



Ministry of Labour Technological Development and Environment

**RIAL - Bilateral Cooperation activity on National Employment Services
Suriname together with Trinidad & Tobago**

Final report

October 16 to 18,

Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago

1. Preface

In the context of the Sixth Call for proposals for bilateral cooperation under RIAL, the Ministry of Labour Technological Development and Environment of Suriname submitted a proposal to the forum.

The proposal consisted of a request for cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Small and Medium Enterprise Development in the form of a study tour to the last mentioned ministry to gain knowledge and experience the successful achievements of the MOL of Trinidad and Tobago within the framework of the national employment services.

After the proposal was selected, both countries, with support of the OAS/RIAL started their preparations to make this cooperative activity successful. The preparatory phase was in order to set the dates and program for this visit. The proposed program was fulfilled in the proposed period of October 16th -October 18th 2013.

Three officers of the Ministry of Labour, Technological Development and Environment travelled to Trinidad and Tobago for the above mentioned study visit. The Specific objectives for this visit were:

- Experience the National Employment Service system of Trinidad and Tobago
- Experience specific programs which are used to promote use of the Public Employment Service
- Field visit to the different National Employment Service offices

In this report, the details of the visit will be presented in the following order:

1. Brief description of the activity
2. Main results and findings
3. Next steps
4. Evaluation of the activity and recommendations
5. Additional comments from the providing institution

The delegation existed of the following officers from Suriname:

- 1) Mrs. Claudette Hiwat, Deputy Director Labour Market Affairs
- 2) Mrs. Joan Rellum, Head Public Employment Services
- 3) Mrs. Maureen Arrias- Bendanon, acting chief Labour Exchange division

2. The Study visit

During the period, October 16th-October 18th, the delegation of Suriname experienced different aspects of the work of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (MOLSMED), which are described below.

On the first day, Wednesday October, 16th the delegation was welcomed by Mrs. Marcia Rampersad, head of the International Affairs division and the staff of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (MOLSMED). During this session a general overview about the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (MOLSMED) of Trinidad and Tobago and the ministry of Labour, Technological Development and Environment of Suriname was shared between the staff of the MOLSMED and the delegation from Suriname. The different divisions of the MOLSMED and the labour policies that are in place in order to give service to jobseekers and workers were presented. Some of these are:

1. The National Employment Service of Trinidad and Tobago (NES)
2. The Overseas employment programme with Canada regarding agriculture
3. Occupational Safety and Health authority & Agency

Since experiencing the work of the NES was the main purpose of the visit of Suriname's delegation, during the day, an in depth view was given about the different activities of the NES, which are:

- a. Career guidance
- b. On line registration of job vacancies
- c. On-line registration of jobseekers
- d. Employment counseling
- e. Job interviews and referrals
- f. Recruitment of workers for overseas employment

It is also worth stating that the MOLSMED has 7 NES offices in Trinidad and Tobago.

With regard to the job placement activities, the staff of the MOLSMED demonstrated the online job placement and vacancy registration database which is currently used by the ministry and is accessible for jobseekers and employers.

The ministry of Labour, Technological Development and Environment of Suriname gave a presentation about their Public Employment Service's activities and special programs:

1. Deprived area visits for registration and placement
2. Different types of training facilities for jobseekers

On the second day, the delegation was guided through the NES office in Port of Spain. In the well utilized office of the NES the delegation had the opportunity to observe an online registration, as well as a job intake/employment counseling conversation between a NES clerk and a jobseeker.

Later that same day, an overview of the Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agriculture Programme with Canada was given. The implementation of this overseas employment program comes out of an MOU between Canada and Trinidad and Tobago since 1966. Yearly an average number of 800 workers travel to Canada to work on different type of farms for 8-10 months. The recruitment and selection of the persons interested in the program is done by the Ministry of Labour, farm program unit. The office in Canada, Canada Labour Liaison Branch is responsible for the contact with the farmers who wish to hire workers.

This program has the following benefits:

1. Increase the standards of living of the workers and their families
2. Contribution to the economy of Trinidad
3. Pension for the workers

The third and last day, Friday, October 18th the schedule was to observe and participate in the World of Work seminar in San Fernando

This seminar is held once a month by every office of the NES. The main goal is to prepare jobseekers for the labour market by giving them the following training/tools:

1. How to make career choices, based on your education background and level
2. How to write cover letters and resume's

3. How to prepare for a job interview

3. Main results and findings

Important lessons learned

1. A lot of similarities regarding jobseekers as well as employers have been observed during the study visit.
2. The effectiveness of an on-line registration system which drops the pressure of work on the staff of the NES. Jobseekers do their registrations by them self.
3. Matching demand and supply of labour is more efficient, because jobseekers can apply for a vacancy since they have access to the internet. Employers can view resumes and contact the client without interference of the NES.
4. Jobseekers are benefitting from the world of work seminars
5. There are 7 NES offices, so the service to the public is within reach of most of those who are in need of help

4. Useful lessons for Suriname

1. The benefits of an automated online database are for the staff of the office, as well as the clients (jobseekers and employers)
2. The world of work seminar supply jobseekers with useful tools and increases their chances to enter the labour market

5. Next steps

The Ministry of Labour of Suriname is now in the process of upgrading their automated database, in order to give clients the opportunity to have access to the data and training the jobseekers to be pro-active in finding a job.

For the Surinamese Labour ministry it is important to structuralize the training sessions for their jobseekers, in the form of the world of work seminar which also have to be held on a regular base.

6. Evaluation of the activity and recommendations

The Ministry of Labour of Suriname had the following expectations:

- a. What type of activities and policies does the NES implement to be successful in their service towards their clients?
- b. What are the different features of the online database and how does it affect the clients?
- c. What challenges are faced while providing service to employers as well as to jobseekers?

In the end it can be stated that:

1. All the above mentioned expectations were fully met by the gained experience.
2. In depth interactive sessions were held between the two countries about their challenges in fulfilling their job and the characteristics of the current labour markets.
3. Great exchange of views resulted in knowledge sharing and gaining.