| Objectives: | Immediate actions in the next 3-6 months: | Short term actions in 2016/17 in the next 12 months: | Medium term actions in the next 2-5 years: | Expected outcomes of the action plan: |
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| **A. Design and deliver an employability and training programme to serve as a catalyst for the transformation of the country’s skills development system** | | | | |
| **A1. Establish a pre-apprenticeship program** | | | | |
| *Pre-apprenticeships provide employability, functional skills and work experience to help young people to be ready for entry- level jobs or to be employed as an apprentice.* | Strengthen the role of the National Training Agency (NTA) in the country’s skills development by building on their current programmes and expand into a nationally recognised pre-apprentice-ship program designed to support entry-level jobs and underpin apprenticeships.  Agree the design of the program and delivery arrangements. Likely to have about 3 months duration and both an employability and work experience component. | Deliver initial cohorts of the pre-apprenticeship program for an agreed number of people.  Establish links with apprenticeship program, so that graduates from the pre- apprenticeship are considered for continued training as an apprentice. | Delivery will have expanded through further cohorts in 2017, 2018 and 2019, so that the target numbers for entry and completion are reached.  The opportunity to continue to deliver additional cohorts of the program on a self-funded basis will have been explored. | An agreed number of pre employment opportunities will have been provided over the 4 years of the program.  A flow of youth with soft skills will have been achieved and soft skills training will have started to permeate the formal education system.  Young unemployed people will have had access to short sharp training for specific in demand job opportunities in the labor market.  Successful graduates from the program will have had an opportunity to be considered for apprenticeships. |
| **A2. Establish an apprenticeship program** | | | | |
| *Apprenticeships provide more in depth skills development for skilled jobs in the economy, building on the pre-apprenticeship program.* | Government to agree basis for national program to develop apprenticeships in a small number of pilot sectors (3) to be agreed.  Agree policy and implementation plan for new national apprenticeship program. This to include governance, funding, apprenticeship frameworks, quality assurance, delivery, links to qualifications and certification.  Agree how widely the program can be delivered across the Family Islands and the pace of roll out. | Develop occupational standards, career pathways and apprenticeship frameworks for pilot.  Agree model for Apprenticeship contract and establish administration and payment systems.  Training provider capacity building program and development of delivery team.  Work with training providers to agree curriculum for “off the job” element of the training and assessment model for “work-based” training.  Agree process to accept employers into the program, including marketing and on-line application process.  Train company supervisors and mentors.  Develop a clear communications strategy that will raise awareness of the existence of the apprenticeships program in The Bahamas and will encourage young people, adults, training providers, and employers to participate.  Provide information to and establish links with the Department of Labour’s (DoL) One Stop Shops, so Apprenticeship becomes a clear option for young unemployed people. | The program has started to broaden to other sectors including development of standards, pathways and training frameworks.  The program is reaching people and businesses across the Family Islands.  An on-line apprenticeship opportunities and careers portal has been considered, to inform young people and their parents about the value and range of apprenticeships available. | The national apprenticeship program has delivered a substantial volume of apprenticeship starts (TBA), with a completion rate that grows as the program develops.  At least (TBA) companies have benefitted.  The number of work permits offered to skilled and semi skilled overseas workers will have substantially decreased.  There are standards and career pathways for each main occupation, at least in the 3 prioritized sectors, based on international best practice.  Employers have confidence in the relevance of the program and the practical skills and employability of young people taking it.  Employers will be offering structured practical work experience.  Individual companies see business benefit from more skilled people being available and are prepared to make a fair contribution to training them.  Young people are better equipped for work, can earn better wages and have the foundation for a career.  The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) office has information on the success of the program and is able to demonstrate positive access to skills as part of their promotion of The Bahamas. |
| **A3. Set Governance mechanisms to carry out the pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programmes** | | | | |
| *Governance is through a National Apprenticeship Board (NAB).* | A new National Apprenticeship Board (NAB)established and chaired by a leading employer. Partnership to include employers, Government, College of The Bahamas (COB), Bahamas Training and Vocational Institute (BTVI), NTA and others to be agreed.  The Board provides oversight and overall governance of the new skills system.  The NAB advises Government on any legal amendments needed to the current Apprenticeship Act. | The National Apprenticeship Board to initially focus on implementation of the Pre Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship programs, agreeing standards, apprenticeship framework design, delivery and quality assurance.  The NAB uses Labour Market Information (LMI) to identify priorities for action and future skills needs.  The NAB monitors development and delivery of the programs against an agreed implementation plan and produces an annual report to Government on progress.  NAB provides oversight of an evaluation strategy including formative evaluation of the development of the program and later summative evaluation of outcomes and impacts. | NAB takes a wider role supporting implementation of the broader elements of the Skills Action Plan.  The number of Apprenticeship opportunities increase as the program takes off.  NAB builds linkages across the Caribbean and Internationally to draw on best practice and refresh its strategy.  NAB has used summative evaluation and MI as the basis for review and “course correction” of the program. | Training providers and Business join together in partnership to deliver skills and apprenticeships to internationally agreed standards.  A strong and partnership based approach to program governance has been established, which gives confidence to all partners that the programme will be run efficiently and effectively. |
| **A4. Establish an employer led skills fora to shape these national programs (Sector Skills Councils)** | | | | |
| *Sector level spaces are established for public-private sector collaboration in operationalizing the delivery of the program.* | Employer led Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are established, drawn from 3 key sectors of the economy, to take operational responsibility for the technical work in delivering relevant programs, including to agree standards and training frameworks.  National and international businesses are engaged in the forum from day 1 alongside local and smaller companies. | The SSCs are active in promoting the skills action plan and program to employers and identifying those willing to engage in piloting the program.  The SSCs review existing LMI to ensure programs are focused on priority needs | Employers have grown this model of employer engagement by establishing specific forums for other key sectors of the economy.  SSCs are leading the development of an expanded range of apprenticeship opportunities. | Employers are at the heart of the skills system  Employers are fully engaged in setting standards and developing apprenticeships. |
| **B. Simultaneously, promote systematic-level changes that are necessary for a transformation of the country’s skills development system** | | | | |
| **At the Policy Level:** | | | | |
| **B1. Agree a clear longer term National Framework to support skills development** | | | | |
| *Government actively shapes the National Framework for skills development and oversees its implementation* | Government to agree the content and structure of the Skills Action Plan and Road-Map in consultation with key stakeholders.  Government to support the creation and development of the National Apprenticeship Board (NAB) and Skills Forum including to ensure they have adequate executive capability and funding.  Government to take any necessary legal amendments through Parliament to allow the new apprenticeship program to operate. | Government to facilitate implementation of the apprenticeship program. This to include definition of apprenticeship and funding arrangements, business planning, budget setting and senior staffing.  Government to agree an evaluation model to provide formative evaluation of the apprenticeship program and wider skills action plan developments, including longer-term evaluation of outcomes and impact.  Organisational and governance arrangements are in place to implement the wider skills action plan components as set out below. | Government will have used emerging evaluation findings and the annual report of the NAB as the basis for review and further development of the apprenticeship programme.  Government will have maintained oversight of implementation of the wider skills action plan, to maximise impact and the value of a “joined up” approach to skills development. | A National Skills Framework is in place and becomes a model for the Caribbean.  A strong evaluation process supports continuous development of the framework.  There is, over time, a measurable impact on the stock of skilled people, business efficiency and productivity in support of a stronger Bahamas |
| **B2. Ensure sustainability of funding** | | | | |
| *Initial loan funding is available to allow the skills plan to move forward, but a longer-term settlement will be needed to sustain these programs and to tackle the wider issues set out in this action plan.* | The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) loan will make funding available to support the development of an apprenticeship and pre apprenticeship program over the next 4 years including development costs to establish the program and build the capacity of training providers to respond. | The Government will need to develop a sustainability plan for the apprenticeship and pre apprenticeship programme to start early enough to avoid a “cliff edge” when IDB loan funding runs out.  There are a number of options including to place the burden more or less heavily on employers or the government. There are attractions to building a co-funding solution that replicates the model being trialed with IDB loan funding. | Government may also wish in the longer term to review more widely how funding is currently provided to Colleges/Providers and individuals and set out options for the future.  This could include a review the current bursary system to take a view on the equity and distribution of funds. Other Countries operate a mixture of grants and loans on the basis of an entitlement to people who have not yet achieved the basis of employability. | A sustainable funding model has been developed to allow a significant expansion of vocational education and skills,  Employers are making a fair contribution to the cost of skills development  Young people have equitable access to financial support to help cover the costs of their learning. |
| **At the Technical level:** | | | | |
| **B3. Strengthen the capacity of the Labour Market Information System (LMIS)** | | | | |
| *High quality Labour Market Intelligence is used to ensure the delivery of up to date and relevant skills* | NAB to commission a quick review of existing sources and quality of LMI for the initially chosen sectors. To include analysis of employer surveys, national education census data, tracking/destination data.  Use this to help select first occupations to develop as apprenticeships. | NAB to develop capability to, in conjunction with the Department of Statistics, undertake and analyse a regular national skills survey.  Review skills survey work elsewhere in the Caribbean to learn lessons for the Bahamas.  Support development of LMI capability in emerging Sector Skills Councils | Annual national employer skills survey established,  Sector Skills Councils to review survey data to add colour and meaning to the information available and make recommendations to the NAB on an annual basis about skills priorities  Produce a short and user friendly public document  for young people and their parents about the state of the job market and skills. | Labour market intelligence informs decisions about priority skills needs  Training Providers and the education system will have a clear basis for developing and adapting their provision and have become responsive to the changing labour market.  Young people and parents will have simple clear information on jobs and skills in demand. |
| **B4. Build the Capacity of Training Providers** | | | | |
| *B4.1. Prepare Training Providers to deliver the apprenticeship program.*  *Use the experience of apprenticeship delivery to inform wider Training Provider development.* | The development and delivery of the new apprenticeship program will require new roles and skills to be developed in BTVI, COB and others. They will need to be able to respond to employer demand and be able to support learning and assessment in the workplace.  The initial step should be an assessment of current capacity and capability to deliver to the planned apprenticeship sectors and development of a capacity building programme. | Engagement of Training Providers in the development of apprenticeships for the key sectors chosen for the apprenticeship program.  Development of a delivery team of functional skills teachers, assessors and verifiers from each college to support workplace learning and college delivered curriculum for each apprenticeship.  Explore the opportunity to build a single co-ordinating team to manage marketing and employer relations.  Prepare for delivery of the Pre Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship programs. | Learn from the delivery of the apprenticeship program first year of operation, to consider how COB, BTVI, and others as appropriate could re-position to play to their strengths while expanding apprenticeship provision to other key sectors.  Review the current equipment and facilities of the Training Providers and develop plans for capital expenditure to bring facilities up to international standards.  Learn from experience in delivering apprenticeships how Training Providers can develop existing full and part time provision so that it is fully relevant to employer needs.  Explore how regular inspection against international standards, such as those of the United Kingdom (UK) Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), can be used to enhance college/provider effectiveness. | COB and BTVI have become Caribbean centres of excellence for professional and technical skills development.  More young people are graduating/ completing programmes and going on to a positive destination |
| *B4.2. Build leadership and teacher capacity* | Program of capacity building to start with a Leadership Excellence Program for College and other key stakeholders. This would include a delegation of employers, college leaders and key practitioners seeing “outstanding“ delivery of college and private sector led apprenticeships internationally. This “seeing is believing” visit to include all aspects of designing and delivering high quality apprenticeships. The program to include personal planning and organisational development.  Engage UK or other skills experts to support capacity building. | Build a teacher development partnership with a leading international provider.  External skills experts to support the development of staff adopting new outreach roles into business to deliver the apprenticeship program.  Learn the lessons from the first year of operation and from experience of college/provider performance, to develop a more sophisticated program for provider capacity development. | Training provider capacity building program longer term may include:  An advanced practitioner program for classroom based teachers.  A future leaders program.  An on-line continuing professional development portal for teachers.  Annual assessment of teachers and formal development plans, (if not already in place)  Exploring the scope for inspection of teaching standards on a regular basis as part of wider Ofsted style inspection model. | Teaching and Leadership is at the heart of making Bahamas a centre of excellence for vocational education |
| *B4.3. Ensure curricula meet industry needs now and into the future for key sectors of the economy.* | Work with external advisers to support the development of a training program for each occupation chosen for the initial phase of the apprenticeship.  These to be based on existing apprenticeship standards and frameworks, adapted as necessary to meet local needs and tested through the initial apprenticeship pilot.  Develop work based assessment model and quality assurance process using assessors and verifiers.  Link with pre apprenticeship programme to ensure coherence.  Develop careers information/marketing program to support the young people and their parents in seeing apprenticeship as a positive choice. | Refine the apprenticeship offer in the light of experience with the pilot and ensure training provider based work complements and extends the training apprentices receive in the workplace, by providing relevant and timely theoretical underpinnings.  Build a partnership with a college in the UK or elsewhere that has outstanding ratings for curriculum development to allow comparison and provide a pathway for development. | Support the development of apprenticeship frameworks in other sectors as demand for the apprenticeship program grows.  Use the experience of apprenticeship development to look more widely across the curricula of providers, develop employer outreach and the ability to customise provision to meet industry need.  Ensure business engagement with each curriculum area.  Establish strong leadership of and expertise in curriculum development  Build capacity to analyse LMI data and draw out key messages for curriculum development | High quality apprenticeship programs are developed  Employers are increasingly engaged in developing apprenticeship programs and offering structured practical work experience.  Students see the value of apprenticeships and higher quality college provision. Drop out rates reduce significantly and outcomes improve. |
| **B5. Departmental Collaboration** | | | | |
| *The Bahamas is joining up youth, education, employment, business investment and skills policy.* | A Departmental task group is set up to review the scope for greater collaboration between policy areas which relate to the education, skills development and employment of young people, informed by industry strategy on foreign and indigenous business investment. | Task group to identify a small number of priority actions where collective effort will bring mutual benefit. The plan should be to develop a “no wrong door” philosophy, where employment One Stop Shops, Training Providers, Schools and other Agencies are aware of the services each other is offering and have clear referral pathways and incentives to collaborate.  A culture change program is developed for all public officials to help them to buy in to the new approach and to recognise individuals and teams that adopt new practices.  Internally focused departments such as the Department of Statistics should take the opportunity to use LMI data actively in support of skills development. | Business investment support should recognise the value of skills as a way to attract FDI and be briefed on progress with skills development.  The process for issuing worker permits to allow foreign worker entry to the Bahamas should be linked directly to skills forecasting and development. It should be made clear that the number of non and semi skilled worker work permits in any occupation will be progressively reduced over time to incentivise the training of local people.  The purchasing power of Government should be fully recognised, by expecting contract holders to take apprentices and have approved training programmes in place | Inward investors are attracted to come to the Bahamas and are better able to comply with planning requirements to take on a percentage of locally sourced labor, because they can be referred to a source of skilled local workers.  Public Employment Services (PES) “One stop shops” are achieving better job placement rates by linking the unemployed to apprenticeship and training opportunities  The number of work permits issued to unskilled and skilled workers from abroad is reduced through improved supply of home grown skills.  Local people have better access to skills development and jobs. |
| B6. A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) | | | | |
| *Employers and citizens can more easily recognise the value and level of the programs available to them.* | Gain a clear understanding of the status of the work carried out by the National Accreditation Council of The Bahamas.  Establish a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) partnership to take forward implementation of the framework.  Identify expert capability in the development of NQF models.  Engage in knowledge exchange with other countries that have developed a national Qualification Framework.  Develop an implementation plan. | Review progress with development of Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Framework and compare with the Scottish NQF (generally regarded as the most effective UK example and basis for the CVQ).  Consult and decide whether to adopt the Caribbean model and how it would need to be amended.  Set out an overall map of the occupational pathways to be covered by the NQF. | Take stock of progress on an annual basis including feedback from employers about the relevance and appropriateness of qualifications emerging from the process.  Set out a clear policy framework including how occupational standards will underpin all qualifications in the framework, how qualifications will be sized and levelled and how existing and new qualifications will be assessed and approved.  Establish a phased approval process to convert existing qualifications and approve new qualifications. | All Bahamian qualifications are available on a single qualifications framework that clearly sets out their size, level, entry requirement skills and knowledge they teach and labor market value in terms of jobs and progress at work.  Public funding is only available for approved qualifications on the framework.  Employers and the public are able to clearly recognise the relative value and level of qualifications and can make better choices. |