



\$13m up for grabs

Selection process for training grant underway

Added by [Barbados Today](#) on May 30, 2014.

Saved under [Public Relations](#)

A special committee is now in place to assess and score proposal submissions for the \$13 million Competency-Based Training Fund (CBTF).

Following the close of the first call for proposals last week, committee members opened thirty-one training proposals from a variety of industry sectors including services, hospitality, creative industries, and energy.

The recently-appointed Technical Review and Selection Committee (TRSC) underwent two days of extensive training last week at the Higher Education Development Unit. The training workshop was facilitated by Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Consultant Dr Juan Prawda on behalf of the CBTF Management Unit.

Dr Prawda has worked on competency-based training projects throughout Asia and Latin America. Speaking to the implementation and scope of competency-based training in other countries, Dr Prawda cited Argentina, saying that the World Bank had financed a “massive” competency-based skills development project there.

“During the project’s tenure, government included 40 sectors of the economy, they standardized or registered close to 400 occupations, they assessed more than 300,000 workers, and they ended up certifying about 120,000 persons,” he said.

Emphasizing that competency-based training (CBT) systems employ a demand-driven approach, Dr Prawda told workshop participants that the first factor in evaluating the proposals is ensuring “the occupations for which [partnerships] want to provide training have been normalized, meaning that occupational standards exist or that there is a clear plan for how they will be developed”.

The proposals submitted to the CBTF must comply with three criteria in order to be reviewed and ranked by the committee. First, proposals must be submitted by a partnership of at least one private employer and one training provider; second, the training must be based on competency-based occupational standards; and finally, the training must lead to certification by a recognised awarding body.

Dr Prawda went into detail on the proposal template used by applicants, in order to give TRSC members a clearer idea of the components successful proposals should have. Participants then reviewed three case studies using criteria and scoring weights to familiarize themselves with the procedures and tie breaking measures for proposal evaluation and scoring.

Appointed committee members include CBTF Manager Anderson Lowe, Committee Chair; Richard Greene, National Union of Public Workers; Henderson Eastmond, TVET Council; and Paul Murphy, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

The committee also includes private sector representative Claudia Smith, retired human resource manager of TMR Sales & Service Ltd.; and training provider representative Henderson Nurse, Erdiston Teachers’ Training College.

Smith said she was looking forward to performing her duties.

“I am pleased to be selected to be a part of the review committee as it will allow me to bring some of my human resource training to the process. I am also looking forward to the interaction with the other members as we participate in this very important selection process,” she said.

Describing the two-day training workshop as “intense”, Smith added that she found the analysis of the case studies the most useful component.

“The discussion that followed the analysis broadened our understanding of the requirements and allowed for an explanation of discrepancies in scoring,” she said.

In explaining the role of the TRSC, Lowe said that it would assess whether the proposals received comply with all the eligibility criteria; inform and return proposals to those applicants whose proposals do not comply with the three eligibility criteria, providing them with a written explanation as to why they were not considered for review so that the applicants can address issues and resubmit during a subsequent cycle; review eligible proposals and score them according to the criteria and weights outlined; and arrange the proposals in descending order according to their score and recommend to the TVET Council those that could be financed by the CBTF.

The fund manager also explained that additional criteria, though not necessary for eligibility, were being used to prioritise the selection of proposals. These criteria are: the number of workers to be trained under the proposal exceeds those to be trained from the employer’s business; the participation of sector associations and the merging of firms in partnership with the training provider; and a clear strategy of sustainability after the end of the CBTF funding period.

By mid-June, shortlisted partnerships will receive official notification of their status. Successful partnerships will receive up to \$800,000 in funding with a maximum of two years to complete their training programmes.

The CBTF is a Government of Barbados/Inter-American Development Bank initiative, 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 the 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.

Competency-based training is a learning system which considers learners competent in an occupational area based on their demonstration of mastery skills, knowledge and attitudes. This is its key difference to traditional education which relies on acquiring content-based knowledge alone.

Learners deemed competent then receive a National (or other) Vocational Qualification certifying their expertise in that occupational area.