

PROJECT STATUS REPORT

JULY 2014 - DECEMBER 2014

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT NAME: Improving performance of SMEs through the application of ICT

Project number: TT-M1009 - Operation Number: ATN/ME-12200-TT

Result: Increased awareness, use and leverage of ICT by 80 SMEs in the food and beverage and in the printing and packaging sectors in Trinidad and Tobago

Country Administrator
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Beneficiary Country
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Group
SME - Small and Medium Enterprise
Development

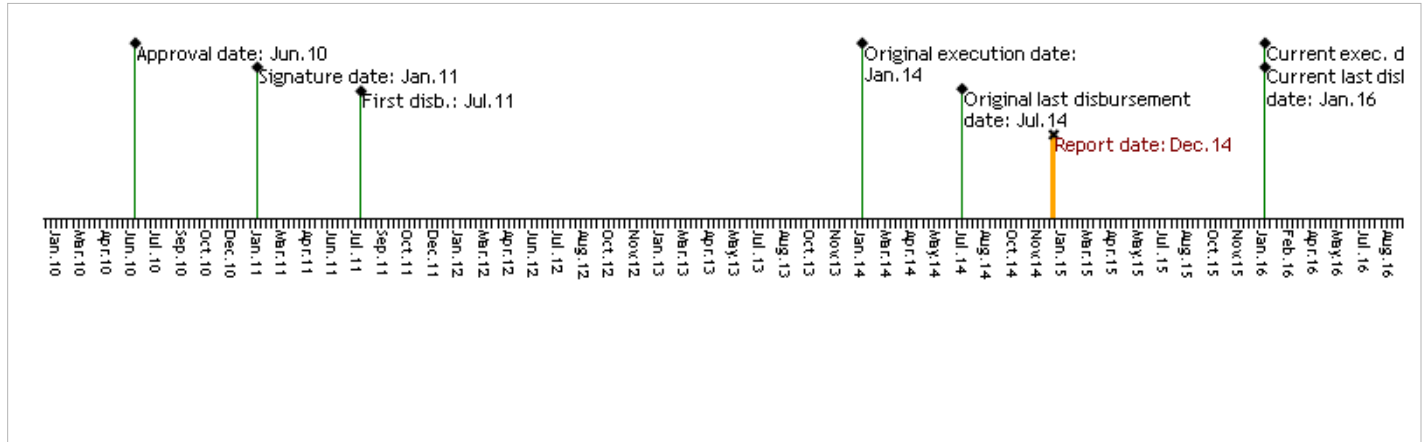
Subgroup
TECH - Technology for Business
Development

Executing agency: Caribbean Industrial Research Institute

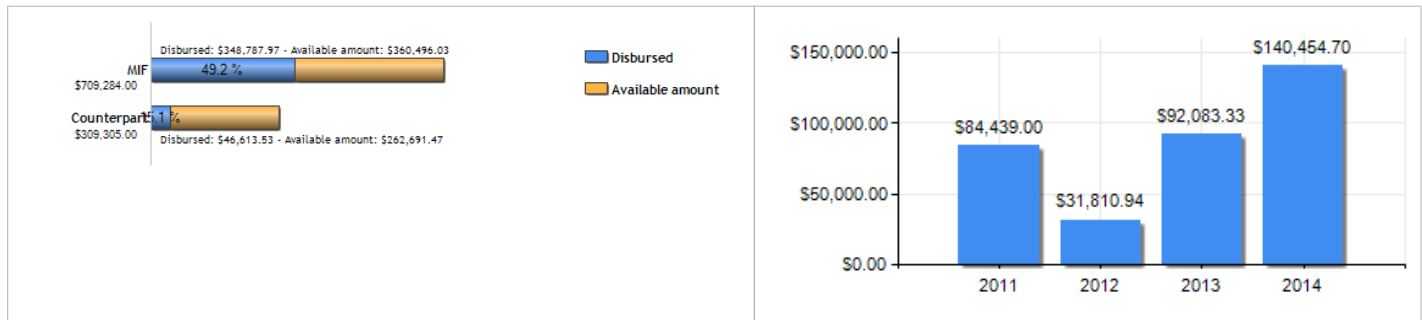
Design Team Leader: Dookiesingh, Vashtie

Supervision Team Leader: Dookiesingh, Vashtie

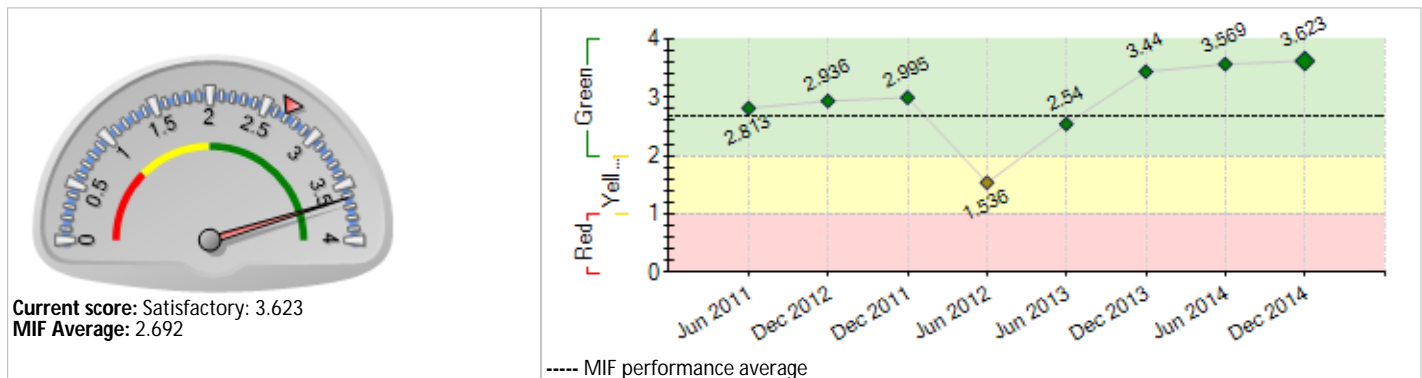
TIMELINE



FUNDS



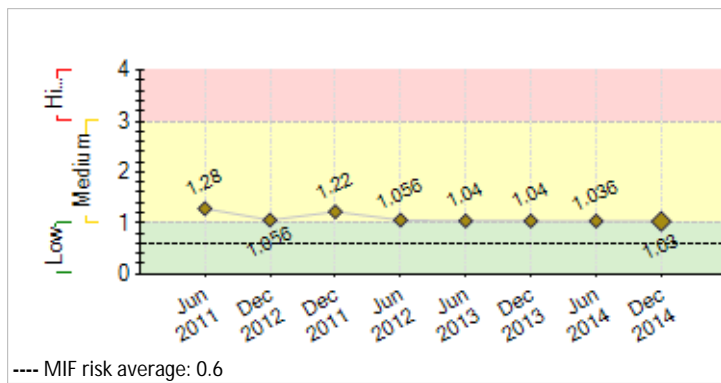
PERFORMANCE SCORE



EXTERNAL RISKS

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Risk
Financial Management: Low
Procurement: Low
Technical Capacity: Low



SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE

Summary of project performance since inception

Summary: Full achievement of targets in sensitization, diagnostic and intervention phases

Aggregated Achievements

A] PEU more skilled in identifying & aligning SME needs with ICT solutions

B] Sensitization of 350 SMEs; Mobilization of Health Sector

C] Completion of 87 diagnostic studies; 50 ICT interventions

E] Promoted ICT for women entrepreneurs

F] Deployment of cluster-based ICT solutions and work products created by PEU

Key Challenges

A] Management of stakeholder's expectations

B] Ensuring business needs are aligned to ICT interventions; Diagnostic reports clearly identifying gaps between current business process and ICT potentials

C] Maintaining effective communications management

Actions taken

A] Establish clear implementation goals and objectives, in discussion with stakeholders

B] Creation of an intervention reporting template with clear guidelines & annotations

C] Revised Communication Plan

Prospect

A very high likelihood of project achieving objectives, because:

- A) The valuable experience gained by PEU staff in delivering the project
- B) The interest shown by SMEs during the diagnostic phase
- C) High occurrence of model ICT solutions which can be easily modified for other SMEs
- D) Excellent reputation maintained due to past project success

Moving forward

- A) Analyze the rich body of knowledge generated during project phases
- B) Continuity in the delivery of post implementation ICT support services
- C) Develop strategies for changing business / IT needs

Comments from the Supervision Team Leader

Agree with the Executing Agency comments

Summary of project performance in the last six months

The main achievements of the semester were: (1) Identifying potential project participants – Agro Processors (via Agricultural Development Bank – 5 clients, Cocoa Research Unit – 13 clients, Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers Association – 16 clients. (2) Conducting and Completing 7 Diagnostic Scoping Study Reports, Developing 'Scope of Works' for 6 SMEs. (3) Identifying approximately 150 participants for the Health & Wellness (H&W) forum including speakers and attendees. There was some level of difficulty in managing communication between various stakeholders including the executing unit, the SME and the Association representatives in order to screen out suitable potentials for participation in the project. The main obstacles faced during the semester were (1) gaining trust from Association representatives to share details of their membership. This was solved by producing evidence of past project success and testimonials to achieve 'buy-in' (2) agreeing on a suitable time to hold the forum given the conflicting schedules of various interest groups. This was solved by negotiating trade-offs in favour of the larger association bodies. In the next six months the Executing Unit's efforts will be to concentrate on: (1) Sensitization of 40 SMEs in the H&W Sector (2) Conducting 15 Diagnostics Scoping Studies in the H&W sector and 15 in the F&B, PPP, and Manufacturing sectors (3) 8 ICT implementations for SMEs in the H&W sector and 7 in the F&B, PPP, and Manufacturing sectors.

Comments from the Supervision Team Leader

Agree with the Executing Agency comments

SECTION 3: INDICATORS AND MILESTONES

Indicators		Baseline	Intermediate 1	Intermediate 2	Intermediate 3	Planned	Achieved	Status
Result: Increased awareness, use and leverage of ICT by 80 SMEs in the food and beverage and in the printing and packaging sectors in Trinidad and Tobago	R.1 80 SMEs realize 10% improvement in (a) sales revenues and volumes, (b) increase in sales to new markets (c) increased sales in existing export markets or (d) profit margins	0				80	0	
		Feb 2011				Aug 2015		
Component 1: Awareness Building Weight: 20% Classification: High Satisfactory	C1.11 4 Awareness Forums convened	0	2	3		4	4	Finished
		Jan 2011	Feb 2013	Feb 2014		Dec 2014	Dec 2013	
	C1.12 SME representatives' opinion on the business potential of ICT investment	0	150	250		350	350	Finished
		Jan 2011	Dec 2012	Nov 2013		Dec 2014	Dec 2013	
Component 2: ICT Diagnostic Scoping Studies Weight: 30% Classification: High Satisfactory	C1.13 Launch of an interlinked web portal to disseminate information and facilitate dialogue among SMEs operating in the targeted sectors	0				1	1	Finished
		Jan 2011				Jul 2012	Aug 2011	
	C2.11 Diagnostic scoping studies completed for 80 SMEs	0	25	65		80	87	Finished
		Jan 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013		Dec 2014	Dec 2014	
Component 3: Implementation and Monitoring of ICT Interventions Weight: 30% Classification: High Satisfactory	C3.11 Development and implementation of ICT solutions to improve business performance of 50 SMEs	0	10	40		50	50	Finished
		Jan 2011	Dec 2013	Jul 2014		Dec 2014	May 2014	

Component 4: Dissemination of Results**Weight:** 20%**Classification:** Satisfactory

C4.I1	Dissemination of information on project results in a special purpose SME forum	0				1	
						Jan 2015	

Milestones	Planned	Due Date	Achieved	Date achieved	Status
M0 Contracting of a Technical Co-ordinator	1	Apr 2011	1	May 2011	Achieved late
M1 Conditions Prior	1	Jul 2011	6	Jul 2011	Achieved
M2 Completion of first ICT awareness forum	1	Jul 2011	1	Jul 2011	Achieved
M3 Completion of initial Diagnostic Scoping Studies for 20 SMEs	20	Jan 2012	20	Jan 2013	Achieved late
M4 Completion of second batch of 20 diagnostics of SMEs	20	May 2013	20	May 2013	Achieved
M5 Sensitization of 150 SMEs on the business benefits of ICT adoption	150	May 2013	154	Apr 2013	Achieved
M6 [*] Completion of initial 10 ICT interventions	10	Jul 2013	10	Jul 2013	Achieved
M7 [*] Completion of final 40 Diagnostic Scoping Studies	40	Dec 2013	40	Dec 2013	Achieved
M8 Sensitization of an additional 200 SMEs on the business benefits of ICT interventions	200	Dec 2013	200	Dec 2013	Achieved
M9 Completion of an additional 20 ICT interventions (cumulative total 30)	20	Dec 2013	20	Dec 2013	Achieved
M10 [*] Completion of final 20 ICT interventions	20	May 2014	20	May 2014	Achieved
M11 [*] Completion of dissemination materials	1	Jun 2015			

[*] Indicate that the milestone has been reformulated

CRITICAL ISSUES THAT HAVE AFFECTED PERFORMANCE

[X] Others, which?: SME engagement has taken a longer timeframe than anticipated

SECTION 4: RISKS**MOST IMPORTANT RISKS AFFECTING FUTURE PERFORMANCE**

	Level	Mitigation action	Responsible
1. Lag times between the completion of sensitization, diagnostics and interventions could lead to loss of interest by the SMEs and potentially unwillingness to continue in the project.	Medium	Execute project components in repeating cycles specifically designed to reduce the lag time between delivery of project components to individual SMEs.	Project Coordinator
2. High likelihood of shortlisted candidates at the ICT interventions phase opting out at critical stage, subsequent to the executing agency investing and committing resources.	Medium	Closer collaboration with the SME in the design of the intervention and conclusion of formal agreements prior to start of implementation.	Project Coordinator
3. Expending Project Execution Unit's time and effort to develop scope of works for an implementation that leads to an outcome where the client cannot afford to invest (due to financial restrictions) in the proposed ICT solution.	Medium	Engaging vendors in the early stages to get a preliminary costs as well as conducting sufficient research to create independent estimates and alternative solution proposals	Project Coordinator
4. Changes in macroeconomic conditions negatively impact SME performance	Medium	Executing Agency must make business case for ICT investment explicit to sustain interest and commitment to investment by SMEs in the event of deterioration of macroeconomic conditions	Project Coordinator
5. Upward revision of scope by the external ICT consultant in some cases taking the project out of the financial reach of the SME.	Medium	Greater care to be taken in the design of the solution to ensure that the scope of the implementation is within the financial means of the client.	Project Coordinator

PROJECT RISK LEVEL: Medium **TOTAL NUMBER OF RISKS:** 12 **IN EFFECT RISKS:** 12 **NOT IN EFFECT RISKS:** 0 **MITIGATED RISKS:** 0**SECTION 5: SUSTAINABILITY****Likelihood of project sustainability after project completion:** HP - Highly Probable**CRITICAL ISSUES THAT MAY AFFECT PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

[None reported in this period]

Actions related to sustainability which will be or have been implemented:

The drafting of a formal business plan to capture the business concept, marketplace and financial objectives of ICT services to be offered to small and medium sized enterprises beyond the project lifecycle. The plan will be designed to formulate strategies to cater for rapid changes in technologies, to create a unique customer value proposition by offering highly customised solutions, and address the succession planning needs as it relates to developing and retaining the skillsets within the Project Execution Unit.

Additionally, the development of a draft project framework document (How-To Guide) was started, geared towards the documenting of processes, procedures and lessons learnt in a format that can be easily exported to other territories. This guide will contribute to technical skills and knowledge transfer within the ICT industry.

Within the project execution unit, a coaching and mentoring strategy was used to develop the skillset of less experienced employees. Activities such as 'stretched assignments' and 'learning-by-doing' were utilized to foster knowledge transfer and learning.

SECTION 6: PRACTICAL LESSONS

<p>1. 2. The management of stakeholders, or lack thereof, can easily impact on activities involving scope, time, cost and quality. It was learnt that the non-involvement of stakeholders whom should have been involved from early in the planning stages can have a negative impact on activity progress. Stakeholders must be identified as early as possible in planning. As the number of stakeholders increase (for example, involving Association representatives to act on behalf of SMEs interests) the number of communication channels also increases. As such, the means and frequency of communications must meet the demands of this increase. It was learnt that the information needs of stakeholders is different (some stakeholder require more frequent updates than others). Furthermore, it was learnt that the dissemination of information, particularly sensitive company details (e.g. financials) must be passed in a secure manner and should be communicated to only those for whom it is intended.</p>	Relative to Risk	Author Joseph, Jade
<p>2. The specific set of marketing activities used in the past to mobilise the Food & Beverage and Printing, Plastics and Packaging sector worked well for the Manufacturing sector. However, this did not work for the SMEs in the Health and Wellness (H&W) sector. It was found that SMEs in the H&W sector was more concerned about divulging information about their organisation and had very little time to spend on meetings. The success of mobilizing this sector was heavily dependent on the participation of Association representatives acting on behalf of SMEs, particularly in terms of information exchange and communications.</p>	Design	Joseph, Jade