

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A WEBSITE FOR THE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA NATIONAL TRAINING AGENCY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SENSITISATION PROGRAMME FOR THE TVET SECTOR

1. BACKGROUND

1.01 Antigua and Barbuda is a services-based economy located in the Eastern Caribbean with a population of approximately 99,534 persons in 2021^{1/}. Over the period 2015–2019, the country registered an average economic growth rate of 5.0%^{2/}. As a result of the COVID-19^{3/} pandemic, the economy contracted by 17.3% in 2020^{4/}.

1.02 In 2018, unemployment stood at an average of 8.7% representing 9.9% for males and 7.3% for females and reflecting an average decline of 13.7% from the year 2015; a year in which unemployment among males and females reached 12.9% and 14.5%, respectively. In 2018, the labour force participation rate was 72.1%, with the participation rate for males (76.1%) being higher than that for females (68.9%), while in 2015, the labour force participation rate was 70.9%, with male participation registered at 73.9% compared with 68.5% for females^{5/}. Both surveys, therefore, revealed that men were more likely to participate in the labour force and women were more likely to be unemployed. Males also earned a higher income than females and, a higher proportion of men work in the top income brackets while a higher proportion of women were represented in the lower three income brackets. Another issue of concern is youth unemployment which has traditionally been stubbornly high, registering 33.9% in 2015 and 25.7% in 2018. This represents three to four times the rate for adults. Women, young people, and those in the informal sector are likely to be among those who are disproportionately bearing the brunt of the fallout from the pandemic. Following the onset of the pandemic, more than 10,000 additional persons have become unemployed representing 20% of the labour force and pushing the total unemployment rate to approximately 30%^{6/}.

1.03 The country's services sectors^{7/} contributed significantly to the economic base accounting for an average 69.0% of gross domestic product (GDP) over the past ten years, with tourism services alone accounting for about three quarters of services exports. In 2019, the World Travel and Tourism Council estimated the direct contribution of travel and tourism to the economy at 42.7% of GDP, providing 90.7%

^{1/} Statistics Division, Min of Finance and Corporate Governance (2021)

^{2/} <https://www.caribank.org/publications-and-resources/resource-library/economic-reviews/country-economic-review-2019-antigua-and-barbuda>

^{3/} Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus

^{4/} <https://knoema.com/atlas/Antigua-and-Barbuda/Real-GDP-growth>

^{5/} Labour Force Surveys 2015 and 2018, Statistics Division Ministry of Finance and Corporate Governance
<https://statistics.gov.ag/>

^{6/} <https://caribbean.unwomen.org/en/materials/publications/2020/12/antigua-and-barbuda-covid19-macroeconomic-and-human-impact-assessment-data>

^{7/} Services sectors include: - hotels and restaurants; wholesale and retail trade; real estate, renting and business activities; transport, storage and communications; and financial intermediation

of national employment, or around 34,000 jobs^{8/}. However, there is a need to improve the quality of jobs available in order to contribute meaningfully towards reducing poverty on a sustainable basis^{9/}. This is particularly important given that approximately 49% of households are headed by females^{10/}.

1.04 Groups that experience the highest levels of economic exclusion include women heads of households, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). TVET^{11/} includes education, training and skills development covering a wide range of occupational fields and livelihoods. It can contribute to lifelong learning, empower individuals and communities and bolster capacity for employment, entrepreneurship, and decent work. As such, TVET has tremendous potential to promote inclusive economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability. Addressing poverty and vulnerability and building resilient societies in Antigua and Barbuda will require concerted efforts to ensure access to skilled employment and decent work for women and vulnerable groups; TVET is a key channel in this regard.

1.05 The potential of TVET to contribute to equality is affected by harmful norms, beliefs and stereotypes that continue to influence study, career, and other life choices. The result is that TVET programmes are gender-biased^{12/}, affecting access to and participation of girls and women as well as men and boys in specific study and occupational areas. Stereotypes and participation issues sometimes direct women to unpaid, caregiving roles over productive employment and contribute to the perpetuation of gender segmentation in the labour market and gender inequalities in society at large. Similar to women, men at times are directed to areas which may be less suited to their natural skills and abilities.

1.06 Notwithstanding these weaknesses however, TVET programmes have the potential to improve learning, social and economic integration across all socio-economic spheres while lending to the dynamic development of the economy. This is particularly so once individual capabilities are channeled to job-related areas where they are most productive.

1.07 GOAB's overarching national goal is 'to improve the quality of life for all Antiguan and Barbudans and their posterity'. Necessary conditions identified to achieve this goal, are 'adequate skills and capacity to support sustainable development' and 'adequate access to education and lifelong learning for all.' Antigua and Barbuda's TVET is integral to this process, with a strategic focus on enhancing export competitiveness and securing a higher level of development.

1.08 The Government's thrust towards education and training as a conduit to sustainable development is envisioned to be realized in part through key vocational agencies: The Antigua and Barbuda National Training Agency (ABNTA) and the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE). The ABNTA is responsible for the regulation of the TVET system in Antigua and Barbuda while the ABICE is the leading TVET institution in the country. Antigua and Barbuda's TVET framework is aligned with CARICOM's Regional TVET Strategy, which recognizes TVET as 'a critical agent for economic development', through the provision of highly skilled and credentialed individuals, 'who form the core of the competitive workforce.' The Regional TVET Strategy is also designed to support the operationalization

^{8/} <https://wtcc.org/Research/Economic-Impact>

^{9/} <https://www.competecaribbean.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2014-Antigua-and-Barbuda-Private-Sector-Assessment-Report.pdf>

^{10/} https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/39054/S1500700_en.pdf

^{11/} TVET is understood as comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods. (UNESCO-UNEVOC, n.d.)

^{12/} Boosting gender equality in science and technology, a challenge for TVET programmes and careers <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED612225.pdf>

of Article 46 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC)^{13/} and in so doing facilitate free movement and improved access to the regional labour market by Member Countries. This project is directly linked to the Regional Integration efforts as captured under Chapter 3 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas which establishes the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

TVET Sector Issues

1.09 In 2020, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conducted an assessment of the regional TVET framework of 13 BMCs. The assessment of Antigua and Barbuda's TVET framework revealed the following:

- (a) **Absence of a national gender-responsive and inclusive TVET Strategy:** GOAB recently approved the National Policy for TVET (the TVET Policy). However, a strategy to implement this policy is yet to be developed. While priority sectors have been identified, there has been no strategic assessment of: (i) the demand for skills; (ii) the nature of the training required to meet this demand; (iii) the capacity necessary to facilitate the training; and (iv) the level of investment required in the TVET system to make this endeavour sustainable.
- (b) **Absence of an operational qualifications framework:** No system exists to appropriately train, evaluate, verify and certify competencies across disciplines in accordance with the regional best practices as exemplified in the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ) framework, particularly at the post-secondary level. This is due to the lack of an operational qualifications framework^{14/} which is required to regulate the recognition of qualifications within the education system and to establish standards for programme development. Such a framework is typically informed by a demand assessment and is also contingent on an action plan which is a priority area to be addressed.
- (c) **Weak accommodative structures, resources and institutional Capacity:** An independent assessment^{15/} of the resources and structures available within the Antigua and Barbuda TVET system concluded that the physical infrastructure and available equipment necessary to meet National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and CVQ standards were inadequate and prevented the institutions (ABNTA & ABICE) from effectively executing their mandates. The assessment further found that ABNTA was underfunded, having received only 12.5% of its annual subvention over the period 2015–2018. In addition, there are gaps in the instructors' qualifications to effectively deliver TVET training. Approximately 76% of trainers of ABICE were not trained in line with the Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) methodology.

^{13/} Article 46 of the RTC sets out the rights accorded to Member States in regard to the free Movement of Skilled Community Nationals. Under the CVQ arrangement skills qualification and certification are standardized to facilitate equitable access across the Region.

^{14/} An instrument for the classification of qualifications according to an established set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, thereby improving the transparency, access, progression, comparability and quality of qualifications.

^{15/} Dunn-Pierre (2018), Consultancy Services for the Evaluation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Capacity.

- (d) **Inadequate marketing and promotion of the TVET programme:** Due to the low allocation of resources directed to TVET programmes, promotion of the TVET agenda is limited. Budget allocations to the ABICE was approximately 2% of the education budget in 2020 and 2021^{16/}. This effectively reduces the visibility of the framework and hence limits the potential for an understanding of the dynamics of the TVET sector by the public. This could result in a low appreciation of the sector as being a viable area for persons to pursue their livelihood. Currently, neither ABNTA or ABICE have functioning websites, and general information on the services offered or the application process is not immediately available in a user-friendly format. The limited publicity about TVET programmes may also limit awareness of the opportunities present within the CARICOM single market as provided for under Article 46 of the RTC.

Progress To-date

1.10 Despite the gaps in the TVET framework and recognizing the urgent need for skills development, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda has rectified some key deficiencies including:

- (a) The approval of the TVET Policy on May 12, 2021.
- (b) Augmenting the capacity of ABNTA with the recruitment of several key positions including:
- (i) Chief Executive Officer
 - (ii) Finance Administrator
 - (iii) Senior Quality Assurance Officer
 - (iv) Senior Occupational Standards Officer
 - (v) Senior Prior Learning Assessment, Recognition and Apprenticeship^{17/}
- (c) A commitment to carrying out infrastructure upgrades at ABICE to enhance skills development.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.01 The objectives of this consultancy are:

^{16/} Budget Estimates for 2021 https://ab.gov.ag/pdf/budget/2021_Antigua_Estimates.pdf

^{17/} At the time of finalization of this appraisal report recruitment was completed for the Chief Executive Officer and the Senior Occupational Standards Officer. Recruitment for the other positions is well advanced (candidates have been identified) and all positions have been accounted for in GOAB's budgetary process.

- (a) to improve the understanding of the importance of technical and vocational skills development and certification in Antigua and Barbuda;
- (b) to develop a fully functional website for the Antigua and Barbuda National Training Agency to increase the accessibility, visibility, and public awareness of ABNTA and the importance of TVET; and
- (c) to raise the profile of TVET among citizens, employers, civil society and relevant government agencies.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICE

3.01 The Consultant Firm will carry out the activities described hereunder and any other activities necessary to accomplish the stated objectives of the consultancy assignment, whether or not a specific activity is cited in these terms of reference. Throughout the assignment, the Consultant Firm will liaise with the Project Coordinator, which will be appointed to lead and monitor the Project.

3.02 The tasks will include, but not limited to:

Public Awareness Campaign

- (a) Conduct a meeting with representatives of the Client Ministry of Education (MOE)/ABNTA/ABICE to clarify the objectives of the assignment and to identify materials and other resources needed for effective execution of the Project.
- (b) Review all Project documents and other pertinent documents identified by the Client including:
 - (i) TVET Skills Assessment and Labour Market Assessment
 - (ii) The National Policy on TVET
 - (iii) The National Strategy on TVET and Skills Development
- (c) Implement a Public Awareness Campaign
 - (i) Development of the Public Awareness Campaign Strategy and Plan within one month of starting the assignment.
 - (ii) Establishment of the National TVET (NTVET) Brand for Antigua and Barbuda.
 - (iii) Work with the Ministry of Education, ABNTA and ABICE to develop content for the promotion skills development and certification for a variety of media included but not limited to:
 - Digital Media platforms
 - Radio advertisements
 - Television advertisements
 - Print advertisements

- (d) Provide guidance and technical assistance on the implementation of the marketing and communications components of the public awareness campaign, including but not limited to:
- (i) Assist in the design and approval of creative concepts for distribution.
 - (ii) Advise on the appropriate channels and placement for distribution of content.
 - (iii) Assist in the implementation of public awareness events.
 - (iv) Assist in media engagement on the public awareness and sensitization programme.
- (e) Develop and implement an evaluation tool (surveys, interviews) to assess the effectiveness of the public awareness campaign on target groups
- (f) Workshops and *Webinars*:
- (i) Develop and implement novel and impactful ways of delivering workshops and interactive webinars for targeted sectors, including design of presentations and other material to augment delivery.
- (g) Guides:
- (i) Contribute to the development of TVET guides for citizens businesses and civil society in targeted sectors including:
 - Creative design of the guides.
 - Presentation of content in the guides.
 - Development of publishing requirements for the guides.
 - Development of marketing and promotion strategies for the distribution of guides.
- (h) Training and Development:
- (i) Develop and implement training programme for MOE, ABNTA and ABICE staff in the development of public awareness and sensitization strategies, impactful presentations, content development and presentation delivery.

Development of website for ABNTA

- (a) Conduct a meeting with representatives of the Client to include the ABNTA, ABICE and the Ministry of Information Technology to discuss and clarify the scope of work for this aspect of the assignment.
- (b) Understand users' needs and identify corresponding user interface requirements.
- (c) Based on the requirements obtained in section (a), provide website design options in PSD/PDF format which are:
 - (i) Interactive and appealing.
 - (ii) User-friendly.

- (iii) Responsive (Designs should consider Mobile, Tablet and Desktop viewing).
- (d) Implement the approved PSD/PDF designs in a Content Management System (CMS) considering the following:
 - (i) The implemented system must be compatible with Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari and Chrome.
 - (ii) The implemented system must render appropriately on a wide variety of different browsers, optimized for tablet and smartphones, and must be efficient in internet bandwidth use.
 - (iii) The Navigation and viewing should be available on Macs, PCs and mobile devices and should adjust appropriately and automatically.
 - (iv) The Content Management System used should be one of the most common and well used in the industry namely Joomla, Drupal or WordPress.
 - (v) The Content Management System must allow non-technical users to create, remove, edit and publish content without the aid of the consulting firm or web development specialist.
 - (vi) The Content Management System must have Search Engine Optimization (SEO) safe URLs enabled to allow easy indexing by search engines.
 - (vii) All pages of the implemented design should pass the following test:
 - The Google mobile friendly test - <https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>.
 - Web Accessibility test - <https://www.webaccessibility.com>
- (e) Implement a system that should address the following security concerns:
 - (i) Use of a valid Secure Socket Layer (SSL) Certificate.
 - (ii) The site is to be hosted on the Government's web link ab.gov.ag under the direction of the Ministry of Information Technology
 - (iii) Ensure the hosting provider adheres to security best practices which include:
 - Daily Backups.
 - Network monitoring.
 - SSL/TLS and Firewall.
 - DDoS Attack Prevention and Mitigation.
 - Access restriction from external server and systems.
 - Facilitates – SSL, SFTP and has FTP access disabled.
 - Prevents against SQL injection.
 - Enforces Strong password rules.
 - Maintain up-to-date versions of software such as PHP and MySQL versions.

- (f) Uploading content provided.
- (g) Enabling Social Network Integration, links to Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- (h) The hosting account to utilize the Government's email platform to ensure secure email hosting.
- (i) Provide Site Statistics/Management Reports: The solution should provide authorized users with a number of relevant reports, for example user registration, site usage, key interests/topics being discussed within the collaborative spaces and other relevant statistical data.
- (j) Prepare a user manual detailing all components of the website and deliver on-going training for at least two members of staff of ABNTA and the Ministry of Information Technology on content management, routine system maintenance.
- (k) Subscribe the website to an alerting platform which monitors the following and provides immediate alerts on factors which affect uptime:
 - (i) Keyword monitoring.
 - (ii) Site response error codes errors, i.e., 404, 500.
- (l) Provide progress reports on website and training and analytics to inform current and future content strategies.
- (m) Provide technical support via: Trouble Shooting, Technical Assistance, Remote Support, Bug Fixes, periodic automated testing to check for broken hyperlinks etc.
- (n) The website should include at least the following features:
 - (i) Profile of Agency, the services offered, their client's journey.
 - (ii) Storytelling – Develop a narrative that speaks to sustainability and social and economic opportunities associated with the agency.
 - (iii) Submission button/ online form to allow visitors to register for courses etc.
 - (iv) Search engine to search for and locate content based on keywords and key phrases
 - (v) Administration section.
 - (vi) Google analytics integration.
 - (vii) Blog/News section.
 - (viii) Resource center (Gallery, videos, documents, etc.).
 - (ix) Allow project staff to create forms which can be used for collecting information i.e., RFPs, Surveys and Polls.
- (o) Knowledge transfer – provide training to select ABNTA team on management of the website, updating of the advert sections and other website content.
- (p) Assist in writing content for the new ABNTA website, with the ABNTA team.

4. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

4.01 The Consultant firm shall report to the Project Coordinator.

4.02 The Consultant firm shall have the following deliverables:

Public Awareness Campaign

Deliverables	When
Concise Inception Report after the consultations with the Client and the review of background documents listed in 3.02(b) above. The Inception Report will contain the proposed detailed work plan for the assignment for the two-year period.	Within seven days after commencing the assignment.
Final report on the NTVET Brand Concept and the evaluation tool for the public awareness campaign.	Within one month of commencing the assignment.
Progress report on the development and implementation of concepts for content creation outlined in 3.02 (iii)	Within two months of commencing the assignment.
Report detailing the development and implementation of concepts for events such as the workshop and webinars.	Within four months of commencing the assignment.
Execution of Training for members and staff of the ABNTA, ABICE and MOE in public awareness and sensitization programmes.	Within six months of commencing the assignment.
2 nd Progress report on the development and implementation of concepts for content creation outlined in 3.02 (iii) and implementation of the evaluation tool for the public awareness campaign.	Within seven months of commencing the assignment.
Draft Report on the development, implementation and performance of the public awareness campaign.	Within eight months of commencing the assignment.
Final Report on the implementation and performance of the public awareness campaign. The Report will include recommendations for sustained promotions based on campaign effected.	Within nine months of receipt of the client's comments on the Draft Report.

Development of website for ABNTA

Deliverables	When
Inception Report containing a work plan and indicating the consulting firm's understanding of the assignment.	Within one month after the commencement of assignment.
Pre-conceptualisation of the website and social media tools validated.	Within one month after commencement of assignment.
Validated elaborated content and the mock-up with the web design and social media design.	Within one month after commencement of assignment.
Registered domain.	Within one month after commencement of assignment.
Live and interactive website launched.	Within two months after commencement of assignment.
Report on the website site design detailing the assignment's successes, challenges, and recommendations for improvement. This report should contain a user manual component outlining operations of the website which may consist, inter alia procedures for: - content upload, system maintenance and administration and quality control.	Within three months after commencement of the assignment.
Source code handover: Full source code including all developed libraries handed over to ABNTA and the Ministry of Information Technology.	Within three months after commencement of the assignment.

5. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

5.01 The Consultant firm should possess:

Key Expert 1: Communications Specialist

- (a) A minimum of a master's degree or equivalent in Mass Communication, Media Communication, Journalism and or other related fields.
- (b) At least seven years' experience with implementing public awareness campaigns.
- (c) Practical knowledge of mass communication strategies.
- (d) At least seven (7) years proven experience in the field of designing and executing market research and focus groups, event management, marketing, media relations, public relations, digital media, advertising, web development, outdoors and digital campaigns.
- (e) Demonstrated experience in organizing events that resulted in interaction with various target groups such as public officials and servants, citizens, etc. over the last four (4) years.
- (f) Experience in managing campaigns involving various social media channels over the last four (4) years.
- (g) Demonstrated experience with pre-production, production and post-production of videos

evidenced by at least four (4) years' experience.

- (h) Experience in implementing campaigns related to national development, in the CARIFORUM region, evidenced by at least seven (7) years' experience.
- (i) Excellent presentation and communication (oral and written) skills.

Key Expert 2: Web Developer/Visual Designer/Programmer

- (a) A minimum qualification of a master's degree or equivalent in Computer Development, Software Development, Information Technology and or other relevant fields.
- (b) At least seven (7) years of practical experience in the field of website design, programming, application development, and information technology.
- (c) Knowledge of industry-standard website design tools.
- (d) Demonstrate the ability to create innovative and visually appealing designs.
- (e) Excellent presentation and communication (oral and written) skills.
- (f) Ability to understand users' needs and to customize services and products accordingly, in order to provide user-friendly solutions that meet user requirements.
- (g) Demonstrated experience in working on similar assignments within CARIFORUM.

5.02 Other key persons on the Team should possess:

Key Expert 3: Digital Media Content Strategist

- (a) A minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent in Public Relations, Communication or equivalent.
- (b) Four years of experience in creating content strategy that includes visual storytelling, video and multimedia design.
- (c) Four years of experience in designing, managing and monitoring digital media campaigns.
- (d) Excellent presentation and communication (oral and written) skills.
- (e) Experience in working on similar assignments within CARIFORUM.

6. SUPERVISION OF THE CONSULTANT FIRM

6.01 The ONAO will facilitate the work of the consultant firm and will make available all studies, reports, and data relevant to the Project. The Project Coordinator will be assigned to be the liaison between the ONAO and the consultant firm.

6.02 It is estimated that this consultancy will require 105 person-days over a period of (twelve) 12 months.