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# CARIBBEAN OPEN TRADE SUPPORT PROGRAM: QUARTERLY REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE 30, 2006

**July 10, 2006**

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The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.



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## ACRONYMS

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BSP	business service provider
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARTAC	Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Center
CBO	community-based organization
CDERA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COTS	Caribbean Open Trade Support
CRNM	Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
DHTA	Dominica Hotels and Tourism Association
ECCB	Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
EU	European Union
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
ICT	information communications technology
IPA	Investment Promotion Agency
IPR	intellectual property rights
IRD	Inland Revenue Department
NDC	National Development Corporation
NDF	National Development Foundation
NGO	non-governmental organization
ODM	Office of Disaster Management
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PR	public relations
PWG	Partners Working Group
RPF	request for proposals
RMU	Reform Management Unit
RSO	Regional Strategic Objective
SAF	Strategic Activities Fund
SOW	scope of work
TA	technical assistance
TSG	The Services Group
USAID/J-CAR	United States Agency for International Development/Jamaica-Caribbean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UWI	University of the West Indies
VAT	Value-Added Tax
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The USAID-funded Caribbean Open Trade Support (COTS) program's main goal is to facilitate the transition of Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries to open trade and to enable these countries to become more competitive in the global economy. To achieve its very ambitious goals, in its third quarter, COTS focused on three broad, important initiatives:

- Support the national governments of Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica in their efforts to improve the regulatory and business environment in their countries;
- Respond to the private sector's need to establish a better dialogue with government officials and to support their ability to compete more effectively within the scope of regional and international integration; and
- In coordination with regional organizations, implement activities that result in quantifiable reductions in the countries' exposures to natural disasters and support development that preserves the sensitive environmental resources of the region.

In order to provide a well-functioning system of governance, a country must have laws that govern its economic and social development. COTS is working closely with the University of the West Indies' Center for International Services to provide technical assistance to enable Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica to meet legislative obligations within the scope of regional and international integration. In Antigua and Barbuda, COTS is providing a part-time legislative draftsman to work closely with the attorney general and Ministry of Legal Affairs to draft critical legislation that must be enacted for the country to meet its obligations under CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and WTO. In Dominica, COTS is funding a short-term legislative draftsman to support additional work that will begin with COTS funding in July. COTS provided additional support for Dominica's solicitor general to attend a two-week intensive legislative drafting course with Tulane University's International Legislative Drafting Institute. The solicitor general's attendance at this course fulfills one of the activity goals of the first-year work plan: increase the pool of qualified legislative draftsmen in the Eastern Caribbean.

In order to enhance inter-ministerial communications in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, COTS interviewed all the permanent secretaries in both countries, as well as some of their staff, to identify targeted interventions for each country. In Antigua and Barbuda, COTS will work with host-country counterparts to establish a committee of permanent secretaries that will meet regularly to discuss matters requiring coordination across ministries or government agencies. In Dominica, COTS' approach will focus on providing technical and material assistance to establish a central government Web site to promote communication and information sharing.

COTS greatly advanced its efforts to improve the business climate and remove barriers to investment during the past quarter. In Dominica, COTS is working closely with the World Bank and the European Union to assist with the restructuring of the National Development Corporation (NDC). In Antigua and Barbuda, COTS is awaiting passage of legislation to establish the Investment Promotion Authority, after which COTS will provide technical assistance to establish a new investment promotion agency in Antigua. COTS provided substantial input to the updated draft of the Antigua and Barbuda Investment Promotion

Authority Act. COTS is a co-sponsor with the World Bank to include, for the first time, all six of the OECS countries in the Bank's annual "Doing Business Survey." This report, recognized internationally by investors and governments, benchmarks a country's business and investment climate against countries around the world. It serves as an important tool to encourage administrative reform to improve the business operating environment.

In conjunction with the CSME Focal Points in each country, COTS supported activities to promote public awareness of the CSME to the general public. Working with the media worker associations in Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda, COTS supported a one-day dialogue with media workers to address the history of the regional integration movement, specific mechanics of the treaty, and provided an update as to where each country stood vis-à-vis their CSME obligations. The dialogue helped better define the role media workers play in educating the public on CSME issues. In Antigua and Barbuda, COTS helped develop a dissemination strategy to inform the public about activities the government sponsored during a week-long CSME awareness outreach program. COTS also held four "Public Outreach 101" workshops with public-sector agencies and private-sector associations, focusing on the mechanics of communicating trade issues to key stakeholders.

In addition, COTS funded Caribbean Vizion's performances of "The Single Market Shop," a theatrical presentation on CSME. Caribbean Vizion is a regional organization lobbying for cultural and economic cooperation between Caribbean people and their governments; they staged nine presentations in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica. The dramatic presentation used humor, song, and dance to convey how the CSME can have a positive impact on peoples' lives, and addressed many of the common concerns raised over regional integration, including crime, drugs, unemployment, and cultural identity. This was further enhanced by interaction between the cast, which hails from throughout the Caribbean, with the audience after each performance.

To support sustainable tourism development in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, COTS worked with the countries' tourism associations to convene action-oriented workshops to prepare disaster business-recovery plans for businesses in the tourism industry. Both workshops were facilitated primarily by COTS' risk reduction specialist, along with local disaster coordinators. The workshops fulfilled the objective to have key businesses in the major economic sectors of both countries better able to plan for, cope with, and manage the aftermath of natural disasters.

In support of international donor, government, and private-sector initiatives to implement risk-reduction measures throughout the region, COTS began to develop a new tool, the Disaster Risk Management Benchmarking Tool (DRMBT), that countries will use to identify and quantify their exposure to a variety of natural hazards. The DRMBT provides a unique approach to address hazard mitigation in that it enables a country to proactively assess its position at the national and local levels across a spectrum of areas and then proactively implement measures to reduce the country's exposure before a natural disaster occurs. This tool has the potential to offer enormous positive impact. It will enable governments and donors to assess how well a country is doing to improve its disaster risk profile. Governments can use the tool to garner resources to implement specific activities to reduce the country's exposure to future natural hazards. Donors can use the tool to allocate resources in future development programs. In order to promote implementation of the DRMBT throughout the region, and to ensure sustainability after COTS

ends, the OECS secretariat will spearhead the implementation of this new mechanism throughout the region. USAID and COTS are working closely with international organizations including CDERA, CDB, CIDA, UNDP, the World Bank, and CARICAD in this landmark activity. COTS expects that the DRMBT will be ready for use in early September and will work with Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda to implement it.

Finally, but very importantly, there have been two key issues that have had a significant impact on the program during the past quarter. The first issue was formal notification by USAID that COTS will experience a significant cut in funding, representing approximately 30 percent of the total program budget. The size of the cut itself, as well as several months of uncertainty about it, had two serious repercussions. The first is that the program delayed, and in some cases cancelled, a number of activities awaiting the outcome of budget discussions with USAID to detail the scope of the budget reduction and USAID priorities. Secondly, it became far more difficult to fully meet stakeholder expectations, which were raised when COTS began its start-up and initial implementation activities.

The nature of the COTS program — several distinct areas brought together in one programmatic package — has made it difficult to immediately reduce the long-term staff base since skills and resources in one area are not easily transferable to another. While a smaller team structure will be put in place over the course of the coming year, in the short term, COTS has to accept a thematically broad program with a significantly reduced depth of operational capacity.

A sub-issue related to the reduced budget is the variety of budgetary earmarks that comprise COTS' funding. Specifically, the biodiversity earmark comprises 15.5 percent of funds currently obligated under the task order for the year, and 16.4 percent of expected obligations in July 2006. Activities funded by biodiversity earmarks have strict qualification requirements. As such, the COTS team, including Chemonics' home office staff in Washington, D.C., has invested significant effort to fully understand the biodiversity code requirements and to properly interpret them in the context of an open-trade program. This included substantial coordination with USAID Mission staff and the USAID consultant currently undertaking a biodiversity threats analysis in the region.

COTS understands the importance that biodiversity plays in sustaining economic growth, in particular within the scope of a program whose main objective is to promote private-sector competitiveness through open trade. With this understanding in mind, COTS will ensure that program activities duly incorporate responses to specific threats faced by Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica's bio-diverse environments while working to accomplish overall COTS program objectives.



## COTS PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS

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### A. MISSION

The Caribbean Open Trade Support (COTS) program is a new component of the Caribbean Regional Program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/J-CAR), designed to facilitate the transition of the region — in particular, selected Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) member countries — to open trade and to enable the countries to compete more successfully and sustainably in the global economy.

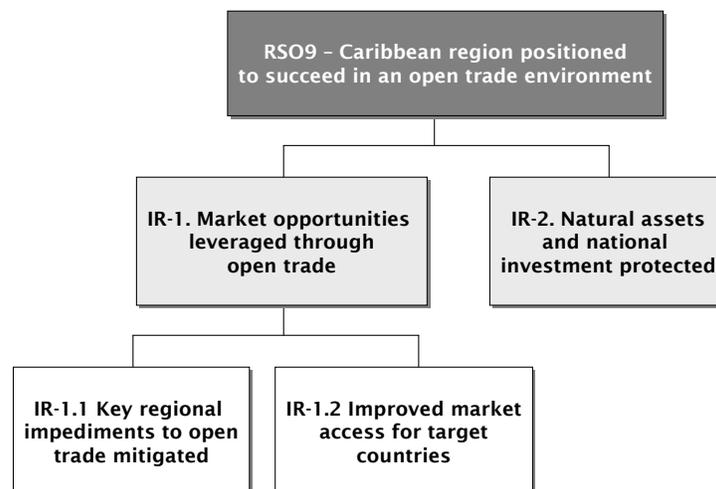
### B. GOALS

To facilitate the transition of OECS countries to open trade and to compete more successfully in the global economy, the COTS program will implement a range of activities over four years:

- Supporting government institutions and agencies to adopt and implement international treaty regulations that support business growth and competition.
- Enhancing public/private-sector interaction and dialogue to improve public policy.
- Increasing civil society’s understanding of the challenges and opportunities of participating in a global economy.
- Enabling businesses to compete more effectively in the global economy.
- Increasing the region’s resilience to natural disasters.

The program responds to the Caribbean Regional Program Results Framework outlined below. It will support USAID/J-CAR in meeting its Regional Strategic Objective 9 through achievement of Intermediate Results 1 and 2 and, in turn, 1.1 and 1.2.

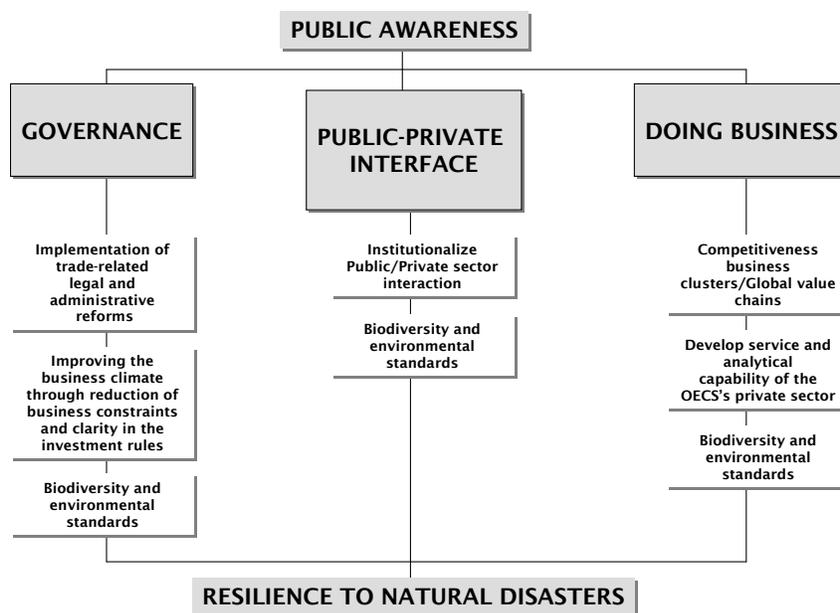
### USAID CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PROGRAM RESULTS FRAMEWORK



## C. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

During the first-year work plan, the COTS team proposed an operational framework that supports a strong internal logic; effective use of synergy to minimize duplication; efficient management; and easy presentation to external audiences. The results framework below reflects the central elements of a well-functioning society: a social and economic logic that drives an efficient market economy, with clear roles for government, the private sector, and civil society.

The overall purpose of COTS' activities is to support OECS countries in developing efficient market economies with good governance and dynamic business sectors, a win-win environment that improves the lives of their citizens.



## D. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The COTS program is financed through a USAID Commercial, Legal, and Institutional Reform indefinite-quantity contract task order awarded to Chemonics International Inc. It was signed on September 30, 2005, with an estimated duration of 48 months. The program will be implemented by an experienced consortium of firms led by Chemonics and includes The Services Group, PA Government Services, Dexis, and Mercosur Consulting Group. Program activities will be supported via a \$4 million Strategic Activities Fund (SAF) that will identify and co-finance promising opportunities at the country or regional level. Partners Working Groups (PWGs), established in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica and made up of public- and private-sector representatives, will serve as important sounding-boards during the life of the program.

The COTS program has a regional scope, covering the Eastern Caribbean countries of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Santa Lucia. COTS has chosen to work first in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica and has functioning offices in both countries. The nine-member technical team divides its time between the two while providing assistance to organizations throughout the region.

At the regional level, the COTS team is actively supporting and coordinating activities with the OECS Secretariat, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) secretariat, Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machine (CRNM), Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Center (CARTAC), Caribbean Development Bank, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), and University of the West Indies (UWI).

## **GOVERNANCE**

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A well-functioning governance system provides a transparent, low-cost, operational legal and regulatory framework for business and civil society. It provides a regulatory framework through which business and the citizenry can take full advantage of integration in regional and international markets. It should focus on continuous improvement to eliminate or update implementing rules and administrative procedures that have outlived their usefulness or present barriers to businesses from effectively competing.

COTS activities in governance focus on two key areas. The first is to ensure that the legal frameworks of Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica will be in compliance with their obligations under CSME and other international trade and treaty obligations. The second is designed to provide an optimal administrative and regulatory environment that reduces transaction costs for the private sector such that business can take full advantage of the opportunities that economic integration offers.

### **A. IMPLEMENTATION OF TRADE-RELATED LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS**

#### **A1. Problem Statement**

Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica were not able to have in place all of their commitments arising under the CSME by the target date of January 1, 2006. In addition, there are World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments from the 1994 Uruguay Round and others arising under international conventions, dealing with environmental quality and safety standards, which are still not enforceable. All this arises from a failure to enact required implementing legislation or from a lack of administrative and institutional oversight capacity. It is exacerbated by a lack of reliable statistical information on trade-related issues upon which to base sound policy decisions. This situation will be further complicated as new international conventions and trade arrangements come into force.

There is also a pressing need for the governments of Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica to enhance their capacity to negotiate trade agreements, within established regional frameworks, which are in the best interests of a wide cross-section of their citizens, including the local business community.

#### **A2. Four-Year Vision**

At the end of four years, the COTS program expects to see:

- Full compliance with CSME commitments and full implementation of WTO Uruguay Round agreements, in addition to any new commitments that may arise under the Doha Round.
- An adequate number of trained personnel with the capacity to prepare the legal documents required to enable implementation of outstanding obligations.
- A public-sector capability to establish and promote negotiating positions in regard to international trade agreements within existing regional frameworks.
- A well thought-out, national negotiating position based upon identification of a range of options, drawing upon well-informed analysis.

- A statistical entity able to collect reliable trade and economic information, which can then be easily disseminated to and used by relevant government agencies and the private sector.
- A fully functioning, inter-ministerial coordinating mechanism that will facilitate implementation of legal reforms related to implementing obligations within international trade agreements, and that will establish a legal framework supporting private-sector development and competitiveness.
- An increased level of government understanding of international norms and standards and the creation of an enabling environment for the private sector.

### **A3. Quarterly Progress Toward Objectives**

On June 12, part-time legislative draftsman Beverley Pereira arrived in St. John's to meet with the attorney general and the acting senior legislative draftsman. They discussed the legislation she will prepare over the next six months in accord with the list of priority legislation agreed to by COTS and the government. Mrs. Pereira is working on legislation for Antigua and Barbuda under a subcontract with the University of the West Indies. Given her expertise in intellectual property law, she will also review drafts of the implementing regulations for six intellectual property laws in Dominica prepared in-house or by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

COTS was able to respond to a late request from Dominica to pay for its solicitor general to attend a two-week intensive legislative drafting course in Washington, D.C., from June 11-24, offered by Tulane University's International Legislative Drafting Institute. The solicitor general's attendance fulfills one of the activity goals of the first-year work plan: increase the pool of qualified legislative draftsmen in the Eastern Caribbean.

While the solicitor general was in Washington, D.C., she met with Andrea Ewart, a short-term legislative draftsman, originally from Jamaica, whom COTS is fielding until the long-term draftsman begins working in Roseau on July 17. Ms. Ewart was instructed on legislation she should draft prior to her arrival in Roseau on July 10. Her work is in accord with the list of priority legislation agreed to by COTS and the government.

Over the past quarter, COTS talked with WIPO and the Intellectual Property Registrar in Dominica (including a meeting with WIPO in Geneva on June 6) to clarify financial and logistical responsibilities for joint sponsorship of an intellectual property law enforcement conference in Dominica, scheduled for July 27, 2006. The conference coincides with a WIPO-sponsored colloquium on intellectual property rights (IPR) for Eastern Caribbean judges on July 28-29. The one-day conference, co-sponsored by COTS, will enable local businesspeople and law enforcement officials to understand how the effective IPR enforcement creates new business opportunities, generates local economic growth, and protects the public from counterfeit pharmaceutical products. COTS has provided input on the content of the July 27 program and speakers for both programs, emphasizing issues that are directly relevant to local entrepreneurs and firms. On June 29, local firms were solicited for proposals to develop a one-month public awareness campaign in Dominica in conjunction with the conferences. The Attorney General/Minister of Legal Affairs of Dominica is using the conference to push the country to enact six pieces of implementing legislation needed to bring its IPR laws into force by the end of

August 2006, including laws protecting patents, industrial designs, new plant varieties, integrated circuits, trademarks, and geographical indications. If passed, this legislation will meet Dominica's obligations under the WTO's Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

After extensive interviews in March and April with all the permanent secretaries and some of their staff in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, COTS devised targeted interventions for improving inter-ministerial communication. For Antigua and Barbuda, these center on legally mandating the establishment of a committee of permanent secretaries that meets regularly and has a pre-set agenda that includes discussion of matters requiring coordination between ministries and government agencies. As an initial step, the COTS program director sent a letter in mid-June to the trade coordinator at the Ministry of Finance and the Economy and the permanent secretaries, offering assistance in drafting a law based on the Public Service Act in Dominica. Also in June, COTS corresponded with the Minister of Labour, Public Administration and Empowerment, who oversees inter-ministerial communication between permanent secretaries. In the next quarter, COTS will work with the Minister of Labour and the Trade Coordinator at the Ministry of Finance and the Economy to begin implementing the recommendations.

In Dominica, the inter-ministerial-communication intervention focuses on technical and material assistance to establish a central government Web site. During the next quarter, COTS will finalize its discussions with the public sector in Dominica to establish requirements for the Web site and then implement it.

The COTS program director and the legal and economic integration specialist met with Minister of Finance and the Economy, Dr. Errol Cort on April 26 to discuss bottlenecks in the Statistics Division as identified by COTS, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), and CARTAC. The meeting outlined how COTS can assist the ministry to resolve deficiencies in the scope, reliability, and timeliness of statistical data produced by the department. Following the meeting, the COTS program director wrote to Dr. Cort to offer to finance a regional technical advisor with prior senior-level experience to reorganize and or restructure the division. This assistance depends on COTS' ability to confirm an appropriate internal financing mechanism through the Strategic Activities Fund (SAF), as well as the Ministry of Finance and the Economy implementing, *inter alia*, necessary personnel changes within the Statistics Division.

Working through the CARICOM Secretariat, COTS contacted the OECS Hub and Spokes Project, which improves the collection and dissemination of trade-in-services statistics in OECS countries. COTS expressed interest in funding a local consultant to provide training to the Central Statistics Office in Dominica to implement the Extended Balance of Payments survey the ECCB developed to improve the reliability of trade-in-services statistics. Antigua and Barbuda must resolve internal personnel issues before COTS can provide similar assistance there.

In mid-June, COTS sent a scope of work (SOW) to Ministry of Finance and the Economy Trade Coordinator, Dr. Clarence Henry, outlining the type of assistance COTS can provide to examine a new trade-policy infrastructure for Antigua and Barbuda. The Ministry of Finance and the Economy first made this request in April and contemplated an examination of the need for a new Ministry of Trade and other issues that the COTS program has already targeted for remedial

action. The SOW proposes a more focused analysis that identifies sectors in the local economy with a competitive advantage in an open-trade environment and government policies and mechanisms that can increase their exports and domestic sales. Dr. Henry provided COTS with feedback, and further input will be sought from private-sector associations. In an effort to reduce costs, the analysis will build upon the previously prepared SWOT analysis for Antigua and Barbuda, the World Bank's 2005 report on the OECS — "Towards a New Agenda for Growth," and firm-level information collected by the COTS "Lead Cluster Firm Analysis" in February and March.

#### **A4. Challenges Encountered During the Reporting Period**

Despite a signed contract indicating a start date of April 1, 2006, to field the UWI-supplied full-time legislative draftsman for Dominica, UWI has postponed the start date several times. Sadie Dixon is now scheduled to report for duty in Roseau on July 17. From her base in Barbados, however, Ms. Dixon drafted amendments to the Marriage Act, urgently sought by the Ministry of Tourism, to enable Dominica to capitalize on the destination-wedding tourism market. To mitigate some of the delays in fielding Ms. Dixon, COTS hired Jamaican trade lawyer Andrea Ewart in mid-June to work in Dominica as an emergency draftsman.

Though UWI's "scrubber" has been delayed in reviewing the current legal framework in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica to identify existing legislation that must be modified or repealed for new or proposed laws, this work should start during the next quarter.

The Minister of Finance and the Economy in Antigua and Barbuda agreed to make the previously mentioned personnel changes at the Statistics Division once COTS confirms that our program assistance is ready to implement; this will occur very early in the next quarter. The personnel changes are a prerequisite to COTS' assistance, and any delay by the minister will cause a delay by COTS. This has been a longstanding impasse with other regional entities, such as CARTAC and ECCB, to provide assistance. COTS is reasonably optimistic that the government now recognizes the importance of the Statistics Division and will make the necessary changes.

Personnel changes in the government agencies responsible for posting a new government Web site in Dominica delayed COTS' efforts to provide technical and material assistance to this effort, which is the foundation for COTS' efforts to improve inter-ministerial communication and enhance public/private-sector interface in the country.

In June, COTS organized a meeting of the Partners Working Groups (PWGs) in both countries to solicit input for the second-year work plan. COTS also invited a larger group of stakeholders to ensure a broader base of information from stakeholders in the public and private sectors. The wider representation was extremely valuable, especially from the public-sector representatives. COTS works closely with on program implementation.

In Antigua and Barbuda, two of the three public-sector representatives are from the Industry and Commerce Division of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy. (The third representative was from the National Office of Disaster Services and works with COTS on the Reducing Risk component.) This reduces the range of "official" feedback, despite the fact that COTS works

with a broad range of public-sector implementers. COTS recommends that the PWG include at least one other public-sector representative, or that an Industry and Commerce representative be replaced by a representative from another operational ministry with whom COTS works. A potential candidate is a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, given that this ministry also oversees trade. This will ensure that a broader political agenda is represented.

## **B. IMPROVING THE BUSINESS CLIMATE THROUGH FEWER BUSINESS CONSTRAINTS AND INCREASED CLARITY IN INVESTMENT RULES**

This prong of the Governance Component seeks to ensure that the administrative systems, regulations, and procedures that govern business operations, investment, and trade are efficient, transparent, and well-aligned with efforts to enhance a country's competitiveness and export capabilities. These goals can only be achieved by implementing and, where necessary, updating the recommendations identified in the Investor Roadmap reports for Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica prepared under the previous USAID-financed C-TRADECOM project.

### **B1. Problem Statement**

Global investment and trade flows have grown steadily over the past 20 years as more countries see the economic and social benefits of well-regulated private-sector participation in the economy. Export-led growth, where domestic and international companies produce for the global marketplace, has been successful for many developing countries. These trends represent a shift in thinking from command-and-control economic policies that prioritize producers to a free-market approach that favors consumers through fostering competition among private firms.

In certain sectors, Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica have made progress in capitalizing on export-led growth, but more can be done. Each country must consider its ability to attract foreign direct investment in a shifting international economic landscape and to encourage domestic investment and growth among existing firms.

A key question is to what extent the administrative systems, regulations, and procedures that govern investment and trade are efficient and well-aligned with the country's overall policy goals. Administrative barriers can have a negative effect on the economy by deterring investment and raising the cost of doing business. Individually, these administrative constraints may seem like mere nuisances, but looked at as a whole they can become overwhelming, resulting in an investment climate that is uncompetitive, with increased "transaction costs" to conduct business; increased economic, political, and regulatory risk; unpredictability; and, in general, contributing to competitive and comparative disadvantage.

In both countries, USAID analysis of previous investor roadmap work and the current team's continuing review of the business regulatory environment reveal that there are still very pressing administrative, procedural, and regulatory problems that hinder growth. Reforms have been slow to implement.

## **B2. Four-Year Vision**

It is expected that targeted reform efforts to remove administrative barriers in both countries will improve the investment climate and improve overall competitiveness.

Specifically, after four years, the COTS program expects to see:

- Measurable improvements in regulatory and administrative procedures;
- Greater efficiency and transparency in investment and trade-related procedures;
- Increased recognition of improvements and greater understanding of procedures, regulations, and policies (including environmental, health, and safety standards); and
- A higher profile for Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica among international investors based on improvements in the ease of doing business.

## **B3. Quarterly Progress Toward Objectives**

COTS' new long-term administrative reform specialist joined the team on May 2.

The COTS team made numerous efforts to meet with the key players in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica whose cooperation will be critical to the interventions COTS is pursuing to enhance the business climate and remove identified barriers to investment in the two countries.

These efforts include substantial discussions in Dominica regarding its National Development Corporation (NDC). On several occasions, COTS met with relevant government ministers, the chairman of the NDC and the head of its Industry Division, and the head of the European Union-funded Eco-Tourism Development Program. The discussions elicited opinions on restructuring and institutional strengthening for the NDC, and on getting its buy-in on a COTS intervention. COTS also talked with World Bank personnel, as the bank has a major role in the restructuring.

As a result of these discussions, COTS can identify its role in the restructuring and institutional strengthening of the NDC:

- Assisting the NDC's Industry Division to use its Web site to attract investment to Dominica;
- Working with government and the World Bank to restructure the NDC; and
- As part of the overall restructuring process, providing technical assistance that will enhance the NDC's capacity to do its work.

Work on the Industry Division's Web site is expected to commence within a matter of weeks.

COTS' support to Antigua and Barbuda's new investment promotion agency is awaiting Parliament's passage of the Investment Promotion Authority Act and adoption of a new investment code, both of which have been long delayed. Sources suggest the legislation will be enacted within a month, to be followed shortly thereafter by adoption of the code. COTS will then be in a position to provide technical assistance to establish the new investment promotion agency in Antigua. If everything goes according to plan, this work could begin within the next three months.

Over the past quarter, COTS prepared for a customs intervention. COTS reconfirmed that customs is in dire need of reform in both Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica. COTS talked to relevant government officials, including the customs comptrollers in the two countries and Dominica's Reform Management Unit (RMU). With each authority, COTS clarified planned or proposed customs interventions by other agencies and is now identifying specific areas where COTS can contribute. In Dominica, COTS can work on customer service; human-resource capacity assessment; and establishment of an intelligence unit. Work on the first two, which aim to improve interaction between the Customs Service and the private sector it is intended to serve, will also be done in Antigua and Barbuda. COTS is preparing scopes of works (SOW) for these interventions.

In Dominica, issues of land ownership, transfer, and registration loomed large in reviews of the investment climate, and COTS revalidated this finding in April. Through discussions with Dominica's RMU and the newly formed Land Administration Task Force, COTS is ready to complete a SOW to streamline the three agencies involved in land ownership and transfer, and network their operations. The objective is to shorten the time to own, transfer, and register land and simplify the processes involved, which will reduce business transaction costs.

COTS continued working with the World Bank to conduct "Doing Business" surveys in OECS countries. Surveys were completed in each country and COTS and the World Bank validated the findings at a "Right of Reply" meeting with OECS country representatives. Formal launching of the first-ever "OECS Doing Business Surveys" will take place in Antigua in October. COTS will then organize a national-level Doing Business conference in Dominica in November to share the survey results with public- and private-sector colleagues.

COTS used this quarter to finalize specific interventions to enhance the investment climate in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica. These interventions constitute the Improving the Business Climate section of COTS' work plan for the next 15 months.

#### **B4. Challenges Encountered During the Reporting Period**

In Antigua and Barbuda, one of the key issues with improving the investment climate is company registration. COTS' intervention is not yet defined because it has been difficult to obtain meetings with some of the key personnel.

The other major challenge, as previously mentioned, is the substantial delay in passing the Investment Promotion Authority Act. COTS advised the government that, due to a reduced program budget, it can only assist with the new Investment Promotion Authority if the Act is passed by August. If this does not occur, COTS will direct resources into other program areas.

In Dominica, the challenge for the government in restructuring the NDC is to identify the funds required for redundancy payments to personnel. Without these funds, there will be no major changes in NDC's operations.

Despite these challenges, both countries are considerably receptive to COTS' assistance to improve the investment climate and thereby increase levels of economic growth. Counterparts in Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda view COTS to be timely, coming right after the countries

joined the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. COTS' challenge will be to meet the countries' expectations under a substantially reduced program budget.

## **DOING BUSINESS**

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A healthy market economy relies on the private sector to provide jobs to its citizens and contribute to the national purse by paying taxes on the profits it earns. If business does not earn money, it does not pay taxes or employ people. Doing business requires that firms be competitive in domestic, regional, and international markets.

Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica have a number of opportunities to improve their businesses. The COTS Team has developed a series of implementation activities to capitalize on these opportunities. The activities are divided among two tasks: improving the competitiveness of value chains, business clusters, and individual firms, and improving the range and quality of firms that provide business-consulting services (business service providers, or BSPs). The second strengthens the ability of industry associations to better analyze information, develop an advocacy agenda, and advocate more effectively on behalf of their members.

### **A. COMPETITIVENESS BUSINESS CLUSTERS/GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS**

#### **A1. Problem Statement**

The private sectors in Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda are generally weak and not prepared to compete regionally or globally. It is important that the economies become more efficient and diversified to respond to the increasingly competitive world in which they must survive and prosper. Businesses need to confront the several important issues over the next two years:

- Integration into the CSME;
- Increased pressure to conform to international voluntary standards, including those for quality, environment, occupational health and safety, and food safety;
- Responding to the demands and opportunities within the scope of bilateral agreements with the EU (and possibly with the United States under the FTAA); and
- Anticipated investment code reforms.

These changes will affect the ability of existing businesses in the region to compete. In turn, the businesses will require upgrading to compete globally. COTS' task over the long run is to enable these businesses to become more integrated into the global value chain.

The COTS program recognizes the need for more efficient and diverse economies such that the supply response to globalization and the economic reforms currently underway in Dominica and Antigua become more robust. Broad constraints include:

- Lack of information about market opportunities;
- Lack of access to affordable finance;
- Shifting international terms of trade (exchange-rate volatility and relative price movements), which puts businesses at a disadvantage;
- High costs of water, electricity, and imported inputs;
- Lack of access to best-use technology and management practices, especially quality control and environmental standards (including energy and water-saving techniques);

- Low-productivity, high-wage labor;
- Lack of adequate BSPs; and
- Inadequate infrastructure.

The ability of companies to establish competitive positions in tourism markets, other service sectors, manufacturing, and agribusiness will increasingly depend on the ability of firms to apply international norms and standards. A review of the tourism, medical, and agribusiness sectors indicates that conformance with norms for quality workplace safety and labor, environment, and food safety are rapidly becoming vital value-chain determinants.

Private enterprises are not prepared for emerging requirements and are overwhelmed by the need to upgrade their current operations to conform. This is compounded by a general lack of trained professionals who can facilitate enterprise conformance. The inability to manage costs, predict and prevent negative environmental and social impacts, and develop products for a discerning market has long-term competitiveness consequences for businesses.

Antigua and Dominica have a number of opportunities to capitalize on new business opportunities. The COTS team has developed a series of implementation activities to capitalize on these opportunities.

## **A2. Four-Year Vision**

At the end of four years, COTS envisions:

- A more vibrant private sector that is globally competitive;
- New markets, products, services, employment, and investment;
- In the tourism cluster, a dynamic and growing tourism sector that is competitive globally and responsive to new demands in the marketplace. Niche market tourism, attracting customers from a variety of markets (especially the high end, which is the most profitable);
- Increased domestic and regional value added in the tourism cluster and other clusters due to better use of domestic human resources, agricultural inputs, and horticultural products;
- A robust and functioning business-services sector providing a diversified range of world-class business services to improve the ability of the private sector to respond to demand;
- Enhanced private-sector knowledge of, and access to, global markets, resulting in increased and sustainable exports;
- Streamlined, more efficient, and more environmentally friendly business processes across the economy;
- Private enterprises readily adopting management systems and practices that conform to international standards, and recognition that this is a means to improved competitiveness;
- Businesses incorporating quality and environmental management systems and practices; and
- Enterprises actively supporting the adoption and certification of international standards and improved practices.

A firm-level assessment survey conducted in Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda in March 2006 recommended that COTS adopt a results-oriented, market- and transaction-driven approach to the development of businesses in the OECS, and concluded that significant opportunities exist

for the program to assist companies expand sales and jobs in both countries. The assessment also recommended that the most appropriate criteria for selecting companies for assistance should be cost-effectiveness, where support must yield the highest sales-to-assistance return.

### **A3. Quarterly Progress Toward Objectives**

In order to assess opportunities for competitiveness-building in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, COTS mentored a number of firms in the information communications technology, garment production, tourism, advertising and public relations, and food and beverage sectors. COTS provided opportunistic enterprise assistance in garment manufacturing through deal sourcing, production support to close sales, and material supply support to prepare for Cricket World Cup 2007 sales.

Following new requirements for pallets used in shipping food and beverage products to the United States, COTS initiated a search for, has identified, and is following up with a pallet leasing company that will enable local firms to comply with the new requirements and permit the flow of export products to the United States for a number of COTS client firms.

Opportunistic deal sourcing continued with buyer requests for supplier information in candle production and garment production in Dominica. The initial, unqualified solicitation for candle production was shared with a USAID-funded project in Jamaica (COMMIT) to determine if a Jamaican firm could fill the order.

In preparation for rollout of the enterprise-assistance activity in Dominica, COTS completed a comprehensive procurement process to identify and contract a BSP in Dominica. COTS expects to make an award to the firm, ICMS Ltd., in mid-July, and provide training to improve its demand-driven consulting services to private-sector clients in the country. COTS personnel will provide similar services to firms in Antigua and Barbuda.

COTS initiated a solicitation of market-linkage consultants who will source demand for local products and services in external markets. In order to foster greater cooperation between COTS and other assistance programs, legal documents were drafted to share information and collaborate on providing enterprise assistance.

COTS explored developing capacity to provide entrepreneurship training in Dominica through the Dominica State College Business Training Center, the National Development Foundation, and other donor programs operating through the Roseau Credit Union. These programs sought funding, not technical assistance, so COTS will not pursue these activities further at this time.

To prepare for standards-compliance issues that may be addressed through firm- and cluster-level assistance, COTS met with the Bureau of Standards and 18 companies in the food and beverage, garment, building materials, and furniture sectors in both countries to ascertain the technical standards and other compliance requirements the companies must meet to supply customers in regional and extra-regional markets. Hazard-analysis critical control points, care labeling, cleaner production, and eco-labeling were identified as the critical compliance measures to be adopted for exporting to these markets. COTS will incorporate standards assistance to client companies when this is a roadblock to meeting customer demand.

In order to move the tourism industry to greater economic competitiveness, COTS responded to a request from the Dominica Hotels and Tourism Association (DHTA) for a study on the impact of the VAT and high energy costs on the economic competitiveness of the tourism industry in Dominica. At the government's request, COTS made a special presentation of the final report to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Private Sector Relations. The report validated the prime minister's work to grant some relief to the tourism sector even before the study was completed, though such validation was by no means a prior objective of the study.

COTS provided the DHTA with a detailed summary of the country's Tourism 2010 policy for the association's Web site. COTS presented a summary of the policy to DHTA members so that they could implement specific opportunities within the scope of the policy.

COTS provided technical assistance to Ministry of Tourism officials in Antigua and Barbuda on the preparation of the Terms of Reference (TOR) for a tourism master plan. The TOR was used to identify consultants who will begin preparation of the plan in July, funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation.

In order to address the need to conform to and support sustainable tourism development in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, COTS convened two workshops through the respective tourism private-sector associations, titled "Disaster — Business Recovery Planning for the Tourism Industry." Both workshops were facilitated primarily by COTS' risk reduction expert and local disaster coordinators in both countries. The workshops fulfilled the objective of making key businesses in the major economic sectors of both countries better able to plan for, cope with, and manage the aftermath of natural disasters. There was positive and extensive media coverage for these specific COTS interventions.

#### **A4. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD**

A number of planned activities for the quarter were scaled back, placed on hold, or cancelled while COTS awaited firm indications on the scale of budget reductions. Activities that were pursued were largely opportunistic or relatively low-cost.

### **B. DEVELOP SERVICES AND ANALYTICAL CAPABILITY OF THE OECS' PRIVATE SECTOR**

#### **B1. Problem Statement**

The private sector and its accompanying business associations are inadequately prepared to respond to the myriad issues surrounding increased trade and regulatory openness as implemented in the OECS. COTS' focus is not simply to develop the services and analytical capacity of the private sector in the OECS, but to do so in the context of increased trade and competitiveness. The primary stimulus for change, and why the private sector needs to be able to respond with improved services and analytical capacity, is the OECS's openness agenda, which includes:

- Integration with the CSME;

- Improved compliance with WTO; and
- Bilateral trade negotiations with the EU (and potentially a revival of the U.S. FTAA).

The trade policies that come out of this agenda will, for the most part, drive the types of services and analytical capacity to be developed among and demanded by the OECS' private sector.

In each trade treaty, zone, or region, governments are usually represented at the negotiating table. This is the case with the OECS integration with CSME, its improvement of WTO compliance, and bilateral negotiations (the openness agenda of the OECS). USAID and most of the governments of the OECS would like this agenda to occur faster rather than slower. However, if the private sector is not able to articulate its needs to those setting the trade regime or the openness agenda, the benefits of CSME to OECS countries will not be forthcoming. At present, the nascent OECS Business Forum and other public/private-sector dialogue on the openness agenda of OECS are weak. Private-sector associations in the OECS need to develop their capacity and that of their members in order to provide meaningful input to the trade negotiation agenda being pursued by the CRNM. COTS activities will incorporate training on the trade agreements and negotiating skills for private-sector associations to properly represent their views with the CRNM. One result of this intervention will be a private sector better equipped to talk with governments and advocate their positions at COTED.

Therefore, we need to create a dialogue between the private sector and national governments to incorporate private-sector needs as the OECS integrates globally. In addition, to improve the legitimacy of the process, there needs to be a functioning mechanism where the results of trade negotiations and integration are presented to the private sector. In so doing, the region's governments would explain:

- Which private-sector demands were represented and accepted at the trade table;
- Which demands were rejected or modified and why; and
- The intended impact of such policy regime changes — who are the winners and losers?

The imperative is to achieve the openness agenda, and private-sector support is necessary in the face of the inevitable compromises that occur in negotiations.

## **B2. Four-Year Vision**

At the end of four years, COTS expects to see:

- A smooth integration into the CSME to the general satisfaction of the private sector, and that the general openness agenda is legitimized by private-sector understanding and involvement;
- Business associations with the capability to adequately inform and represent their members in meeting international trade requirements;
- Improved understanding between the government and the private sector of their respective needs, such that legitimacy for trade arrangements is enriched;
- A self sustaining chamber(s) of commerce;
- National/regional chamber(s) of commerce in the OECS with the analytical capacity to serve the needs of its/their members;

- A formal business-advocacy sector to articulate policy roadblocks to business development;
- A better-trained workforce resulting from an improved demand environment;
- Self-sustaining business associations;
- An improved current account dominated by private-sector trade;
- Evidence that net exports and investment contribute to economic growth, up from the current –1.9 percent and 0.4 percent respective contributions within the region; and
- An established role for the private sector with the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery.

### **B3. Quarterly Progress Toward Objectives**

In order to foster improved private-sector advocacy, COTS completed a comprehensive assessment of nine private-sector and quasi-governmental organizations in Antigua and Barbuda and 10 in Dominica. Based on the findings and comments from various organizational leaders, COTS began to establish an umbrella business organization for each country. COTS will assist in building capacity in the umbrella organizations so they are better able to analyze economic policy and trade information and advocate with a more unified voice on behalf of a broader range of private-sector members.

Additionally, COTS held workshops in both countries to train the executives and staff of private-sector organizations on how to better interact with and communicate their issues to the media and other stakeholders to elicit a more effective response.

### **B4. Challenges Encountered During the Reporting Period**

A number of planned activities for the quarter were scaled back, placed on hold, or cancelled while COTS awaited firm indications on the scale of budget reductions. Activities that were pursued were largely opportunistic or relatively low-cost.

## **PUBLIC/PRIVATE INTERFACE**

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One of the cornerstones of a well-functioning market economy is transparent communication between the government and the business community. Focused, transparent, and inclusive public/private-sector dialogue is necessary for governments to effectively formulate and implement policy. Sometimes this interface does not work as well as it should. Governments need to know when private-sector input is beneficial and they should be able to frame questions that elicit appropriate feedback. For their part, private-sector organizations need to be sufficiently organized to solicit feedback from members, analyze data, and formulate policy positions and an advocacy agenda. This requires communication mechanisms that are appropriate, well-functioning, and effectively utilized to ensure that information flows between government and the private sector.

Understanding the importance of the interface between the public and private sectors, and the factors that limit its effectiveness at this time, the COTS team — with counterparts in the public and private sectors — aims to support capacity to structure public/private dialogue to produce concrete results and improve the transparency of the process.

The primary purpose of this component is to institutionalize and enhance the quality of public/private-sector interaction so as to create more effective negotiating positions at international trade negotiations and make the local business environment more competitive.

### **A. INSTITUTIONALIZE PUBLIC/PRIVATE-SECTOR INTERACTION**

#### **A1. Problem Statement**

Private-sector and government leaders in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica judge the quality of public/private interaction to be insufficient. There is a need and a desire by both parties to improve the process of public/private dialogue.

For example, under the previous administration in Antigua, many complained that the cabinet made decisions based on insufficient public/private dialogue and any input was largely relationship-based. At the same time, some senior government officials complained of unsuccessful attempts to receive input on policy issues from the private sector. In Dominica, critics see business associations as weak, disorganized, and representing overly parochial interests of just a few members. Abundant literature from the World Bank and other donors notes private-sector complaints that the government decision-making process lacks transparency. Furthermore, many private-sector businesspeople find civil servants generally unresponsive.

New mechanisms have been established to improve public/private dialogue in both countries, particularly at the senior level, through the establishment of committees of top government policymakers and leading businesspeople. The efficacy and sustainability of these mechanisms is unclear, however. For example, in Antigua, the scope of the Economic and Social Council's mandate, its schedule of meetings, and the nature of the output are not well-known — even among local business organizations. In Dominica, it is unclear whether a forum established by the Minister of Tourism, Industry, and Private Sector Relations will be sustainable, has a specific agenda, or can lead to increased private-sector input applied across agency lines. In both

countries, it is important to ensure that existing mechanisms are well-utilized and institutionally able to produce concrete results through effective agenda-setting. The COTS program will focus on evaluating, supporting, and improving existing dialogue mechanisms.

## **A2. Four-Year Vision**

At the end of four years, COTS expects to see:

- A change in the culture of the public and private sectors so that each sector has an improved understanding of and empathy about the other's constraints, objectives, and capacity;
- Functioning groups at various institutional levels, including umbrella private-sector organizations, capable of collecting and synthesizing information across sectors and companies, and technically defined working groups as needed;
- Improvement in each sector's ability to ask the right questions to arrive at solutions and policies that benefit both sectors and civil society at large;
- Labor, other NGOs, and central statistics offices involved in dialogue on economic policy where warranted; and
- Ministries, national bureaus of standards, laboratories, and industry associations better informed and able to apply export-market requirements and quality standards in environmental, health, and safety issues.

## **A3. Quarterly Progress Toward Objectives**

Over the past quarter, the COTS team reviewed existing institutions and mechanisms for interface and canvassed representatives from the public and private sectors for appropriate ways to improve public/private dialogue. One possible mechanism was that the executive branch be required to hold public hearings on all proposed legislation prior to submission to parliament or following its first reading. This suggestion was rejected as straining already-limited human and financial resources and not in keeping with the parliamentary tradition of Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, which is based on the Westminster model. Similarly, mandating rigid guidelines for the issuance of green and white papers was also rejected as inappropriate in light of human and financial resource constraints. Instead, COTS has devised more realistic means of improving public/private-sector interface, including:

- The governments of both countries should provide easy access to the full text of all proposed legislation through a central government Web site, and all proposed legislation should be posted promptly on the Web site following its first reading in parliament. Ideally, this posting should be mandated by law. The official gazette should also be posted on the Web site;
- Dominica's new central government Web site (which COTS will be supporting) should have a discussion forum to facilitate private-sector input on proposed legislation;
- Each country should appoint a full-time person to direct commentary and queries posted on the Web site's discussion forum to the proper government official(s) and ensure timely, appropriate responses;
- The discussion forums should be widely publicized through public-information campaigns among the private sector and citizenry;

- Each Web site should provide a clear explanation, in laymen’s terms, of how laws are developed and passed;
- Standing orders should be drafted by each parliamentary chamber, as is relevant, that transparently explain how to call witnesses to submit statements in writing or in person before select committees. Further, all statements made in person or in writing should be recorded and made available for public review; and
- In Dominica, necessary legal changes should allow televised sessions of Parliament.

In Dominica, COTS met with the Reform Management Unit (RMU) on a broad-based Consultative Working Group (CWG) that would serve as the main mechanism for public/private-sector interface in that country. The minister with responsibility for private-sector relations was not excited by the idea of a CWG, thinking its composition would be too large and serve as an ineffective talk shop. He was, however, willing to meet with each of the major private-sector stakeholder groups on a monthly basis. The president of the Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce was similarly lukewarm to the CWG idea. COTS is continuing to work with the RMU, the minister, and the private sector to find a workable mechanism.

In Antigua and Barbuda, COTS met with the president of the newly formed National Economic and Social Council (NESC), which performs a role similar to that imagined for Dominica’s CWG. He said progress was satisfactorily moving along toward making the NESC operational. Others — including chamber of commerce officials — contradicted this view. COTS will continue to secure consensus at the national levels on the way forward.

#### **A4. Challenges Encountered**

Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica are microstates with a limited pool of qualified civil servants. They are both under IMF mandates to reduce extremely high fiscal deficits by shedding government employees. This makes it extremely difficult to adopt mechanisms to improve public/private-sector interface that have proved successful in other countries. Accordingly, requirements for public hearings or green or white papers about new legislation — even if limited to major legislation — are unrealistic and unsustainable in these two countries.

Limitations on the private sector’s time and policy-analysis skills also contribute to the problem. Within the scope of work to develop private-sector analytical capability to develop and promote a policy agenda with the public sector, COTS is working toward a potential solution to encourage an umbrella private-sector body in each country. This would, at a minimum, establish a more unified approach by the private sector in terms of its interface with government.



## **PUBLIC AWARENESS**

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The COTS Public Awareness component strives to design and implement coordinated public-awareness campaigns that address a range of high-priority trade and competitiveness issues affecting the region and to strengthen our partners' capacity to communicate effectively with their constituents.

Communication with and among the citizenry is a fundamental principle in a well-functioning market economy. Government needs to effectively communicate its programs and policies to the public. The business community needs to explain its rationale for the policies they advocate. Local citizens require mechanisms to provide input and responses to their elected leaders. Therefore, public outreach is essential and the media plays a critical role in this process.

Perception is reality. In many cases, government and regional organizations believe they are providing the right message — but if the audience does not perceive it correctly, or if it creates little resonance, the effort is not successful. Sometimes representatives from government and the private sector are not familiar with the best practices to effectively communicate with the media, and the message gets lost. If some of the information to be communicated is highly technical, the media may not fully understand it, and so the information is unintentionally miscommunicated. In other instances, members of the media may intentionally inject a biased view in forums that call for objective reporting.

Understanding that public outreach and the role of the media are critically important, COTS has designed a series of implementation activities to work with the media, government, private-sector, and civil-society organizations to improve the effectiveness of national dialogue and communication.

### **A. EFFECTIVE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT**

#### **A1. Problem Statement**

The private sector in the OECS is not adequately informed on trade liberalization and its impacts. There is a general perception, shared by the public at large and several business leaders, that more harm than good arises from global economic integration. Public information, though available, has not been effective at changing this mindset. The reasons why the public information has not yet been as effective as expected are broad and varied:

- The private sector lacks the capacity to understand the issues. In some cases, there is simply a view against trade liberalization *per se*;
- Information targeted to the public on trade issues is frequently complex and has often been overly technical, inaccurate, and contradictory;
- The media and public sector's lack of understanding of technical issues related to trade; and
- In some cases, there is personal bias, or vested interests are promoted.

As a result, there is a lack of understanding of the key issues, and, as a consequence, a lack of engagement by the public in national dialogue.

A wide range of organizations disseminate public information on regional and international trade issues. It is important that regional efforts at public outreach on trade issues are well integrated with national efforts to avoid duplication or confusion. Furthermore, national governments must present information to their citizens in a way that is understandable to average people, especially regarding the impact of these changes on their lives.

## **B2. Four-Year Vision**

At the end of four years, the COTS program expects to see:

- Private-sector individuals who understand the impact of trade agreements on their businesses and adapt their business operations accordingly;
- The private sector providing informed input to government in developing trade policy;
- General public understanding of the impact of trade issues on their lives, and dialogue with government through civil-society networks;
- Media understanding of the technical aspects of regional and international trade issues and accurate, unbiased reporting promoting wider debate through a variety of informed opinions;
- A public sector better able to communicate to its constituencies on trade-related issues and soliciting feedback that contributes to the policy-development process; and
- Regional and national organizations coordinating with each other as they implement public-information and outreach activities.

## **B3. Quarterly Progress Toward Objectives**

COTS' activities during the quarter have focused on building capacity within public-sector agencies and private-sector associations via workshops on the mechanics of communicating trade issues to key stakeholders. The day-long workshops, "Public Outreach 101," trained 78 people from Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica. Training for private-sector association representatives focused on how to advocate positions on trade issues to their respective governments and how to package trade issues in terms of monetary impact on individual businesses in order to better enlist their members' participation. Training for public-sector technicians emphasized the need to make trade issues and government decisions accessible to the general public by focusing the impact on people's lives.

COTS also focused on creating a capacity within the media to understand the current issue of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy by convening a one-day dialogue in conjunction with the Antigua Barbuda Media Congress and the Media Workers' Association of Dominica. The meetings included presentations by Salas Hamilton from the CARICOM CSME Unit, who discussed the history of the integration movement and the nuts and bolts of the treaty. Presentations by the local CSME Focal Points outlined where each country stood vis-à-vis their CSME obligations. The dialogue included an interactive group session in which media workers were asked to define their role in public education on CSME. In groups, the media workers reviewed and critiqued television public service announcements on CSME and identified ways to make future announcements more appealing to their intended audience(s). The workshop trained 37 media workers from Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica.

In conjunction with the CSME Focal Points in each country, COTS supported our partners' activities to promote the CARICOM Single Market and Economy to the general public. In Antigua and Barbuda, COTS worked with the local CSME Unit to design a dissemination strategy to inform the public about activities the government was sponsoring during a week-long CSME Awareness outreach program. COTS reviewed press releases, scripts for public service announcements, and other logistical support. COTS also funded Caribbean Vizion's dramatic presentation on CSME. Caribbean Vizion is an organization lobbying for cultural and economic cooperation between Caribbean people and their governments, and their CSME Edu-Culture Tour includes a dramatic presentation called "The Single Market Shop." The production was endorsed by the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development in October 2005 in Guyana.



The cast of Caribbean Vizion performing "The Single Market Shop" in Antigua on May 25, 2006. The performance was part of a public education effort on the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

PHOTO: Johnny Jnobaptiste, Photoshack

**Feedback from school principals on Caribbean Vizion's performances:**

*"I think the dramatization indeed created clarity on the whole issue of the CSME. Such efforts should continue regionally."*

*"Very interesting and appropriate both for the time and the age group. The dramatization was very good, portraying both the advantages and disadvantages of CSME."*

*"The program was very informative, enlightening, and provided critical information to the students in a humorous and easy way for students to grasp the concept of CSME."*

Caribbean Vizion staged four performances between May 25-26, 2006, at the Tim O'Reilly Auditorium in St. John's and a performance at the Holy Trinity school in Barbuda on May 27. More than 450 students attended the performances. In Dominica, Caribbean Vizion staged four performances islandwide between June 13-17, 2006: three at Arawak House in Roseau and one at the Arbeedee Cinema in Portsmouth. 383 students saw the four performances.

Caribbean Vizion's performances assisted our partners' efforts to make CSME understandable to the school-age children of the countries. The dramatic presentation, humor, song, and dance made it easy for children to understand how the CSME might have a positive impact on their lives and addressed many of the common concerns raised over regional integration, including crime, drugs, unemployment, and cultural identity. This was further enhanced by interaction after each performance with cast members from all over CARICOM.

Finally, COTS developed the baseline survey to gauge the public's knowledge of, attitude to and concerns with CSME and other trade issues within Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica. Such objective evaluation, through quantitative research, of the public's attitude toward CSME and other regional trade issues is essential to effectively gauge the needs and accurately measure the impacts of public awareness campaigns. Our partners can use the data to better design public-awareness campaigns that are more effective at reaching the general public.

#### **B4. Challenges Encountered**

The COTS strategy of working through counterpart organizations to implement its activities has been extremely successful, creating a sense of ownership of and responsibility for implementation activities by our counterparts. As a result, organizations and individual participants are strengthened and this supports sustainability after the COTS program is over. However, it has been difficult to enlist key decision makers to attend workshops to learn the very skills that they have identified as necessary to communicate effectively. This means that future COTS activities will be more hands-on and focus on the office level.

COTS also determined that there is generally a low level of understanding of the business opportunities available to the private sector as a result of trade agreements. No one can be expected to effectively communicate about trade issues they do not understand. Working through the Doing Business and Governance components, COTS will create a basic level of understanding of trade issues, while at the same time building capacity to communicate these issues through the Public Awareness component.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the CSME Focal Point's capacity to provide counterpart support is very low. Better organization of Caribbean Vizion's performances would have resulted in much higher attendance and participation at the performances. COTS' future activities with this counterpart will incorporate extra lead time and handholding to ensure greater success.

## RESILIENCE TO NATURAL DISASTERS

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To be part of a productive society, people need access to reliable infrastructure — homes, offices, communications, water, and electricity, among others. A breakdown in any or all of these components has a severe impact on the entire economic and human chain. Though it is not possible to prevent natural disasters, people and businesses can be prepared and put systems in place so that post-disaster life can return to normal as soon as possible.

In some cases, national policy may exist, but it may not be well integrated with either public implementing agencies or civil-society organizations to convert policy into action. In other cases, national policy is not in place, so there is no overarching framework to address disaster preparedness and mitigation. Sometimes, the tools to identify hazard-prone areas are lacking or policy has not kept up with the pace of change. There may be a need to upgrade or improve systems to protect the country's most vulnerable populations. The private sector may not fully understand its role or its capabilities to participate in the risk-reduction process.

COTS' objective for this particular component is to work with national governments, civil society, and private-sector interests to improve their ability to proactively plan and implement actions to reduce the country's vulnerability to natural disasters and to realize greater resilience within the economy when natural disasters occur.

### **B. IMPROVE RISK-REDUCTION FRAMEWORKS**

#### **B1. Problem Statement**

Natural disasters pose a growing threat to the sustainable development of and foreign investment in OECS countries. Natural hazards endanger human safety — especially among the most vulnerable populations, destroy infrastructure, reduce productive capacity, and adversely affect the natural-resource base. In relation to other COTS program activities, any economic gains can be quickly reversed by a disaster event if vulnerability-reduction measures are not better integrated into the fabric of civil society.

Collaboration and coordination among key ministries and agencies is lacking and integration of national policies within implementing agencies is limited. Likewise, governments have struggled to engage the private sector and civil society to promote effective vulnerability-reduction implementation mechanisms, including low-cost mechanisms for the most vulnerable populations. It is the most vulnerable sectors of the population who feel a disproportionate impact from natural disasters. Risk-reduction initiatives compete with other pressing socioeconomic issues for the limited financial, technical, and human resources available at the national level.

#### **B2. Four-Year Vision**

At the end of four years, COTS expects to see:

- Effective legislative and institutional frameworks for natural-hazard risk reduction, in accordance with regional risk-reduction frameworks;

- Sustainable and diversified economic growth that is resilient to the impact of natural hazards;
- Increased community-level awareness of the importance of natural-hazard risk reduction and increased use of low-cost vulnerability-reduction measures;
- Approaches to risk reduction that are fully integrated with other cross-cutting policies and interventions (for example, coastal zone management, climate change, biodiversity, forest management); and
- Shared responsibility for risk reduction, preparedness, response, and recovery between governments, businesses, the donor community, and civil society.

### **B3. PROGRESS MADE DURING THE QUARTER TOWARD ABOVE OBJECTIVES**

During the quarter, COTS implemented activities that will improve the Caribbean region's ability to reduce its natural-disaster risk profile and will result in reduced risk exposure at the country level when a disaster occurs.

#### **Benchmarking Tool**

Work on the Disaster Risk Management Benchmarking Tool commenced in May with the contracting of Trinidad-based Spatial Systems to spearhead the venture. This tool will provide an objective measuring instrument with standardized measures and terminology to identify and quantify a country's vulnerability to natural disasters, and then implement specific measures to reduce risk exposure. To galvanize support for this new tool within the OECS region, COTS is working closely with the OECS Secretariat, who will take the lead on promoting use of the tool throughout the region.

Working within an extremely short timeframe, a first draft of the tool was presented on May 25 at the ProVention Consortium workshop in Barbados. ProVention is a broad-based donor group focused on the impact of natural hazards on countries. Spatial Systems updated the tool based on comments received at the ProVention meeting. Early in the next quarter, the updated tool will be circulated to a broad base of representatives throughout the Caribbean region for comment.

COTS expects the tool to be ready for implementation in early September. COTS will work with Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica to implement the tool and the OECS Secretariat will work with St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The three countries will serve as test cases for the wider Caribbean region. COTS expects the new tool to raise the profile of budget resource allocations for risk-reduction measures at the national level, and it will serve as an important way for donors to assess how funds should be allocated in their program assistance to countries.

#### **Integrated Development Planning Workshop**

COTS worked with the Antigua and Barbuda National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) to sponsor a three-day workshop on Integrated Development Planning. COTS used SAF funds to hire Ecoisle, a private consulting company in Barbados, to work with the disaster office to implement the activity. The workshop focused on developing realistic and locally acceptable procedures for streamlining and integrating the development process. The proposal for the workshop evolved from discussions with local planners who indicated that the disjointed nature of the planning process led to disorderly overall development of the island, requiring corrective

action. Participants came from a broad base of public-sector agencies involved in planning, and although private-sector representatives were invited, they did not attend.

Participants developed several recommendations: the draft National Physical Development Plan urgently needs to be approved by the Minister of Housing, Culture and Social Transformation and used to guide the development process; ministerial and agency functions should be streamlined in the review and approval process; and legislation is needed to provide incentives for risk-reduction activities.

COTS is working with the NODS to form a local advocacy group in Antigua and Barbuda to support adoption of the National Development Plan, changes in the approval process, and modification of the Town and Country Planning Act to incorporate a recommendation that a hazard and vulnerability assessment be included in the development of a national land use policy. The proposed policy will be done concurrently with a similar policy for Dominica.

### **Coastal Vulnerability Assessment in Dominica**

COTS received a preliminary report from Smith Warner International Limited, a Jamaican firm, which supports Dominica's Office of Disaster Management (ODM) by producing a high-resolution coastal hazard map for Roseau and eleven other sites in Dominica. The preliminary reports consist of satellite imagery and hydrographic surveys of the areas being studied. These maps will be incorporated in the multi-hazard map to be prepared by CIPA. COTS will work with Dominica's Land Reform Management Task Force and Reform Management Unit to formulate an effective land-management policy, which will address several of the issues in the Disaster Risk Management Benchmarking Tool as these relate to knowing where hazardous areas are located; ensuring appropriate land-use policies for hazardous areas; and implementing measures to mitigate the impact of existing development in these areas to reduce the impact of a natural disaster on people and infrastructure.

### **Hazard Mapping in Dominica**

Also in conjunction with Dominica's ODM, COTS financed a subcontract with CIPA, a Puerto Rico-based firm that has completed a series of indicative hazard maps for Dominica. Mapped hazards include flood, earthquake, landslide and volcanic locations and storm-surge hazards. The maps have been sent to the ODM for review and comment. As a follow-up, CIPA will conduct a three-day training session on the application of hazard mapping and vulnerability assessments in disaster management, development review, and physical planning for government representatives. This activity will be coordinated by the ODM and will facilitate the incorporation of disaster risk-reduction in the planning and development process by planners. This further supports activities to reduce Dominica's exposure to natural hazards and will be reflected by an improved measure on the benchmarking tool.

## **B4. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED**

The major challenges that COTS encountered were related to the limited absorptive capacity of our host country counterparts due primarily to the scant resources allocated to risk reduction by the national governments. In Dominica, for example, the national disaster office is manned by

one national coordinator and two support staff. The deputy director of Antigua and Barbuda's National Office of Disaster Services is also responsible for overseeing security matters for the country in relation to World Cup Cricket, and the director of the office is retiring from government service. When one staffer travels out of the country, there is no one available to continue work on the ground.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the Development Control Authority has limited capacity in building inspection, lacking both the personnel and the mobility to carry out its mandate in an effective and efficient manner.

While the planning and development community accepts that the development process should be streamlined and that development should proceed along a predictable path, the countries' capacity to immediately utilize outputs is severely limited by lack of trained personnel. It is likely that a number of the outputs will not be used immediately, but will be gradually incorporated into the planning and development process as the countries upgrade their systems and add qualified personnel.

As a result of limited capacity and absence of data, development decisions continue to be made in a vacuum, resulting in developments being approved in environmentally sensitive areas that are highly exposed to natural hazards. Increased land-use pressure and a random development approach exacerbate incompatible land use, with new developments encroaching on high-risk areas. These processes often increase flooding by disrupting existing natural waterways.

To counter the problem of implementation, COTS will work closely with the private sector, NGOs, community-based organizations, and government agencies that can provide direct and indirect support to the disaster and planning offices, and local communities to reduce exposure to natural disasters. In Dominica, COTS will work with the ministries of Agriculture, Local Government and Finance and Planning; the Red Cross; the Dominica Association of Local Authorities; and the National Development Foundation to implement program activities. COTS will also support the development of a technical working group in both Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda to assume responsibility for the implementation of project activities. This group will be chaired by the chief town planner in Dominica and the national disaster coordinator in Antigua and Barbuda. By having other players incorporate aspects of disaster management into their portfolios, COTS expects to reduce the management tasks of the disaster offices as these relate to risk reduction.

## MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS AND SAF MANAGEMENT

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### A. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Management priorities and requirements for the third quarter were driven by two factors: the need to aggressively implement program activities and the need to realign COTS' budget and program priorities to conform with budget reductions and USAID's programmatic objectives.

In May, COTS's management team attended meetings in support of USAID's semiannual portfolio review and Implementing Partners Meeting. As a result of the portfolio review meeting, COTS submitted its second-year work plan to the Mission on June 30. The plan reflects the modified focus of the program (due to budget cuts).

In support of the work plan, COTS worked closely with USAID/W/LAC Biodiversity staff and the regional mission to ensure that COTS activities conform with biodiversity earmarks that comprise some of the monies obligated to the program. If necessary, the program will identify additional intervention areas in order to meet the earmark requirements.

Chemonics is working closely with AID/W/LAC Biodiversity staff to finalize these activities, which will be done in conjunction with overall changes to the program in line with upcoming budget reductions.

COTS is committed to delivering high-quality assistance to regional and national organizations in OECS countries' public and private sectors and has devoted a great deal of effort to managing program activities that support the technical team's requirements.

#### A1. QUARTERLY PROGRESS TOWARD OBJECTIVES

##### A1a. Staffing and Staff Development

**Staffing.** In May, Swinburne Lestrade joined as long-term administrative reform specialist. Mr. Lestrade is based in COTS' Dominica office.

In Antigua, COTS recruited and hired a replacement for the program assistant, who had resigned. The team also recruited and hired a local monitoring and evaluation specialist who began work in June.

As a result of budget cuts and a realignment of USAID priorities, Dr. Maria Bellot completed her long-term assignment as tourism specialist on June 30, 2006.

**Staff development and training.** COTS implemented several training activities for professional and administrative staff. The project accountant traveled to Dominica to train the Dominica office manager on the accounting software system and on policies and procedures. COTS continued to populate the Administrative Management Program (AMP). On a related note, Development InfoStructure, the software company responsible for AMP, is revising and significantly improving the AMP system and expects to release an updated version in late June

or early July. COTS anticipates “going live” after the upgrade, in time for the second-year work-planning session.

### **A1b. Office Administration and Logistical Support**

**IT infrastructure.** COTS’ computer network specialist returned to the Antigua and Dominica offices to finalize configuration of the computer network and allow staff in both offices to access files remotely.

**Disaster Readiness Training.** Following the regional security review in March, the COTS offices in Antigua and Dominica have devoted time during weekly staff meetings to review specific sections of the emergency action and evacuation plan. In addition, the project is making advance preparations for the 2006 hurricane season, including stockpiling food, water, and emergency items, testing the emergency telephone cascade, and identifying options for evacuation and staging.

## **B. STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES FUND MANAGEMENT**

The Strategic Activities Fund (SAF) is a flexible financing mechanism managed within COTS to allow the program to achieve its goals by responding to specific needs and opportunities through targeted interventions: local and regional subcontracts, grants, specific commodity procurements, and even fixed-amount reimbursement agreements. To effectively achieve the overall goals of the COTS program, the SAF was envisioned under this task order from program design. The wide range of the scope of COTS activities, from legislative reform to natural-disaster risk reduction, presents a particular challenge to predetermine partners’ needs at program outset. Another critical consideration is COTS’ aim to provide a balanced approach to development, with a mix of technical assistance provided by long-term staff and short-term consultants, a range of supporting activities that are often best delivered by local and regional subcontractors — including regional universities, and in specific instances, in-kind commodities procurement. The SAF gives COTS the needed flexibility to respond to any and all need to finance activities using the most appropriate contractual mechanism. The COTS team is tapping into SAF to implement activities across the full range of program components.

### **B1. Four-Year Vision**

The SAF is a tool that provides the COTS program the flexibility to rapidly respond to new opportunities while creating capacity in local institutions and leveraging other public- and private-sector resources.

COTS has developed a core set of criteria that is used to evaluate proposed activities to guarantee maximum impact and ensure that all activities financed by the SAF reflect partner needs and program goals. In doing so, COTS will at all times be sensitive to issues such as gender, at-risk and disadvantaged groups, HIV/AIDS considerations, and environmental impacts to ensure that activities meet program objectives in an integrated manner.

## **B2. Quarterly Progress Toward Objectives**

Since the start of program implementation, COTS has awarded subcontracts and vendor agreements totaling over \$700,000 through the SAF. During this quarter, signed subcontracts totaled over \$194,000. Two of these subcontracts were with Caribbean Vizion to present theatrical performances in Antigua and Dominica to educate the public on the CSME. This was done under the Public Awareness component. Signed subcontracts also supported activities in other component areas: Governance, Doing Business, Public/Private Interface, and Resilience to Natural Disasters. Annex 1, attached, illustrates COTS' SAF activities.

In addition to the above activities, COTS also selected a BSP for Dominica. COTS expects that the final contract will be approved by USAID before the end of July. Due to budget reductions, COTS will not have a BSP for Antigua; however, COTS will provide services to Antiguan businesses through our in-house technical team.

The SAF team was also in Dominica in June for an initial financial and analytical review of ICMS, the company selected as the BSP.

## FINANCIAL DATA

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### A. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Chemonics has worked closely with USAID since February to make necessary adjustments in the program budget to reflect the expected \$8 million overall reduction in the life of task order budget. During the quarter COTS prepared the project's work plan for year two which reflects the impact of the budget reduction and the realignment of USAID's priorities. Upon approval of the work plan COTS will work with USAID to complete a budget and program modification to reflect the changes.

### B. FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR QUARTER ENDING JUNE 30, 2006

	<i>1st Quarter Subtotal</i>	<i>2nd Quarter Subtotal</i>	<i>3rd Quarter Subtotal*</i>	<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>Amount Remaining (Budgeted)</b>	<b>Amount Remaining (Obligated)</b>
Workdays Ordered	511,059	725,588	767,915	2,004,562	10,971,224	
ODCs	399,746	694,164	445,410	1,539,320	10,996,285	
G&A	15,990	27,664	17,816	61,470	440,386	
<b>Total</b>	<b>926,795</b>	<b>1,447,416</b>	<b>1,231,141</b>	<b>3,605,352</b>	<b>22,407,895</b>	<b>2,138,933</b>

\* This is a projected subtotal, as the June 2006 data is not yet finalized.

## Annex A

### Public Information and Outreach

#### Upcoming USAID COTS Event

Component	Activity	Date	Proposed Official representation
Risk Reduction	Benchmark Tool Launch	September 2006	Mission Director
Governance	Doing Business Survey 2006 Conference	September 2006	Mission Director

#### Coverage of USAID COTS Events

Component	Activity	Coverage Received
Public Awareness	Public Outreach 101 for private sector association representatives in Antigua and Barbuda	June 13, 2006 The Antigua Sun
Public Awareness	Caribbean Vizion staging their CSME Edu-Culture Tour in Antigua and Barbuda	May 24, 25 and 27, 2006 The Antigua Sun May 30 , 2006 The Daily Observer
Doing Business	VAT study in Dominica	May 26, 2006, The Chronicle
Public Awareness	One Day Dialogue with Media Workers in Dominica on CSME	May 4, 2006, Caribbean Net News
Public Awareness	One Day Dialogue with Media Workers in Antigua and Barbuda on CSME	April 21, 2006 The Antigua Sun and The Daily Observer
Risk Reduction	Integrated Development Planning Workshop in Antigua	April 11, 2006 The Antigua Sun
General	News on the Antigua Partners Working Group	April 6, 2006 The Antigua Sun



## **Annex B**

### **CSME legislation goes to Parliament shortly**

Antigua Sun: Friday April 21 2006

by Patricia Campbell

Media workers have been assured that Antigua & Barbuda's preparations for participation in the Caricom Single Market (CSM) are on target.

Antigua & Barbuda and the rest of the OECS are scheduled to become CSM compliant by 30 June and, during a media workshop focussing on the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME), representatives of the CSME Unit said most of Antigua & Barbuda's outstanding legislation for the CSM will be tabled in the upcoming sitting of parliament.

Research Officer in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy's CSME Unit Barbara Williams told journalists that outstanding legislation will be tabled in approximately two weeks, when Parliament next meets.

Among the laws to be put in place are the Accreditation Act, which will govern the accreditation of skilled workers who desire to move and work within the region, and the Caribbean Community (Movement of Factors) Act, which deals with rights of establishment, to provide services and move capital under the CSME arrangements.

Williams noted that amendments to the 1997 Caribbean Community (Skilled Nationals) Act are also necessary in order to correct discrepancies in some of the definitions contained in the Act, bringing them in line with Caricom agreements.

These amendments will allow the government to activate issuance of skills certification, which it has not been able to do since the law was first enacted and, shortly thereafter, shelved.

"We need to get it done because it puts us at a disadvantage when we ourselves want to move... if we don't have the certificates in place, we will not be able to move and we will not be able to facilitate the movement of other persons within our jurisdiction," Williams explained to the media professionals.

Yesterday's workshop was organised by the Antigua & Barbuda Media Congress and facilitated by Ambassador Joan Underwood, along with Caricom Communications Specialist Salas Hamilton and Williams.

The workshop saw the participation of reporters, journalists, talk show hosts and editors from most of the media groups in Antigua & Barbuda. The media workers were challenged and encouraged to educate themselves about CSME in order to properly fulfil their role of educating the public on the issues related to its introduction.

**Reprinted from Caribbean Net News  
caribbeannetnews.com**

**Dominica media CSME ready**

Thursday, May 4, 2006

by: Malaika Laurent  
Caribbean Net News Dominica Correspondent  
Email: malaika@caribbeannetnews.com

ROSEAU, Dominica: Media Workers in Dominica are now more capable of tackling news stories relating to the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), now having a better understanding of the issues relating to it.

Last week, the Media Workers Association of Dominica (MWAD) together with the Caribbean Open Trade Support (COTS) held a discussion with local media practitioners on the CSME.

Thalia Remy, President of MWAD stressed that the media had been limited in communicating the changes and implications of the CSME to its audiences hence the need for such discussion.

“This workshop will not teach us everything, but it will inspire and encourage us to do some more research and consider the implications, positive and negative to the changes in the way we do things in the Caribbean.

“This workshop is not about getting you to put a positive spin on CSME for our people, it’s about understanding our role as media within it so that we may provoke dialogue, exert pressure where necessary, and bring greater understanding,” Ms Remy explained at the opening of the workshop/

Trade Officer Floyd Capitolin said that the discussion was overdue

“I was convinced that this should have been something we should have done way back then, so at this stage we would not be scrambling at what is being said and what is not being said but rather, we would have had a unified approach into handling the whole matter as it relates to the CSME,” he said following the one-day discussion.

CARICOM’s Communication Specialist Salas Hamilton referred to the workshop as a step in the right direction, urging the association to play its role in the regional integration movement.

“MWAD needed to be a bit more vibrant as an association, so that it can play its part in the regional integration movement and linkages with the Ministry of Trade in the whole aspect of integration.

He urged media workers to be professional and competitive by getting qualified in their trade.

## **Caribbean Vizion brings message of unity**

Antigua Sun: Tuesday May 23 2006

A CSME edu-culture drama presentation forms part of a week of activities being mounted by the CSME Unit in Antigua.

This Thursday and Friday, the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Caribbean open trade support programme, presents as part of its CSME week of public education activities, the dramatic presentation performed by Caribbean Vizion.

The presentation entails dance, drama, singing, music and poetry and will provide facts and general information on CSME and Caribbean integration.

Performances are geared towards students at all levels and are also open to members of the general public.

The performances will be held at the Tim O'Reilly Auditorium on Thursday and Friday at 10 a.m. and then again at 1:30 p.m. On the Saturday the group moves to Barbuda with a similar performance at 10:30 a.m. at Madison Square. All performances are free.

Caribbean Vizion is an organisation lobbying for cultural and economic co-operation between Caribbean people and their governments. The group consists of members from St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Guyana, St. Kitts/Nevis, Dominica, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, and St. Lucia.

## **Caribbean Vizion teaches youth about CSME**

Antigua Sun: Tuesday May 30 2006

Last week, Caribbean Vizion, a group lobbying for co-operation between governments and civil society visited the shores of Antigua & Barbuda to stage a production on CSME.

For two days, the production was open to the public, especially the youth.

A collaborative effort between the Ministry of Trade and Foreign affairs, the Caricom Secretariat and USAID, the production was geared to the youth.

A humorous play, the production caught the attention of the student's who visited over the two-day period, entertaining them while at the same time educating them.

The play addressed issues that have been discussed by many in society such as how CSME will affect nationals, who are eligible for free movement, the issue of the Caricom passport, if it would be easy for criminals to migrate from island to island, how nationals can get their products traded among a host of other issues.

According to CEO of Caribbean Vizion, Chocolate Allen, the group is all about lobbying for cultural and economic co-operation between governments.

"We (Caribbean Vizion) travel from island to island and so far we have visited St. Vincent & the Grenadines, St. Lucia, St.Kitts/Nevis and Guyana putting on our educulture production.

"Educulture is the creative use of the cultural arts that motivates and inspires students to achieve in both their academic and artistic success."

Having gotten involved in the CSME movement in Guyana, the group is focussing on enlightening people around the region on what the Caribbean Single Market is about.

As such, the group doesn't stop educating on stage.

Following the staging of the production, members of the group mingled with the students present and had a question and answer session ensuring that the students understood the message the play was attempting to bring to light.

"I found the play to be quite informative and I learned a lot about CSME," one student said.

## **Trade issues discussed at training session**

Antigua Sun: Tuesday June 13 2006

The Caribbean Open Trade Support, a USAID funded programme, recently engaged representatives of private sector associations in Antigua & Barbuda at a one-day public outreach seminar.

The sessions were held under the theme, “Communicating trade liberalisation and facilitating private sector development in the new economy”.

The main focus was to equip private sector members with the tools to effectively communicate trade issues, such as the CSME, to their constituents and the general public, and to more effectively represent their views to public policy makers.

Participants, according to a press release, left the seminar with a comprehensive overview of methodologies available to enhance their public outreach and overall communication skills.

The consensus from the participants was that the exposure to the range of media tools and communication strategies, highlighted during the day’s event, would enhance the level of communication to members as well as improve their public relations programmes.

A similar session will be conducted later this year, at a time and venue to be announced. The event was coordinated by Crystal Business Solutions.

**On The Rock**



By Joanne C Hillhouse

**Caribbean Vizion Uses Drama & Humour To Relay CSME Information**

“Somebody got shot here today,” the voice-over declared in the attention-grabbing opening of Caribbean Vizion’s Caricom Single Market-themed production. The tableau showed frozen bodies and shocked faces. A rapid rewind – bodies literally convulsing backwards – took the audience, made up of students from Barbuda, Antigua Grammar School, TOR

Memorial, and St Andrews, back to the beginning. The restlessness caused by the late start was quickly forgotten as the students, hooked by the opener, tuned in. What they were tuning in to was a multi-island cast of young people, representing different Caribbean types – from

student to entrepreneur to “gangsta” to artiste to “sketel” to elder to Amerindian – as they explored issues surrounding the Caricom Single Market and Economy. The play, staged Thursday and Friday at the Tim O’Reilly Auditorium, and due for a Saturday staging in Barbuda, was only the

latest activity in a week dedicated to CSME awareness. The play was set in Aunt Sarah’s shop, with its steady stream of patrons getting a healthy dose of her enthusiasm for CSME and being quizzed on their knowledge of it. It has something to

*Continued on page 8*

**From page 5**

Because you’re not confident in your individual ability, some of you are tempted to opt for the easy way out. Cheating. You think it will help you to be successful, but think again. Though it may seem quite an attractive offer, it really isn’t of much help to you. What if you get caught? There goes any chance you had of doing well because that opportunity will be ruined by your dishonesty. So, what? You might’ve gotten off without getting

caught. But who says you’ll never get caught? Even if no one found out about your cheating, your conscience will be quite merciless when it’s ready to strike. Who will you blame when you’re unable to complete a task all because you didn’t take the time to understand what you were taught. There’s no one to blame but yourself.

It is quite normal to be a bit apprehensive when it comes to exams; especially when a lot of things depend on it. However, you shouldn’t take the coward’s

approach and look for the easy way out. Examinations are prepared to test your ability to retain information and test your application of such information. Your main reason for going to school or engaging in educational courses is to develop yourself educationally. Cheating undermines these purposes.

We all want to do well and achieve in all that we do. However, we must go about earning success the right way. There is nothing more rewarding than

looking back at your accomplishments and knowing that it was through your unwavering and sincere efforts that you were able to achieve so much. Success feels good but it makes you feel even better knowing how you got there. So, this year, do the right thing and eliminate the cheating. The fear and uncertainty will come around but it’s up to you to face the music on your own. Remember, if you don’t cheat, then you’ll know where you really stand.

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Antigua

27 05 2006

From page 6

to with a Caribbean market that sells fruits and vegetables," said the child, played by 12-year-old Caribbean actor NED Chocolate (the

aged 10-year-old Mr. Shanto, played by 36-year-old Roger Hinds of Guyana, CSME stood for "the Caribbean Second Major Error," the failed West Indies Federation being the first. Another of his definitions was "Corruption Scheme Mismanagement and Errors".

For man-crazy Mandy, played by 21-year-old Celia Gregoire of Dominica, CSME stood for "the Caribbean has the Sexiest Men on Earth".

To the enterprising Dan Raj, played by 16-year-old Surinamese, Dhilon

The multiple definitions, apart from providing comic relief, also under-coded the reservations and confusion articulated by Caribbean people, and specifically this host of islands, people, and nations, and their coming together of all Caricom nations.

For the artiste, played by 20-year-old St Lucian Sara-Lee Smith and the shopkeeper, Aunt Sarah played by 20-year-old Vincentian Norlan Jackson, both unabashed enthusiasts for CSME, the benefits were obvious; and converts were soon made of other cast members, with the longest holdout being Mr Shanto. He is set in his ways, cynical having lived long enough to remember the shambles that became of Federation and understanding well the



Poonow, CSME meant "Chutney and Soca Music Engage".

Tecnie, an Amerindian, played by 18-year-old Guyanese Diana Ferrara, saw in CSME an environment where all creeds and races would be equal.

Then there was the criminal, played by 23-year-old Keeshan Walwyn of St Kitts, who had a string of irreverent definitions: "Criminal Services Moving" and "Cocaine Services and Marijuana Exportation" among them.

dynamics of global relations. But even he thaws as the production progresses with a symbolic representation of this being his invitation to Aunt Sarah to join him in a game of chess - when he has refused another playing partner since the passing of his previous partner years before. But a shot rings out even as this is taking place, leading to worry that - as the beginning of the play declared "somebody got shot here today".

The audience soon learns, after verifying that everyone is okay, only shan-



en up, that the island-hopping criminal has been apprehended due to cooperation between the Caricom member states. These events suggest that all will not necessarily be perfect under CSME, but that functional cooperation can help provide new solutions to old and emerging problems.

Mr Shanto thaws further, ready to get behind anything that can reduce the crime rate. He is prepared to proceed with caution; and in the end, it is his journey - from extreme rejection to grudging acceptance - that is perhaps best representative of the CSME skeptics.

The production - which included singing and dancing and many popular music cues - was largely expository, the cast being challenged to relay large bits of CSME-related info in

huge mouthfuls. Perhaps in deference to this and the attention-spans of their youthful audience, almost every bit of dialogue was punctuated with exclamation points - ie delivered with high levels of intensity and excitement. It seemed to have the desired effect as the audience reacted positively to the play's humour, and, in the chat sessions afterwards, were able to parrot some of the information put forward.

"Better jobs...free trade...better education..." St Andrews students responded when asked about the benefits of CSME.

Antigua Grammar School students described the play as "interesting..." and "very educational" with one boy adding "normally people parlay the lies of CSME but in the play we



for the opportunity to see what it has to offer."

Of course, the existence of a group like Caribbean Vizion is a working example of one of those positives. With its multi-island cast, it symbolizes the Caribbean solidarity being preached by the powers that be. Chocolate - who unlike one of her older cast mates - readily spoke to the media, said the five-year-old group is committed to education, ie the use of cultural arts to inspire students. With Kurt Allen as its director, Fabienne Allen as general manager, and Linda Allen, rounding out the team, Caribbean Vizion has been making the rounds, with, according to Chocolate, much success.

"It's been really great," she said. "Students are taking all the messages really well; and, having the one on one chats, that's how we know we're really getting to them."

## Observation...

By Don Ward

Antigua's roads are dangerous places to be. Almost daily, we read about accidents, some with tragic consequences.

There are several reasons for this situation: 1 Speeding, 2 Poor condition of vehicles, particularly tyres, 3 Wandering cattle, 4 Poor condition of roads, 5 Lack of drivers' aids - street lighting, white lines, signage.

Items 4 and 5 require major investment but if something could be done about the first three items, then we would be well on our way towards far safer roads.

### Speeding

My own observations are that few mature men, and hardly any women are guilty. Generally, the offenders are a minority of young, inexperienced male drivers and a minority of bus, taxi and

# Road Safety In Antigua, A Personal View

truck and van drivers.

This minority of bus and taxi drivers spends many hours on the road, and develops a sense of over-confidence. Coupled with that, they have a financial interest in getting to a destination quickly in order to pick up the next fare.

Similarly, the minority of truck and van drivers that offend can be financially motivated, but there is also an element of over-confidence. ("I am big. Get out of my way.") Ego is part of the problem.

As for the inexperienced young male, what can you say? Typically, he is just a show-off. He is a "big shot" displaying his macho image, blasting us with his music and driving as though he was on a race-track. How stupid he looks. How sheepish he is when he writes off that flashy car.

### Suggested Solutions: 1 Speed Bumps

Construct speed bumps to force traffic to slow down. Introduce speed bumps at entrances to schools, churches etc, but also on the highways, especially at dangerous bends and junctions.

Some years ago, I pleaded to construct a speed bump at the brow of the hill on Factory Road, known as the "dog farm". I was denied. About a year later, a young man driving back to St John's from Willkies was hit and killed, at that precise spot, by two cars racing in the opposite direction.

### 2 Radar

Speed traps are a wonderful deterrent, but attempts to use radar have not been as successful as they should have been, because the uniformed

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## WIOC REFUNDS CUSTOMERS

The West Indies Oil Company, WIOC, is pleased to advise the General Public that the Company will be paying a full refund to all customers who made the \$150 deposit on the 100lb cylinders.

Customers are requested to take along their receipts and cheques may be collected from Bowl Consumer Gas Services, McDonald Street, Ottos, on the scheduled delivery day for your area as follows.

**Mondays: 15th, 22nd, & 29th May:** All Saints Road, Belle View Heights, Renfrew, Sea View Farm, Lightfoot, Clarkes Hill, Freemansville, Jonas Road, All Saints, Liberta, Falmouth, English Harbour, Picadilly, Swetes, Buckleys, St. Clairs, John Hughes, Bishop, Sawcolts, Herberts, Cobbs Cross.

**Tuesdays: 16th, 23rd, & 30th May:** St. John's, Point, Villa, Fort Road, Yorks, Gambles, Clare Hall, Cassada Gardens, St. Johnson's Village, Sutherlands, Potters, Piggotts, Barnes Hill, New Winthropes, Fitches Creek, Coolidge, Carlisle, Powells, Cedar Valley Gardens, Cedar Valley Springs, Skerritt's Pasture.

**Wednesdays: 17th, 24th & 31st May:** Gray's Farm, Greenbay, Five Islands, Kentish Road, Golden Grove, Nut Grove, Creek side, Bendals, Browne's Avenue, Ottos, Scott's Hill, American Road, Briggins, Cashew Hill, Bathlodge, Martin's Village, Cooks Hill, Union Road.

**Thursdays: 18th & 25th May & 1st June:** Sugar Factory, Parham, Crabbs, Vernons, Pares, Glanvilles, Seatons, Willkies, Long Bay, Lyons, New Field, St. Phillip's, Freetown, Mill Reef, Half Moon Bay, Bethesda, Christian Hill.

**Fridays: 19th & 26 May & 2nd June:** Old Road, Urlings, Johnson's Point, Crab's Hill, Bolans, Jennings, Coolidge, Hodges Bay, Thibou's, Cedar Grove, Crosbies, Blue Waters, Marble Hill, Dickenson Bay, Trade Winds, Paradise View, McKinnons, Friars Hill Road, Cedar Valley, Longford's, Mt. Pleasant.

The West Indies Oil Company takes this opportunity to thank its valued customers for their support, patience and understanding during this volatile period in the industry.