

BELIZE TOURISM BOARD

TOURISM TRAINING UNIT

Annual Report
August 2003 – June 2004

Submitted to
Inter-American Development Bank

August 2004

This Sixth and Final annual report is for activities that took place from August, 2003 to June 2004. During this reporting period the Unit focused on marketing the services offered by the Unit to ensure that substantial income is generated to allow for self-sustainability upon project completion. In this final year the environmental conservation component of the project was introduced through an Environmental Walkthrough Program. There was also a big drive to certify line level employees through the American Hotel and Lodging Association Education Institute Scheme. The Unit also partnered with a regional project to train and certify persons in the culinary arts and in safety and security for the tourism industry.

The first component of the project, Training Program Design, aimed at improving 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. The second component, Training of Trainers, developed a cadre of locally trained experts available to deliver training and specialized consulting services for emerging and existing tourism establishments. And the third objective is the Institutional Strengthening of the Belize Tourism Industry Association. This report explains in detail the activities that were conducted under each of the Components.

Component 1: Training Program Design

Activity 1a: The Unit, through a concerted plan and strategy continued to market the following off-the-shelf courses:

- Tour Operators Training Program,
- Supervisory Management,
- Teacher Tourism Training program
- OAS Lodging Safety and Security for Everyone (SAFE),
- An Environmental Walkthrough Program,
- OAS Owner Managers Program,
- Intermediate Food Preparation and Presentation,
- Intermediate Cakes, Pastries and Desserts course,
- Energy Conservation and Plant Maintenance Course,
- Unified System of Accounting.

The Unit continued to seek out relevant courses that can be purchased for training purposes. Some of the courses were acquired through partnering with other regional initiatives.

Activity 1b: The seven trainers who were certified by CAST to conduct Environmental Walkthroughs participated in another practical training session where they conducted mock EWTs for two properties. They are now equipped to conduct EWTs when they are called upon.

- Activity 1c: The Manager of the Unit attended several working groups sessions spearheaded by TVET to ensure that the training programs that were developed by the Unit are incorporated in the final TVET program.
- Activity 1d: The period saw the completion of the Advance Marine Guiding Training Program. This program ran once in Belize City and is scheduled to run again on Caye Caulker and in Placencia in the near future. At official handing over ceremonies the BTIA handed over the advanced and preparatory programs to the Training Unit.
- Activity 1e: The Unit adopted a certification program from American Hotel and Lodging Association Educational Institute for Department Trainers for small hotels. 13 trainers have been certified under this program. In this report period 175 persons were certified in either of the following disciplines Restaurant Server, Banquet Server, Kitchen Steward, Bartending, Front Des Representative and Public Space Cleaner.
- Activity 1f: The Unit continued to built on the resource library of training materials. These materials are available to the District Tourism Trainers for use and to the industry.
- Activity 1g: Over the duration of the project the Unit continues to collect training programming schedules and course offerings from other training providers. This information is made available to all involved in the tourism industry hence it serves as a clearing house for tourism training in the country.
- Activity 1h: In collaboration with the OAS Small Tourism Enterprises Project (STEP) 2 training seminars were offered. 65 persons participated in the Accounting made easy course and the effective Marketing and Communications Skills.
- Activity 1i: This last year saw the dramatic increase in demand for the tour guide training program. The attached table shows the breakdown of the different courses by destination.
- Activity 1j: In collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology the Unit developed an Archaeology course for those who guide in the cave Actun Tunichil Muknal. This program will be a must for those who guide in this cave. The Unit promoted the Archaeology Lecture series to the guides in training.
- Activity 1k: This period saw the execution of the Tourism Training Feasibility Plan consultancy. This plan was commissioned by the Belize Tourism Board to assess the direction of tourism training in Belize. A copy of this report will be attached to this report.

Component 2: Training of Trainers

- Activity 2a: The Marketing Officer held destination seminars with the District Tourism Trainers. A part of this was an actual reception that was organized for tourism stakeholders of the different destinations.
- Activity 2b: There were adjustments in the way the DTTs were compensated. Instead of receiving monthly salary, they are now working on a commission basis. They get the first priority to train the courses and their names remain on our trainers database which we will contact when there is future train-the-trainers sessions.
- Activity 2c: There was a train-the-trainer session on how to conduct Environmental Walkthroughs on small properties. These persons were trained by representatives from CAST and conducted several mock assessments and are now capable of conducting actual assessment.
- Activity 2d: The trainers of the tour guide training program met to discuss ways to improve the training program. This seminar looked at various aspects of the program and it was agreed that the field experience component of the program must be extended.

Component 3: Institutional Strengthening of the BTIA development

- Activity 3a: The already established Project Execution Committee met twice in this reporting period.
- Activity 3b: During this period the Consultancy to determine the feasibility of tourism training in Belize was concluded. This report is the basis of a new workplan that was developed for the post funded era of the project.
- Activity 3c: During this period the Unit continued to advertise and market the services that it provides. This was through print and video media. The Marketing Officer continued with the business mixers throughout the country
- Activity 3d: Continued to collaborate with BTIA destination branches in hosting destination offices.

Towards a Sustainable System of Training for the Tourism Industry in Belize

Feasibility Study and Business Plan for Sustainability of Tourism Industry Support Training Programmes

April 2, 2004

Consultancy Services Provided by:

Ms. Luz Longsworth, M.A., M.B.A. Lead Consultant
Mr. Fatai Akinkuolie M.Comm (Finance)
Ms. Sharret Yearwood M.Sc (Tourism Management)

Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, University of Belize

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the kind assistance of all the persons interviewed and to thank them for their candor and willingness to share their vision of the future of the tourism industry. A special note of acknowledgement to Mr. Steve Schulte, President of the Belize Tourism Industry Association and Mr. Rob Hiron for their input into the final document. We also would like to thank the Belize Tourism Board and the Project Execution Committee for their support and confidence in the ability of the team to propose a workable and practical approach to sustainable training for the tourism industry. In particular we wish to acknowledge Dr. Vincent Palacio, Director of the Tourism Training Unit and Mr. Anthony Mahler, Chairman of the Project Execution Committee for their key role in the facilitation of this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
1. INTRODUCTION	8
2. TOURISM TRAINING IN BELIZE AND THE CARIBBEAN	10
3. CURRENT STATUS OF TOURISM TRAINING IN BELIZE	11
4. INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE.....	12
5. PROPOSAL FOR A SELF SUSTAINING TRAINING SYSTEM	15
6. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE TTU 2004-2006	20
7. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	25
8. CONCLUSIONS.....	26
APPENDIX I - INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY WITH REFERENCE TO TRAINING	29
APPENDIX II - INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY.....	32
APPENDIX III - LIST OF INTERVIEWEES	34
APPENDIX IV - SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES TO INTERVIEWS	36
APPENDIX V - PROJECTED INCOME STATEMENTS FOR THE TOURISM TRAINING UNIT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2004 TO APRIL 2006	43
APPENDIX VI - RESOURCE AUDIT FOR HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM TRAINERS IN BELIZE.....	47

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

APPENDIX VII – PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	49
---	-----------

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to prepare a feasibility study and business plan for sustainability of the Belize tourism industry training support programs. The study was therefore designed to assess the stakeholders' response to the training provided thus far and to examine ways of improving the cost effectiveness of the delivery.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objective of the study was to focus on arriving at recommendations for an approach to sustainability for industry support programs in Belize, based on consensus with key stakeholders in the tourism sector and government and to provide recommendations for the following

- A formula for funding of training within the industry, minimizing the financial burden on any single source;
- A training model that will minimize time away from the work place for front-line staff in particular;
- A coherent, integrated system that will efficiently utilize resources to deliver the necessary training to as wide a geographic area as possible while still minimizing costs in time and money;
- Continued partnerships between the industry service providers, government and the BTB in developing high quality standards

METHODOLOGY

Face to face interviews with over 60 industry stakeholders were conducted between October and December 2003. Two interview guides were designed focusing on issues of concern regarding training delivery and funding, as well as to assess stakeholders views on how training should be developed over the next two to three years.

INDUSTRY RESPONSE TO TRAINING PROGRAMMES

From the interviews conducted it was clear that the stakeholders in the industry felt that training was absolutely essential in maintaining Belize's international competitiveness. Concerns expressed by stakeholders related to costs, accessibility and sustainability of the current training programmes offered through the Tourism Training Unit.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from an analysis of the stakeholders' responses as well as the financial and programme data obtained from the Tourism Training Unit the following recommendations were made:

- Where legislation of training is seen as absolutely essential in the industry due to health and safety issues for the visitor, consultation between the private sector and the Government be done prior to the institution of such legislation in order to work out timelines and other relevant issues affecting the particular sector;
- Certification of industry providers, linked to training targets, be introduced by the BTB as an incentive to other industry providers to embrace formal training for their employees;
- New training modules be added to the Tour Guide Training which could include specializations such as Birding, archaeology etc.
- Training modules should be expanded or broken down into different levels in order to ensure progressive certification of employees in the industry.
- Policy makers, industry stakeholders and educators need to come together to look at the development of a national policy on tourism training and education.
- A 5 year strategic plan for the period 2006-2010 needs to be developed based on the national policy consultations

RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO THE SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM TRAINING

In reviewing the performance of the Tourism Training Unit (TTU) over the last two years, it was clear that a great deal had been achieved in sensitizing the industry providers to the need for and value of training. The Unit should therefore remain in place for at least another two years to continue to refine and widen its offering while completing its original mandate of strengthening the BTIA and other agencies to develop the human resources in the industry. However with the ending of the funding from the IDB scheduled for April 2004 the Unit will need to restructure its mode of operation significantly in order to be self-funding. Specific recommendations are:

- Implementing a Tourism Training Advisory Council which will take a more proactive role in the functioning of the TTU.
- Reduction of the overhead costs of running the Unit through strategic partnerships with the BTIA district offices, the Belize Hotel Association (BHA), Junior Colleges, CET and UB to market and deliver training programmes. This will result in the discontinuation of the system of District Tourism Trainers. However it is vital that the skills of these trainers be retained and that they be absorbed into the formal data bank of trainees. This approach will result in major cost savings for the TTU. Commissions can be paid to other institutions offering courses developed by the Unit and the BTIA, BHA and other partnering institutions can be considered for profit sharing to encourage more ownership of the training process

- Review of course offerings through consultation with the industry and expansion of courses offered;
- Increasing revenue streams from the sale of manuals and modules as well as developing other services at the Resource Centre in Belize City.
- Restructuring of the staffing of the Unit to concentrate more on the administration and co-ordination of the marketing of training programmes as well as a research arm of the industry.

CONCLUSIONS

The delivery of tourism training in Belize can only be cost and time efficient if all the resources available in the industry are coordinated and fully utilized. The implementation of the proposals contained in this plan should result in less duplication of efforts and inefficient utilization of resources while developing a more pro-active approach to training by the beneficiaries of such training through the active involvement of the major stakeholders such as the BTIA and BHA.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Study

The consultant was contracted by the Belize Tourism Board to prepare a feasibility study and business plan for sustainability of the Belize Tourism industry training support programs. Particularly the proposed plan was to focus on arriving at recommendations for an approach to sustainability for industry support programs in Belize, based on consensus with key stakeholders in the tourism sector and government.

1.2 Methodology

The project was divided into four phases

Phase 1 – Literature Review and Analysis

Phase 2 - Interviews and meetings with over 60 Stakeholders in the industry (Appendix III)

Phase 3 – Draft Plan presented to the Project Execution Committee and industry stakeholder groups for discussion and feedback

Phase 4 - Review and finalization of the plan

1.3 Research Limitations and Challenges

There were three major limitations that were experienced by the consultant and assistants.

1.3.1 **Time constraints.** In order to interview a wide cross section of the industry stakeholders it was necessary to limit the number of interviewees. However the team was able to interview more than 60 stakeholders from different sectors within the industry and geographical locations. This allows for the plan to reflect the many and varying views of stakeholders of varying sizes, and to include a representative view of a wide cross section of the industry.

1.3.2 **Availability of interviewees.** Because of the early onset of the tourism season (particularly the cruise ship season) many targeted interviewees were unavailable for weeks at a time. Given the tight time line for submission of this proposal this resulted in a delay in the completion of the interview phase. Nonetheless we are confident that we were able to gather key data from the industry in areas central to the development of this plan. Because the methodology also required face-to-face interviews the process was time consuming but eminently rich in the quality of information passed on to the interviewers.

- 1.3.3 **Weather Conditions.** Poor weather conditions in mid October to mid-November delayed trips by road, sea and air to stakeholders at pre-arranged times thus delaying the process of interviewing many of the stakeholders particularly in the Cayes.

2. Tourism Training in Belize and the Caribbean

An OAS study on tourism training needs in the Caribbean completed in 1999, indicated that with the tremendous growth of the importance of the tourism industry to regional economies, the need for education and training in tourism "are vital to the development of the industry in the Region" (Tourism Training for the New Millennium, OAS, 1999).

Nowhere is that more evident than in Belize where visitor arrivals have more than doubled in the past year and the industry has spawned new and entrepreneurial enterprises at a dizzying rate. In anticipation of this the Belize Tourism Board had the foresight to establish, with the assistance of funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in August of 2000 a training project that saw the establishment of an Ecotourism Training Program mandated to do the following:

- Increase the competitiveness of the tourism industry by developing the skills and abilities of the hospitality and tourism workforce;
- Development of training programmes in modular form and customized for the industry;
- Development of highly trained trainers and coaches for the industry;
- Development of stronger facilitation and coordination of specialized skills training for the tourism sector;
- Creation of a registry of trainers and programs available to service the training needs of the sector;
- Improvement of the technical and organizational capacity of the Belize Tourism Industry Association to "...respond to the human resource development and management needs of the tourism sector." (Annex A, Non-reimbursable Technical Co-operation No ATN/MH-7092-BL Support for the Development of an Ecotourism Training Program).

With the formation of the Tourism Training Unit overseen by a Project Execution Committee a concerted and coordinated effort began in 2000 to tackle the Human Resource needs of the expanding tourism industry in Belize.

3. Current Status of Tourism Training in Belize

3.1 Accomplishments of the Tourism Training Unit (TTU)

After two and a half years of operation the TTU in collaboration with the efforts of the BTB has had a great deal of success in putting training as a number one issue on the agenda of most tourism related enterprises.

Over the period, the TTU has :

- Completed the design and offering of some 13 modular courses in the areas of Tour Guide Training, front desk operations, supervisory management, customer relations, bartending, housekeeping etc.;
- Had an enrollment of over 2000 spread among its courses;
- Trained and developed a cadre of trainers through the offering of 'train the trainers' programmes, including the development of the District Tourism Trainers;
- Created a small Resource Centre for industry stakeholders;
- Commenced the creation of a database of training resources;
- Developed training modules that are internally sustainable.

3.2 Training Resources within Belize

In addition to the development of new training resources Belize does have a core of institutions offering formal training and certification in the areas of tourism and hospitality operations (See Appendix V)

The challenge for the tourism industry in Belize is to avoid the pitfalls that have occurred in other Caribbean countries regarding the duplication of efforts and resources through the inefficient use of limited resources, as was pointed out in the OAS study in 1999 and reiterated in the study by Drs. Ethley London and Denis F. Paul (2003), in their study on Quality Assurance and articulation in tourism training programmes in the Caribbean:

"..the great challenge for tourism education and training ..lies in constructing an educational system which avoids falling into the trap of tackling issues in an isolated and fragmentary way"

This plan hopes to address these concerns as well as others expressed by the industry stakeholders during the interview phase with the aim of proposing a sustainable approach to tourism support programs in Belize.

4. Industry Stakeholder Response

Because of the need for wide stakeholder acceptance of any proposal or plan put forward to the industry the primary approach in the development of the Plan was to gather as much information as possible from stakeholders of the industry regarding their needs and views on the training requirements in the industry.

The Consulting Team developed two interview protocols. The first was particularly aimed at Service providers from the eight primary sub-sectors in the Tourism Industry (Appendix I). The second instrument targeted stakeholders who were in the areas of education and training, management and administration as well as governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (Appendix II)

4.1 Objectives of Interview Phase

The Interview Phase of the Project had five primary objectives

- To determine the need for training within the industry;
- To determine the type and level of training preferred by industry Stakeholders;
- To determine what level of financial commitment industry stakeholders were likely to make to training in the industry;
- To gather feedback on what level of time commitment stakeholders felt they could give for training their staff; and
- To ascertain what general future trends and stakeholders saw and what concerns they had regarding the industry in general and training needs in particular.

4.2. Profile of Interviewees

Geographical: Interviews were conducted with stakeholders from all districts and major tourism centers

Sectoral: All eight sub-sectors in the Tourism Industry were represented in the interview phase. Additionally interviews have been conducted with individuals representing the following sectors/groupings:

- Educational Institutions (e.g. University of Belize, Ecumenical college)
- Training Institutions (BIM)
- NGO's (Programme for Belize, PACT, TIDE, TDC)
- Trainers (District Tourism Trainers)
- Senior Managers at the BTB
- Board Members of the BTB
- Heads of Industry organizations (BTIA, BNTOA, Belize Auto Rental Association etc.)

Demographic Data. Among those direct service providers interviewed the following demographic information is useful to note in order to understand the range of service providers interviewed:

- All interviewees had over 5 years of involvement in the industry with the longest being 32 years in the industry;
- Capital investment ranged from a low of BZ\$60,000 (small tour operators) to Bz \$10 million;
- Employment ranged from 3 employees to 170 employees;
- Majority of employees were in front-line services.

4.3 Primary issues of concern

Stakeholders recognized that the key issues in the tourism training thrust were primarily:

- The need for high quality training programmes but at an affordable cost. Many stakeholders mentioned that the programmes produced by the Unit were expensive but this was not by any means a majority opinion among the stakeholders;
- The importance of accessibility to training given Belize's unique geographical spread as well as the diversity of the tourism product offered;
- The need for training to be convenient and minimizing absences away from work.
- The need for more "follow-up" on training courses either through the development of more advanced training in those areas already dealt with (e.g. Tour Guide training) or through the breaking up of modules into varying levels;
- The importance of tourism training and education at all levels including the primary and secondary school level.

See Appendix IV for a complete summary of the responses from the interviewees.

Without exception, interviewees felt that training in the tourism industry was absolutely essential at all levels if Belize was to maintain its competitiveness in the market. Despite this commitment many service providers did not take advantage of the courses being offered by the tourism training unit. Reasons put forward for that included:

- high costs of the programmes
- Lack of practical application of the training ("too much classroom theory")
- Time constraints
- Small staffing
- No real advantage to staff who are trained
- High turnover thus waste of funds training constantly
- Preference for on the job and destination specific training

Although many of these reasons are defensible, it is clear that the industry service providers do not feel a sense of ownership and control over the training process and generally preferred to do their own training. There is also a strong sense of training being an expense rather than an investment and, given the high turnover rate, a reluctance to train for other properties.

The proposal therefore seeks to address these concerns generally and s to develop and recommend:

- A formula for funding of training within the industry, minimizing the financial burden on any single source;
- A training model that will minimize time away from the work place for front-line staff in particular;
- A coherent, integrated system that will efficiently utilize resources to deliver the necessary training to as wide a geographic area as possible while still minimizing costs in time and money;
- Continued partnerships between the industry service providers, government and the BTB in developing high quality standards
- Strengthening existing "smart partnerships" and strategic alliances among industry stakeholders, government and education (Tourism Training for the New Millennium 1999)

5. Proposal for a Self Sustaining Training System

Based on the industry stakeholder response as outlined in Section 4 above, it is clear that there is need to expand the training in the tourism sector but with the following conditions:

- Costs must be reasonable and within the reach of all stakeholders.
- Centralization of Tourism Training is not a desirable goal at this time given the diversity of Belize's tourism product and the challenges of the geographical diversity of the stakeholders. However there is general support for the *concept* of a Tourism Training Centre as a means of offering a coordinated training programme particularly for the hotel and restaurant sectors.
- There is a need to properly utilize and co-ordinate all the resources of the industry in order to achieve economies and to reduce the fragmentation of training systems in Belize which result in higher costs and uneven quality.
- The commitment to training from the stakeholders needs to be strengthened and the industry needs to have more input and "buy in" to the training process. This requires more direct involvement in the development and delivery of training from the industry members.

In attempting to address these conditions the following sections focus on two areas: firstly the central issues surrounding the implementation of a sustainable tourism system of training in Belize; and secondly on the role of the TTU in the next two years in supporting the growth of tourism training while being able to be financially viable.

5.1 Legislation of Training

Stakeholders generally felt that legislation of training in the industry was not essential as it is not a practical and cost effective approach to encouraging service providers to have a trained work force. Nevertheless there was consensus that, as with Tour Guide Training, there may be areas within the industry particularly from a health and safety perspective that could benefit from some level of legislation.

Given the particular sensitivity and cost implications of any new legislation to the industry, it is strongly recommended that, where any sector may be identified for new legislation, the private sector and the regulators work closely together to work out acceptable timelines and regulations. This will ensure acceptance and support by those providers who may be affected by the legislation.

5.2 Certification of Industry Providers

For other areas of the industry we recommend that the BTB institute a system of **certification** based on including number of trained staff. It is felt by many of the industry stakeholders that certification of properties and service providers by the BTB would be a useful marketing tool for those providers who invest heavily in training and would be an incentive to others to embrace formal training for their employees.

A BTB Quality seal/logo would be awarded on an annual basis to properties and providers who have completed a set number of training man hours of their staff, or who have a set percentage of staff trained within the year. The seal would be used by the certified property on their letterheads for the year and in all their marketing promotion. The BTB would then publish a list of all certified service providers for distribution to travel and cruise ship agencies. A web site could also be created that would list the certified providers.

This would be a powerful incentive to service providers and would encourage, rather than force training as the direct impact of such a certification should be evident in the providers' market competitiveness.

It is noted that one industry stakeholder group in its response to this proposal did not believe that this system would be an effective marketing tool, nevertheless this has been proven in other markets such as Jamaica, Barbados and the Bahamas and it is believed that the same would be true for the Belizean markets. However the consultancy team would like to underline the fact that our proposal is for this to be a voluntary process for industry providers.

5.3 Delivery of Tourism Training

The possible formats for formal coordinated delivery of tourism training range from maintaining the current status quo with the TTU developing and offering training modules throughout the country to the development of a Centre for Tourism Training where training would be centrally focused. There is little consensus among industry stakeholders on the format of delivery but there is consensus on the objectives:

1. Training programmes need to be delivered in a cost effective and sustainable manner;
2. Training programmes need to be accessible;
3. Training has to be at acceptable regional and international standard;
4. Training has to be oriented towards the combination of the practical and the theoretical elements of the industry;
5. Training needs for those persons already in the industry as well as new entrants would have to be addressed separately.

Although viewed as a long-term goal, achievable within 5 years, the formation of a Centre for Tourism Training at this time is not viewed as a feasible solution to the short to medium term needs of the industry. The issue of capital funding, adequately trained, full time staff and the funding of recurrent costs would need to be addressed preferably in a more intensive strategic plan.

With the funding from the IDB coming to an end within the next four months, the structure of delivering the programmes requires a relatively short-term approach.

The current Tourism Training Unit under the guidance of the PEC has, as was pointed out in section 2, done a praiseworthy job in sensitizing the industry to the need for training and in developing modules that have had some success. This proposal recommends that the Tourism Training Unit be maintained for at least another two years with a somewhat modified role re-focusing itself primarily as a coordinating and planning body rather than an executing body. However the costs incurred currently are not sustainable without continued extensive funding and subsidy.

5.3.1 Training Cost Effectiveness

Currently, the TTU's costs for maintaining the system of District Tourism Trainers are extraordinarily high (\$243,000.00 over the life of the project). There are other resources that are currently in place that could be utilized for training, which would require less financial support from the TTU on a district level. It is therefore recommended that:

1. A Tourism Training Advisory Council be developed that would work with the Training Unit to co-ordinate training among the institutions in the most cost effective way. The inventory of resources shows that the Training unit can target training in the various districts utilizing the resources of the network of Junior Colleges, the BHA representatives and BTIA district offices and the coming national expansion of CET (through the TVET project). The full role of this Council will be discussed further in Section 6.
2. The benefits of such an alliance include
 - Less reliance on the TTU to actually execute the training, thus allowing training institutions to be fully involved in the provision of such training with assistance from the Unit. The Junior Colleges, UB and CET should focus on the training of new entrants into the industry
 - The BTIA district offices and the BHA representatives would be used as a major promotion and marketing point for courses to members for training of staff presently involved in day to day operations. The BTIA, as the industry voice should be given the mandate to assist in the marketing of the courses developed by the Training Unit to its members and to share in the profits made from the offering of such courses. Through this mechanism it is expected that BTIA members will benefit through the income generation for its district offices and, members will feel a greater sense of ownership of the training process. This will move the institutional strengthening of the BTIA to the next level as was anticipated in the original project proposal and prepare the organization for even more responsibility for training of its members.
 - The system of retaining district tourism trainers would no longer be necessary as these trainers would be absorbed into the regular training programmes offered by the Junior Colleges, CET, UB and the TTU. This would considerably lower the cost burden on the TTU budget and still maintain the decentralized approach to training that most stakeholders indicated was important to the Belizean Tourism product.

5.4 Review of Programmes currently offered by the TTU

- 5.4.1 47% of the trainees over the last two years has come from the Tour guide training programmes. The Tour Guide training Programme should be reviewed with the aim of making it more sustainable as well as ensuring that trainees are kept up to date in their field. The TTU should develop additional courses that will broaden the skills of

the Tour Guides as well as ensuring that quality standards are maintained. The Unit should offer:

- Refresher courses
- A Senior Tour Guide qualification
- Advanced Training in specialized fields such as Birding, Archaeology, natural history etc.

5.4.2 Based on the analysis provided by the TTU of the breakdown of courses offered over the past two years, enrollment in the remaining courses (approximately 12) has been relatively low averaging approximately 10 persons per course. Although the courses are internally self sustainable i.e. the costs are covered, the administrative costs are relatively high (generally 50% of the total fixed and variable costs). This suggests that the price to end users could be reduced through increased enrollment. A new marketing strategy therefore is imperative in order to increase sustainability of the training programmes as well as to survey providers needs to ensure that more relevant courses are offered.

5.5 Marketing

5.5.1 Marketing strategy

Members of the industry need to be more committed to the training of their employees. Criticisms of the present programmes focus on issues of affordability and "value" to the industry provider. The original proposal for the IDB was that the training of the industry would be devolved to the private sector through the BTIA. This proposal supports that view but recommends that a stronger partnership be forged between the BTIA, the BHA the TTU and the other stakeholders. This will increase the "buy in" of the industry stakeholders.

The TTU should meet with the major industry stakeholders and develop an annual plan based on assessed training needs within the industry and more targeted areas of training and professional development identified by stakeholders.

With greater stakeholder involvement and in particular with the full support of the BHA and BTIA, the TTU will be able to focus training on areas that are most needed within the industry.

5.5.2 Course Packaging and Pricing

Based upon consultation with the industry, the TTU should develop a series of courses in each of the major areas of focus of training. Each course should be seen as a finite and self-contained programme but there should be a clear articulation of courses one into the other. Courses should be broken down into progressive modules that would have clearly designated achievement objectives that would inform the industry as to the expected level of competence of the graduate from each course.

Courses may be packaged and sold in various formats

- Full packages: Direct, face-to-face training modules that are offered in convenient locations nation wide. These packages would include training

manuals for each participant, services of a trainer/facilitator, examination and certification. Pricing of this package should include full cost recovery of the cost of preparation of the manual, facilitator's fees, administrative fees set by the TTU and a small service charge percentage that will be used to re-invest in the training fund.

- Distance Package: This package would be marketed to hotels, and resorts in particular and would be primarily aimed at in-house training. The package would include training manuals, training outlines and additional material on CD-ROM, Facilitator Manual including testing and evaluation criteria. Pricing of this package would follow the same formula as for the full package. However there should be a scale of charges that would be based on number of employees being trained by the purchasing institution.
- Individual modules/items (manuals, videos, CD-Rom's) etc. should be sold separately on a *cost plus* basis to individuals, institutions etc.

5.6 Articulation of TTU course offerings and Other Educational Institutions

The Tourism Training Unit should do a review of the present course offerings to evaluate which ones could be best outsourced to other training institutions as well as to evaluate the expansion of the existing modules. One of the major criticisms levied at the courses offered is the fact that they are perhaps too general without any clear progression ("follow up"). It is recommended that courses be broken down into more detailed modules at various levels allowing for a clear progression in the trainee's career. Thus a course such as Bartending could have Modules 1-3 with progressively higher levels of in depth training and certification. The benefits of this streamlining of courses would be:

- More coherent streaming of skilled and semi skilled individuals into their proper levels and encourage industry workers to upgrade their skills in a continuous manner as clearer career paths can then be created;
- Employers in the industry will be able to properly evaluate the competence levels of potential employees who have completed the training courses
- The possibility of industry workers accumulating credits from such a system that could be transferred into the more formal education system at the Associate and Bachelor Degree levels
- Ensuring a steady stream of "returning" trainees for the programmes and encouraging a lifelong learning approach to training in the industry rather than the relatively ad-hoc approach currently adopted by individuals and service providers.
- Facilitating articulation of all training programmes with the formal system both locally and regionally.

5.7 Establishment of Formal Linkages between the TTU and other Partnering Institutions

- 5.7.1 Through consultation with individual educational institutions which currently offer tourism programmes and courses(e.g. University of Belize, Sacred Heart College, Centre for Employment Training etc.) the TTU should:

- Examine courses currently being offered by the TTU and identify those that will allow for transferability to the formal educational system. For example, students in the Bachelor's degree programme in Tourism Management would be allowed to take specific technical courses offered through the TTU as electives. In addition this would enable those persons pursuing short term training courses to receive credit upon entering the formal educational system;
- The TTU should become the central source for trainers and all training programmes should recruit trainers through the TTU trainer database. This could be done through contractual arrangements with the formal institutions that will pay to the TTU a "finder's fee" for sourcing trainers. The current DTTs would be incorporated into this pool of human resources.

The end results of this system would be that the TTU would play a central and stronger role in coordination of all training in the tourism sector. The TTU would function in this capacity as a **regulatory and quality assurance body**.

5.7.2 It is proposed that the TTU engage in a series of Memoranda of Understanding with partnering institutions that would cover the following general areas:

- ☐ Identification of potential shared resources - human and physical;
- ☐ Agreement on sharing of costs and revenues (see Note 8 to the Financial statements);
- ☐ Terms of reference regarding the utilization of copyrighted materials (modules and manuals) from TTU to be used for the delivery of courses offered by the institutions.

5.7.3 It is further recommended that **separate** contract agreements be negotiated with the individual offering partner using the general terms of the MOU as a guideline. However, specific details of the contract would have to take into consideration factors such as enrollment projections, type of course(s) being offered, fixed and variable costs, location, availability of infrastructure etc.

6. Structure and Function of the TTU 2004-2006

The mandate of this project was to evaluate the feasibility of tourism training, as it currently exists and to do a business plan for a self-sustainable structure.

It is the view of the consulting team that the work done over the last year by the TTU has been invaluable and should be continued for another two year period incorporating the recommendations listed above. In that interim the Tourism Training Advisory Council should spearhead national consultations for the development of a national policy for tourism training to be completed by 2004 and thereafter develop a five year strategic plan for training in the industry for the period (2006-2010).

In the meantime however the Training Unit must remain self-sustainable. From the cost sheets provided by the Unit it is clear that the courses offered cover their costs. However the administrative and overhead costs of the Unit are disproportionately high and are not

sustainable without continued external funding at the level of approximately Bz\$1,000.000 per annum if the current structure and mode of operation are maintained.

If external funding is not available then the Unit will have to restructure in order to be able to sustain itself while still enabling the increase of trained individuals over the next year to two years.

6.1 Management Structure and Operations of the TTU

6.1.1 The Role of the BTB

The Belize Tourism Board will have oversight of the Tourism Training Unit. It is recommended that the BTB appoint a small management committee of no more than three persons to monitor and evaluate the performance of the TTU on a monthly basis in achieving the goals and objectives set out by the Manager in his/her annual workplan. As the primary role of this committee is to ensure that the TTU remain on track towards self sustainability it is strongly recommended that at least one member of the Management Committee have a strong background in Management and/or Accounting.

6.1.2 Role and Function of the Tourism Advisory Council

The policy framework and strategic planning for the TTU will be carried out by the Tourism Training Advisory Council (TTAC). The role and function of the TTAC will include but may not be limited to:

- Receiving and approving annual workplans from the Manager of the TTU including annual Marketing and Public Relations Plans
- Receiving and approving the annual budget for the TTU
- receiving quarterly financial and operational reports from the Tourism Training Unit
- reviewing and developing strategies for the industry training programmes through consultation with stakeholders
- evaluating the sustainability of existing programmes and to recommend necessary changes
- leading the thrust to develop a National Strategic Plan for Tourism training to be completed and adopted by the end of 2005
- ensuring full stakeholder participation and consultation in the development of new training programmes, changes in training policy and development of quality assurance standards.

6.1.2 Membership of the Tourism Training Advisory Council

Membership on the TTAC should include at least one member of the BHA, the BTIA the BTB as well as representation from ATLIB, CET and UB. The Chairmanship of the TTAC in the first year should remain with the BTB in order to harness its ability to lobby for policy changes and the Vice Chair should be from the BTIA. In the second year the BTIA should assume the Chairmanship of the Council. The TTAC should meet at least once every quarter

6.2 Focus for the TTU

As more a coordinating body with responsibility for quality assurance and control, the TTU shall have a small core staff and then hire specialist consultants as is required on a short-term basis. Reliance on the BTIA offices and the BHA representatives to market the courses will result in the following changes to the Unit's present structure and function

- Discontinuation of the retention of the DTT's on an honorarium basis;
- Outsourcing of curriculum development and other specialized services;
- Expansion of the Unit as a Resource Center for training;
- Reduction of staff to a full time compliment of 4 (instead of the current 6);
- Expansion of the sale of training modules and material to the industry;
- Focusing the Unit's role on the development of a quality assurance framework and implementing regulations aimed at ensuring high training standards.

Instead of acting primarily as an execution unit for training the TTU should take the lead as a co-ordinating and facilitating body for the training needs identified by the Tourism Training Advisory Council.

The unit will focus in the first year on identifying the resources available at the Junior Colleges, CET and UB and work closely with the BTIA and BHA in assessing the needs of their membership and marketing courses to members

Through the hiring of short-term consultants, the unit will also co-ordinate the revision and development of advanced modules for offering to the industry. The TTU should also work closely with the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) to examine the modules already developed that could be easily adapted for use in Belize.

6.3 Staffing and Structure of the TTU

The staffing of the Unit will include the following:

- Manager
- Administrative and Financial Officer
- Marketing Officer
- Secretary

6.3.1 General Duties and Functions of the Manager

- To have overall responsibility for the operation of the TTU with specific responsibility for financial management at the level of budgeting and planning
- To produce a two year work plan stating clear objectives and goals specifically for the current year
- To work closely with the Management Committee appointed by the BTB to ensure tight monitoring and control of activities and finances of the TTU

- ❑ To liaise closely with the TTAC to identify training need priorities
- ❑ To direct the development of new programmes and the restructuring of current programmes
- ❑ To aggressively develop strategic partnerships in all districts with the BTIA/Junior Colleges/CET and UB to ensure the proper and efficient delivery of training programmes;
- ❑ To ensure even standards and quality assurance by encouraging the use of standardized modules through module revision and sale of modules to end users as well as training institutions;
- ❑ To ensure the preparation of quarterly reports for the TTAC including full management and financial reports;
- ❑ To source funding from local, regional and international agencies to support the work of the Unit.

It is proposed that the Manager have a strong background in training management. It is not recommended that a volunteer be sought for this position, as the temporary nature of programmes such as BESO could pose a threat to the continuity of programmes instituted. However, recruitment of someone through the BESO programme to assist the manager in the preliminary stages of executing this new strategy would be helpful and would help to minimize the costs of using part time consultants.

6.3.2 Administrative and Financial Officer

The Administrative and Financial Officer will:

- ❑ Prepare and present quarterly financial reports to the Unit Manager
- ❑ Collect fees from training courses and to monitor the agreements with the partnering institution
- ❑ To oversee the day to day accounts and financial records of the TTU
- ❑ To develop proposals for other revenue generation programmes
- ❑ To ensure the completion and management of the database for trainers as well as the employees database which would provide industry members with a resource for accessing trained staff.

6.3.3 Marketing Officer

The Marketing Officer will

- ❑ Develop and implement an annual plan for training.
- ❑ In consultation with industry stakeholders, design a promotional campaign to encourage service providers to participate in industry training.
- ❑ Be responsible for press releases, advertising and liaising with the media for coverage of training related activities.
- ❑ Liaise with partnering institutions to ensure the proper dissemination of information to target groups regarding training programmes.
- ❑ Present a quarterly report tot the TTU manager on the deliverables as indicated in the annual training plan.

6.3.4 Receptionist/Secretary

The Receptionist/Secretary will:

- ☐ Report to the Administrative Officer;
- ☐ Answer telephones, do photocopying, faxing and other office duties;
- ☐ Be responsible for data entry into the Unit databases.

6.4 Revenue streams

The Unit shall have three primary revenue streams:

1. Profit from the sub contracting and offering of training courses;
2. Sales of manuals and modules;
3. Other income derived from local, regional and international agencies.

Details of the projected income and expenditure statement are in the Appendix V . From the projections it is estimated that the Unit will be self sustainable for the period of two years and will be able to facilitate the increase in training by working with and through other agencies. Indeed the projections show that there should be a surplus at the end of each year that could be placed into a capital investment fund towards strengthening and improving the infrastructure of the Unit.

7. Other Recommendations

It is important to restate that the proposal contained in the preceding section is based on the cessation of funding at the current level. Also the proposals presuppose the willingness of the proposed execution agencies to become more active partners with the BTB in the development and delivery of training in the country, an assurance that we have received through the interviews conducted with the representatives of these agencies.

Secondly the proposal is in essence an interim position while several urgent issues are decided on through national consultation over the next year, specifically the following:

- Development of an Industry Certification Programme – by BTB
- Certification would be done every two years or preferably every year as the industry grows. Each sub sector should be consulted in developing certification criteria for their sector.
- Expansion and development of Tour Guide Training programmes.
- Legislation of training in those sectors with direct health and safety risks.
- Continued sensitization of the nation to the importance of tourism to the country's development.
- Development of a tourism training and education policy for Belize in line with the regional thrust such as the CTO's thrust at introducing tourism curricula in primary and secondary schools and the inclusion of the tourism section in CXC Social Studies for Belize.
- Development of a five year strategic plan through the involvement of policy makers (Ministry of Tourism, BTB, Ministry of Education), Private Sector, and educators.

8. Conclusions

There is little doubt that there exists a great deal of commitment to the concept of training in the industry. However there needs to be more ownership of the process by the private sector and increased partnering with related institutions.

Although resources are limited, thanks in great part to the work done by the BTB and the Tourism Training Unit over the last few years, Belize does have a reasonably large core of resources which are not properly utilized and shared. Through the proper sharing of resources training can be offered at competitive rates and will be seen more as an investment than an expense to the service providers in the industry.

It is hoped that implementation of this proposal will eliminate the fragmentation of the training resources in the industry and develop a cost effective system that will allow for the growth of consensus and trust among the key stakeholders of the industry.

Selected Bibliography

A Tourism Strategy Plan for Belize prepared by Blackstone Corporation, Toronto Canada, June 1998

Tourism Training for the New Millennium. Organization of American States, 1999

Human Resource Development in the Belize Tourism Sector, prepared by Sally Christ and Allan McPherson. April 2000

A Study of Training Needs in Belize, August 2001, Belize Tourism Training Unit

The Tourism Training Unit Marketing Plan by Alberto Young (undated).

The Business Plan for The Belize Tourism Industry Association, April 2002

Quality Assurance and Articulation in Hospitality and Tourism Programmes in the Caribbean by Ethley London and Denis F. Paul (2003 draft).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY WITH REFERENCE TO TRAINING

(specifically targeted at the members of the major sectors of the industry e.g. accommodation, transportation etc.)

Date: _____

Interviewee Name: _____

Organization: _____

1. In which sector of the tourism industry are you involved?
 - a. Accommodation
 - b. Food and Beverage
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Entertainment
 - e. Outdoor recreation
 - f. Travel Trade
 - g. Tourism Service
 - h. Conferences & Events
2. How long have you and your organization been involved in the Belize Tourism Industry?
3. What is the total capital investment in your business? Do you believe that this is adequate?
4. How many employees do you have?
5. How many employees belong to:
 - a. Top level management
 - b. Middle level management
 - c. Supervisory levels
 - d. Front Line Employees
6. What is the average level of education of your employees? (primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational).
 - a. Top level management
 - b. Middle level management
 - c. Supervisory levels
 - d. Front Line Employees

7. Do you support the view that training in the tourism industry is absolutely essential at all levels? Which level do you think is the most critical for training? Please prioritize:
 - a. Top level management
 - b. Middle level management
 - c. Supervisory levels
 - d. Front Line Employees
8. For you personally and your organization what do you think are your top three priorities for the next three years.
9. How much time do you currently allow for your employees to receive training?
10. What do you think is the ideal amount of time that employees should spend in training each year?
11. Have you or any of your staff been involved in any formal tourism training programs in Belize? If yes, please indicate the type of training and how many training sessions your employees or yourself have attended in the past year.
12. What do you think were the strengths and/or weaknesses of the training programs that you and/or your staff received?
13. How much does your organization normally provide for training in your annual budget?
14. If you do not presently budget for training, how much would you be willing to spend per year for training your employees?
15. Do you support local or international training in the field of tourism? Please indicate your choice and reason(s).
16. Do you think that tourism training should be legislated for all employees in this industry?
17. In your opinion, how should training in the tourism industry be funded?
18. What kind of tourism training system do you think would be most effective for Belize?
19. Would you support the establishment of a Belize Tourism Training Institute?
 - a. How would you envisage the structure and functioning of such an Institute?
 - b. What would be the best location for such an institute?

20. What do you see as the three major challenges that face the Tourism Industry in Belize in the next three years?
21. What do you see as the three major strengths of the Belize tourism industry?

APPENDIX II - INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Date: _____

Interviewee Name: _____

Organization: _____

1. What role do you and your organization play in the Belize Tourism Industry?
2. How long have you and your organization been involved in the Belize Tourism Industry?
3. For you personally and your organization what do you think are your top three priorities for the next three years.
4. Do you support the view that training in the tourism industry is absolutely essential at all levels? Which level do you think is the most critical for training? Please prioritize:
 - a. Top level management
 - b. Middle level management
 - c. Supervisory levels
 - d. Front Line Employees
5. Have you or any of your staff been involved in any type of training programs in the tourism industry in the last year? Please indicate which ones and the level of involvement?
6. What do you think are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the training programs that you have been involved in or that you are aware exist locally?
7. Do you support local or international training in the field of tourism? Please indicate your choice and reasons.
8. Do you think that tourism training should be legislated for all employees in this industry?
9. In your opinion, how should training in the tourism industry be funded?
10. What kind of tourism training system do you think would be most effective for Belize?
11. Would you support the establishment of a Belize Tourism Training Institute?
 - a. How would you envisage the structure and functioning of such an Institute?
 - b. What would be the best location for such an institute?

12. What do you see as the three major challenges that face the Tourism Industry in Belize in the next three years?
13. What do you see as the three major strengths of the Belize tourism industry?

-END-

APPENDIX III - LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Amparo Gutierrez	Elvi's Kitchen
Ramon Cervantes	Tourism Village Terminal 4
Einer Gomez	Ramon's Village
Frances Delvalle	Caladium Restaurant
Teresa Parkey	Best Western Biltmore Hotel
David Almendarez	Radisson Fort George Hotel
Anna Pereira	The Palms
Dennis Sunderman	Tropic Air
Valerie Woods	PACT
Maria Vega	Vega's Inn
Robert Blease	Caye Caulker Tour Guide Assn
Lionel Heredia	Caye Caulker Water Taxi Assn.
Elsa Moran	Happy Lobster Restaurant
Curlette Palacio	DTT
Desmond Pratt	DTT
Yvonne Villoria	Toledo Tour Guide Association
Ludwig Palacio	TDC
Nimrod Coe	Punta Gorda
Godfrey Young	Dangriga Tour Guide Association
Roselia Zabaneh	Bonefish Hotel, Dangriga
Agustine Flores	Pal's Guest House, Dangriga
Kennedy Amu	Ecumenical College, Dangriga
Gillian Eyles	Paradise Vacation Hotel, Placencia
Fiona MacFarlane	DTT Placencia
Elysia Dial	DTT Placencia
Deborah Vernon	Toadal Adventures
David Vernon	Tour Guide Trainer, Placencia
George Westby	Westwind Hotel, Placencia
Colton Young	DTT, Placencia
Greg Duke	Hopkins Inn, Hopkins
John Rodriguez	Caribbean View Guest House, Hopkins
Jorge Ramirez	Heart Land Inn Guest House, Hopkins
Piet Van Zyl	Hamanasi Resort, Hopkins
Doug Danny	Jaguar Reef Hotel, Hopkins
Christopher Aird	Sacred Heart College, San Ignacio
Cecilia Neal	Cayo Adventure Tours
Luis Godoy	Maya Mountain Lodge
Bill Butcher	Aguada Reef Hotel
Francisco Ramon Galvez	DTT Cayo
Javier Gutierrez	DTT Cayo

Kevin Lewis	Belize Auto Rental
Lavern Swift	Action Adventure Tours
Reynaldo Guerrero	BIM
Kevin Geban	University of Belize
Curl Bell	UB student, BSc Tourism Management
Lita Krohn	House of Culture/Trainer
Wayne McNab	Biltmore Hotel/PEC member
Ida Saucedo	Pelican Beach Hotel/PEC member
Alice Bowman	Pelican Beach Hotel
Sarita Tillett	S&L Travel and Tours
Kevin Herrera	Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Lucy Flemming	Chaa Creek
Judy Duplooy	Duplooy's Resort
Vincent Palacio	Director, TTU
Tracy Taegar	Director, BTB
Sen. Therese Rath	Chairman, BTB
Andrew Godoy	BTIA
Herbert Haylock	Programme for Belize
Anthony Mahler	Belize Tourism Board
Hon. Mark Espat	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Investment

APPENDIX IV - SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES TO INTERVIEWS

1. NEED FOR TRAINING IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

1.1 All interviewees agreed without hesitation that training was absolutely essential in the tourism industry in Belize. Some of the reasons put forward included the following:

- Rapid pace of development of the industry requires improved response from the workers in the industry
- Quality standards need to be increased if Belize is to remain competitive;
- Lack of trained and skilled workers in the industry presents one of the major threats and weaknesses to its continued growth and development

1.2 Several interviewees also felt that the fact that the BTB and the BTIA had clearly recognized the importance of training to the industry was one of the industry's strengths and had already put the industry on the right track.

1.3 Some of the positive comments that stakeholders made regarding the training that they and their employees had already received through the Training Unit and the BTB included the following;

- Trainers were generally well prepared, knowledgeable and capable
- Courses were accessible to people in all districts
- Course materials were comprehensive and well prepared
- Courses were affordable
- Courses were applicable to the local needs and requirements

1.4 Some weaknesses identified by stakeholders regarding the current training programmes included the following:

- Lack of adequate notice to stakeholders regarding course offerings. Some stakeholders felt that if they had more advance notice of the timing of courses they would be able to arrange to send more staff members. Some stakeholders recommended an annual plan of course offerings should be prepared and sent out to them
- Lack of sufficient details regarding course content. Some stakeholders recommended that they be sent an outline of the curriculum in order to assist them in making a decision as to the level of staff to send to the training
- Courses were sometimes too brief to adequately cover the material
- Cost is too high for smaller operators
- Not enough practical exposure in the training programmes (*"Too much classroom theory"*)

2 TYPE AND LEVEL OF TRAINING PREFERRED

- 2.1 Over 90% of interviewees indicated that the focus for training in the industry should be to prioritize front-line employees. Stakeholders felt that as front-line employees interact regularly with the customer (the Tourist) it was important that they be trained primarily in customer relation skills and then in technical skills.
- 2.2 The next priority for most stakeholders was in the area of supervisor training.
- 2.3 An interesting perspective from four stakeholders was that training priority should be at the level of top management as trainees were often discouraged from "putting into practice on the job" what they had learnt as upper management was not supportive of the implementation of practices that were different to what they had been used to doing. Top and middle management participation in training was seen in this case as a priority.
- 2.4 Type of training that was seen as important needs in the industry were:
 - Front desk training
 - Customer service
 - Public relations
 - Marketing
 - Hospitality accounting
 - Human resources management
 - Communication skills
 - Field training (knowledge about the history, culture, environment of Belize)
 - Leadership
- 2.5 Most stakeholders supported a judicious combination of both local and overseas training. It was strongly felt that, as far as possible local trainers should be used, as it was more affordable, convenient and local trainers had greater knowledge of the destinations within the country.
- 2.6 International training was also seen as a priority in terms of "training of trainers" programmes and ensuring that Belize's industry was exposed to international standards. Some stakeholders felt that as far as possible overseas training should come from regional sources as Belize had more in common with other Caribbean destinations than with extra-regional bodies

3.0 POTENTIAL LEVELS OF FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

- 3.1 Very few stakeholders interviewed had a budgeted amount each year for training. With the exception of two large stakeholders in the transportation and accommodation sub-sectors, none of the direct service providers interviewed had more than a notional idea of how much it cost them for training staff and how much they should budget annually. Figures ranged from \$500.00 per year to \$5,000 per year. In a few cases stakeholders

felt that the training budget should be somewhere between 2.5% to 5% of the operation's annual gross income.

- a. In response to the question regarding how training should be funded in the industry, there were varying views as follows:
 - Equally funded by the government, stakeholders and employees;
 - Private sector and employees
 - Wholly Government funded
- b. Non-service providers interviewed felt that industry players needed a change in approach to viewing training as an investment rather than an expense as the direct benefits of the training in terms of improvements in service and consequently income went to the service providers.
- c. Many interviewees felt that employees in the industry also needed to pay a part of their training as it was increasing their skills and marketability in the industry. In addition because of the high turnover of staff in the industry, employers could not afford to be constantly bearing the full cost of training of employees.
- d. The majority of stakeholders felt that although they would be willing to share in the costs of training they would be unable to afford full cost recovery type of programmes. Some suggestions put forward for funding models include:
 - Earmarking a percentage of the taxes presently levied on the industry for training;
 - Increase in taxes charged to departing tourists;
 - A percentage of the cruise ship head tax should be dedicated to training
 - A contributory type of scheme where the employees would contribute a percentage of their salary and employers would pay a proportion as well (similar to the social security model)

Similar models have been used successfully in other parts of the region such as the Bahamas and Barbados.

4.0 LEVEL OF TIME COMMITMENT FOR TRAINING

- 4.1 Second only to the issue of funding was the issue of how much time employers felt employees should have dedicated to training. In addition was the corollary question of whether employers were willing and able to give the necessary time for training their employees.
 - a. As with the funding issue dealt with in Section 7 above, we received a variety of responses to this issue. The general view of the direct service providers was that for the most part it was difficult to nearly impossible to budget time for training. Due to the small staff complements of most operations, many of the interviewees felt that training had to be done on an as-needed basis.

- b. Most of the service providers interviewed felt that extended time off for training was not feasible in the industry and felt that the following factors needed to be considered:
- Training for front line staff should be concentrated in the "slow season". However, it was recognized that there has been an increase in year round tourism which made the time situation even more difficult to accommodate training;
 - Training programmes need to be offered in short modules that would limit employees' time away from the job. Programmes lasting two weeks were not seen as feasible for the industry. Employers were more enthusiastic about half-day training sessions in a modular format.
 - It was also felt that training should take place outside of working hours for employees i.e. weekends and evenings.
 - Training was sometimes too general and did not really satisfy the precise need of the employers, thus leading to them still having to do "on-the-job training" In house training was seen as one way to limit the amount of time spent off the job to receive the necessary skills.
 - There was no general consensus on how much time employees should spend in training per year especially among the smaller service providers. Most interviewees, when pressed for an answer, felt that 1-2 weeks of training per year was adequate for their employees. Larger organizations had standardized training programmes in place ranging from 8-10 hours per quarter to 9-18 hours per month, the latter being in line with the franchise requirements of the property.
 - Some interviewees also pointed out that because employees had to travel to Belize City for the training the time and financial costs were too high to the service provider.
- c. Among the non-service providers interviewed, it was generally felt that the amount of time allocated to training should depend on the area of training. For example, at the higher skilled, technical levels (such as Food and Beverage Management) it was felt that 2 weeks to one month was an acceptable range of time required to properly train employees.
- d. In terms of upper level training in the industry (Associate and Bachelor degrees), it was felt that the standards created in the industry by CTLS had to be adhered to.

5. FUTURE TRENDS AND CONCERNS FOR TRAINING NEEDS IN THE INDUSTRY

5.1 A majority of the stakeholders interviewed indicated this as one of their major concerns.

5.2 Stakeholders indicated several issues that were of concern for them in terms of training needs for the future growth of the industry:

- Coordination in the management, and delivery of tourism training programmes nation-wide
- Delivery mechanisms and accessibility
- Articulation and accreditation of training programmes
- Legislation of training in the industry

6.0 Co-ordination and Delivery of Training Programmes

5.3 Stakeholders generally agreed that fragmentation in tourism and hospitality training in Belize was a costly and ineffective way of delivering training to the industry

5.4 There was a majority support for “some sort of coordinating body” that would be in charge of the management and administration of the tourism training in the country

5.4.1 The structure of such a body was seen in various ways:

- A central Tourism Training Institute with branches in each district. The responsibility of the Institute would be to ensure proper co-ordination of the programmes and to articulate all programmes within a national tourism training plan. This body would pull together all the present training resources offered at technical/vocational levels as well as at the Associate and Bachelor's degree levels. In this scenario the institute would play primarily an administrative function
- Other stakeholders felt that there would be no need to create a separate institute for this function only and any such institute should also function as a fully equipped and functional “Tourism Training School” where trainees would be able to have access to practical training on the spot. This would be off the model of the Training school in Barbados, Jamaica and the Bahamas. Stakeholders felt that this model would require a body independent of Government control with its own Board made up of academic representatives and private sector representatives. This school or institute could be affiliated with the University of Belize and offer courses that would be accredited towards the degree programmes in Tourism Management.

5.4.2 Several stakeholders commented that although the full fledged “institute” or “school” was an ideal, Belize did not at this point in time have the necessary capital to invest in such a system and that pulling together our current resources and coordinating their training efforts through the BTB was a first step towards the development of a single tourism training institute.

5.5 Delivery Mechanisms and Accessibility

- 5.5.1 Because of the wide geographical range of stakeholders, the primary concern among interviewees was the issue of accessibility to the training and the mechanisms used to deliver training to further districts such as Toledo;
- 5.5.2 Some suggestions for improving accessibility to training included use of the Internet to deliver training programmes through distance education mode,

establishment of regional centers for training with centers servicing the Northern districts and Belize District (Belize City) and another center servicing the Western and Southern districts (Belmopan)

- 5.5.3 The interviewees from Toledo felt that a training Center should be located in Toledo given the difficulty for the stakeholders to access training elsewhere, as well as providing stimulation for growth of the industry in that district.
- 5.5.4 A couple of stakeholders felt that the Tourism training system could utilize the UB physical network to co-ordinate training in various parts of the country.
- 5.5.5 The consensus among interviewees was that whether the system was headquartered in Belize City or Belmopan, there was a vital need for a physical presence in all the major tourism centers.

7.0 Articulation and Accreditation of Programmes

- 7.1 Primarily among stakeholders in the NGO and Education categories, there was a strong sentiment that programmes needed to articulate with each other and to have some form of accreditation whether to a national or regional body.
- 7.2.1 It was felt that for the Belizean industry to gain recognition in terms of the quality of training offered, the accreditation of all training programmes was vital. Also stakeholders felt that employees would be more willing to invest in their own training if there were a system of acquiring credits that could eventually lead them to certification.
- 7.2.2 Some Interviewees also felt that the University of Belize could be the accrediting body while others felt that the BTB could set up an accreditation "Council".

7.3 Legislation of Tourism Training

- 7.3.1 The issue of whether training at all levels should be legislated in Belize met with mixed responses from interviewees.
- 7.3.2 Some interviewees agreed strongly that training at all levels should be legislated in order to ensure standardized quality across the board. Interviewees felt that unless there was legislation in place, employees and employers would not fully commit to training on a voluntary basis and this could negatively impact the industry. Interviewees pointed out that the Tour Guide Training was the only training programme that was constantly oversubscribed because of the legislative framework
- 7.3.3 Other interviewees agreed that in some areas where there were safety issues, training should be legislated but that it would not be feasible to legislate training in areas that required relatively low level of skills (waiters, housekeeping staff, ticket vendors etc.). It was felt that legislation would act as a disincentive for persons wanting to enter the industry without official training and could result in a shortage of employees.
- 7.3.4 It was generally agreed that if training were legislated then the issue of funding for such training would become a central one.
- 7.3.5 Some interviewees felt that the industry should move towards self-regulation rather than legislative regulation and that a programme of certification of service providers could be undertaken that would have a certain level of training as a criterion or pre-

requisite for certification. The BTB could then publish a list of certified service providers. This would prove to be a strong incentive for service providers to include training in their standard operating procedures.

- 7.3.6 For future growth of the industry, a few stakeholders pointed out the need for a curriculum in tourism to be developed for the primary and secondary levels. From a long term sustainable perspective it was felt that this would not only sensitize the general population to the importance of tourism to the country but would also set a basic level of tourism "literacy" which would then relieve some of the requirements for general training. This would then free up resources to focus on more specific industry-related skills when these individuals integrated into the tourism industry.

**APPENDIX V - PROJECTED INCOME STATEMENTS FOR THE TOURISM
TRAINING UNIT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2004 TO APRIL 2006**

**PROJECTED INCOME STATEMENTS FOR THE TOURISM
TRAINING UNIT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2004 TO APRIL
2006**

Feasibility Study and Business Plan for Sustainability of Tourism Industry Training Support Programmes in Belize

INCOME		YEAR 1	YEAR 2
	Notes		
Training Fee	1,2,3	312,500	450,144
Sale of Training Modules and Manuals	4	30,000	44,325
Other Income	5	<u>7,500</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Total Income (A)	6	350,000	504,469

COST OF SALES

Production of Modules and Manuals	7	22,580	35,260
Training Costs	8	<u>93,750</u>	<u>157,550</u>
Total Costs (B)		116,330	192,810

Gross Profit (A-B)		233,670	311,659
---------------------------	--	----------------	----------------

**OPERATING AND
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES**

Salaries and Wages	9	130,000	136,500
Benefits	10	6,200	6,510
Electricity		6,000	6,500
Telephone	11	7,200	7,500
Water		300	350
Garbage Disposal		300	300
Printing and Office supplies	12	29,750	37,090
Uniforms		2,500	2,250
Property Tax		100	125
Training and Staff Development		2,500	3,000
Advertising and Promotion	13	15,000	20,000
Social Security Expense		1,000	1,250
Bank Charges		1,300	1,450
Entertainment		1,250	1,500
Gasoline and Lubricants		7,000	7,200
Repairs and Maintenance		3,600	4,800
Allowance for Bad Debt		10,000	12,000
Amortization and Depreciation		6,000	7,000
Donations and Subscriptions		1,000	1,250
Legal and Professional Fees		3,000	3,500
Auditing and Accounting		6,000	7,500
Traveling and Accommodation (Overseas)		5,000	6,500
Traveling and Accommodation (Local)		<u>5,000</u>	<u>6,500</u>
Total General and Administrative Expenses		250,000	280,565

Net Income from Operations		27,950	24,995
-----------------------------------	--	---------------	---------------

Net Income (Beginning of the year)	14	60,000	32,050
NET INCOME (End of the Year)		32,050	57,145

NOTES TO THE PROJECTED INCOME STATEMENTS FOR THE TOURISM TRAINING UNIT 2004-2006

1. The number of trainees for the first year is projected at 1250 persons. This figure is expected to grow by about 25% during the second year of the unit's operation. Note that the Training Unit was able to train over 2000 trainees during the last two years of operations.
2. The average cost of each course to be put on by the TTU is projected at \$250.00 per trainee having factored into the cost the fixed and variable costs. The amount of \$250.00 has been conservatively projected taking the average of training costs for all courses offered by the TTU over the last two years of its operations.
3. The training fee for each course to be offered during the second year is projected to increase by about 15% over the projected cost for the first year considering the rate of inflation and cost of living index over the two-year period.
4. The income from the sale of the training modules for each course is projected at \$20 per module to the participant. It is also projected that each participant will buy a copy of the manuals as well as some institutions that may wish to use the modules for the offering of various courses. The cost to each institution is projected at \$500.00 per module. It is projected that at least 10 copies should be sold in each year. It is projected that the sale of the manuals and modules should increase by about 25% and 5% respectively in the second year.
5. The other income of \$7500 and \$10000 respectively are expected to accrue from various income generation activities that may be undertaken by the TTU e.g. Resource Center user fees, photocopying, internet services, job placements etc.
6. The projected income statement also assumes that the TTU will undertake aggressive marketing efforts and offer varieties of courses that will be able to attract and meet the needs of the Tourism sector during the period.
7. The cost of producing each manual and module is projected at \$15 and \$375 respectively in the first year and at \$20.00 and \$400 in the second year of operation of the Unit.
8. The training cost is projected at the rate of 30% of training income for the first year and 35% for the second year. The training cost includes facilitators' fees and commissions to be

paid to partnering institutions on a formula to be amicably negotiated between the TTU and these agencies.

9. The salaries and wages figure for the first year is projected as follows:

Training Manager - \$55,000
Finance and Administration Officer \$30,000
Marketing Officer - \$25,000
Secretary/Receptionist - \$20,000

The figure for the second year is projected to increase by about 5% over the first year figure.

10. The benefits include \$400 per month as housing allowance to the Training Manager and the sum of \$1400 per annum as entertainment allowance. The figure for the second year is expected to increase by a margin of 5%.

11. The figures of \$7,200 and \$7,500 for the first and second year respectively are projected under the understanding that the Unit will be fully responsible for meeting all their utility expenses and that all employees will be cost conscious in utilizing these facilities as government assistance will not be forthcoming in that period.

12. The printing and office supplies is projected at 13% and 12% of the total income in the first and second years respectively.

13. The figure for advertising and promotion is projected with the understanding that the unit will use all available media to create the necessary awareness of all courses, seminars and other activities that may be undertaken by the Unit.

14. The figure of \$60,000 as the beginning balance is the estimated sum that would be carried forward from the Unit's Sustainability Fund at the beginning of the first year of operations under this proposal.

APPENDIX VI - RESOURCE AUDIT FOR HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM TRAINERS IN BELIZE

1. **Center for Employment Training (CET):** offers certificate courses in hospitality management addressing areas such as housekeeping, catering, customer service skills.

Staff includes:

- Ian Sanchez – possesses an associate's degree and several years experience working with the CET.
- Mrs. Garbutt – Many years teaching experience food preparation and catering techniques.
- Ms. Jodi Ebanks – several years teaching experience and presently pursuing a Bachelors degree in tourism Management at the University of Belize.

2. **Galen University:** offers courses including marine ecology, watershed ecology, society and the environment, ecology of tropical rainforest, Mayan art and archaeology, Mayan history and culture and cultural anthropology.

Staff includes: positions from lecturers to professors

3. **Lamanai Field Research Center:** offers training related to community tourism, archaeology and ornithology.

4. **Sacred Heart Junior College:** offers an associate's degree in tourism management.

Staff includes:

- Ms. Marjorie Shaw (M.A.), many years teaching experience.
- Mr. Francisco Guitierrez - tourism teacher and a district tourism trainer.

5. **Stann Creek Ecumenical High School:** Offers a hospitality program within their high school syllabus.

Staff includes: Ms. Shanna Jackson – she has an associate's degree in natural resources management and has attended a few training sessions relating to tourism.

6. **University of Belize:** Offers an associate's degree in hospitality management (which is presently being reviewed). The university also offers a bachelors of science degree in Tourism Management.

Staff includes:

Feasibility Study and Business Plan for Sustainability of Tourism Industry Training Support Programmes in Belize

- Ms Sharret Yearwood (MSc) – several years teaching experience and a first degree in tourism management as well.
- Ms Camille Estelle – many years hospitality management experience and currently a supervisor at the Radisson Fort George Hotel
- Mr. Omar Ortiz – several years' hospitality management experience and presently an employee of the Belize Chamber of Commerce.
- Mr. Robert Sebastino (Chef Bob) – owner/manager of Chef Bob's Bar and Grill. He has many years experience in food and beverage management.
- Mrs. Beverly Brown - Diploma in Hospitality and several years of experience in the teaching of Hospitality Management. Also she has completed the TTU's Training the Trainers programme.

APPENDIX VII – Proposed Organizational Structure

