

Final Report of the Caribbean Labour Market Information System (CLMIS) Project



Presented at the Caribbean Labour Market
Information Conference

*"Producing and disseminating labour market information and
Regional integration processes in the Caribbean"*

17-19 October 2004
Cascadia Hotel and Conference Centre
Trinidad and Tobago

Prepared by: Reynold Simons, CLMIS Project Director and Senior
Specialist, Employment and Labour Market Policies &
Aurora Noguera-Devers, CLMIS Project Coordinator

1. Background

In September 2001, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) signed an agreement with the United States Department of Labor (US-DOL) to implement the Caribbean Labour Market Information System (CLMIS) Project. The project aimed at achieving more effective labour, employment and labour market policies in the Caribbean that would be responsive to the new challenges of regional and hemispheric integration and globalization by generating reliable, timely and internationally comparable Labour Market Information (LMI), at the national, regional and international levels.

The immediate objectives of the project were:

- (i) In the participating countries the national labor market information systems are structured by establishing an institutional framework and the adopting of a national short term LMI plan and these systems are improved by an increase in the availability and quality of timely labor market information crucial for policy formulation of governments, trade unions and employers.
- (ii) Six countries in a pilot group will have enhanced and more efficient dissemination and analytical capability of national and international LMI through an electronic nationally based LMIL that is part of a global LMIL.

From areas of where countries had decided to take action the project sought to achieve these objectives by implementing the following ten (10) project activities:

1. An update of the *National Classification of Occupations (NCO)* in three (3) Caribbean countries and fusing these into a draft regional classification.
2. An evaluation of the potential of the *National Insurance Schemes (NIS)* to serve as a source of LMI on formal sector employment in six (6) countries.
3. Set up national institutional framework for LMI and adoption of national *LMI plans* in six (6) participating countries.
4. The establishment of *Occupational Wage Surveys (OWS)* and *Labour Force Surveys (LFS)* in three (3) in participating countries.
5. The enhancement of Occupational Wage Surveys (OWS) and Labour Force Surveys (LFS) in six (6) participating countries.
6. Produce the Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) *Productivity Indicators (PI)* for manufacturing and tourism sectors in six (6) participating countries.
7. Design and implement software and instructions to adapt the format of the ILO Subregional Office data set to the *(Caribbean) Labour Market Information Library (C-LMIL)* and restructure the data collection to facilitate updates quarterly and semi-annually.
8. Establish *country specific (national) Labour Market Information Libraries (N-LMIL)* in six (6) countries.
9. “*Train the Trainers*” seminar on Creating trained users of LMI amongst employers and trade unions.

10. Conduct 1st *Caribbean Conference on LMI standards and guidelines* to adopt a set of core regional standards for labour statistics.

2. Strategy for Implementation

In getting the project started, initial structures were put in place to facilitate project implementation. These included:

- *Establishing the project organization.* The project office was established and project staff recruited.
- *The establishing the tripartite project advisory committee (PAC)* with representatives from the Ministries of Labour, the national Statistics Office, the Caribbean Employers Confederation (CEC), Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL), CARICOM Secretariat, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and the International Labour Organization Subregional Office for the Caribbean. The purpose of the PAC is to provide advice to the ILO as the program implementing agency, and assist in the promotion of project activities, outreach, and facilitation and in providing other project implementation support.
- *Formal enrolment of countries in project activities and mandating lead agencies for each activity.* This formal enrollment included formalizing commitment and ensuring participation in project activities. This involved conducting a teleconference to refine project areas and to illicit enrollment as well as missions to each participating country to explain the project and to initiate activities nationally.
- *The establishing national tripartite LMI committees* to guide the implementation of the activities.
- *The establishing national focal points* in each country to ensure the coordination and integration of LMI activities nationally.
- *Signing a contract with the lead agencies* implementing the activity.

The project was basically designed to provide technical assistance and limited support for implementation. It was also assumed that the respective lead agencies had decided to undertake the activity without completely depending on international funding for implementation and sustainability.

Initially the project was designed to be implemented by a core set of National Consultants with guidance from International Specialists and various national technical teams and stakeholder groups. Due to the requests by national lead agencies to strengthen lead agency capacity building and promote regional collaboration the project management took the decision to allow national specialists employed by the lead agencies to be released to serve as the National Specialists for the project activities as in kind input by the lead agency. Although this decision tended to promote greater ownership of the project outputs, greater participation by the key agencies responsible, and institutional

strengthening, this decision had a large impact on the project’s administration including the implementation schedule.

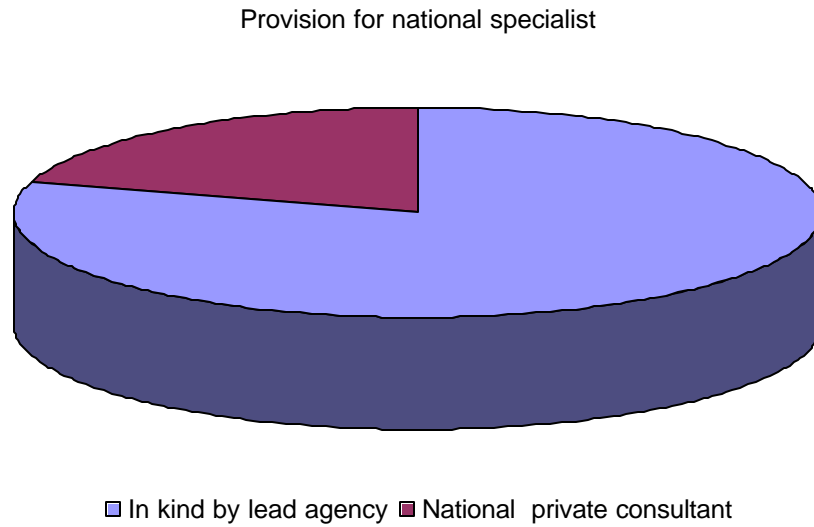


Figure 1

Table 1: Percentage of National Specialists Provided by Lead Agencies (in-kind)

Activity	Provision for national specialist		
	In kind by lead agency	National private consultant	Total
NCO	2	1	3
LFS	5	1	6
OWS	10	2	12
PI	4	1	5
NIS	7	0	7
LMI Plan	5	3	8
LMIL	10	3	13
Total	43	11	54
%	80	20	100

As a result, as indicated in Table 1 above, in approximately eighty percent (80%) of the activities, the technical assistance structure involved the linking of International Specialists with National Specialists assigned by the lead agency involved, guided by

national technical teams and tripartite committees, and coordinated by project management at the ILO Subregional Office in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

3. Project Results

Overall the project has been able to meet most of its objectives and targets. Table 2 below demonstrates the project objectives and the results achieved to date.

Activity	Results
<p>Update <i>national occupational classification (NCOs)</i> systems in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Jamaica and fuse these into a draft regional system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NCO in Barbados¹, Jamaica², and Trinidad and Tobago³ were updated and a publication was produced highlighting the work that was implemented. - Two (2) electronic modules were developed to facilitate the development of a regional classification and dissemination: A database to facilitate comparison of Occupational Titles and Descriptions for Levels 1-3; and a search engine comparison of the detailed descriptions across each updated classification and the ISCO. - The Caribbean Occupational Exchange Facility (COIEF) will take ownership of institutionalizing the communication and collaboration between the national custodians and the ILO. It will also take responsibility for the distribution of the COIEF-CDROM containing the three classification which are linked through the ISCO (crosswalk) and the website that provides services and feed back to the users
<p>Set up national institutional framework for LMI and adoption of national <i>LMI plan</i> in the participating countries.</p>	<p>Seven⁴ (7) participating countries are at various stages of completing their LMI plan. LMI users and producers in these countries have completed the on line questionnaires to facilitate the needs/output assessment. Serious setbacks as a result of IT problems hampered the timely release of the results. The results of this assessment have been distributed by Project management to facilitate the development of the national LMI Plans which will be discussed and institutionalized through the national meetings.</p>

¹ For the following sectors: garages, information technology, _____

² Levels _____

³ For the following sectors: Information Technology, Energy _____

⁴ Bahamas, Barbados, Netherlands Antilles, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

<p>Conduct a <i>Caribbean Conference on LMI standards and guidelines</i> to adopt set of core regional standards for labour statistics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is the Conference we are now attending with participation from over 13 countries in the region representing the Ministries of Labour, the national statistics Offices, the Trade Unions and Employer Organizations.
<p>Decrease time between information collecting and processing through evaluation and enhancement and the establishment of <i>labor force surveys (LFS)</i> and <i>occupational wage surveys (OWS)</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four (4) countries⁵ completed the enhancement of their LFS and two (2) countries⁶ completed the enhancement of the OWS. One country⁷ established and implemented the LFS, however, survey results are still being compiled. Of the eight (8) countries who were establishing OWS, four (4)⁸ implemented the survey and four (4)⁹ completed survey designs. Although Trinidad and Tobago has not yet completed its survey, it has submitted an implementation plan and will complete the survey shortly after the overall project ends. - Two (2) working papers¹⁰ have been published to highlight the final reports of each country (inclusive of the results, where applicable) and their survey designs. These publications not only illustrate the results of the survey, but serves as a reference document work and sample to countries interested in implementing or enhancing these surveys nationally. The publication is updated every two to three years it will reflect the development of these surveys in the region.
<p>Evaluate the potential of the <i>National Insurance Scheme (NIS)</i> to serve as source of LMI on formal sector employment indicators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This project activity was successfully closed at the end of March, 2003. A total of seven (7) countries¹¹ participated in this activity and developed final reports highlighting the capabilities of the NIS to produce LMI. Apart from methodological issues, the recommendations in these reports include a programme of action aimed at using the NIS as a valuable source of LMI. - A regional working paper highlighting the recommendations from the evaluation of the NISs has been published and circulated to all stakeholders.

⁵ Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica and the Netherlands Antilles

⁶ St. Lucia and the Bahamas

⁷ St. Kitts and Nevis

⁸ Barbados, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Guyana,

⁹ Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, Netherlands Antilles, and Trinidad and Tobago

¹⁰ "Survey designs for Occupational Wage Surveys in the Caribbean" and "Survey designs for Labour Force Surveys in the Caribbean"

¹¹ Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Netherlands Antilles

<p>Produce the <i>KILM productivity indicators (PI)</i> for manufacturing and tourism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The KILM Productivity Indicators were produced for the total economy and the manufacturing sector in five (5) countries¹² in the region. The indicators for the tourism sector were not produced due to the non availability of critical input data. - A working paper examining productivity levels in four (4) of these countries¹³ as compared to the US for the manufacturing sector and the total economy has been published and is being distributed during this conference.
--	---

Objective 2

Six countries participating in the developmental phase of the national LMIL will have enhanced, and more efficient dissemination and analytical capability of national and international LMI through an electronic, nationally based LMIL that is part of a global LMIL.

Activity	Results
<p>Design and implement software and instructions to adapt the format of <i>ILO Caribbean Office data set to the LMIL (C-LMIL)</i> and restructure the data collection to facilitate quarterly and semi-annually.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Regional/Caribbean Labour Market Information Library (C-LMIL) has been completed and is available in your packets on CD-ROM. Broad distribution will take place in combination with the National libraries and through downloading from the ILO website.
<p>Establish a country specific <i>LMIL</i> in each of the six countries opting or participating in the pilot project and that have committed themselves to sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Six (6) national LMILs are also completed¹⁴ and have been distributed to each of the participating countries.

¹² Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago

¹³ Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago

¹⁴ Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Netherlands Antilles, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago

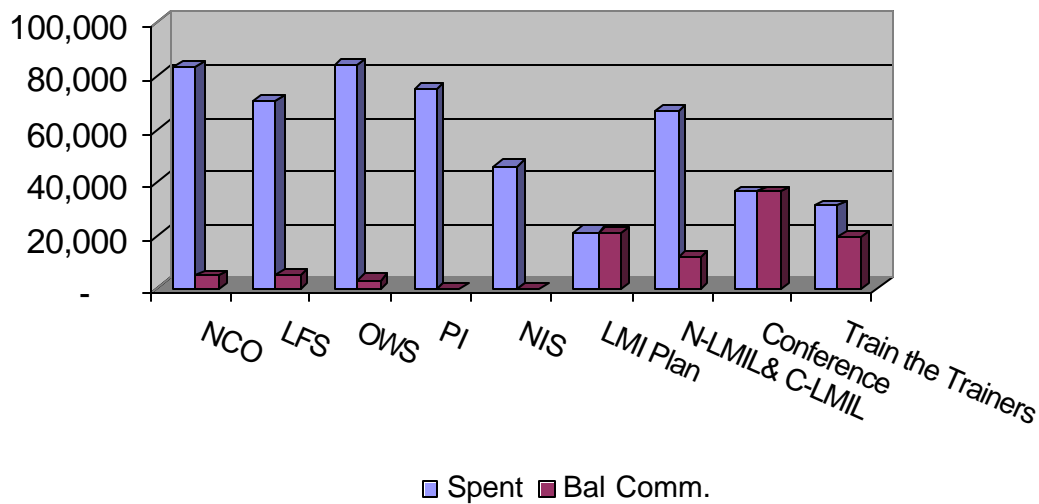
<p><i>Train the Trainers</i> seminar on “Creating trained users of LMI amongst Employers and Trade Unions”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labour Market Information (LMI) Modules have been developed for both the trade unions and employer organizations. The trade union module was piloted in Barbados and the employer organization module was piloted in Jamaica. - The “train the trainers” seminar is scheduled for 20-22 October in Trinidad and Tobago to train key researchers from the national unions and employer organizations on how to use the module and to make any final changes in the system if necessary.
--	---

In terms of cost, the following table represents the total amount spent per activity, (excluding management costs):

Total Amount of Donor Funds Spent by Activity (US\$)

Activity	Spent	Balance Committed	Total Spent and Committed(US\$)
NCO	83,203	5,000	88,203
LFS	70,392	5,500	75,892
OWS	83,942	3,756	87,698
PI	75,196	-	75,196
NIS	46,188	-	46,188
LMI Plan	21,669	21,009	42,678
N-LMIL& C-LMIL	66,568	12,250	78,818
Conference	36,500	36,500	73,000
Train the Trainers	31,110	20,000	51,110
Total	514,768	104,015	618,783

Total amount of Donor funds spent and committed by Activity



4. Lessons Learnt

During project implementation the project experienced various challenges. Various attempts were made to mitigate these challenges during the course of implementation. These challenges included:

1) At the level of Project Management :

- a) Resource constraints: From the size of the project that is the number of countries and the number of activities it becomes clear that the allocated budget was very tight. This resulted in various constraints including the available technology, staff and other technical expertise.
- b) Communication: The project design relied heavily on telecommunication facilities to link the international specialists with the national specialists. Inadequacies of the telecommunication infrastructure in the region posed a challenge especially in the area of video conferencing.
- c) The formalization procedures the project adopted involved initiating new procedures within the ILO administration. Sometimes this resulted in delays
- d) Determining the final group of participants in each activity.

2) At the national level:

- a) The attrition rate of personnel serving as focal points for purposes of communication and reporting was higher than expected in some countries. Consequently, progress in setting up an LMI institutional framework met with mixed success.
- b) Some of the national stakeholders were unaware of what was happening with the project on the national level.

- c) Attrition rates for national specialists were also high and this adversely affected the transfer of knowledge from experts, as well as completion of planned activities within the agreed time frame. Having the implementation of an activity “rest in the hands” of National Specialists employed by lead agencies. These lead agencies tend to be small with limited resources. As a result, there are competing priorities for the time and resources of these offices and their officers. The national specialists employed by the lead agency usually had a different pace than private consultants.
- d) Ensuring that the lead agency is aware of the progress and supports the work of the National Specialists.

3) Delivery of technical assistance

- a) Some of the International Specialists were not available as planned.
- b) Both national and international specialists were unable to deliver their products within the agreed time frame. As the work had to be done in a synchronized way this usually impacted on the timeline of the project. Late production of deliverables by the national staff was usually due to other pressing activities and commitments.

Recommendations:

4) At the level of Project Management :

- a) To avoid resource constraints project budgets should better reflect the need for project implementation infrastructure and staff.
- b) Critical communication facilities assumed in the project design should be made explicit in the project design and budgeted for separately in the project budget.
- c) All procedures for formalizing participation in project activities must be prepared and agreed with the parties involved during the start up phase of the project to avoid delays during implementation.
- d) A system of competitive assessment should be designed to determine the final group of participants in each activity if the target number of participants is exceeded.

5) At the national level:

- a) National agencies should assign a back up person for each position that is critical to project implementation to minimize the impact of attrition.
- b) At the national level a parallel system to the quarterly technical reports could be instituted to monitor project implementation and facilitate communication and coordination at the national level.

6) Delivery of technical assistance

- a) The International Specialists must be contracted well in advance of the commencement of the activities and a system of backup consultants should be considered in cases where specialists are not available.
- b) In the quarterly reports recommended earlier, the lead agencies should report on the availability of specialists they made available to the project during that period.

This will allow the project management to assess the type of problem that caused delayed delivery of outputs.

5. Recommendations for follow up

Based on the challenges confronted in Caribbean Labour Markets, the state of the labour market information systems in the region and the lessons learned the CLMIS project management recommends the following follow up for the CLMIS project.

- 1) LMI Assessments/Plan: With the experience gained and the assessment tool developed the LMI assessments can be taken by countries on a periodic basis. This will allow countries to assess progress made in the development of their LMIS. The ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean will make the upgraded assessment tool available on its website which will allow countries to take the assessment and get their database and a set of standard tables immediately. All other tools developed to prepare a national LMI plan will also be made available on the website.
- 2) National and Regional Classifications of Occupations: In brief a regional platform of custodians should take the role of coordinating collaboration and activities in this area to ensure continuity. Informal talks between the custodians of classifications of occupations involved¹⁵ have resulted in the decision to have the Caribbean Occupational Information Exchange Facility (COIEF) take charge of the products produced by the CLMIS. The COIEF will also be the initial platform for communication and collaboration between the partners.
- 3) LMI Standard Setting meetings every three years: The region should meet with a frequency of three to four years to discuss labour market regional information standards which are becoming increasingly relevant with the processes of regional and hemispheric integration.
- 4) Productivity indicators are extremely important in the analysis of the global competitiveness of the Caribbean economies. The series established in the five countries should be institutionalized and updated regularly (annually). However, to ensure continuity, quality and analysis of the indicators as well as to allow other countries to develop the indicators a Caribbean Center for Productivity Studies is needed. Project document is being developed.
- 5) Labour Force and Wage Surveys: Countries are urged to continue to periodically evaluate and enhance their LFS and WS as information needs and situations are continuously changing. The ILO will continue to provide technical support to this effect. The working paper produced by the CLMIS project containing the methodological information on the surveys established

¹⁵ The custodians involved were the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in Barbados custodian or the BARSOC, STATIN the custodian of the JASOC, the Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago custodian of the TTDOT and the ILO custodian of the ISCO. It was decided to formally ask the CARICOM secretariat to participate fully in the COEIF considering its expected role in developing and maintaining a regional classification of occupations

or enhanced will be published with a certain periodicity, probably every three years. As such it will become a reference document on LFS and WS but it will also reflect the regions development in this area.

- 6) Administrative databases. The CLMIS project evaluated the National Insurance Schemes in the region as a potential source of additional labour market information, particularly in countries that do not have the ability to pay for an extensive and frequent household survey programme to monitor labour market indicators. This evaluation was aimed at identifying differences between the concepts and methods used in producing these data and data produced specifically for statistical purposes by statistical offices and other agencies. As a follow up the CLMIS project management recommends that:
 - a. A project is developed to implement the recommendations of the national reports of the countries that participated in the evaluation.
 - b. The tools developed for this evaluation are made available on the website of the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean. This will allow countries that did not participate in this activity to undertake the evaluation. The ILO could make technical assistance available to countries undertaking this evaluation.
- 7) Data dissemination: In the CLMIS Project two data dissemination projects were delivered:
 - a. The labour market information dataset that is available on the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean website was restructured. The information is now available as a Caribbean Labour Market Information Library. This format is much more user friendly and allows easy cross reference between countries. In addition the classification and categories used are standardized for the region.
 - b. Six national labour market information libraries. These libraries are specifically designed for national use and provide a link with the regional library. The software allows for a sub-national level.
 - c. The follow up for data dissemination consists of:
 - i. Keeping both the Caribbean and the National libraries updated will provide national, regional and international users with an up to date set of key indicators of the Caribbean labour markets.
 - ii. Extending the Non-employment tables in the Caribbean Labour Market Information Library.
 - iii. Including the data for the sub-national level of the national libraries and further customization of the libraries to satisfy national needs.
 - iv. Further updating of the metadata in the system
- 8) Trade Union (TU) and Employers Organisations' (EO) modules Implementation of the modules at the national level will require funding and some technical assistance. A project is now being written find funding to provide this assistance.