

AID-FOR-TRADE: CASE STORY

JAMAICA

Commonwealth Hubs and Spokes Project:
Building the Capacity of ACP Countries in Trade Policy Formulation,
Negotiations and Implementation

Attachment of a Trade Policy Analyst in Jamaica

Region: The Caribbean

Country: Jamaica

Type: Capacity – building

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Date 4th February 2011

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1. Objective of the Project

The objective of this project was to promote the effective participation of ACP countries in international trade negotiations and to strengthen capacity to formulate and implement trade policies in compliance with overall development strategies.

The project activities included the attachment of a Trade Policy Analyst (TPA) or “Spoke” in Jamaica, initially for a period of 2 years (2006-2008) to be engaged in activities such as training and sensitization of stakeholders in trade policy issues; building capacity to analyze, formulate, negotiate and implement trade policies; the development of national trade policy networks; and the provision of advice on trade policy issues.

The Hubs and Spokes Project was funded by the European Union through its TradeCom Facility in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) as well as the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group Secretariat. The Regional Trade Policy Adviser (RTPA) or “Hub” for Jamaica was located at the CARICOM Secretariat. Funding for project activities in Jamaica was requested and approved through the Hub at the CARICOM Secretariat.

2. Appointment and activities of the Trade Policy Analyst

A Trade Policy Analyst was assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade in Jamaica in April 2006 in accordance with the project specific Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Jamaica in March 2006. The contract of the Analyst would be extended for a further 2 years in 2008.

The guiding principle in the deployment of TPAs was that they had to be non citizens of the host country and preferably of the region. Hence, the Spoke for Jamaica was a national of Zimbabwe, living in South Africa, whose qualifications included a Masters Degree in International Law and Economics from the World Trade Institute in Bern, Switzerland. The Commonwealth Hubs and Spokes project thus allowed for cultural exchanges between ACP regions-where Caribbean nationals were posted to Africa and vice-versa; and Africans to the Pacific. It also underpinned South to South technical cooperation.

This project involved counterpart training and thus Foreign Service Officers in the Ministry were assigned to work with the TPA. Equipment was also provided in the form of a laptop computer and printer/scanners.

During the 4 year assignment, the TPA, who was found to have a keen interest in trade in services, assisted the Ministry in ongoing work for the negotiation of the CARIFORUM/EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which concluded in December 2007, and with the preparations for the negotiations for the Canada/CARICOM Trade and Development Agreement, which commenced in November 2009. He also assisted with the WTO Services negotiations and Services implementation in the context of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME).

This work included organizing trade in services consultations with stakeholders utilizing the Ministry's existing consultative mechanism which includes representatives of the public and private sectors and civil society. The TPA improved the working relationship with the services stakeholders.

The TPA was actively engaged in organizing seminars and workshops on trade policy issues such as trade in services, rules of origin and analysis of trade with trading partners. A major training activity was done in collaboration with the University of the West Indies at Mona and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in 2010 to train 29 government officials in the conduct of Sustainability Impact Assessments.

Work related to the CARIFORUM/EU EPA included analysis of the Agreement. With the signing of the EPA in October 2008, the TPA organized a major Seminar on the Agreement with the preparation of a newspaper supplement to coincide with it. Both activities took place in January 2009.

The Trade Policy Analyst worked with members of the Ministry's consultative mechanism organizing sessions on the EPA and other trade issues outside of Kingston, in Montego Bay and Mandeville. He also assisted a civil society group to organize trade policy workshops.

In addition, the Analyst assisted in identifying technical assistance and in the preparation of research papers.

The contract of the Trade Policy Analyst ended in October 2010 with the conclusion of the first phase of the Project and he left Jamaica to commence an assignment in Botswana.

3. Monitoring by the Commonwealth Secretariat

The Analyst attended training and evaluation sessions organized at the regional level by the Commonwealth Secretariat. These sessions were open to other Jamaican Government Officials.

The Manager of the Hubs and Spokes Project in the Commonwealth Secretariat, Mr. Nimrod Waniala, also visited Jamaica to monitor and evaluate the project.

4. The Regional Hub

Under the Hubs and Spokes Project, Jamaica also benefitted at the regional level from the funding provided through the CARICOM Secretariat and the regional trade policy activities organized by the Regional Trade Policy Advisor and the CARICOM Secretariat.

5. Assessment of the Project

The young Trade Policy Analyst was well qualified, competent, and brought a great deal of enthusiasm to the assignment. He did not come to the position with the wealth of experience

that one might have expected, but made up for any deficiencies in this area with a diligent approach to projects.

The TPA assimilated well into the Foreign Trade Division and the Ministry, and into the Jamaican Society. He demonstrated the ability to implement, a willingness to learn and to take on new challenges. He thus extended the capacity of the Foreign Trade Division which has a limited staff complement. The benefits from capacity-building in international trade policy accrued to both the Ministry and the TPA, who acknowledged that the assignment to Jamaica had contributed significantly to his growth and development. In this context, this project facilitated successful cross fertilization, as it facilitated a greater appreciation of the Jamaican economy and its trade policy regime, as well as its culture.

Counterpart training cannot be assessed as a resounding success. The Counterpart assigned to work with the Analyst was posted overseas and is still working in international trade. However, attempts to match the Analyst with other counterparts resulted in a lesser degree of success. Currently, the Foreign Trade Division requires a specialist in trade in services due to the mobility of staff.

The legacy of this project is assessed, among other things, as the equipment received, the training provided, the strengthening of the services outreach and network, and the contribution to services negotiations.

6. Lessons Learnt

Lessons learnt from this project can be summarized as follows:

1. That there should be increased south-south involvement in technical assistance;
2. That in technical assistance programmes, there should be no hesitation in utilizing the services of young, qualified trade professionals as it can be mutually beneficial;
3. That counterpart training is necessary, but it can pose various challenges relating to compatibility and mobility;
4. That, in the long term, expertise in international trade policy can only be built and sustained through the employment and retention of nationals with the requisite

technical expertise. However, in this regard, it is recognized that the difficult economic environment poses its own challenges.

Conclusion

Overall, the assignment of the Trade Policy Analyst to Jamaica has generally been evaluated as a success. As shown, the Analyst made it possible for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to continue to participate effectively in trade in services negotiations with the involvement of all stakeholders; to undertake a number of training initiatives to further build capacity not only in the Ministry, but also in the wider public service; and to improve trade policy analysis. The Analyst positively contributed to work on the CARIFORUM/EU EPA.

The Ministry, however, recognizes that building trade policy capacity as it relates to human resources requires the employment of staff with the requisite qualifications and skills. The Ministry, therefore, has been employing persons with qualifications in international trade policy, and has employed graduates of the Masters Programme in International Trade Policy at the UWI Cave Hill Campus in Barbados, initially supported by the Organization of American States (OAS), and from the Masters Programme in Economics and Economics and Law at the UWI, Mona Campus.

The Government of Jamaica also continues to make use of training programmes offered by the WTO, the IDB, UNCTAD and other institutions. In fact, it is a requirement that staff participate in WTO training courses.

Nevertheless, in Jamaica, capacity-building in international trade policy continues to be an ongoing and necessary activity in the public and private sectors and in civil society due to the small size of administrations and the adverse economic environment.