

Inter-American Development Bank

Mid-Term Evaluation

Ecotourism Training Program Belize

FINAL REPORT

June 2002

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all of those involved in the Ecotourism Training Program who generously contributed their time and shared their enthusiasm, their perspectives on the program, its implementation, its potential and its challenges in the course of this Mid-Term Evaluation. Our hope is that the recommendations contained in this evaluation provide the program with the opportunity to not only meet its goals and objectives, but to rise to its full potential in the ensuing months of funding support and beyond.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BAS	Belize Audubon Society
BCIA	Belize Cruise Industry Association
BETA	Belize Ecotourism Association
BHA	Belize Hotel Association
BIM	Belize Institute of Management
BNTOA	Belize National Tour Operators Association
BTB	Belize Tourism Board
BTGA	Belize Tour Guides Association
BTIA	Belize Tourism Industry Association
CET	Centers for Employment Training
CHA	Caribbean Hotel Association
CHTI	Caribbean Hospitality Training Institute
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organization
DTT	District Tourism Trainer
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
MIF	Multilateral Investment Fund
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOT	Ministry of Tourism
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
PEC	Project Execution Committee
TTU	Tourism Training Unit
UB	University of Belize

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ecotourism Training Program is funded by a grant from the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and executed by the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) in collaboration with the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA). The grant document was signed in August 2000, with an intended 39 months of execution from that date.

The program is carried out by a Tourism Training Unit (TTU), newly established for this purpose, and overseen by a Project Execution Committee (PEC) of tourism industry stakeholders. The program's objective is to increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry in Belize by developing the skills and abilities of the hospitality and tourism workforce, through the development of district-based flexible, relevant and accessible tourism training courses. In addition to the Tourism Training Unit staff, housed at the Belize Tourism Board's offices in Belize City, the program employs 14 District Tourism Trainers (DTTs) to organize, promote and run the program in 9 destinations around the country. The intent of the program is to provide flexible, accessible and relevant tourism training courses at the district level, based on both local need and overall trends in tourism growth and development in Belize.

Actual implementation of the program began in June 2001 with the hiring of the TTU staff. This mid-term evaluation examines implementation successes and challenges to date, and suggests Action Items and Key Recommendations to assist the program in achieving its objectives over the life of the funding period. The Key Recommendations are specific to the Program Management and to the three components of the program defined in the Donors Memorandum: Tourism Training Design; Training of Trainers; and Institutional Strengthening of BTIA.

The program has made great progress in completing the tasks associated with the start-up of the program, including the completion of a countrywide Needs Assessment, the hiring of DTTs and the establishment of district Tourism Training Unit offices, and the selection and design of curriculum materials. A schedule of training courses has been established for all destinations, and courses began running in February 2002. Participants in these courses have been very positive about their experiences to date. In addition, a Marketing and Promotion Plan and a Business Plan for BTIA, activities required during the first year, have been completed and have begun to be implemented. Transparent management and information systems have been established and all required reporting has been completed on time.

The Ecotourism Training Program shows great promise in fulfilling its goals and objectives and meeting its potential, through the hard work of all parties involved in the program to date. In addition to the specific recommendations provided for each component of the program, the overall recommendation of the consultants is to extend the funding period for the program to allow for a full 39 months of implementation.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Further, specific information on each of the key recommendations below is provided in the body of the report under the section indicated. This summary is provided here to highlight the main findings of the consultant team.

Program Management

- ◆ Provide specific guidance, using up-to-date tourism statistics and industry information, to the program on responding to tourism trends, growth and/or decline in specific sectors, and other potential broad-based issues that may impact on program implementation.
- ◆ Develop an Action Plan for the management transition of the program at the end of the funded period sets out specific benchmarks of performance for BTIA that allows the transition to proceed. An outside consultant may be helpful in guiding the PEC, and/or a sub-committee assigned to this task, in the development of this Action Plan. The Action Plan should be completed by January 2003.
- ◆ Evaluate DTT workload at 6-month point of employment and make adjustments as needed to allow the work to be completed. Consider increasing the number of hours worked by DTTs and/or increasing the number of DTTs in an area for the next 6 months to address the need for a strong start-up push in promotion and marketing of the program. Evaluate again at the end of the next 6-month period and adjust time schedule as needed.

Component 1: Training Program Design

- ◆ Assess willingness to pay as part of the Year 2 Needs Assessment, as this is a critical issue to the long-term success of the program.
- ◆ Add an area of the website that provides a Monthly Update to DTTs on program developments, district events, tips, new resources acquired, etc. and provides a forum for DTTs to share ideas or request assistance in meeting challenges being faced in a particular destination. This can be accessed with a special password.
- ◆ Design and develop an oral presentation that can be made to a group of businesses/employers that addresses their expressed barriers (timing, cost, employees leaving for better jobs, seasonality, etc.) and provides creative responses that encourage them to support the training program. Schedule presentations to local business/employer groups by Program Manager in as many destinations as possible over the next 3-6 months to assist DTTs in promoting program locally.
- ◆ Enhance monitoring of the curriculum production process by the Curriculum Specialist to ensure that timelines are met and that course implementation is not delayed due to lack of materials.
- ◆ Monitor and evaluate tests and assessments given for each course on a semi-annual basis, and consider on a course-by-course basis if there is a need to standardize testing across destinations.

- ◆ Design and implement a simple evaluation tool to administer to participants and employers 2 months after the completion of a course to assess the program's impact. Collect and use this information for impact, quality assurance and marketing purposes.
- ◆ Continue to develop creative ideas to address the issue of cost of the courses, and to share these with all DTTs through Monthly Update. Ensure that all DTTs are aware of different methods of cost-sharing that they may try, and consider programmatic support for some cost sharing ideas (scholarship fund, revolving loan fund, etc.)

Component 2: Training of Trainers

- ◆ Explore additional creative partnership ideas (such as the tourism incubator concept) between tourism industry stakeholders that may enhance tourism services in some destinations, such as tourism centers that are centrally located to provide information to visitors, house BTIA and other sector organization offices, as well as the TTU training office. Consider cost-sharing arrangements that may enhance both public and private sector goals to improve the provision of tourism services in destinations.
- ◆ Consider program support for program staff to access professional development opportunities at the regional level to enhance broader tourism perspective. Select 3-4 regional conferences and/or Train the Trainer opportunities to participate in yearly. Consider cost-sharing strategies with BTB and BTIA to support these human resources development efforts.
- ◆ Find ways to support development of skills for all levels of trainers, from newly trained to highly experienced. Develop ways for more experienced trainers to benefit less experienced trainers, through co-facilitating training courses, to mentoring, to program-based Train the Trainer sessions.
- ◆ Explore regional tourism certification systems by networking regionally with tourism organizations and institutions that have developed such programs. Provide opportunities for the TTU Project Manager and Curriculum Specialist to broaden their knowledge of these programs, through regional site visits and/or through educational workshops or conferences.
- ◆ Establish a PEC sub-committee that includes other invited stakeholders to develop a framework for tourism training certification in Belize. Network with local educational institutions, NGOs, government ministries, and tourism stakeholders. Consider consultancy assistance to help develop the framework for Belize's certification system for tourism training.
- ◆ Network with local, regional and international organizations on the issue of certification for ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Participate in regional discussions on development of this certification and encourage local dialogue and discussion to further development and implementation of such a program in Belize.

Component 3: Institutional Strengthening of the BTIA

- ◆ Provide consulting services to the BTIA Board of Directors to accomplish the restructuring of its governance structure, to redefine its mission, and to develop written Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members and of each officer of the Board that specifically outline what is expected of Board members, prior to the next Board elections in August 2002.
- ◆ Once the new Board is in place in Fall 2002, provide consulting services and/or seminars in Board development, including the development of a concrete Work Plan for the upcoming year, clearly defining the objectives and how these will be achieved.
- ◆ Support BTIA staff development training for the General Manager and for the Marketing/Database/Job Bank DTT.
- ◆ Develop an Action Plan for transition of management to BTIA (see Key Recommendations, Program Management). Complete by January 2003.
- ◆ Develop a back-up alternative plan for the transition that considers working in partnership with other organizations to support the program.
- ◆ Work with BTB, BTIA, and tourism sector organizations to develop ways to improve and consolidate tourism services in the destinations (See Key Recommendations, Component 2: Train the Trainers).
- ◆ Implement the Job Bank as soon as possible to take advantage of seasonality in the tourism sector, including significant marketing and promotion of the plan.
- ◆ Evaluate the Job Bank at the end of one year of operation, contacting both employers and employees who have used the service, to determine if any adjustments need to be made.
- ◆ Finalize the Marketing and Promotional Plan as soon as possible, and proceed with implementation.

Overall Recommendation

- ◆ Extend the funding period of the program to September 2004 to allow for a full 39 months of program implementation.

INTRODUCTION

On August 10, 2000, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), as the administrator of the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF), signed an agreement granting non-reimbursable resources for the execution of the Ecotourism Training Program. The agreement also includes a financial and in-kind contribution from the Belize Tourism Board to the program. The program is to run for 39 months from the time of the signing of the agreement.

The Ecotourism Training Program aims to assist Belize in addressing one of the main challenges facing the country's tourism sector, identified in the Tourism Strategy Plan, that of human resources development in the critical areas of ecotourism, cultural, heritage, and adventure tourism that Belize has as the core of its tourism development. The overall objective of the program is to increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry in Belize, by developing the skills and abilities of the hospitality and tourism workforce.

The Program is administered by the Belize Tourism Board (BTB), in cooperation with the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA). The Program is implemented by a Tourism Training Unit (TTU), established and housed at the Belize Tourism Board offices, and overseen by a Project Execution Committee (PEC). Members of the PEC include key tourism industry representatives of the BTB; BTIA; other industry sector membership organizations - the Belize Hotel Association (BHA) and the Belize National Tour Operators Association (BNTOA); the Ministry of Education (MOE); and a representative of one non-governmental organization – the Belize Audubon Society (BAS), to insure broad input and support for the program.

A mid-term and final evaluation of the program were included in the initial program design and implementation agreement, with the mid-term evaluation to be conducted 18 months after the signing of the original agreement. The objectives of the mid-term evaluation are, broadly, *to evaluate the progress of the program to date in achieving its general and specific objectives, and to provide recommendations for changes or adjustments or improvements required to ensure that the program's objectives are achieved.* The detailed activities of the mid-term evaluation are contained in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1).

The evaluation was carried out by Sally Christ, tourism training consultant, with assistance from Costas Christ, ecotourism specialist, from March 27 – April 15, 2002. Activities included a review of all supporting documentation provided by the Ecotourism Training Program and by IDB, and site visits to all of the locations where District Tourism Trainers have been hired and district Tourism Training Unit offices established. Meetings were held with the TTU office staff, District Tourism Trainers (DTTs), trainers involved in teaching the courses, student participants, BTIA representatives, BTB personnel, members of the PEC and other stakeholders.

PROJECT DESIGN

The Ecotourism Training Program is designed following a logical framework concept, with a hierarchy of objectives, and activities designed to meet those objectives.

The overall objective of the program is to “increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry in Belize by developing the skills and abilities of the hospitality and tourism workforce.” This objective continues to be a valid framework for the program, particularly as Belize moves forward in developing different sectors of the tourism market, and strives to increase visitation, which has continued to show a pattern of growth in the two years since the inception of the program. Regional competition will challenge Belize to maintain this growth, and service is a critical area by which visitors will evaluate Belize’s tourism product.

The outcomes of the Ecotourism Training Program are:

- Development of modular and customized programs for small tourism entities;
- Availability of a cadre of highly trained trainers, coaches and mentors for the industry located in each district of the country;
- Development of stronger facilitation and coordination of general and specialized skill training for tourism sector employees and new entrants to the labor market;
- Creation of a registry of trainers and programs available to address the needs of the sector;
- Improved technical and organizational capacity within the Belize Tourism Industry Association to initiate and undertake action plans, needs assessments, and training programs that respond to the human resource development and management needs of the tourism sector.

To facilitate the development and implementation of activities to meet these objectives and achieve these outcomes, the program has three distinct, yet complimentary components:

1. Training Program Design

To address measures needed to improve the flexibility and relevancy of tourism education and training in accordance with the projected growth areas of the sector in eco, nature, heritage, and adventure tourism.

2. Training of Trainers

To develop a cadre of locally trained experts available to deliver training and specialized consulting services for emerging and existing tourism establishments.

3. Institutional Strengthening of the Belize Tourism Industry Association

To address measures needed to facilitate the Belize Tourism Industry Association's ability to manage and respond to the human resource development needs of the tourism sector in an efficient and sustainable manner.

In seeking to assess the progress and effectiveness of the program's implementation and the extent to which planned objectives are being or are likely to be achieved, we looked at the overall objectives and outcomes, the program design and the activities planned, and assessed implementation to date. In addition, we assessed the program management, looking at each of the management levels of the program, their coordination, and implementation of activities. Action items and key recommendations are suggested for each component of the program, including program management. Action items indicate areas within a component that merit particular monitoring and attention from program staff to enhance or insure effective implementation, and are listed in the body of the report under each activity.

Key recommendations, highlighted for each activity area and summarized at the beginning of the report, indicate tasks that the consultants consider critical to the successful achievement of the program's overall goals. The Key Recommendations suggest activities that may not have been included in the original design of the program, but take into consideration the program's experience to date in actual implementation, and areas whose importance has become apparent as a result of that experience. Most of the key recommendations listed do not impact on the financial resources of the program for implementation. Those that have financial implications are discussed at the end of the report in a section on Budgetary Considerations.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Project Execution Committee

The PEC is chaired by the Director of Product Development for BTB. The other members of the committee are: one representative from the Ministry of Education, one representative from the Ministry of Tourism, one representative from the Board of BTIA, the General Manager of BTIA, a member of BHA and BNTOA, and one representative from a local NGO, the Belize Audubon Society (BAS). The PEC is scheduled to meet on a quarterly basis.

The PEC began meeting regularly when the TTU was established, in June 2001, and has held three meetings since July 2001.

The role of the PEC is to oversee the general direction of the program, to review the semi-annual reports and work plans, and to review the financial reports from the program. It is also involved in the selection of program consultants, such as the consultant hired to develop the marketing plan, and the consulting team hired to develop the business plan for BTIA. It works in cooperation with IDB to insure that program implementation is proceeding as planned.

To date, the relationship between IDB, the PEC, and the TTU has been positive, and this has enabled the program to move forward in implementing and completing many of the start-up tasks, while looking at creative ways to work towards fulfilling the objectives of the three components of the program, particularly as implementation proceeds.

While the PEC has met regularly, attendance on the part of some parties has been lacking. The committee has proposed that alternate personnel be identified from each agency, so that scheduled meetings can proceed with all agencies duly represented. This idea is supported by the consultants as an Action Item, in order to insure that the Committee can continue to provide leadership, oversight, and timely decision making on matters that affect the implementation of activities by the TTU.

This body must also keep abreast of any changes to the tourism sector that may affect the implementation of the program, or that need to be considered in the context of the TTU's activities, as the program continues. For example, world events that began with the incidents in the United States on September 11, 2001 continue to have a reverberating impact on the tourism industry worldwide. With its significant reliance on the North American market for its visitors, Belize has been affected by these events and should remain diligent in monitoring the overall impact on its visitation and expectations of visitors, both positive and negative.

In helping the TTU to determine the focus of its semi-annual work plans, the PEC can bring insights about the overall tourism climate to the dialogue that may need to be considered in the choice and focus of training. If visitors show an increasing concern

over safety and security, for example, adding a training course on such issues for managers can address these concerns and improve performance in this area. If Belize decides to expand its marketing efforts in the European market, language training for the tourism sector may become a more important factor to consider in developing the training schedule of courses.

Another factor in Belize's tourism picture is the rapid expansion of cruise ship visitation to the country, and the subsequent increase in the number of cruise ship passengers disembarking for short excursions. The impact of this increased number of visitors (from 34,000 in 1998, to 58,000 in 2000, to a projected 250,000 in 2002) and the specific human resources demands that they pose at the local level must be added into the overall picture of tourism growth and development in the country. While the impact of this sector is primarily felt in specific local destinations, particularly Belize City, this is an area that needs to be specifically targeted and addressed by the program in terms of its local training offerings.

Thirdly, the localized impact of two hurricanes in two years (Keith in 2000 and Iris in 2001) on specific areas of the country must also be considered by the PEC in terms of the overall goals of the program, and in considering future possibilities. What impact have these events had on the capacity of these communities to respond to the training initiatives being offered, and how might the program develop methodologies to support these special situations at the local, district level where training is being offered? What can be learned from these experiences that might assist the program in future planning?

The PEC will also need to play an increasingly important role as the project moves into Years 2 and 3 of implementation in regards to the transition to self-funding. IDB, PEC, and TTU should together develop an Action Plan with a timetable for the transition of the program to BTIA's management. This Action Plan should establish benchmarks for BTIA performance that will provide a framework for how the transition proceeds. A sub-committee of PEC should be assigned to manage this task, and this sub-committee should meet more frequently to make sure that this action plan is implemented with sufficient time to allow BTIA the opportunity to realistically meet the benchmarks established, while the PEC continues its regular schedule of quarterly meetings. An outside consultant may be helpful in guiding the sub-committee and the PEC in developing the plan. It is recommended that the Action Plan be completed by January 2003. This task is critical to the program's efforts to meet the goal of developing the capacity of the BTIA to eventually manage the program on a self-sustaining basis.

Action Items:

Each agency should assign a designated attendee and alternate to ensure participation in PEC meetings.

Maintain schedule of quarterly meetings, with more frequent meetings of sub-committees assigned to specific tasks.

Review the most recent available tourism statistics at each meeting to ensure that the program is being guided with the most up-to-date information.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ **Provide specific guidance, using up-to-date tourism statistics and industry information, to the program on responding to tourism trends, growth and/or decline in specific sectors, and other potential broad-based issues that may impact on program implementation.**
- ◆ **Develop an Action Plan for the management transition of the program at the end of the funded period that and sets out specific benchmarks of performance for BTIA that allows the transition to proceed. An outside consultant may be helpful in guiding the PEC, and/or a sub-committee assigned to this task, in the development of this important Action Plan. The Action Plan should be completed by January 2003.**

Tourism Training Unit

A delay in the hiring process for staffing the TTU led to a delay in the start-up of the implementation phase of the program. The Program Manager/Director began work in June 2001, together with the Curriculum Specialist. The Administrative Coordinator joined the TTU in July 2001. Project implementation did not begin in earnest until mid-June 2001, ten months after the signing of the agreement. Thus, in looking at program activities to date, the consultants were aware of the fact that actual implementation has been underway for approximately 10 months, and that implementation progress must take this fact into consideration.

The TTU is fully staffed with qualified and capable personnel. Dr. Vincent Palacio, the Program Manager, is an effective team leader, and works well with all involved in the project, from the staff at IDB to the PEC, from the TTU staff to the DTTs in the field. He was praised by all parties for his firm, yet flexible, leadership, and his positive motivation of all involved to carry out the demanding tasks of the project. Mrs. Clara Pastore, the Curriculum Specialist, brings many years of experience in education and traditional curriculum development to her position. Mr. Mark Borland, the Administrative Coordinator, brings a wealth of experience in the tourism sector, and in setting up and maintaining financial and information systems, to his position.

Regular staff meetings are held to make sure that work is coordinated and all are aware of both progress and problems encountered. A regular schedule of quarterly meetings with DTTs has also been established and implemented, in addition to maintaining regular contact with each DTT. The start-up phase of the program has proved to be demanding in its workload, but the staff have risen to the challenge, and remain enthusiastic and very committed to the development and implementation of the program.

The TTU has moved quickly to implement the start-up tasks of the program, and TTU offices have been established in 9 locations, with DTTs hired, trained, and beginning to offer courses to the public as of February 2002. Reporting systems have been put in place and implemented, with progress reports, work plans, and financial reports being delivered on time. A TTU website has been established that serves multiple functions – as a public relations and information outlet to the general public, as a resource for DTTs and other industry members, and as a point of registration for training courses. The website will also be one point of entry into the Job Bank being established as part of the program. A resource library has been started, with information collected from multiple sources, and assistance secured from the National Library Service in collating and managing the library. The TTU Team has established a positive and productive working relationship with IDB, the PEC, and the DTTs.

District Tourism Trainers

DTTs have been hired in all but one of the original locations designated in the original technical component documents. The following are the locations and numbers of DTTs: Belize City – 2 DTTs for training, 1 DTT assigned to BTIA to assist with training coordination and the development of the Job Bank; Corozal – 1 DTT; Orange Walk – 1 DTT; San Pedro – 1 DTT; Caye Caulker – 1 DTT; Dangriga – 2 DTTs; Placencia – 1 DTT; Toledo District (Punta Gorda) – 2 DTTs; Cayo District – 2 DTTs (to cover Cayo and central Belize).

The hiring process for DTTs began in September 2001 and was completed by the end of that year. In each location, an office has been established, and the DTTs supplied with equipment to help them coordinate and develop the training programs. In addition, each office is sign-posted to indicate the presence of the training program.

It was originally envisioned that DTTs would be hired on a part-time basis to coordinate training efforts, while maintaining their regular employment. Most DTTs are employed for 10 hours per week. Several positions are full-time, depending on the anticipated demand in a particular location. In all cases, those who are working 10 hours per week feel that this amount of time is insufficient for the work that needs to be accomplished, particularly during this start-up phase of the program. As they begin work in earnest towards the implementation of training courses, the DTTs see the work as divided into two distinct tasks, marketing and coordination. In this start-up period, marketing and promoting the program is demanding a great deal more time than anticipated, from making people aware of the program to actually gaining a commitment to participate in a program. Many of the DTTs feel that face-to-face meetings with employers is the only way to convince people to participate, and that this requires a lot of time and effort. Often more than one visit is required, with follow-up, to secure actual participation in a particular course.

In addition, the DTTs have the responsibility of coordinating the training programs being offered, organizing all the logistics for the program. Again, in this beginning phase of the project, this is time-consuming, as systems are being put into place, tested, and adjusted

as needed. Once all materials are on hand in each of the destination locations, and once the courses have been offered several times, routines will become established that will allow for the streamlining of the coordination process, requiring less time and effort on the part of the DTTs. A number of DTTs expressed their desire to focus on one or the other aspect of their job, depending on their strengths and skills. Tasking DTTs to focus specifically on marketing/promotion or logistics/coordination should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

All DTTs signed a one-year contract at the start of their employment, with the understanding that the workload would be evaluated at 6 months. The 6-month evaluation point will occur for most DTTs in June 2002, and it is recommended that the program consider ways to increase the time allotted to DTTs to carry out the needed marketing and promotion of the program in their districts during this start-up phase. Each district needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to see if the current DTTs can handle the additional hours, or whether additional DTTs should be hired on a part-time basis to work on this task. This increased DTT work effort should be evaluated at the end of another six months to see if it has met this start-up need and can be scaled back, or needs to be continued.

In addition, a method should be established for DTTs to keep track of the hours that they work, both paid and unpaid, so that unpaid hours can be counted as part of the in-kind volunteer hour contribution to the program.

Action Items:

Consider tasking certain DTTs with promotion and marketing, and others with coordination of training, based on their skills and strengths.

Establish a system for tracking both paid and unpaid time devoted to the program, so that unpaid time can be counted as part of the Volunteer Hours in-kind contribution to the program.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ **Evaluate DTT workload at 6-month point of employment and make adjustments as needed to allow the work to be completed. Consider increasing the number of hours worked by DTTs and/or increasing the number of DTTs in an area for the next 6 months to address the need for a significant start-up push in promotion and marketing of the program by DTTs. Evaluate again at the end of the next 6 month period and adjust time schedule as needed.**

IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

As noted above, the program has three specific components that address the overall and specific objectives of the grant. Each component was evaluated in terms of implementation, strengths and weaknesses, potential opportunities available to the project which will strengthen its implementation, and possible challenges to the program that have come into the picture since the design phase of the program.

Each destination in the country is unique in the successes and challenges that it presents to the implementation of the program for the TTU and the DTTs. In examining the three components of the program, the following discussion focuses on an analysis of the overall program, providing suggested activities and recommendations that are applicable to the program as a whole. The format follows the Components and Activities listed in the original Donors Memorandum (Belize, Support for the Development of an Ecotourism Training Program, TC-99-02-06-2). Implementation of these suggestions and recommendations will vary destination by destination, in keeping with the overall intention of the program to provide localized services that are accessible, flexible and relevant.

Component 1: Training Program Design

To address measures needed to improve the flexibility and relevancy of tourism education and training in accordance with the projected growth areas of the sector in eco, nature, heritage, and adventure tourism.

Activity 1: Needs Assessment

A country-wide Needs Assessment was designed and carried out during the first three months of the program's implementation, the first of three annual Needs Assessments that will be carried out during the program, with the results tallied in August 2001 and reported to IDB and the PEC in a report titled, "A Study of Tourism Training Needs in Belize." 652 tourism establishments completed the needs assessment questionnaires, which were administered by fax, email or by one of 15 interviewers hired to administer the survey. The survey was designed to provide a significant level of detail in regards to the felt needs of the tourism industry, allowing the program to look at different training needs by skill level (managerial, professional, skilled/semi-skilled and unskilled labor), preference for type of training preferred (on-the-job, in-house, local training, etc.), timing of training (day, evening, weekend), and financial resources devoted to training. The survey was also designed to allow an analysis of training needs by destination, which can provide guidance to DTTs in the districts in deciding on the most appropriate training courses for their area, as well as some of the challenges they may face in implementation of the program. Lastly, the survey requested information on each institution's employees, as a way to begin collecting information for the database of people involved in the tourism industry that will assist in establishing the Job Bank.

As a result of the initial needs assessment, the following nine courses were identified as being a top priority for development and implementation during the first year of the program: customer relations, marketing, leadership, financial/accounting, communications, human resources management, management, computer literacy and foreign language. As noted in the Needs Assessment analysis, “these programs ranked the highest across the nine sectors of tourism and across the four levels of employment.” (A Study of Tourism Training Needs in Belize, August 2001, p. 12)

In addition to the above, the TTU was given the responsibility of managing the National Tour Guide Training Program, a course traditionally organized and managed by BTB’s Product Development department. The National Tour Guide Training Program is unique in the country, in that completion of the course with a passing grade is a requirement for obtaining a Tour Guide License. Tour Guides may not legally work in Belize without a Tour Guide License, so participation in the course is driven to a large extent by this legal requirement.

The National Tour Guide Training Program was substantially revised and upgraded in 2001, and TTU has been handed the responsibility for managing the implementation of the new program, which is longer and more rigorous than the previous tour guide training program. As with any new program, there are lessons to be learned as the new program is implemented, but BTB’s decision to have TTU coordinate this process is a positive one, as it puts all of BTB’s training efforts under the watchful eye of one department, the TTU. Some specific questions in the Needs Assessment for Year 2 that are directed at assessing the effectiveness of the new Tour Guide Training Program may provide useful feedback for the unit.

The Needs Assessment for Year 2 will begin in June 2002, and will evaluate the response to the first cadre of courses developed and offered, and assess any significant changes in the tourism industry that need attention in terms of courses to be offered. The Needs Assessment should also ask about the availability of training from other institutions, to ensure that efforts are not duplicated or in competition with each other. Most importantly, it is recommended that the Year 2 Needs Assessment solicit additional information about willingness to pay for training, as this is one of the issues that has been a challenge to the DTTs in recruiting participants to the courses, and will continue to impact on both the short-term and long-term implementation of the program.

With the implementation of courses now underway, it is becoming clear to the DTTs that, for some of the courses, the need and willingness to participate are felt beyond the strict confines of the tourism industry. Many people who interact with tourists on a peripheral level have expressed an interest in participating, and have also been identified as being good potential clients for the training courses. For example, the telephone company, bank personnel, local government representatives, customs and immigration personnel, and the police have expressed interest in different locations in participating in some of the training courses offered. As the Needs Assessment for Year 2 is prepared, it may be useful to try and survey some of these more peripheral but still important participants in tourism to make sure that their needs are also factored into the overall program.

One aspect of the tourism industry, in particular, has grown dramatically in the past several years, and merits particular attention in the up-coming Needs Assessment. The number of cruise ship visitors to Belize has increased dramatically, from approximately 58,000 visitors in 2000, to a projected 250,000 visitors in 2002. The particular needs of this segment of the market, which is a market focused on one area of the country, Belize City and environs, may need to be considered in the development of courses for 2002 and 2003, particularly for Belize District.

The demand generated by this sector of the industry, particularly for tour guides, may also necessitate some creative thinking involving all sectors on how to best meet this need in a rapid, flexible way that maintains the standards of tour guiding that the country and the local and national Tour Guide Associations have fought hard to implement and insure. Questions addressing this particular issue in the Needs Assessment may help guide the program in developing some additional flexibility in tour guide training as discussions continue on how to best coordinate the licensing system.

Action Items:

Add specific questions about the new Tour Guide Training Program to the Year 2 Needs Assessment to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the new program, and to solicit input on how to ensure that the program is accessible, flexible, and relevant.

In addition to exploring feedback on courses already offered and soliciting input on felt needs, ascertain perceived access to other training courses to minimize competition and maximize coordination.

Consider targeting additional sectors of the industry, including those specifically involved with cruise ship tourism, and those more peripherally involved in tourism, such as banks, immigration, telephone personnel, etc. to solicit their input on training needs.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ **Assess willingness to pay as part of the Year 2 Needs Assessment, as this is a critical issue to the long-term success of the program.**

Activity 2: Development of a Management Information System to track information such as the training delivery system, schedule of courses offered both by the Training Unit and other institutions, registration and evaluation forms, etc.

The Management Information System has been implemented, and a database established that tracks DTTs, trainers, courses, participants, schedules, etc. A variety of information is readily available to the TTU to assess the program's progress, and to provide information for the required reporting to IDB, PEC, etc. DTTs are required to submit two

monthly reports: 1) a Monthly Work Plan that outlines their plans for the coming month; 2) a Monthly Report that outlines the activities they have pursued for the previous month, and their progress in program implementation. As noted in Component 2, Activity 4 below, revisions to these forms are needed for better data collection purposes. In addition, the forms currently provide an area for difficulties encountered, which is important to the TTU staff, as it enables them to identify potential problems and address them quickly. In order to encourage DTTs to continue to respond creatively to on-the-ground situations, it is recommended that the forms be adjusted to encourage DTTs to share their problem-solving solutions to challenges they have faced. This information can then be shared generically with the other DTTs via a Monthly Update.

A Master Schedule of course offerings in tourism has been created, and this is made available to the public via the TTU website. In addition, each destination has established a schedule of intended course offerings, which is available locally and at the national level. Course schedules are being included in the marketing and promotional advertisement that is included in the Marketing Plan. Consistency in promoting both local course offerings and the overall program needs to be maintained in any marketing efforts.

A website for the Tourism Training Program has been created that makes much of this information available to the public, allowing them to gather information about the staff members involved in the Tourism Training Unit, the courses being offered at different locations, and to register online. The Administrative Coordinator brings previous experience in the setting up and designing of management information systems, including website design, to his position, and is responsible for coordinating and maintaining the information systems. The website is up and running, although several areas and functions are still to be finalized and made available on-line. In addition, the website will, in the future, be one of the important access points to the Job Bank, as this is created and implemented. Coordination with the BTIA DTT responsible for the Job Bank and other marketing functions will be extremely important as this aspect of the program is implemented.

DTTs around the country are finding creative, innovative ways to develop and implement the training programs in their areas. The quarterly meetings that the DTTs attend provide a forum for sharing ideas, information, and creative problem-solving strategies that are invaluable. However, the program should consider adding an area to the website available only to TTU staff and DTTs that provides a Monthly Update on what is happening in each of the districts, tips, ideas, etc., and potential forum for addressing challenging issues that a particular destination or the program as a whole may be facing that serves as a mechanism for maintaining communication in the time between quarterly meetings. This area could be accessed by password.

Action Items:

Revise the DTT Monthly Work Plan and Monthly Report forms to enable better data collection.

Encourage DTTs to include creative problem-solving ideas they have used when completing the Difficulties Encountered section of their Monthly Reports, to be shared with other DTTs via the Monthly Update.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ **Add an area of the website that provides a Monthly Update to DTTs on program developments, district events, tips, new resources acquired, etc. and provides a forum for DTTs to share ideas or request assistance in meeting challenges being faced in a particular destination. This can be accessed with a special password.**

Activity 3: Acquire off-the-shelf training products/packaged courses that already exist. Evaluate and select the appropriate products for use in Belize. Packaged courses will be purchased and made available as part of the training resource “library.” The project will create a “resource library” of training materials.

The TTU, and specifically the Curriculum Specialist, has identified packaged training courses available from the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), The Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), and the Organization of American States (OAS), focusing on regionally available and potentially useful courses. A number of these courses have been purchased for the program, both for use as off-the-shelf courses, to modify for use in the Belize context, and to be part of the “training library”. These include the Tour Operators Training Program, Supervisory Management, and Teaching Tourism in the Caribbean, all purchased from CTO. Training is being provided for DTTs in conducting these training programs (See Component 2: Train the Trainers), and other programs available regionally continue to be identified and evaluated for use. Train the Trainers activities have an impact on this component, as expanding exposure of TTU personnel, DTTs and program course trainers to training opportunities provides increased awareness of what is available internationally and regionally that may benefit the tourism training program, specifically, and the tourism industry generally, in Belize.

The TTU has developed a Resource Center, currently housed in the TTU offices at BTB. The unit has liaised with the National Library Service to develop a computerized system for cataloguing and circulating the materials. The Resource Center is well-organized and growing in size, and TTU staff have indicated a strong interest in continuing to develop this resource as the program continues. The in-house circulation system is also available on-line through the website, making it easily accessible to tourism industry personnel, and providing accurate tracking of materials as they are borrowed. As the resource library grows and expands, information about newly acquired materials should be made available to the DTTs through the Monthly Update, and to the public via the website.

As part of this activity, the TTU is also engaged in identifying, designing and developing alternative training modules that further the goals of accessibility and flexibility. Specific

training modules have been developed for the Tourism Police, for Customs and Immigrations personnel, and targeted at those working in the Cruise Industry. These will be offered on a demand basis in different destinations. Careful evaluation of these specialized training modules should be included, to make sure that the courses are consistent in quality with the other TTU course offerings. In addition, a CD-ROM version of the Customer Relations course is expected to be completed and available in May, with the CD-ROM for sale to those who would prefer this method of self-training. The TTU has plans to develop other self-study distance learning modules, videotapes and CD-ROM alternatives for courses. Evaluation of each course needs to be an important component, in order to assess and insure the quality of the training products.

In regards to the Tour Guide Training Program, the program should consider a self-study, distance learning alternative approach for some units of the program. Those units of the program that are focused primarily on information will lend themselves to this type of alternative approach. However, because the program also focuses heavily on the development and practice of guiding skills, other units are not appropriate for self-study. Another alternative to be considered is the idea of allowing trainees to complete Unit 1 (Belize Today) and Unit 2 (Tour Guiding Skills), followed by a site-specific unit (to be developed) that would allow them to work as a “Junior Guide” for one specific site, and complete the full course over a defined period of time to gain a full Tour Guide License. Again, following the motto of “Accessible, Flexible, and Relevant,” the TTU is in an excellent position to help guide the national decision-making process on how best to conduct the training and licensing of tour guides.

Action Items:

Continue to acquire and evaluate off-the-shelf tourism training programs available regionally and internationally.

Make sure that DTTs and tourism industry personnel are made aware of new acquisitions of materials, courses, and programs at the Resource Library, through the recommended DTT Monthly Update, and via the website for the industry, in addition to other outlets (the National Library Service, for example).

Include an evaluation component in all alternative training programs, whether self-study, special courses, distance learning programs, etc.

Consider developing self-study programs for certain units of the Tour Guide Training Program (Units 1, 4, and 5) and alternatives to the full course that might allow for “junior guides” to work under clearly defined circumstances while working towards completion of the full program and acquisition of a full Tour Guide’s License.

Activity 4: Three levels of training have been identified in the project analysis for introduction in the first year: (i) Management level; (ii) Staff level; and (iii) Entry Level.

As a result of the Needs Assessment, the project identified four different levels of training needed: management; professional staff; skilled/semi-skilled staff; unskilled/entry level staff. The off-the-shelf courses that have been purchased, and the courses being developed in-house, are designed to address these different levels of training need. To date, 1-2 courses have been offered in almost every location. As of April 15, 2002, 159 participants have completed 12 courses in 7 locations, and received certificates of completion at "graduation" ceremonies. Other courses are currently in progress, including Tour Guide Training. The level of the courses offered to date is at the skilled/semi-skilled and unskilled/entry level, depending on the location and the trainees enrolled.

The DTTs have showed admirable flexibility in responding to the different training needs of their areas. For example, in Punta Gorda, trainees for one of the Communication Skills sessions that was offered were at such an introductory level, that the trainer made the decision to divide the course into two parts and spend the needed time to make sure that her trainees were able to manage and progress through the material. The TTU supported this decision, and participants eagerly await Part II of their course, now that they have mastered Part I. In other locations, trainers have been able to adjust the training exercises for the Customer Relations course to reflect the different employment sectors of their participants, some of whom are only peripherally involved in the tourism industry (for example, telephone company personnel, bank personnel, etc.). In Corozal, the DTT has approached the tourism police to propose training in Customer Relations, and in Caye Caulker, the Taxi Driver's Association has expressed some initial interest in such a course.

DTTs, trainers, and participants to date all note the need to offer training to management. This is proving to be a challenge to the DTTs, both in terms of getting management themselves to participate in training programs, and in terms of getting management to support the training programs offered at the staff level. A Supervisory Management course is being developed now, and will be offered later this year at most locations. As the marketing and promotional plan begins to operate (it was just beginning in April 2002), the message will become more widespread and this will enhance their efforts.

In the meantime, in this initial phase of getting the courses up and running, the DTTs need some additional assistance in convincing managers, employers, and owners to buy-in to the program. It may be helpful for the Program Manager to meet with a gathering of local business leaders at the district level, including but not exclusively limited to tourism industry businesses, to directly promote the program and respond to any concerns or barriers that employers perceive. The program needs to motivate the employers to buy-in to the training courses and support their staffs in accessing the training programs, by allowing time to attend the courses, cost-sharing mechanisms, and other support. With the reported level of frustration on the part of DTTs about the amount of time needed to

approach individual employers, the Program Manager could usefully assist the DTTs in their promotional efforts by creating and delivering an oral presentation that addresses local employers' concerns as a group directly, impressing upon them the importance of supporting the program, now that it is operational, and demonstrating the commitment of BTB/BTIA for the program at the local and district, as well as national, levels.

The DTTs can assist in identifying the best venue and timing of such a visit from the Program Manager, and in organizing such an event, perhaps utilizing already existing local groups such as the local Business Council, Rotary Club, BTIA chapter, or other business association. The time to plan such events should be over the next few months, when the program is still building momentum, and would most benefit from such a motivational push. Such an event should facilitate the job of the DTTs in recruiting participants and in carrying out the necessary follow-up, by making their presence more familiar and the goals of the program clearer.

Action Items:

Offer management-level training program as soon as possible to promote idea of management/employer involvement in the program.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ **Design and develop an oral presentation that can be made to a group of businesses/employers that addresses their expressed barriers (timing, cost, employees leaving for better jobs, seasonality, etc.) and provides creative responses that encourage them to support the training program. Schedule presentations to local business/employer groups by Program Manager in as many destinations as possible over the next 3-6 months to assist DTTs in promoting program locally.**

Activity 5: Current, locally-developed tourism training courses will be revised and strengthened and off-the-shelf programs/curriculums will be modified to reflect local context (educational level, district focus, tourism development level, etc.) in accordance with the on-going needs assessment. The project will develop and reproduce the materials for selected courses such as workbooks, manuals, teaching aids, certificates, decals, etc.

Currently, materials production for the courses that will be offered in Year 1 of the program are in the process of being completed. To date, all course materials are available for the Customer Relations and Tour Guide Training program. Communication Skills materials and Front Office Operation are in the final stages of production and are expected to be ready for use at the end of April. The production of course materials has proceeded more slowly than anticipated, for a variety of reasons – hired consultants have been slow to produce work, the printing process has taken longer than planned, etc. The

lack of all needed course materials has frustrated the DTTs in the field, who have had to re-schedule planned courses in some instances in order to wait for materials.

The Curriculum Specialist needs to more closely monitor the process of materials development, and provide the necessary guidance and motivation to contractors to complete work on a timely basis, so as not to impede the implementation of courses. As courses are completed and available, this issue will become less of a problem, but in this start-up phase, it is important to keep the momentum of the program building by being able to offer courses as scheduled.

The project is being careful to make sure that the materials produced are of good quality and provide useful, user-friendly, relevant take-home materials to participants. Each course includes a trainer's guide, a participant's handbook, and other hand-outs. The materials are well-designed, practical, easy to read, and attractive, all important components of insuring that the quality and reliability of the training program is apparent. All participants interviewed commented favorably on the course materials, both those used in class, and those provided to participants to keep. They have found the information presented to be clear, usable, and interesting, and it kept their interest and continues to assist them after the course is completed.

Graduates of each course are presented with a TTU certificate that lists BTB, BTIA and IDB as sponsors of the program, and identifies the course by title. These certificates are valuable to participants, as evidence of their achievement, and to the program as well, both in terms of marketing, and in the long-term goal of developing a certification system for tourism training in the country. Other participant rewards need to be developed to recognize participation in self-study, distance learning, or customized programs, which the program can also track in terms of standardization.

For example, if courses are to be measured in hours, than levels of achievement based on course hours may be one way of offering different levels of recognition: 1-5 hour courses result in a ribbon, 5-10 hour courses result in a decal, etc., with courses requiring 25 hours or more resulting in a certificate. If this is standardized across the program, than DTTs have flexibility in tailoring courses to their local circumstances, while maintaining consistency in recognition for participation in training. Promoting the flexibility of the program is very important, but at the same time, the training programs will only be recognized across the industry if a certain standard of achievement is maintained.

Now that courses are running in most districts, the evaluation of the programs becomes particularly important. The project has built an evaluation component into each training course. Participants and trainers both complete an evaluation of the course at the end of the training. This information is being collected and tracked by the TTU and will provide an important feedback mechanism.

In addition, each course includes an assessment component. Currently, this assessment is designed and delivered by the trainer at the end of the training, utilizing the course materials. This is in keeping with the idea of accessible, flexible and relevant training,

particularly as skill levels, needs and familiarity with the general concepts of the tourism and hospitality industry vary widely throughout the country. As the program works towards furthering the goals of the industry in establishing and designing standards for performance and a more comprehensive certification system, it will be very important for the Curriculum Specialist to monitor the assessment done for each course across the districts to ensure that quality and consistency is being maintained.

The program should implement a plan to evaluate the assessment component of each course on a semi-annual basis to monitor this, and consider the need to standardize testing across districts for a course on a course-by-course basis. The only course that currently has standardized national testing is the Tour Guide Training Program, and this is due to the licensing requirement imposed by the government. As the stricter testing regimen of the revised tour guide training is implemented, this should also be monitored carefully by the TTU to ensure that it is succeeding in testing participants without creating unnecessary barriers. The standardized testing methodology of the Tour Guide Training Program may serve as a model for the program as it considers the need for standardized testing for different courses.

One of the most exciting aspects of the program, now that participants are completing courses and are returning to (or joining) the workforce, is the positive feedback that DTTs are getting from both course participants and their employers about their enhanced skills. It is very important for the program to capture this information in a systematic way, for two compelling reasons: 1) the information can be used as an additional evaluation tool in monitoring and measuring the program's impact and assessing the quality and relevancy of each course under real-life conditions; and 2) the success of participants and positive employer evaluations can be used as a marketing and promotional tool to encourage others to participate in the training programs.

It is recommended that the TTU design and develop a simple evaluation form that can be administered approximately two months after completion of a course to both participants and their employers that can gather information about job performance changes and impact of the course. These evaluations should be analyzed on a regular basis to make any necessary changes to courses and to provide data on impact and effectiveness of the training program. A simple, one-page evaluation form distributed to both employers and course participants and analyzed by the TTU will provide important information on the effectiveness of the program.

Another issue that has surfaced for the program now that the program has begun implementation is the issue of the cost of the courses. The program from the start intended for the courses to be offered on a cost-recovery basis, and for the program as a whole to be self-sustaining and generate income for BTIA when the funding period ends. Nearly everyone involved in the program supports this idea, and understands the rationale behind it. At the same time, a variety of factors around the country make the cost of the courses an initial barrier: 1) competition from other courses that are offered for free or at lower cost, either because they are less rigorous courses, or because the cost is subsidized; 2) lack of economic resources in some districts; 3) lack of support from

employers; and 4) outside events that have impacted on available financial resources in some areas – for example, the devastation of Hurricane Keith on Caye Caulker and San Pedro, and Hurricane Iris on Placencia and Punta Gorda, where recovery is still underway, and there has been both loss of income and increased financial burden for repairs and recovery.

In the long-term, the program will only survive if it is self-sustaining and can support itself. In the short-term, creative ways must be explored to try and address the perceived barrier of the costs of a course. The DTTs and others involved with the program are coming up with many creative ways to address this issue, particularly at the onset of the program, which is commendable. Ideas such as cost-sharing between employers and employees, with or without an employee commitment to remain in employment for an agreed-upon period of time; reduced costs for enrolling more than one person (3 for the price of 2, 2 for 1, etc.), time payment plans that allow participants to pay over time, with their certificate awarded only when payment has been made in full; revolving loan programs through local credit unions; a scholarship fund; and other innovative ideas are being tried in various locations. In addition, BTIA members receive a \$50 discount when signing up for a course, a policy that has been implemented country wide. The project should examine whether the \$50 per course fee, or a percentage amount per course, is the best mechanism for providing for cost-recovery and income, as well as a positive incentive to BTIA members.

We recommend that DTTs, together with TTU staff, take the opportunity to meet together and share all of the ideas generated in regards to the costing issue, and brainstorm additional ideas that may be applicable. As this issue is critical to the initial success of the program, as well as to its long-term success, it must be addressed and continue to be monitored over the life of the project. While the program has funding support, creative ideas can be tried to build participation, particularly in this initial phase. Setting aside time in the upcoming June 2002 quarterly meeting for DTTs to address this issue will be beneficial to the program. It should also be an item for on-going reporting and discussion in the Monthly Update to DTTs.

Action Items:

Continue to monitor and insure that the quality of materials produced for each course is consistently high.

Develop a reward system that recognizes participation and achievement for different types of training – short-courses, self-study, specialized training programs, etc. - that complements the certificates now in place for standard courses.

Ensure that course evaluations are monitored regularly to insure quality control.

Re-examine the BTIA discount and determine whether a flat fee or percentage reduction is more appropriate.

Designate time at the June 2002 DTT quarterly meeting to discuss and brainstorm on creative ways to address course costs.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ Enhance monitoring of the curriculum production process by the Curriculum Specialist to ensure that timelines are met and that course implementation is not delayed due to lack of materials.
- ◆ Monitor and evaluate tests and assessments given for each course on a semi-annual basis, and consider on a course-by-course basis if there is a need to standardize testing across destinations.
- ◆ Design and implement a simple evaluation tool to administer to participants and employers 2 months after the completion of a course to assess the program's impact. Collect and use this information for impact, quality assurance and marketing purposes.
- ◆ Continue to develop creative ideas to address the issue of cost of the courses, and to share these with all DTTs through Monthly Update. Ensure that all DTTs are aware of different methods of cost-sharing that they may try, and consider programmatic support for some cost sharing ideas (scholarship fund, revolving loan fund, etc.)

Component 2: Training of Trainers

To develop a cadre of locally trained experts available to deliver training and specialized consulting services for emerging and existing tourism establishments.

Activity 1: DTTs will be selected by the project (2-4 per district, serving approximately 10 locations throughout the country) and initially retained on a part-time basis (approximately 10 hours per week) to coordinate and provide tourism training within their district.

The project has hired and trained 14 DTTs in 9 locations throughout the country, following an advertising process supported by the PEC and the TTU. Those selected to be DTTs have a broad base of experience. While some have many years of experience as trainers in the tourism field, others are less experienced but with skills in community outreach, environmental education, and/or marketing. All but two of the DTTs were interviewed by the consultants in person. One of the two remaining DTTs was interviewed via email. We were impressed with their level of enthusiasm and commitment to the program, despite the demanding time commitment and challenges they face in start-up implementation.

Tourism Training Unit offices have been set up in each of the nine locations, and support materials provided in the form of computer, printer, TV and VCR, and other training

supplies. Each office location is clearly sign-posted. Two of the offices are located in DTT homes, while the others share space in a variety of offices associated in some way with the tourism industry. As training implementation continues, the location of some of these offices needs to be evaluated to make sure that they are in the best location to offer accessibility and visibility.

In coordination with ***Component 3: Institutional Strengthening of the BTIA***, it is possible that BTB and BTIA may be able to find more centrally located space in some destinations that could house a tourist information center, BTIA and other industry sector offices, and the local training unit office as well, providing each destination with a single, central place for tourism information of all kinds for both visitors and industry members alike (see Component 3 for additional discussion of this), with support from both BTB and the private sector to house and staff such a facility. This “incubator concept” has been used successfully in other developing tourism destinations to help coordinate efforts to develop and enhance services in the tourism sector, and could be adapted for use in Belize.

In addition to the 14 DTTs working for the program, the TTU has also identified tourism trainers, by district, who can provide training across a variety of skills and courses. Having this roster of qualified trainers available to call upon ensures that courses offered maintain a high standard of quality in the subject matter being taught. Currently, 57 trainers are included in the Trainer’s List. The program needs to evaluate how it can best support these trainers in the development of their skills, in providing the best quality instruction in the courses when they are offered, and adequate compensation and opportunities to work. Because Belize is a small country, a destination can access quality trainers from other locations if the requisite skills are not available locally. While the aim should be to develop local trainers as much as possible, this is not realistic in all cases, due to the need for differing skills in different areas, and differing levels of demand.

The program needs to monitor demand to ensure that supply of trainers doesn’t exceed the demand for their services, and to ensure that Training of Trainers occurs across all levels of experience. Newer trainers must be afforded opportunities to gain experience and skills, while more seasoned trainers need to be provided opportunities to further refine their skills. The program should also explore the possibility of using more experienced trainers to co-train with less experienced trainers, or offer some of the Train the Trainer courses themselves. In areas that are newer to tourism and still developing, the need for skilled trainers locally may grow over the life of the project, and the project will also need to monitor this.

Action Items:

Evaluate destination office set-up in each location at the six-month evaluation of DTTs' employment, in terms of location, functionality, and provision of services.

Monitor demand and supply of trainers available to the program. Provide opportunities for skill enhancement and capacity building across all levels of training ability.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ **Explore additional creative partnership ideas (such as the tourism incubator concept) between tourism industry stakeholders that may enhance tourism services in some destinations, such as tourism centers that are centrally located to provide information to visitors, house BTIA and other sector organization offices, as well as the TTU training office. Consider cost-sharing arrangements that may enhance both public and private sector goals to improve the provision of tourism services in destinations.**

Activity 2: DTTs will be encouraged to maintain their regular employment, serving part-time in the capacity of District Tourism Trainer with the support of their employer. Given that training needs vary between districts, it is possible that some districts may require full-time DTTs once the project has begun to offer training.

All DTTs were required to sign a one-year contract, with an evaluation of their roles and responsibilities to be carried out at the six-month mark. Currently, only two DTTs work full-time, with the rest working 10 hours per week, as was originally envisioned. However, as noted above in the Program Management section, all DTTs have expressed their opinion that this amount of time is not sufficient for the work entailed, particularly at this initial phase of getting the program operational in the destinations. In particular, additional time is needed for marketing and promotion of the program to employers, who are seen as key to the success of the program, both in terms of their own participation and the enhancement of their skills and understanding of training's benefits, and in terms of their support for their employees in pursuing training opportunities.

The DTTs have shown admirable creativity in providing "affordable, timely, flexible and responsive tourism training in their area." (Donors Memorandum, p. 5) They have worked to tailor courses to the abilities of participants and scheduled courses to reflect the preferred timing in the destination (evenings, daytimes with employer support, and weekends are preferred in different locations). The TTU has been supportive of DTTs by reacting positively to flexible approaches in offering the training courses. This is particularly important during this initial phase of the program, when getting courses up and running, with satisfied graduates, is important to building the program momentum.

As the DTTs acquire more experience in offering a variety of courses, refinements will no doubt be required, in scheduling, logistics, costing, promotion, selection of course trainers, etc. The TTU should continue to support the creative efforts of the DTTs, as it has done to date. Again, a wider mechanism, such as the Monthly Update for DTTs, for sharing successes, challenges, creative problem-solving ideas and new information would

be very helpful in keeping the DTTs informed, in touch with each other, and motivated in their efforts to implement the program in their area.

Action Items:

As noted in Program Management Key Recommendations, DTT workload needs to be evaluated and adjusted on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the program is able to build the necessary momentum to meet its overall objectives.

Continue to support the flexible approaches that DTTs develop in implementation, while maintaining overall standards in course quality.

Enhance communication between TTU and DTTs as a group through Monthly Update and other creative mechanisms.

Activity 3: Initial training of the DTTs would be organized by the project to ensure that the trainers are competent to carry out the training programs. This initial “training of trainers” would provide them with the knowledge and skills to assist people in their communities to acquire needed tourism occupational training, and to understand and utilize the framework for one training system. Initial training would also focus on ecotourism skills, enabling DTTs to provide specialized business know-how in this developing area. Training will be regular, frequent, and model different teaching methodologies to encourage development of such skills for use in district training programs.

The TTU has done an excellent job of organizing Train the Trainers sessions for the DTTs and, in the case of some courses that have been offered, to open these as well to people identified by the program to work as course trainers. Quarterly meetings are scheduled for the DTTs that include opportunities to share their experiences to date, updates on the program, and a particular Train the Trainers activity. Each quarterly meeting is held in a different destination, affording all DTTs the opportunity to become familiar with the different circumstances of each destination, and for the program's efforts and importance to become more familiar to that destination. All DTTs praised the quarterly meetings as being of particular benefit in carrying out their work and in enhancing their own skills and abilities.

To date, two quarterly meeting sessions have been held, in Belize City in December 2001, and in Corozal in March 2002. In the first quarterly meeting, DTTs were given an orientation workshop that introduced them to the program and to the Trainer's Kit (see below), and also received Train the Trainers sessions for the Communications Skills course. In the second quarterly meeting, sessions included a motivation workshop, a presentation on marketing and the marketing plan for the program, and a Train the Trainers session in ecotourism provided by the Executive Director of The International Ecotourism Society.

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for June 2002 in Caye Caulker, and will include a Train the Trainers program for the Teaching Tourism in the Caribbean Training Program purchased from CTO. All DTTs are then scheduled to provide training in this program in their destinations in late June 2002, and the MOE has agreed to award continuing education credits for this courses to the teachers who complete it. The quarterly meeting system is well-organized and we encourage the program to continue to organize and provide these meetings on a regular basis throughout the life of the program. They offer a dynamic and multi-faceted opportunity for those involved in the program to enhance their skills and abilities, which ultimately benefits the program and all that come into contact with it.

In addition to these quarterly meetings, the TTU has also organized and offered other training programs. In August 2001 and again in March 2002, the unit offered the CHTI Train the Trainer program to all DTTs, as well as others. At this juncture, all but one DTT has been certified as a trainer through this course (the one missed the course due to a medical emergency). This course was universally praised by all that participated in it and has enhanced the skills and abilities of even veteran trainers and teachers. The TTU is, in addition, making plans to provide training to select trainers at the next level, that will allow Belize to have its own CHTI training assessors and certifiers. It is anticipated that up to 5 trainers will be afforded this opportunity. In addition, DTTs have been trained to offer customized training needs assessments to businesses, and a Tour Operators Training of Trainers program is currently being run, with many of the DTTs participating in this training in anticipation of providing this service in their destinations.

One of the challenges faced by the TTU and by the DTTs and trainers themselves is the varying levels of experience, skills and abilities that individuals bring to the program. As the program continues to identify and organize training opportunities for the unit, DTTs, and trainers who will assist the program, a variety of different levels of opportunity needs to be built into the Train the Trainer offerings. In developing its cadre of trainers, Belize must look both outward and inward to enhance its capacity. The TTU must respond to the needs felt by the individuals and individual businesses that participate in the industry at the local level, and at the same time ensure that a broader vision of the demands and expectations of the global and regional markets that Belize wishes to reach are incorporated into the overall strategy for training.

The program has done a good job of identifying the felt needs of the local tourism industry, through the yearly Needs Assessment. This is an important tool in assisting the TTU to determine the courses it should develop and offer as the project moves into Year 2 and Year 3. However, it would also benefit the program greatly to look beyond Belize's borders to ensure that the training offered enables the tourism industry to be competitive regionally and globally. While the program was designed to utilize internationally and regionally available off-the-shelf courses for some of its training, it could additionally benefit greatly from a broader exposure to the regional tourism sector, in particular.

By carefully selecting potential regional training opportunities for members of the TTU staff and the more experienced DTTs, the program will ensure that it is working to achieve its overall objective, which is to increase the competitiveness of the Belize tourism industry. The global and regional marketplace are demanding, and Belize will need to make sure that its training programs correctly understand these demands and respond to them adequately. Therefore, we would recommend that the program consider the participation of program staff in Train the Trainer opportunities and tourism conferences at the regional level to enhance this understanding.

Personnel that would specifically benefit from such training opportunities would be the Program Manager, the Curriculum Specialist, and a number of the DTTs with considerable tourism and training experience. Seeing how other countries, similar to Belize but further along in their tourism development, such as some of the Caribbean countries, have developed their tourism product, and their tourism training programs, would be extremely beneficial to the program overall and to its ability to upgrade the quality of tourism and hospitality services in Belize. DTTs selected to further develop their skills in this way, which would recognize their level of expertise, would then be able to provide additional training to those less-experienced DTTs and trainers, increasing the benefit across all levels of the program.

The knowledge gained from this wider perspective, coupled with the information gathered from the annual Needs Assessment, will allow the program to design training course offerings that are accessible, flexible, and relevant on a broader scale. We recommend that the program consider participation in 3-4 such opportunities per year, carefully selected both for content and participants.

As DTTs organize their course schedules and course offerings in their destinations, they should be encouraged to select trainers who will deliver a high quality experience, while also ensuring that the capacity of trainers is developed and opportunities presented that build their experience. Both newer and more experienced trainers need to be afforded the opportunity to serve as trainers for courses. The program should consider the possibility of pairing a more experienced trainer with a less experienced trainer in teaching a course, to promote collaboration, the development of mentoring relationships, and the gaining of experience and skills, particularly in the early stages of the program, where a quality product and skill development are essential. In addition, the program should carefully monitor course evaluations of the trainers to ensure that quality facilitation is being provided, and multiple trainers are being afforded the opportunity to participate in delivery of courses.

Action Items:

Continue Quarterly DTT Meetings, including motivational presentations, the opportunity for DTTs to share their experiences and problem-solve together, program updates and information, and Train the Trainer opportunities.

Monitor evaluations of Trainers to ensure that courses are being conducted by quality trainers, and opportunities are provided to all trainers involved in the program.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ **Consider program support for program staff in professional development opportunities at the regional level to enhance broader tourism perspective. Select 3-4 regional conferences and/or Train the Trainer opportunities to participate in yearly. Consider cost-sharing strategies with BTB and BTIA to support these human resources development efforts.**
- ◆ **Find ways to support development of skills for all levels of trainers, from newly trained to highly experienced. Develop ways for more experienced trainers to benefit less experienced trainers, through co-facilitating training courses, to mentoring, to program-based Train the Trainer sessions.**

Activity 4: DTTs will be trained in the use of a “Trainer’s Kit.”

DTTs were presented with and trained in the use of the program “Trainer’s Kit” at the first quarterly meeting in December 2001. This included orientation to the policies and procedures for training delivery, how to organize logistical arrangements, the system for procuring materials from the main office, procedures for establishing course fees and collection of payments, reporting requirements and reimbursement procedures. In addition to the office hardware and software provided to each DTT to maintain records and communication (computer; printer; filing cabinet; software for word processing, data entry, email and Internet; and other supporting materials), the Trainer’s Kit includes registration forms, database information collection forms, participant evaluation forms, and trainer’s evaluation forms, as well as honorarium request forms and expense reimbursement forms.

The DTTs are also required to complete a Monthly Work Plan for the coming month and submit a Monthly Report for the month just completed, to enable the TTU to track DTT progress and plans in regards to program implementation. While these forms are simple and easy to use, they need to be further refined to provide more specific information about actual numbers that can provide the TTU with easy-to-track and comparable information about many facets of program implementation in the destinations. In order to track actual work efforts, more specific information needs to be collected. Ease of reporting is important to insuring that the monthly reports are completed and received, but the TTU must be able to accurately track information (for example, actual contacts made and what sectors of the tourism industry or other businesses they represent, actual numbers of participants in courses, signed up versus completed, etc.) to monitor implementation and impact, as well.

The Trainer's Kit should be evaluated at the up-coming six-month evaluation of DTT work performance in June 2002, and adjustments made to the reporting forms, based on both the input of the DTTs and the needs of the TTU office.

Action Items:

Evaluate DTT Trainer's Kit forms at June 2002 job performance review. Solicit input from DTTs on usability of forms, information being gathered, etc.

Revise DTT reporting forms, based on DTT input and TTU needs, to more accurately track job performance, program implementation, and program impacts, as well as provide additional information on creative problem-solving.

Activity 5: DTTs will market and promote the programs offered by the project, developing a schedule of tourism training offerings. The DTTs will also serve as an information clearinghouse for tourism training being offered by other agencies.

A schedule of training courses has been organized for each destination and is being promoted by the DTTs. As implementation proceeds, DTTs are recognizing that marketing and promotion of the project is the most demanding and challenging part of their job requirements, particularly in this first year of the program. They also recognize that it is the most important part of their job, because the program's success rests on the participation of the industry in the training courses. Key Recommendations have been made above to address this particular challenge. In addition, as the marketing plan is finalized and activated, this should also assist the DTTs in achieving greater recognition and awareness of the program in general.

In serving as a clearinghouse for tourism training being offered by other agencies, the program is in an excellent position to further the countrywide dialogue and discussion around the issues of tourism training certification. Many people involved in the program ultimately wish to see a system implemented that recognizes levels of tourism training with certification and allows flexibility in building skills across the industry that are recognized in improved job quality and improved wage earning power, making Belizean workers competitive at the regional and international level in terms of the quality of their skills and service. This will require implementing a tourism training certification scheme.

The program has taken a pro-active role in participating in this dialogue. It is in on-going discussions with the University of Belize about how a tourism training certification program might be best implemented to allow participants to be recognized for the courses they take and the skills they build in relation to the degree-granting program the University offers in tourism. In addition, the program has secured continuing education credits from the Ministry of Education for its CTO Teaching Tourism in the Caribbean Training Program, which will be offered to teachers nationwide at the district level by the DTTs in June 2002. Plans are also underway for up to 5 trainers to receive additional training from CHTI that will build Belize's capacity to train at a regionally recognized

level. The PEC has suggested that the TTU also initiate contact with CET in regards to training certification.

Efforts such as these are commendable and need to be supported and enhanced by other industry players. The issues of setting standards and developing certification systems for the tourism industry are complex, involving the government and the private sector, educational institutions and industry stakeholders. The PEC should establish a sub-committee to help guide the development of the tourism training certification process, inviting other stakeholders to participate and supporting the TTU's efforts in this area. The objective should be the development of a tourism training certification framework for presentation to the tourism industry stakeholders, incorporating both local and regional ideas and information.

This is one area where the program could benefit from the experience of other countries regionally, particularly in the Caribbean, who have developed such programs. The PEC sub-committee and the TTU should investigate how it might best access this experience, through the services of a consultant who could advise the program on best practices and the step-by-step process for building such a program, and/or by facilitating program personnel in accessing training or conference opportunities on this topic available regionally. OAS, CTO, and CHTI may all provide networking opportunities around this issue. Such information could then be used by the PEC sub-committee to create a framework tailored to Belize's own circumstances, while also paying heed to the need to compete and gain recognition at the regional and international levels.

The program was also specifically designed to focus on the "growth sectors of eco, nature, heritage and adventure tourism" in developing its tourism training courses and other services because of the country's stated focus on these sectors as the core of its tourism development (Donors Memorandum, p. 2). As training now moves into Year 2 and Year 3, courses should be developed to educate industry participants and encourage them to adopt sustainable tourism practices. Development of a program of certification for ecotourism and sustainable tourism is thus of particular importance as the program continues, because it establishes mechanisms to recognize industry efforts in this regard.

In general, the goals of certification for ecotourism and sustainable tourism are to recognize tourism enterprises for their commitment to environmental sustainability; measures enacted to manage and conserve natural resources wisely; contributions to conservation; work with and support for local communities; respect for and promotion of local culture; and client education.

There is a great deal of activity around this particular issue in the region and internationally, particularly in this U.N.-designated Year of Ecotourism (2002). Significant work is being done to organize and develop a world-wide program of certification and accreditation for ecotourism and sustainable tourism, with dialogue between environmental organizations, governments, tourism industry stakeholders, conservation organizations, other NGOs and interested parties. A framework for an international certification program for sustainable tourism and ecotourism was developed

and agreed upon at an international workshop in November 2000, known as the Mohonk Agreement. At this same workshop, a proposal for a Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council to serve as an international accreditation body (in essence, to certify the certifiers) was also approved.

National certification programs are already in place in Costa Rica, Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic that can provide ideas for such an effort in Belize, tailored to Belize's particular circumstances. In Costa Rica, the Certification for Sustainable Tourism program has been in operation since 1998. A local certification program called Green Deal was organized and implemented in the Peten Region of Guatemala in 1999. In addition, a June 2001 meeting led to an agreement by six Central American countries to develop and promote a regional "Certificate of Sustainable Tourism" program. Thus, frameworks and models already exist that can guide Belize in developing its own program, and/or allow it to participate in the regional program.

The Ecotourism Training Program is in a unique position to spearhead this effort in Belize, by educating itself, and by bringing this knowledge to the on-going discussion about development of tourism standards, certification and accreditation in Belize's tourism industry, as well as in developing training and business needs assessment tools that encourage tourism industry personnel to implement such strategies in their development and operations. Again, establishing links with regional organizations working on these issues will allow the TTU to broaden its knowledge, enhancing the program's objective of competing more effectively in the global tourism marketplace.

Action Items:

Continue to explore creative avenues to gain the participation of tourism industry stakeholders in the program.

Develop training courses that encourage tourism enterprises to understand and adopt sustainable tourism practices in their operations.

TTU staff should educate themselves on the issues surrounding certification and accreditation for ecotourism and sustainable tourism, and serve as a conduit of information on eco-certification to the PEC, the tourism industry and other stakeholders.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ **Explore regional tourism certification systems by networking regionally with tourism organizations and institutions that have developed such programs. Provide opportunities for the TTU Project Manager and Curriculum Specialist to broaden their knowledge of these programs, through regional site visits and/or through educational workshops or conferences.**

- ◆ **Establish a PEC sub-committee that includes other invited stakeholders to develop a framework for tourism training certification in Belize. Network with local educational institutions, NGOs, government ministries, and tourism stakeholders. Consider consultancy assistance to help develop the framework for Belize's certification system for tourism training.**
- ◆ **Network with local, regional and international organizations on the issue of certification for ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Participate in regional discussions on development of this certification and encourage local dialogue and discussion to further development and implementation of such a program in Belize.**

Component 3: Institutional Strengthening of the BTIA

To address measures needed to facilitate the BTIA's ability to manage and respond to the human resource development needs of the tourism sector in an efficient and sustainable manner.

Activity 1: The project will provide technical assistance to work with BTIA in the development of a strategic plan.

The PEC is actively involved in this component of the program, an important and indeed critical part of the program if the training program is to succeed in the long-term, beyond the funding life of this project. The program provides support to the PEC to meet and work on tasks associated with this component. The PEC has provided input into the Terms of Reference for the development of a Business Plan for BTIA and selected the consulting team to carry out the Business Plan through a sub-committee of the PEC specifically tasked to do this. The Business Plan was completed in draft form in March 2002 and presented to the PEC for comments. The final Business Plan was submitted to the PEC at the end of April 2002.

The Business Plan addresses the issues that it was tasked to address, that of designing and developing a proposal for revenue generation for BTIA that includes the tourism training program to insure sustainability for the organization and for the training program beyond the period of IDB funding. However, in consulting with tourism industry stakeholders around the country in regards to BTIA's capacity, it became clear that issues beyond a simple revenue generation plan were important to BTIA's capacity to sustain itself as an organization. As the Business Plan states in its Executive Summary, "The respect and recognition once earned by BTIA during past years has gradually deteriorated. This decline stems from the lack of management, structure and focus of the association coupled with poor financial accountability." (BTIA Business Plan, April 2002, p. 2)

Concerns remain country-wide about BTIA's organizational structure, mission, and capacity to manage the training program in the long-term. Indeed, concerns remain among those directly involved with the Ecotourism Training Program about handing over

the management of the program to BTIA, as is planned at the end of the funding period. BTIA will have to prove that it is, indeed, capable of taking on this task.

While the PEC and the TTU can support and advise BTIA in strengthening and building its capacity as an organization, they cannot make the organization as a whole viable. This must come through the efforts of the BTIA Board and the BTIA staff, who must show commitment to restructuring the organization; develop a clear mission and implement yearly Work Plans that set out clear achievable objectives and outline how these objectives will be met; support and empower BTIA staff to carry out the Work Plans; rebuild declining membership in the organization by providing tangible benefits to members; define the relationship between local branches of the organization and the national office, as well as between the national office and other tourism sector organizations (BHA, BNTOA, BETA, BTGA, BCIA); and demonstrate financial accountability.

While attempts have been made to address some of these issues, particularly in the development of the BTIA Strategic Plan in 2000, on-going board and staff turnover have made the implementation of any clear plans very difficult, and the organization continues to suffer from a lack of confidence and lack of support among tourism industry members. The Business Plan outlines some of the structural and management issues that the organization must tackle in order to rebuild itself, restore confidence in its performance among those involved in the tourism industry, and develop financial viability. This Business Plan can be used as a starting point in carrying out the necessary organizational development of BTIA. The consultants support the recommendations made in the Business Plan, and recommend that the program support the implementation of the Business Plan by providing outside consulting services to assist the organization in several critical tasks. Timely completion of these tasks will be extremely important to the process of handing the management of the training program over to BTIA.

In light of the difficulties posed by yearly turnover in the Board of Directors, who are appointed to serve one-year terms, the Board should restructure its governance structure. Two or three year Board terms should be introduced, with rolling turnover (only 1/3 of Board members change in any given year on a 3-year term cycle, for example). Officer terms should also be extended to cover one Board term, allowing for adequate continuity in leadership and direction of the organization. The program should support the Board by providing consulting services to facilitate the restructuring of its governance structure, to redefine its mission, and in the development of written Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members and of each officer of the Board that specifically outline what is expected of Board members. These can then be used to recruit new Board members, who will make a commitment to serve based on a realistic understanding of what they are expected to do. As annual Board elections are approaching (August 2002), it is recommended that this process take place prior to the next elections, allowing the restructuring to proceed smoothly and efficiently, and to provide for the recruitment of new Board members.

Once the new Board is in place, the program should support the further development of the Board by offering facilitation services and/or seminars to orient the Board, and to develop a concrete Work Plan for the upcoming year, clearly defining the objectives and how these will be achieved. Given the historical record of the organization in offering services that it has then failed to deliver, it will be particularly critical for the organization to develop a few clearly defined services that it will provide, and then deliver on its promises. This will allow the organization to begin to rebuild the trust that it has lost.

The Ecotourism Training Program can also support BTIA by supporting staff development. The new General Manager, although young and limited in experience with the tourism sector, is enthusiastic, committed to the task ahead, and has a wealth of creative ideas to offer. With additional training and support, he may indeed prove capable of rejuvenating the organization. He will need the full support of the Board, who must assist by creating clear Work Plans, with staff input, that can then be implemented. The program can assist by providing access and support for staff development training opportunities for the General Manager in defining and understanding the roles and responsibilities of the General Manager, formulating and implementing strategic plans, working in partnership with the Board of Directors, etc.

In supporting the hiring of a full-time DTT based at BTIA to organize the Job Bank and provide marketing assistance, the project has shown excellent creativity in supporting BTIA's institutional strengthening. Supporting this DTT with additional training to build his skills and help him to expand his capabilities within the organization will further enhance the assistance that can be offered to the organization. BTIA must now move to hire a financial manager, and establish a consistent and transparent financial accounting system. Again, the program has provided support to BTIA in developing a financial accounting system. BTIA must now hire the personnel to implement the system. Regaining financial accountability will be a crucial step forward in the organization's ability to manage itself, establish viability, and take on the training program full-time in the long run. The program can provide additional support for the training of the financial manager, further enhancing and developing his/her skills so that a consistent, timely financial reporting system is established that is useful to the Board, staff, and outside organizations interested in working with BTIA.

Because of expressed concerns about BTIA's capacity for managing the Ecotourism Training program, many people directly involved in the training program suggest that there needs to be an Action Plan that begins now and gradually transitions the management of the program to BTIA. They rightly point out that it would be unfair for the program to run on its own through the IDB funding period, with handover at the end of the funding period with no preparation or training. In order to provide the best possible chance for the long-term sustainability and success of the training program, we recommend that an Action Plan for transition be developed in consultation with all of the training program's stakeholders that outlines a timetable for the gradual transition of the program to BTIA's management, as indicated above in Key Recommendations under the Program Management section.

This Action Plan should outline specific benchmarks that BTIA must meet in order for specific transitions to occur. These benchmarks must be acceptable to all stakeholders and the transition timetable based on achievement of these benchmarks. An outside consultant may be helpful in assisting the stakeholders to develop this Action Plan and decide on the appropriate benchmarks. Examples of benchmarks might include the restructuring of the Board's governance system, the development by the BTIA Board of a yearly Work Plan with clearly defined objectives, the hiring of a financial manager and the regular submission of monthly financial reports for a specified period of time, a defined and verifiable increase in BTIA membership, verifiable progress towards financial stability and viability, etc.

Transitional activities might include the relocation of the TTU office to BTIA's offices (currently slated to move to the Marine Terminal), the oversight of logistical training functions by BTIA (production and inventory of materials, for example), shared financial management and reporting, etc. The program's stakeholders will be in the best position to determine those benchmarks that represent the best measures of BTIA's improving capabilities and viability.

In order to ensure that there is adequate time for the gradual transition of the project to BTIA's management, this process should begin as soon as possible, with the Action Plan for transition in place by January 2003. With a clearly outlined process in place, all involved will understand what needs to be accomplished and how the transition will proceed.

In the event that BTIA does not meet these benchmarks and does not make sufficient progress towards organizational and financial stabilization, the PEC will need to create an alternative plan for the continuation of the program. Alternative organizations in Belize will need to be considered as potential partners for the program, such as the Belize Institute for Management (BIM), the University of Belize (UB), or the Centers for Employment Training (CETs), either in a partnership arrangement with BTIA or independently. The PEC needs to consider and develop this back-up alternative plan, in addition to its commitment to an Action Plan with BTIA.

In addition, another significant area that BTIA must urgently address is the relationship of the destination chapters to the national office. Again, the Business Plan outlines ways in which the national office might work with and support the destination chapters, and vice versa. At the present time, nearly all of the destination chapters are in an extremely weak position, with declining membership and a generalized feeling of exclusion rather than inclusion on the part of many working in the tourism industry. One particular exception to this is the Placencia chapter, which is growing and thriving, in spite of some significant obstacles.

One aspect of note in Placencia is that BTB's tourism information center, the BTIA office, and the TTU training office are all located together, so that tourism services are easily accessible to visitors and members alike, and coordination of tourism services is enhanced. Placencia's model may be useful for other destinations and the national

organization as a whole in revitalizing the destination chapters, and in coordinating tourism services. The program should encourage BTB, BTIA and the other sector organizations, in conjunction with itself, to develop ways to improve the delivery of tourism services in the destinations through consolidation of services, looking at possibilities for cost-sharing, employee time sharing, and centralized location of tourism offices and services together, as noted above in Key Recommendations, **Component 2: Training of Trainers**. This should strengthen the provision of all tourism services in the destinations, from visitor information, to training, to destination marketing and support.

Action Items:

Consider having Placencia share its model for provision of tourism services with other destinations. Investigate cost-sharing, employee sharing, and office-sharing possibilities in each of the destinations to improve efficiency and responsiveness to both visitors and tourism sector participants.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ Provide consulting services to the BTIA Board of Directors to accomplish the restructuring of its governance structure, to redefine its mission, and to develop written Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members and of each officer of the Board that specifically outline what is expected of Board members, prior to the next Board elections in August 2002.
- ◆ Once the new Board is in place in Fall 2002, provide facilitation services and/or seminars in Board development, including the development of a concrete Work Plan for the upcoming year, clearly defining the objectives and how these will be achieved.
- ◆ Support BTIA staff development training for the General Manager and for the Marketing/Database/Job Bank DTT.
- ◆ Task a PEC sub-committee to develop an Action Plan with project stakeholders that establishes agreed-upon benchmarks of performance for BTIA and a timetable for transitioning the management of the project. Begin this process as soon as possible, and complete by January 2003, to allow adequate transition time for the project's management and ultimate sustainability (See Key Recommendations, Program Management)
- ◆ Develop an alternative plan for the transition that considers working in partnership with other organizations to support the program.
- ◆ Work with BTB, BTIA, and tourism sector organizations to develop ways to improve and consolidate tourism services in the destinations. (See Key Recommendations, Component 2: Train the Trainers)

Activity 2: Development of a Job Bank

The database for the employee/employer skill bank/job bank has been designed. The project has hired a full-time DTT, housed at BTIA, to implement the Job Bank, as well as to assist with marketing initiatives related both to the Job Bank and to the marketing plan for the broader training program. A system has been put in place to collect Job Bank data from participants in the training courses and to enter them into the Job Bank database. The program should provide automatic listing in the Job Bank for all training course “graduates” for one month after the completion of their training course for free or at a reduced rate. This will help build initial participation in the Job Bank. Additional time for listing in the Job Bank can then be purchased at regular rates.

A fee structure for the Job Bank has been proposed as part of the BTIA Business Plan. Reactions to this proposed fee structure need to be determined through a survey of industry stakeholders, including both BTIA members and non-members, employers and employees. This survey also needs to determine the best functions of a Job Bank from both the point of view of the employees and the employers, so that it is used. For example, employers may wish to be able to access recommendations or references. How will this be managed? Will employees be given job listings and employer contact information? Or will employers contact potential employees? The services the Job Bank will offer need to be clearly defined and understood, and meet the needs of both employers and employees as much as possible. Once this survey is completed, the fee structure needs to be finalized and implemented, and the Job Bank marketed and promoted nationwide.

It will take time to build momentum for participation in the Job Bank. However, the DTT assigned to the task has some creative and innovative ideas for reaching both established tourism employees and employers, and those newly entering the job market, including those just finishing school. Seasonality is a factor in use of the Job Bank, with strong participation from new job seekers as their schooling ends and they enter the job market, and as the beginning of the tourism season approaches in December. TTU should monitor participation in the Job Bank carefully, and evaluate the service from both the perspectives of the employer and the employee after one year of operation, to determine if any adjustments need to be made in how the service is offered.

Action Items:

Provide automatic enrollment for all training course graduates in the Job Bank for a limited time period at a free or reduced rate, to build participation.

Conduct a survey of industry stakeholders, both BTIA members and non-members, employers and employees, to determine best services and fee structure for the Job Bank.

Key Recommendations

- ◆ Implement the Job Bank as soon as possible to take advantage of seasonality in the tourism sector, including significant marketing and promotion of the plan.
- ◆ Evaluate the Job Bank at the end of one year of operation, contacting both employers and employees who have used the service, to determine if any adjustments need to be made.

Activity 3: Development and implementation of strategic marketing efforts targeted for print and television media linked to a recognizable brand identity for the training and technical assistance; and development of promotional brochures and information on the programs offered.

A consultant was hired by the program to develop a Marketing and Promotional Plan, including the design of a program logo, print, radio and television ads. This plan was presented to the PEC in March 2002 as a draft, with the plan due to be finalized in April 2002. This Marketing Plan should be finalized and implemented as soon as possible. While the consultants were in-country, radio advertisements began about the program. In addition, print advertisements have been created and have appeared as training courses have been scheduled, while awaiting the inception of the actual marketing plan. DTTs have designed flyers and brochures for their training courses in their destinations, using their own considerable creativity.

In addition, another excellent method for promoting the training courses has arisen in the decision to hold graduation ceremonies at the end of each of the courses that the participants design and plan themselves. The format generally has included a keynote speaker, each participant speaking briefly about their experience of the course, presentation of certificates, and refreshments. These graduation ceremonies, in addition to providing the participants with recognition of their achievement, have been an excellent opportunity for public promotion of the training program. Invitees to the ceremonies have included many business leaders in the community, government officials, etc., and several of the ceremonies have been taped for airing on local TV programs. All of these offer a wonderful opportunity for awareness building and positive reinforcement of the benefits of tourism training.

The marketing and promotion of this program is critical to its success. There has been some initial confusion about the name and identification of the program, and the necessity to include the three organizations supporting the program in all identifying materials (BTB, BTIA, and IDB). This concern is being addressed in the further development of materials. One concern is that the TTU establish a name for its training programs that will continue and remain the same beyond the transition period, so that there will be seamless change in spite of the change in management. This is extremely important to the long-term life of the training programs and their success, and needs to be incorporated into the marketing plan.

It is also important that information generated in each of the destinations be consistent in terms of message and quality. As the Marketing and Promotional Plan is implemented, we suggest that local production follow a set of guidelines in terms of message, information, and format, allowing for local creativity while maintaining consistency. The DTTs should be given the opportunity to share the brochures and informational materials they have created with each other, providing an opportunity for creative exchange. In addition, since the national print media reaches all parts of the country, we encourage the ads placed there to identify and list training outlets throughout the country, rather than destination specific training courses only. This will allow for wide distribution of the schedule nationwide.

It is clear that the TTU understands the need for a professional, consistent, frequent and high-quality marketing message for the program. All the materials that have been developed to date reflect this awareness of the need for high quality and have been consistent in their professional appearance. Everything from the course certificates to the course materials to the website to the media messages have offered a consistent message of professionalism and high quality. As the Marketing and Promotional Plan is implemented, this should continue and become still more fine-tuned and targeted.

It is evident that, in spite of the strongly expressed opinion of tourism industry members of the need for training, the actual commitment to participating, allowing time for participation, and paying for the cost of the courses will take time to develop. Messages will need to be continually targeted at employers to support the program, in addition to the messages aimed at individuals to encourage them to become participants. But unless the employers and managers get on board with the program, it will be difficult for it to gather the necessary momentum. Targeting messages that address the barriers expressed – “payment plans are available”, for example – may be necessary in the beginning to gain initial support for the program. As noted in Key Recommendations, **Component 1: Training Program Design**, a concerted effort to target employers in the destinations through a visit by the TTU Program Manager to address their concerns is needed in the near term to generate commitment to participation in the courses being offered.

The marketing and promotional plan will need to be evaluated on a regular basis, and the plan updated as circumstances change, new courses are initiated, etc. We recommend that, once the Marketing and Promotional Plan is finalized, the proposed quarterly work plans be implemented, with evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan every quarter during the first year of implementation, and every six months thereafter. Press releases must continue to be sent to national media outlets on a regular basis, any time that the program graduates a course, offers new services, etc. The aim should be, particularly in the beginning, to increase the program’s visibility at all times.

Action Items:

Continue to support graduation ceremonies for each course, as a promotional event for the program.

Provide guidelines to DTTs for the development of their destination brochures, flyers and materials. Guidelines should provide for consistency in message, format and information, while allowing for local creativity.

Provide an opportunity for DTTs to share their materials with each other and generate additional ideas for local promotional efforts.

Ensure consistency in promotion of the name of the program, so that the transition at the end of the funding period is seamless.

Ensure that all messages in national media offer information on all the destinations, so that people are aware both of the national program and of their local contact point.

Once the Marketing and Promotional Plan is finalized, prepare quarterly work plans during the first year and evaluate results on a quarterly basis. Make adjustments as needed.

Key Recommendations
♦ Finalize the Marketing and Promotional Plan as soon as possible, and proceed with implementation.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The Key Recommendations suggest activities that the consultants feel are important to the program reaching its overall goals and objectives in implementation during the life of IDB funding. In implementing these recommendations, the program will need to balance the potential positive impact on overall outcomes with the impact on the budget and the availability of financial resources. An overview of the expected impact on the budget and potentially availability of resources is indicated in the table below, using the Chart of Accounts provided by TTU (3/5/02). The PEC and TTU staff will ultimately need to determine how the resources can best be spent to achieve the program's goals. They have, to date, shown creativity in using the budget to fund program components that will positively impact on the overall goals of the program, and such creative thinking will continue to enable the project to make the most of the resources it has available to it.

Program Management	Budgetary Impact	Resources
♦ Provide specific guidance, using up-to-date tourism statistics and industry information, to the program on responding to tourism trends, growth and/or decline in specific sectors, and other potential broad-based issues that may impact on program implementation.	Minimal monetary impact, some impact on time, to collect information	No additional funding needed
♦ Develop an Action Plan for the management transition of the program at the end of the funded period sets out specific benchmarks of performance for BTIA that allows the transition to proceed. An outside consultant may be helpful in guiding the PEC, and/or a sub-committee assigned to this task, in the development of this Action Plan. The Action Plan should be completed by January 2003.	Additional financial support for PEC sub-committee meetings, and payment to consultant.	Funds may be drawn from 142 Advisory Meetings for PEC meetings. Consultant fees could be paid from 143 Business Plan Development, with additional funds from Contingencies, if needed.
♦ Evaluate DTT workload at 6-month point of employment and make adjustments as needed to allow the work to be completed. Consider increasing the number of hours worked by DTTs and/or increasing the number of DTTs in an area for the next 6 months to address the need for a strong start-up push in promotion and marketing of the program. Evaluate again at the end of the next 6-month period and adjust time schedule as needed.	Additional funds to pay DTT increased salaries	122 District Tourism Trainers could support additional salary payments. Moneys might also be drawn from Marketing and Promotion, if needed, to finance this 6-month push focused on marketing/promotion of the program in the destinations.

Component 1: Training Program Design	Budgetary Impact	Resources
♦ Assess willingness to pay as part of the Year 2 Needs Assessment, as this is a critical issue to the long-term success of the program.	No additional funds needed, budget funds allocated.	Already included in 121 Training Needs Assessment.
♦ Add an area of the website that provides a Monthly Update to DTTs on program developments, district events, tips, new resources acquired, etc. and provides a forum for DTTs to share ideas or request assistance in meeting challenges being faced in a particular destination. This can be accessed with a special password.	No additional funds needed. Budget funds allocated. Time/effort for Administrative Coordinator to design Monthly Update and add to website.	
♦ Design and develop an oral presentation that can be made to a group of businesses/employers that addresses their expressed barriers (timing, cost, employees leaving for better jobs, seasonality, etc.) and provides creative responses that encourage them to support the training program. Schedule presentations to local business/employer groups by Program Manager in as many destinations as possible over the next 3-6 months to assist DTTs in promoting program locally.	Cost of presentation (audiovisuals), Program Manager travel to districts to present, costs of holding meetings.	All of these costs can be absorbed within the allocated budget for 123 Staff Travel/Food/Accommodation, while the actual presentation audiovisuals could come from 141Marketing/Promotional Plan.
♦ Enhance monitoring of the curriculum production process by the Curriculum Specialist to ensure that timelines are met and that course implementation is not delayed due to lack of materials.	No additional funds needed. Budget funds allocated. Curriculum Specialist time.	
♦ Monitor and evaluate tests and assessments given for each course on a semi-annual basis, and consider on a course-by-course basis if there is a need to standardize testing across destinations.	No additional funds needed. Budget funds allocated. Curriculum Specialist time.	
♦ Design and implement a simple evaluation tool to administer to participants and employers 2 months after the completion of a course to assess the program's impact. Collect and use this information for impact, quality assurance and marketing purposes.	Cost to design and produce evaluation form. Time to distribute and collect by DTTs and/or Administrative Coordinator.	This could come out of 137 Training Delivery System/Training Kit.

♦ Continue to develop creative ideas to address the issue of cost of the courses, and to share these with all DTTs through Monthly Update. Ensure that all DTTs are aware of different methods of cost-sharing that they may try, and consider programmatic support for some cost sharing ideas (scholarship fund, revolving loan fund, etc.)	Potential costs involved in schemes such as scholarships and loan funds.	This could come out of 137 Training Delivery System/Training Kit.
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Component 2: Training of Trainers	Budgetary Impact	Resources
♦ Explore additional creative partnership ideas (such as the tourism incubator concept) between tourism industry stakeholders that may enhance tourism services in some destinations, such as tourism centers that are centrally located to provide information to visitors, house BTIA and other sector organization offices, as well as the TTU training office. Consider cost-sharing arrangements that may enhance both public and private sector goals to improve the provision of tourism services in destinations.	Potential cost implications for rental of space.	Potential funds to be found in 148 Office Space, Furniture, etc. The idea is to look at cost-sharing schemes with BTB, BTIA, and others to reduce the burden on the program, yet positively benefit everyone by enhancing support and communication.
♦ Consider program support for program staff to access professional development opportunities at the regional level to enhance broader tourism perspective. Select 3-4 regional conferences and/or Train the Trainer opportunities to participate in yearly. Consider cost-sharing strategies with BTB and BTIA to support these human resources development efforts.	Costs involved for staff to travel to professional development opportunities and register for conferences and/or courses.	By creatively drawing on funds in 13 Training of Trainers and utilizing some of the funds for Meetings/training/travel, Purchase of Training Courses, Specialized Curriculum Training, etc., this recommendation can be addressed. Suggested annual budget: BZ \$10,000. BTB has expressed their commitment to Human Resources Development, and may be willing to contribute additional funds to supplement program funds.
♦ Find ways to support development of skills for all levels of trainers, from newly trained to highly experienced. Develop ways for more experienced trainers to benefit less experienced trainers, through co-facilitating training courses, to mentoring, to program-based Train the Trainer sessions.	Costs involved for Trainers to access variety of training opportunities.	Funding for particular opportunities should be evaluated in regards to 13 Training of Trainers budget, with 135 Specialized Curriculum Training one potential source of funds for such activities.

♦ Explore regional tourism certification systems by networking regionally with tourism organizations and institutions that have developed such programs. Provide opportunities for the TTU Project Manager and Curriculum Specialist to broaden their knowledge of these programs, through regional site visits and/or through educational workshops or conferences.	Costs for staff to gather information, travel locally and/or regionally.	Program budget 125 Development of Standards/certification should be used to support these efforts, along with moneys allocated to 126 Curriculum Design and 127 Specialized local curriculum.
♦ Establish a PEC sub-committee that includes other invited stakeholders to develop a framework for tourism training certification in Belize. Network with local educational institutions, NGOs, government ministries, and tourism stakeholders. Consider consultancy assistance to help develop the framework for Belize's certification system for tourism training.	As above.	As above.
♦ Network with local, regional and international organizations on the issue of certification for ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Participate in regional discussions on development of this certification and encourage local dialogue and discussion to further development and implementation of such a program in Belize.	Costs involved for staff to participate in networking opportunities.	Resources from 125 Development of Standards/Certification and from 138 Staff Travel/Food/Accommodation could support this recommendation.

Component 3: Institutional Strengthening of the BTIA	Budgetary Impact	Resources
♦ Provide consulting services to the BTIA Board of Directors to accomplish the restructuring of its governance structure, to redefine its mission, and to develop written Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members and of each officer of the Board that specifically outline what is expected of Board members, prior to Board elections in August 2002.	A similar recommendation was made in the Business Plan, with an estimated cost of BZ \$7000.	This should come from 143 Business Plan Development and be used to help implement the recommendations of the Business Plan.
♦ Once the new Board is in place in Fall 2002, provide consulting services and/or seminars in Board development, including the development of a concrete Work Plan for the upcoming year, clearly defining the objectives and how these will be achieved.	Costs involved include consultant assistance.	Potential financing may come from remaining funds in 143 Business Plan Development.

♦ Support BTIA staff development training for the General Manager and for the Marketing/Database/Job Bank DTT.	Funds already earmarked for this purpose.	134 Purchase of Training Courses/Licenses has been earmarked for some of this training.
♦ Develop an Action Plan for transition of management to BTIA (see Key Recommendations, Program Management). Complete by January 2003.	Additional financial support for PEC sub-committee meetings, and payment to consultant.	Funds may be drawn from 142 Advisory Meetings for PEC meetings. Consultant fees could be paid from 143 Business Plan Development, with additional funds from Contingencies, if needed.
♦ Develop a back-up alternative plan for the transition that considers working in partnership with other organizations to support the program.	As above.	As above.
♦ Work with BTB, BTIA, and tourism sector organizations to develop ways to improve and consolidate tourism services in the destinations (See Key Recommendations, Component 2: Train the Trainers).	Potential cost implications for rental of space.	Potential funds to be found in 148 Office Space, Furniture, etc. The idea is to look at cost-sharing schemes with BTB, BTIA, and others to reduce the burden on the program, yet positively benefit everyone by enhancing support and communication.
♦ Implement the Job Bank as soon as possible to take advantage of seasonality in the tourism sector, including significant marketing and promotion of the plan.	No additional funds needed. Budget funds allocated.	
♦ Evaluate the Job Bank at the end of one year of operation, contacting both employers and employees who have used the service, to determine if any adjustments need to be made.	No additional funds needed. Budget funds allocated.	
♦ Finalize the Marketing and Promotional Plan as soon as possible, and proceed with implementation.	No additional funds needed. Budget funds allocated.	

CONCLUSION

The Ecotourism Training Program has moved quickly since the TTU was finally created in June 2001 to establish itself as a focus of tourism training efforts in the country. It has performed the start-up tasks admirably, hiring and establishing DTT offices throughout the country staffed by competent personnel. Training of Trainers has been of high quality and offered on a regular basis and DTTs are enthusiastic about the program. Reporting procedures have been established, and reporting completed on time, with adequate financial oversight and consistent, transparent financial reporting. A schedule of training courses has been established in each destination, and in all but one destination, training courses have begun to be offered, with graduates to date enthusiastic about the quality of the educational experience they have received. The Needs Assessment, Business Plan, and Marketing and Promotional Plan have all been completed, and as they are finalized (yearly Needs Assessment, Business Plan, and Marketing Plan), will positively guide the program's development for the rest of the funded period.

The program is just beginning to gain momentum, and has tremendous potential to develop into an excellent resource for the country's tourism industry that will, indeed, "increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry in Belize by developing the skills and abilities of the hospitality and tourism workforce." As implementation proceeds, the objectives continue to remain consistent with the reality of the program. In two areas, additional effort will be needed – that of actually convincing employers to support the program, and in the efforts to provide institutional strengthening support to BTIA. This is because there has been less support than anticipated from employers, in spite of their stated enthusiasm for training, and because of the weakened position of BTIA. However, with the efforts recommended and additional support provided, the program can succeed in achieving its objectives in these areas.

The TTU staff and the DTTs are firmly and enthusiastically committed to the program. They work hard towards accomplishing the objectives and activities of the program, and have built good working relationships with each other and with IDB, BTB, and BTIA. The most beneficial support that can be offered to the program at this point is to give it the opportunity to fulfill its potential, by allowing it to continue for the full period of time envisioned for implementation, 39 months. While the delay in the start-up of implementation was frustrating, now that the program is in place and fully operational, it is showing that it can provide the services that it was designed to provide, in a professional, consistent, and high quality manner. The consultants recommend that the funding period be extended to cover a full 39 months of implementation, from June 2001 to September 2004, and that the final evaluation be completed at that time, allowing the program the time needed to build on its initial successes and complete its development.

Overall Recommendation

- ◆ *Extend the funding period of the program to September 2004 to allow for a full 39 months of program implementation.*

ANNEX 1

ATN/MH-7092-BL ECO-TOURISM TRAINING PROGRAM

MID-TERM EVALUATION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On August 10, 2000, the Belize Tourist Board and the Inter-American Development Bank, acting in its capacity as Administrator of the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF), signed an agreement granting non-reimbursable resources for a technical cooperation for the Eco-Tourism Training Program.
- 1.2 The purpose of the contribution is to increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry in Belize by developing the skills and abilities of the hospitality and tourism workforce.
- 1.3 Specifically, the objectives of the Eco-Tourism Training Program are: (a) development of modular and customized programs for small tourism entities; (b) availability of a cadre of highly trained trainers, coaches and mentors for the industry located in each district of the country; (c) development of stronger facilitation and coordination of general and specialized skill training for tourism sector employees and new entrants to the labor market; (d) creation of a registry of trainers and programs available to address the needs of the sector; and (e) improved technical and organizational capacity within the Belize Tourism Industry Association to initiate and undertake actions plans, needs assessments, and training programs that respond to the human resource development and management needs of the tourism sector.
- 1.4 The program consists of three (3) components. First is the Training Program Design to address measures needed to improve the flexibility and relevancy of tourism education and training in accordance with the projected growth areas of the sector in eco, nature, heritage, and adventure tourism. Second is the Training of Trainers to develop a cadre of locally trained experts available to deliver training and specialized consulting services for emerging and existing tourism establishments. Third is the Institutional Strengthening of the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA) to address measures needed to facilitate the BTIA's ability to manage and respond to the human resource development needs of the tourism sector in an efficient and sustainable manner.

- 1.5 The Executing Agency responsible for the program is the Belize Tourist Board (BTB), while the Tourism Training Unit (composed of a Tourism Training Manager, a Curriculum Specialist, and an Administrative Coordinator) is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the program. The Tourism Training Unit is guided by a standing committee, the Project Execution Committee, which meets on a regular basis.
- 1.6 Clause Thirteenth of the Special Conditions of the Agreement stipulates that the program will be subject to a mid-term evaluation that will be conducted eighteen (18) months after the signature of the Agreement. According to the Agreement the Bank will contract consultant services to carry out this evaluation. The Bank agrees to have this Mid-term Evaluation of the Eco-Tourism Training Program during the month of April 2002.

2. ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 Based on reviews of the Program's Progress Reports and meetings with the Belize Tourist Board (BTB), the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA), the District Tourism Trainers, tourism establishments and other stakeholders the consultant will conduct the following activities:
- (I) Evaluate the progress of the program in achieving its general and specific objectives, and assess the relevancy/appropriateness of the assumptions related to these objectives at this stage of the program's implementation.
 - (II) Evaluate the progress of the program in its implementation of the three components, i.e. the training program design, training of trainers, and the institutional strengthening of the BTIA.
 - (III) Assess the viability of the training programs, including the needs assessment, course design and costing.
 - (IV) Determine the adequacy of the management information system and the off-the-shelf training products/package course in meeting the training needs of the tourism/hospitality industry.
 - (V) Evaluate the expertise of the District Tourism Trainers and their effectiveness in marketing and implementation of the training programs.
 - (VI) Evaluate the practicality of the BTIA Strategic Plan (also referred to as BTIA Business Plan) and the ability of BTIA to implement this plan prepared under the program. Special attention should be placed on the financial viability of the BTIA Strategic Plan.
 - (VII) Evaluate progress made in the development of the job bank.

(VIII) Assess the effectiveness of the marketing and promotion of the program in terms of demand for tourism employment and career opportunities.

(IX) Based on the above eight (8) activities provide recommendations for changes or adjustments or improvements required to ensure that the program's objectives are achieved.

3. OUTPUTS

3.1 A final report including the results of the findings and comments provided the various actors involved in the program will be delivered at the end of the consultancy.

3.2 The report should also include a set of recommendations and a proposed timetable to introduce any necessary adjustment to the program to ensure the achievement of the program objectives.

4. DURATION OF EVALUATION

4.1 Twenty-five (25) working days.

ANNEX 2

List of Contacts

Name	Title	Agency
Cindy Alamilla	Assistant DTT	San Pedro
Robert Blease	President	Caye Caulker Tour Guides Association
Mark Borland	Administrative Coordinator	TTU
Marcia Bouloy	Consultant, BTIA Business Plan	
Wendy Bryan	President	Placencia Chapter, BTIA
Evan Cayetano	Natural Resource Management	IDB
Kurt Clare	DTT – Job Bank	BTIA
Elysia Dial	DTT	Placencia TTU
Rosalva Domiguez	Graduate, Customer Relations	Corozal TTU, February 2002
Francisco Galvez	DTT	San Ignacio TTU
Andrew Godoy	General Manager	BTIA
Mario Guizar	Vice President President	Caye Caulker Chapter, BTIA Caye Caulker Business Association
Javier Gutierrez	DTT	San Ignacio TTU
Laura Gutierrez	Graduate, Customer Relations	San Pedro TTU, March 2002
Mary Beth Maestre	DTT	Belize City TTU
Anthony Mahler	Deputy Director, Product Dev. Chairman	BTB PEC
Abigail Marin	DTT	Corozal TTU
Marja Manzur	Graduate, Customer Relations	Orange Walk TTU, February 2002
Ellen McCrae	Trainer	Caye Caulker TTU
Fiona McFarlene	Trainer	Placencia TTU
Fidelis Mejia	Graduate, Communications Skills and Customer Relations	Dangriga TTU, February-March 2002
Jack Nightingale	Trainer Past President	Punta Gorda TTU Toledo Chapter, BTIA
Wilfredo Novelo	President	Orange Walk Chapter, BTIA
Cassian Nunez	Mayor, 2000-2003	Dangriga Town Council
Ramon Pacheco	DTT	Orange Walk TTU
Curlette Palacio	DTT	Punta Gorda TTU
Vincent Palacio	Program Director	TTU
Mike Panton	DTT President	Belize City TTU BTIA
Clara Pastor	Curriculum Specialist	TTU
Desmond Pratt	DTT	Punta Gorda TTU

Kelvin Ramnarace	President	BNTOA
Therese Rath	Chairman of the Board	BTB
Olympia Requena	Graduate, Customer Relations	Punta Gorda TTU, February 2002
Elizabeth Ross	DTT	Caye Caulker TTU
Bill Ryan	Manager	San Ignacio CET
Ida Saucedo	Past President	BTIA
Tracy Taeger	Director of Tourism	BTB
David Vernon	Past President Trainer	Placencia BTIA Placencia TTU
Jose Villafranco	DTT	Dangriga TTU
Yvone Villoria	Trainer	Punta Gorda TTU
Rosella Zabeneh	President	Dangriga Chapter, BTIA

Additional people were contacted, but we were unable to arrange for an interview due to schedule conflicts. The above list represents those with whom we met and held discussions.