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Manager of the Competency-Based Training Fund Management Unit, Anderson Lowe (right), announcing the call for proposals while executive director of the TVET Council, Henderson Eastmond, listens. (GP)



\$13m fund for training

The first call for proposals inviting applications to a new \$13 million training grant for employers and training providers has begun, following a series of information workshops for over 100 prospective applicants.

The Competency-Based Training Fund (CBTF), a Government of Barbados/Inter-American Development Bank initiative, has been established to better equip the Barbadian workforce with the skills and competencies they need to excel in the 21st century market place.

A key component of Government's Skills For The Future education and labour initiative, the CBTF will disburse \$13 million over a three-year period in four cycles of funding.

On April 11, at the official start of the call for proposals, fund manager, Anderson Lowe explained that proposals would be evaluated "in a competitive fashion to support interested partnerships of employers and training providers to develop and provide competency-based training aimed at improving the skills of employed and unemployed persons in Barbados."

Successful partnerships will receive up to

\$800 000 in funding with a maximum of two years to complete their training programmes. The call for proposals ends on May 23.

"Only those proposals that comply with the following criteria will be reviewed and ranked by the CBTF's Technical Reviewing and Selection Committee: those submitted by a partnership of at least one private employer and one training provider; where the training to be provided is based on competency-based occupational standards; and where the training leads to certification by a recognised awarding body," Lowe said.

Proposals that do not meet the criteria will be sent back to the partners with comments. Those partnerships will also be invited to resubmit their proposals in a subsequent cycle.

Business development officer at the Barbados Community College (BCC), Gomell Elcock, said her institution was looking to submit proposals for four major projects including languages, sports, agriculture and the alternative energy sector, and was also partnering with Intimate Hotels of Barbados to submit a proposal for language training. (PR)



Paul Murphy, programme director, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, describes the fund's approach to partnerships as Gayle Headley-Lowe, executive director, Intimate Hotels, looks on. (GP)

Sealy encourages support for festival

For more than four decades, the Oistins Fish Festival has provided a national platform for cultural excellence, and it therefore ought to be appreciated for its intrinsic value to the wider community.

And Marilyn Sealy, corporate communications and public relations manager of telecommunications provider LIME, is encouraging corporate Barbados to continue to support the annual festival which comes off this weekend.

LIME is the title sponsor of the festival in the popular fishing district.

"For almost 50 years now, the Oistins Fish Festival has provided a great avenue to showcase some of this country's most outstanding acts of cultural expression," said Sealy, who was speaking against a backdrop of decreasing sponsorship from the private sector.

"However, it is unfortunate that the current economic climate has not allowed for some businesses to support the festival, especially since the festival is run entirely by a team of volunteers.

"Still, despite the lack of sponsorship, the festival continues to be a high-calibre event that attracts several thousand visitors to Oistins and its surrounding areas."

The Oistins Fish Festival was inaugurated in 1967 and

according to festival organiser Dan Carter, it takes more than \$100 000 to produce.

Carter noted that it was very difficult to keep the festival alive and he thanked LIME for sticking with it by being the title sponsor of this year's event.

"We are indeed very grateful to LIME for stepping forward again this year and leading from the front to support the Oistins Fish Festival. We do get some support from Government but it's not nearly enough to produce a quality festival. Therefore, we are relying more and more on contributions from corporate Barbados, in cash or kind, to offset the costs associated with such a huge undertaking," he said.

Sealy said that local businesses should view the festival as an opportunity not only to market their brands to the public, but also to simultaneously invest in keeping Barbados' once vibrant heritage sector alive.

"Our future depends on us taking stock of our history and the Oistins Fish Festival allows Barbadians to display the knowledge and techniques that have been passed down from generation to generation," she said.

(PR)



LIME corporate communications and public relations manager, Marilyn Sealy. (GP)