GLOBAL ON THE JOB TRAINING

The Board is asked to review and approve the paper entitled: Global On The Job Training.
CARDI GLOBAL ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING PROGRAMME

Contributing to the Regional Agriculture Human Resource Development Goals

Draft Policy Brief
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1.0 Introduction
The paper sets out the policy framework for the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute’s (CARDI) Global On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programme. A regional initiative to contribute to the development of the human resource capacity of the Caribbean and in turn to the Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy for the agriculture sector. The paper is presented for the consideration and approval of the Board of Directors.

1.1 Background
In spite of the mixed reviews on the performance of the agriculture sector over the years, the sector is still cited as a major economic driver, directly and indirectly through its linkages. The sector has the potential to positively impact domestic food production, food security, employment, dependence on food imports and overall sustainable development of the region.

As the region grapples with its development within the external pressures of globalization, volatile commodity prices, and increasing weather/climate risks, the need to adopt a regional integrated approach to the development of the agriculture sector, through harmonised policies becomes more imminent. Among the policies for sectoral development identified is one that addresses agriculture. Together with other supportive measures, the interventions attempt to address the internal constraints on the sector including HRD, in particular the lack of skilled and quality human resource. It is proposed that on a continual basis CARICOM will adopt effective measures for the development of human resources to satisfy the requirements for skilled agricultural personnel at all levels. It is imperative that this skills gap be addressed, more so because agriculture markets have become more competitive, and new skill sets are required in order to advance agricultural innovation to drive the development of the sector.

According to a World Bank Study 2005, human capital development plays a critical role in a country’s economic growth and development process through achieving high rates of output growth, reducing unemployment, poverty and enhancing social development. For Small Island Developing States (SIDS), like those in the Caribbean, emphasis must be placed on HRD in the national development strategy formulation.

HRD refers to the enhancement of the skills, knowledge and competencies of the population so that the workforce can contribute meaningfully to the national development process. In this regard, employers are able to obtain the quality and quantity of labour resources they need, while individuals can supply better quality labour resources and receive higher incomes. HRD initiatives must therefore incorporate the dynamics of the labour market.

Miller identified common patterns of human resource development in the region including:

- Long history of priority given to early childhood and primary education.
- Substantial expansion of secondary education in the last 40 years.
- Well established tradition of qualified and skilled Caribbean people who move within the Caribbean as well as obtain opportunities in the international labour market.

Alternatively, he also noted:
- Limited provision for tertiary education

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1 CARICOM Secretariat 2001. Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas Establishing the Caribbean Community including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy
2 Article 63- Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas;
3 Identified as one of the tens constraints in the Jagdeo Initiative
• Limited provision for broad-based technical training resulting in a great shortage of skilled persons in a wide variety of fields
• Limited tradition among employers in offering training to their workers
• Tradition of poaching by the private sector.
• Relatively large segment of young literate people not attracted to jobs involving manual labour but not possessing the competencies to be employed in available skilled jobs.

Further, at the Tropical Agricultural Congress 2008\(^5\), human resource development was identified as a key issue/constraint affecting agriculture in the region. There is a lack of a critical mass of scientists in regional agricultural research and development institutions in the Caribbean and limited human capacity to support research and development initiatives. The absence of opportunities for University of the West Indies’ (UWI) agriculture graduates in the Agriculture sector in general, and in particular, Research and Development (R&D), has resulted in the movement of graduates into other sectors or migration out of the region.

Both at the national and regional levels there are ongoing efforts to address the human resource development issues of the region. These have included the introduction of a number of labour market policies and programmes including national training programmes and a regional Human Resource Strategy and Action Plan 2030.\(^6\) Downes (2007)\(^7\) recommended six labour market policy interventions including restructuring and refocusing the system of education and training. It was also suggested that there is need for a much greater interface with employers who can support apprenticeship programmes, work experience-study programmes and related programmes.

Given the challenges that attend the development of the required human capital in the region, there are opportunities for CARDI to contribute to the region’s human resource development goals. In this regard, the incorporation of the region’s Youth Development Strategy as enunciated in the Caribbean Community Agriculture Policy\(^8\) as well as the CARICOM Human Resource Policy which was recently approved by Heads of State is indicated. This can be facilitated through the establishment of a Young Professionals’ Development Programme.

CARDI, the region’s research and development agriculture institution with over 40 years’ experience, considerable in-house expertise, professional networks and strategic alliances is located in 14 CARICOM countries and serves a combined population of over 6.5 million. It is well positioned to be at the forefront and deliver on any regional Professional Development initiative in the agriculture sector.

### 1.2 CARDI’s HRD Initiative

Human resource development and strengthening of the human resource function are cited as focal areas of development in CARDI’s current 5-year Strategic Plan\(^9\) 2018-2022. CARDI recognises that some of its required skills are unique and not readily available on the labour market. Filling these

\(^{5}\) Report on the workshop held at the “Tropical Agricultural Congress”, Hyatt–Regency Hotel, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. December 4-5, 2008. Prepared by Professor P. Umaharan, Deputy Dean, Enterprise Development and Outreach, Faculty of Science and Agriculture, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. [https://sta.uwi.edu/newspics/2009/ForginganewparadigmforCaribbeanAgriculture.pdf](https://sta.uwi.edu/newspics/2009/ForginganewparadigmforCaribbeanAgriculture.pdf)

\(^{6}\) CARICOM Secretariat


\(^{8}\) Pillar 4 – Rural Modernization And Youth Programmes and Pillar 5 A modern agricultural knowledge and information system – Caribbean Community Agricultural Programme - pp 18

gaps has often required special initiatives and in the past, the institute identified a number of strategies to enlarge its catchment of young professionals, including attachments to universities and other specialized institutions.

Agriculture training is facilitated through a number of institutions in the Caribbean, including universities, technical colleges, national and regional organizations. Annually, young persons graduate from these institutions with certificates in agriculture, most of whom are absorbed by state agencies. Both management and employees at CARDI, recognize and acknowledge the skills gap and lack of practical work experience upon completion of an academic programme. Clearly, this is not only a challenge for CARDI but for many CARICOM countries and agriculture agencies.

Over the years, CARDI has been involved in informal internship arrangements with the second and third year students of tertiary institutions as well as graduates of the University of the West Indies which has yielded some young professionals who are now positioned to assist CARDI in delivering its mandate as well as contribute to the development of agriculture in the region.

CARDI has also hosted interns from international universities including the University of Reading, University of Florida as well as universities in France and the Netherlands and has been building partnerships with these tertiary institutions.

In the past, CARDI (Headquarters) participated in the national On-The-Job Trainee programmes. A review of the programme within CARDI revealed that the intervention is beneficial to both CARDI and the trainees. On completion of the internship, CARDI retained some of the young professionals who demonstrated that they acquired the relevant competencies in specialised areas and deployed them in key positions in the organisation. The period also allowed for an informal assessment by both parties to determine professional alignment.

The past trainees identified: the exposure in the field, attendance at high level meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences at a regional and international level, networking, working under the close supervision and guidance of experts as very beneficial as it complemented their formal training. It was stated that these experiences were invaluable. The testimonials of three past OJT's are included. These young professionals endorsed the significant role the programme played in their career/professional development.

CARDI embraces the concept as part of its youth development initiatives. Accordingly, CARDI continues to forge relationships with tertiary institutions, recently partnering with the University of Trinidad and Tobago and the University of Belize. CARDI also wishes to attract Caribbean students in international universities and technical institutions to participate in this programme. There are further attempts to engage the youths of the region through the development of the “Apps Hub,” bringing cutting edge technology to agriculture through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in agricultural development.

The OJT Programme therefore represents a platform for career development and a catchment for young talented professionals readily available to CARDI as well as national and regional engagements in both private and public sector agencies.

2.0 HRD Policy Intervention
In spite of the regional and national human resource development interventions over the years, there remains a dearth of graduates who are ‘Regionally Road Ready’ and/or prepared for regional assignments in agricultural Research and Development (R&D). The demands of building a competitive, regional agriculture sector requires a robust human resource base. In this regard, a CARDI led OJT/ Professional Development Model is highly recommended to address human capital needs for the agriculture sector, as well as contribute to its succession planning. CARDI envisions a structured programme to meet agreed
targets and deliver on the regional and institutional mandates. An intervention which addresses the language gap in the Caribbean, recognising the importance of training in the languages of the region including Dutch, French, Portuguese and Spanish is now necessary.

2.1 CARDI Global: OJT Training Programme
CARDI Global is a regional OJT Programme which will provide a sustained cadre of professionals who can seamlessly enter a workforce that seeks region-ready young expertise. The programme will be implemented across CARDI’s 14 offices where at least two trainees will be employed for the duration of 24 months. During this period, the trainees will be exposed to all the critical and related areas of work which will assist in their career development as young professionals in the agriculture sector in the Caribbean region. In addition they will be exposed to national, regional and international policies and multinational agreements including climate change, environmental, labour, gender and youth agreements. The placement of the trainee will be linked to programmes, projects and priority areas enunciated in CARDI’s Strategic Plan as well as aligned to sector plans at the national and regional levels.

A systematic approach to the development of the programme will be adopted with assessment, design and evaluation phases. Examples abound of professional development programmes which target young professionals in agriculture and other sectors including IICA, FAO, UN, the World Bank and the local private sectors. CARDI can draw on lessons learnt from its past experiences as well as incorporate best practices from elsewhere. Careful consideration must therefore be paid to the assessment phase (data gathering) which will inform the design and structure of the programme.

Oversight of the OJT intervention shall be with a consortium of experts and representatives from various regional agencies including but not limited to: representatives from the Agriculture, Education and Labour sectors, Caribbean Examination Council, Caribbean Technical Vocational Institutes, Tertiary Institutions and the private sector.

This group together with the Thematic Group for Research and Human Resource Development and CARDI’s executive can advise on the human resource needs of the region and the details of the OJT intervention. Notwithstanding, the programme shall comprise the following core areas:

- Language Training
- Research, Development and Management
- Agricultural Innovation Systems
- Project Cycle Management
- Results Based Management
- International and Multinational Agreements

A Competency Assurance Management System will be incorporated into the design of the programme. This quality assurance framework will ensure that the workforce is trained and assessed as competent in a number of targeted areas including regional and multinational agreements, health and safety and labour.

The operationalization of CARDI Global OJT will be managed from CARDI Headquarters. It is proposed that a Human Resource Training and Development Coordinator be employed to work with the Manager-Human Resources with responsibility for the successful implementation and management of the OJT programme.

CARDI GLOBAL: OJT PROGRAMME

- Appoint advisory Committee
- Hire Project Coordinator
- Liaise with stakeholders/partners including participating agencies
- Design and develop structure of OJT training programme including: systems, structures, procedures and processes, recruitment process, criteria for participation and databases
- Formal launch of CARDI Global On-the-Job Training Programme
- Promote programme
- Implement programme in the CARDI Offices throughout the Region (Recruit Trainees)
- Design and implement Monitoring and Evaluation systems for the programme
- Graduation at end of cycle
Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the programme is also critical as it will help to identify any issues or challenges in the implementation and operation at an early stage. This will ensure that any necessary management interventions will be timely.

2.2 Beneficiaries
Upon completion of training, the programme will graduate 28 highly trained young professionals who can be deployed throughout the region equipped to tackle assignments in the agriculture sector at a national, regional and/or international level. This project has the potential to significantly contribute to the medium and long term development of CARDI (through succession planning) and to the accelerated development of the region’s agriculture sector.

2.3 Cost and Financing the OJT Programme
The total cost of CARDI Global OJT is estimated at US $ 386,000 per year. The cost includes trainee stipends, compensation for the Project Coordinator, materials and supplies and at least one assignment in a country where the trainee is not posted. Refer to Table below.

The financing of this project will be sourced through resource mobilization efforts and engaging regional and international stakeholders including CARICOM member countries and other donors.

### TABLE 1: ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST OF CARDI OJT PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Item</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Unit Cost US $</th>
<th>Total Cost US $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>18000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipends for Trainees</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>336000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials/Supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of Country Assignment</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>28000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>386,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | EC $ | 1,042,200 |

3.0 Conclusion
The agriculture sector has been identified as one of the five economic drivers for the CARICOM region.

The growth and development of this sector is dependent on the quality of its human resource capacity. CARDI recognises this and given its mandate, experience, long history and geographic spread is capable and willing to take the lead in a Global On-The-Job Training/ Young Professional Development intervention in the sector. Such an intervention will contribute to the transformation of the agriculture sector in the region. It will also provide CARDI and the region as a whole with a much needed cadre of young professionals to drive
the development of the agriculture sector in the Caribbean.

The Board of Directors is therefore asked to consider and approve the CARDI Global On-The Job Training Programme as outlined above.

TESTIMONIALS – OJTS AND THE CARDI EXPERIENCE

KISTIAN FLEMMING - Climate Change Specialist and Country Representative, St. Kitts

Upon my completion of a Bachelor’s of Science Degree at the University of the West Indies, I became quite keen on acquiring work experience before the pursuit of advance level education. I thought that this would afford me the opportunity to both develop professionally and to help me define a career path. In the highly competitive world of work with no shortage of graduates, the On-the-Job-Training (OJT) of Trinidad and Tobago granted me this opportunity.

I began my training in 2012 at the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI). I entered into an environment that immediately called upon the theoretical knowledge I acquired at University to apply it to solving a ‘real world problem’. My GIS background helped to identify the suitable location and positioning to install an Automatic Weather Station at the Sugarcane Feeds Centre Experiment Station. During my time at CARDI, the nexus between agriculture, areas of security (food, income, nutrition) and climate change became most interesting to me. With the support of my seniors, I became confident that I would later pursue a postgraduate degree in the field of climate change.

Between 2016 and 2017 I completed and graduated from the University of East Anglia with a Masters of Science in Climate Change and International Development with a specialisation in water security for agriculture. Today I function in the position of Climate Change Development Specialist and CARDI Representative for St. Kitts and Nevis. I aim to particularly target water resources management in the agricultural sector to reduce climate risk, enhance incomes and address national development concerns.

This journey began with the support and encouragement of the On the Job training programme by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

HEIDI JACK - Livestock Officer and PhD Candidate

I am Heidi Jack, a livestock officer currently pursuing doctoral studies at Massey University, New Zealand which is a major component of my work programme at the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI). This journey as a Livestock Officer was sparked through my engaging in the On Job Training (OJT) programme at CARDI.

I’ve had a number of on the job training experiences in a few organisations before I got into the programme at CARDI in February 2010. The experience I had at the CARDI, in comparison to that of the other organisations was one that was rich, directional, insightful and allowed me to engage a track of development that was certainly cut out for me. My immersion in the programme resulted in the establishment of a repertoire of skills including executing basic administration duties such as creating and managing filing systems, data entry, events management and related official communication tasks to the more technical responsibilities including project management, report writing; conducting research and reviews on specific topics related to Caribbean agriculture; and networking with key intra and extra regional stakeholders across different regional agriculture gatherings. All these were and still are fundamental for my operations even today!

At CARDI there is a strong appreciation for youth and youth development which I can certainly attest to. It’s an enabling environment of support and mentorship that has allowed me to expand as a young professional and I would recommend this as an experience to be had by any young professional interested in becoming a resource to the development of Caribbean Agriculture.
As a recipient of the On-The-Job Training (OJT) Programme, it has allowed for my development such that without it, it is hardly likely that I would currently be where I am today. I am currently the Project Management Specialist for the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) however, what led to this position was my initial placement at CARDI under the OJT Programme. As a means of gaining experience and exposure to the agricultural sector and in relation to my area of study which was Agribusiness and Geography, I was placed at CARDI as an Information Clerk working in the library. As time passed, I was exposed to the research arm of CARDI by way of handling requests for information. These requests came from both internal and external persons and this interaction widened my scope and appreciation of the agricultural sector. I also had the opportunity to network with scientists who made such requests as well as stakeholders in the agriculture sector from along the value chain.

As a result of a deliberate move by CARDI based on my qualifications, I was given a different role when transferred to the Resource Mobilization Unit, facilitating new growth and development. I was entrusted with more responsibility having now direct interactions with management and scientists not only from CARDI but other regional and national institutions. I was able to participate in meetings where decisions which impacted stakeholder lives were being made. This included travel duty to such events as the Caribbean Week of Agriculture held regionally and project activities conducted in different Caribbean countries. Additionally, core skills in concept note development, budget preparation, proposal development amongst many others were honed and ultimately led to my acceptance as a member of staff when my OJT tenure came to an end and eventual promotion to the position I currently hold.

I can say unequivocally, that the OJT Programme was what paved the way for me in forging a career in the agricultural sector, going further than simply providing experience for a job, it charted a pathway for upward mobility within an organization but equipping me with skills, knowledge, experience and exposure that I could take with me to other institutions within the same sector or another sector entirely. The OJT Programme is also what you make of it, necessitating that one grasp at the opportunities afforded. I regard the OJT Programme as the gateway and platform to being so much more, and that is what I am, so much more from where I once started.