

## **Brief Overview of ProNet Project**

The ProNet project is co-ordinated and implemented by the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA).

**ProNet** is a practical skills training programme for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the Caribbean that intends to become more competitive. The programme was developed by Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA) in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and is facilitated by Business Support Organisation (BSOs), consultants and other agencies through ProNet Trainers from the Caribbean region.

It is expected that the Regional ProNet trainers, in the context of their BSO affiliations and/or as independent consultants are expected to provide business development and export marketing training to CARIFORUM SMEs based on their own resources. This is the current role of TTMA in the rolling out of the ProNet training programme in Trinidad and Tobago. It should be mentioned that TTMA was closely involved in the framework and the programme development of ProNet since its initiation with CEDA and GIZ. TTMA through Mr. Ramesh Ramdeen; CEO of TTMA and Regional Master Trainer for ProNet developed several 'real *-live*' case studies for the programme.

The **goal** of the project is to raise the level of productivity and profitability in SMEs, allowing owners and managers to operate their businesses more efficiently and effectively. Some **objectives** of the project include, inter alia, increasing the competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the medium to long term, understanding the problems, challenges and needs of SMEs in the Caribbean; and increasing the export readiness of SMEs.

The programme is based on Experiential learning methodology that is case study based and driven by practical examples and assignments. A number of techniques are utilised such as plenary group work, structured learning exercises, open-ended discussions, and fieldwork and brainstorming exercises.

The project entails training workshops. TTMA plans to expose training to approximately one hundred (100) SMEs over a period of three (3) years in partnership with Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment and CEDA.

The programme offers a series of 9 modules covering the key areas in managing and enhancing the competitiveness of a business. See below for modules and objectives.

Module (s) Name	Benefits to SMEs
<b>Business Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assesses the competitiveness of their own business;</li> <li>• recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of their own products / services;</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain knowledge of quality management principles</li> <li>• Acquire knowledge of the basic requirements that a product or service must have to be perceived as having quality</li> </ul>
<b>Production Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies basic strategic options for a manufacturing business;</li> <li>• Understands the impact of location on competitiveness;</li> </ul>
<b>Resources Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands production planning strategies</li> <li>• Understands and apply procurement strategies and techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Product Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of appropriate processes for managing the process of developing a new product;</li> <li>• An understanding of the importance of product innovation in respect of the long-term profitability and growth of a company;</li> </ul>
<b>Information and Knowledge Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the importance of systematically manage information processes</li> <li>• Ability to conduct an audit of the information requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resource Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assist learners in gaining an understanding of the concept of basic conditions of employment;</li> <li>• an awareness of labour requirements imposed on employers by law that necessitates compliance</li> </ul>
<b>Cost and Financial Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of the basis costing, pricing and financial assessment techniques;</li> <li>• an understanding of the key financial management techniques aimed at increasing the financial aspect of the SME including: break-even and safety margin</li> </ul>

	analysis; financial ratio analysis; and
<b>Export Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determines their export readiness;</li> <li>• understands the scope of export market research, which is required before an export transaction is undertaken</li> </ul>

For more information on this stimulating training and upcoming ProNet workshops planned for 2014, you can contact Mr. Ramesh Ramdeen, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at [ceo@ttma.com](mailto:ceo@ttma.com) or Ms. Joy Francis, ProNet Co-ordinator and facilitator at [tradedesk@ttma.com](mailto:tradedesk@ttma.com).