



Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Program (CARCIP)



Application Procedures for Business Incubation Grants and Training Grants

Adapted from the Business Incubation and Training Grants Manual
July 29th, 2014



www.carcipsvg.gov.vc

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (GoSVG) is participating in a programme that will support the country's objectives of leveraging the Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector to carry out transformation in the country by improving service delivery in both the public and the private sectors; providing citizens with ICT skills; and creating jobs.

On June 26, 2012, the Government signed a Financing Agreement with the International Development Association (IDA)/World Bank (Bank) to finance the Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Program (CARCIP) – Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) project. It is estimated to cost US\$6.0 million or EC\$16.0 million and is 100 percent IDA financed.

The main objective of the Project is to increase access to regional broadband networks and to advance the development of an Information Technology-Enabled Services (ITES) industry in SVG and in the Caribbean region. The project became effective on December 11, 2012 and will close on February 1, 2017.

The project consists of three components:

1. **Regional Connectivity Infrastructure:** this component involves the carrying out of a programme of activities for technical assistance and capacity building of the relevant institutions for the design and implementation of Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements, and the strengthening of the legal and regulatory environment.
2. **ICT-Led Innovation:** Developing ICT Centres of excellence to facilitate the growth of ICT-enabled industry in the Caribbean region.
3. **Project Management and Implementation Support:** this component will strengthen the institutional capacity for the implementation, management, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation of the project

THE ICT-LED INNOVATION COMPONENT¹

Under this component, the Business Incubation and Training Grants programme was launched on September 9, 2014. This programme is estimated to cost US \$2,000,000. It is structured as two sub-components:

The first sub-component will provide support in the form of business incubation grants to small IT start-up and existing businesses in SVG to acquire appropriate technical,

¹ CARCIP Project Implementation Manual, pgs. 2-3

management, financing or market knowledge skills, as well as technical assistance to assist them to access global incubation network support.

The second sub-component will provide training grants to individuals through training institutions registered with the National Accreditation Board and private businesses for ICT development within their businesses.

SECTION 2: GRANTS COMPONENTS

BUSINESS INCUBATORS



- Business incubators would provide business support resources and services that could include physical space, capital, coaching, common services and networking connections.

BUSINESS INCUBATION GRANTS



- To become eligible to receive a Business Incubation Grant under CARCIP a Business Incubatee MUST be a client of an eligible Business Incubator.
- The Incubatee can receive services as a resident or virtual client of the Business Incubator.

TRAINING GRANTS: EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



- Individual students who would attend the various training sessions would be the beneficiaries of the grant.

TRAINING GRANTS: BUSINESSES AND NON-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS



- Businesses or non-government institutions would be able to apply for a training grant to assist them in improving their skills levels.

SECTION 3: BUSINESS INCUBATORS

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- The Business Incubator must be registered in St. Vincent and the Grenadines;
- The Incubator must have a physical presence in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (the services given by the incubator could be virtual or residential or both); and
- It MUST have a suitably qualified and experienced business incubator manager and support staff.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Application must include an Expression of Interest (EOI) and a business plan which must be made in English, typed, dated and signed.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE EOI IS SUBMITTED?

The application submitted to CARCIP is subjected to a thorough evaluation process to guarantee impartiality and equal treatment of applicants. The process consists of the following steps:

- Applications are registered and given a reference number;
- Applications would be scrutinized for eligibility;
- The Grants Manager would schedule a site visit or interview with all eligible applicants to verify information submitted;
- Applications meeting the eligibility criteria and recommended for funding based on the site visit would be further evaluated by an Evaluation Committee;
- All applicants would be sent letters in which they would be notified if their application has been successful or unsuccessful; and
- The successful applicants would be required to sign a grant agreement prior to receiving any assistance.

INCUBATOR EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria below would be used to evaluate both virtual and residential incubators. The main difference would be no. 6 of Criteria 1. In the case of the virtual incubator this aspect would not be evaluated. The virtual incubator would then have a score over 90 instead of 100. The raw score would therefore be divided by 90 to assess whether the incubator would have made the 80% passing grade to become an eligible business incubator.

**CRITERIA 1: ASSESSMENT OF THE INCUBATOR BUSINESS PLAN – WEIGHTING
60**

1. To what extent does the business incubator model support ICT or ICT related businesses? – 10 marks
2. How sustainable is the incubator model? – 10 marks
3. To what level does the assessment and evaluation criteria for admissions support high growth sustainable businesses? – 10 marks
4. Are there sufficient monitoring mechanisms in place (example: growth in revenue and net profit, increase in number of employees, ability to service short-term debts etc.) which would allow them to track their client's progress? – 10 marks
5. Are there clear Exit Rules/Graduation Rules? – 10 marks
6. If the incubator supports physical incubation, does it have the necessary infrastructure in place to adequately support these services (example telephone and internet services in place, meeting facilities, admin support, evacuation plan in place in case of emergency)? – 10 marks

**CRITERIA 2: SERVICES OFFERED BY THE BUSINESS INCUBATOR – WEIGHTING
40**

1. Scope of services offered (what is the service offering of the business incubator) – 10 marks
2. Number of planned consultations with clients as per business plan (number of set meetings per month with the incubator manager or staff to assist businesses. There should be at least two scheduled meetings per month) – 5 marks
3. Training offerings (can the incubator support basic management training required by its clients) – 10 marks
4. Quality of Incubator staff (do staff have the competency and training to deliver a business incubation program) – 10 marks
5. Are technical assistance plans done at time of admission for each incubate – 5 marks

Each Incubator must score a minimum of 80/100 in order to be an eligible incubator.

SECTION 4: BUSINESS INCUBATION GRANTS

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible entities are private sector businesses legally registered in St.Vincent and the Grenadines. They **MUST** also be legally and financially autonomous, operate under commercial law, and are not dependent on the Government of St.Vincent and the Grenadines. A business may partner with another business for purposes of the project and in which case the lead organization must be legally established or be a citizen of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

All Applicants Must:

- Accept the terms and conditions associated with the call for proposals;
- Present all documentation required by the call (example certified copy of business registration, letter from business incubator etc.);
- Be a client of an eligible incubator acceptable to CARCIP;
- Commit to provide counterpart funding of 20% of the cost of the project (of which the 20% can be in-kind, an equivalent monetary amount or a combination of both) and accept the financial requirements of the program;
- If selected, agree to involvement in the programme's visibility campaign; and
- Agree to provide all of the information required by the programme for its monitoring activities and for evaluation of results and impact audits performed by the Program Administration or those hired to do so.

WHAT TYPE OF PROJECT CAN BE CONSIDERED?

The Project must:

Meet the definition of an ICT or ICT enabled Project fitting into one or more of the following categories (product upgrade, process upgrade, marketing and organizational process upgrades);

- Have commercial application and sustainability;
- Be able to be completed within the timeframe specified in the call parameters;
- Be in one of the following areas as identified by the Government of St.Vincent and the Grenadines as areas of priority in order for there to be re-engineered growth:
 - Tourism;
 - Information Communication Technology;
 - Agriculture and Fisheries;
 - Financial sector;
 - Construction;

- Manufacturing;
 - Health and Wellness; and
 - The Creative and Cultural Industries.
- Be supported by a complete project proposal including all supporting documentation as required by the call.

WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES CAN BE FUNDED?

The following expenditure can be financed under the grant:

Investments in equipment which is directly related and critical to the implementation of the project as defined in the business plan;

- Consultancy services, including market studies, website development, specialized technical assistance, services provided by the business incubator and other services as deemed necessary for the successful completion of the activity identified for funding;
- Intellectual or industrial property protection; and
- Software.

The following WILL NOT be funded using fund resources:

- Investment in equipment that are not directly related and critical to the project;
- The purchase of real estate or vehicles;
- Construction of facilities; and
- To liquidate debts (to include taxes and duties).

COMPLETING PROJECT PROPOSAL FORMS

Businesses can apply for up to EC\$100,000.00 (USD\$37,200.00) in Business Incubation Grants. Applications must be made in English on the official application form and completed in full. Applications must be typed, dated and signed. Forms would be available on the at the project office.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE APPLICATION FORM IS SUBMITTED?

Applications submitted to CARCIP are subjected to a thorough evaluation process to guarantee impartiality and equal treatment of applicants. The process consists of the following steps:

- Applications are registered and given a reference number;
- Applications would be scrutinized for eligibility;
- The Grant Manager would schedule a site visit or interview with all eligible applicants to verify information submitted and completion of a site assessment plan;

- Projects meeting the eligibility criteria and recommended for funding based on the site visit would be further evaluated by an Evaluation Committee;
- All applicants scoring above the 70% passing grade would be interviewed;
- All applicants would be sent letters wherein they would be notified if their application has been successful or unsuccessful; and
- The successful applicants would be required to sign a grant agreement prior to receiving any assistance.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR BUSINESS INCUBATION GRANTS

I. PROJECT DESIGN AND OPERATION; WEIGHTING (60) BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

- Project Goals and objectives are clear and in line with the overarching project goals (10)
- Clear identification of issues and how the project would address these issues (10);
- Completeness and correlation of the Budget to the project (10)
- Identification of benefits and results with respect to the enhancement of the ICT sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (10)
- Shows that the business would remain sustainable for at least twelve months after receiving the grant (10)
- Employment Creation (10)

II. ENVIRONMENTAL/SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY; WEIGHTING (20) BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

- Project is environmentally friendly (5)
- Will contribute towards poverty alleviation (5)
- Will increase the ICT skill level of persons in St. Vincent (10)

III. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY: WEIGHTING (20) BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

- Good managerial potential (10)
- Good technical capacity (10)

Each project must score a minimum of 70/100 in order to be approved for assistance under the facility.

PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES FOR GOODS AND SERVICES

Goods and services will be procured by the Grantee. All Single purchases MUST be supported by at least three (3) quotations. All three (3) quotations along with the application for payment MUST be submitted to the Grant Manager of CARCIP. Single source for any amount should require the approval of the CPD with recommendation from the Project Coordinator.

PROCEDURES FOR THE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS UNDER THE BUSINESS INCUBATION GRANT

The standard disbursement procedures consist of two procedures as described below:

PROCEDURE 1 – APPLICATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT

A Grantee having made a payment which is eligible for financing under the grant agreement, may apply to the Fund for reimbursement. The applications may cover a number of purchase transactions, however no single transaction should be more than EC\$20,000.00 (USD\$7,440.00). All single purchases MUST follow the procurement guidelines as outlined above. Each item for which reimbursement is requested in the must be pre-approved at the time of signing the “Grant Agreement”. The application must be supported by the following evidence:

- Original invoice from the supplier;
- Evidence of payment to the supplier; and
- Evidence of shipment if applicable

After approval of the application, CARCIP will make disbursement to the Grantee. Disbursements would be made via cheque or direct payment to the Grantees’ account. If for any reason an application is not approved by CARCIP, the Grantee will be notified of the disapproval and reasons for same.

PROCEDURE 2 – APPLICATION TO ENABLE PAYMENT TO BE MADE

The Grantee may also submit an application prior to having paid for goods or services. In such a case the application will request that the Fund, make a payment directly to the supplier on the Grantee’s behalf. The application must be supported by a contract, purchase order, or supplier’s invoice. All single purchases MUST follow the procurement guidelines as outlined above. Each item for which reimbursement is requested in the must be pre-approved at the time of signing the “Grant Agreement”. After approval of the application, CARCIP will make disbursement to the Grantee. Disbursements would be made via cheque or direct payment to the vendors account. If for any reason an application is not approved by CARCIP, the Grantee will be notified of the disapproval and reasons for same. Cheques would be disbursed within fifteen (15) business days.

SECTION 5: TRAINING: EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In order to be eligible to apply to deliver training courses the following must apply:

- The Institution MUST be locally registered by the National Accreditation Board (NAB) of St. Vincent and the Grenadines;
- The Institution MUST have a physical presence locally; and
- The Institution MUST have a track record of delivering training in the local environment for a minimum of three (3) years.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE APPLICATION FORM IS SUBMITTED?

Applications submitted to CARCIP are subjected to a thorough evaluation process to guarantee impartiality and equal treatment of applicants. The process consists of the following steps:

- Applications are registered and given a reference number;
- Applications would be scrutinized for eligibility;
- Applications would be evaluated and a report would be sent to the NSC for final approval on the award contract.
- All applicants would be sent letters in which they would be notified if their application has been successful or unsuccessful;
- Successful Institutions would sign a contract to deliver the course which they were successful in the bidding process;
- Successful institutions would put out a call for persons to apply for the various programs being offered;
- The successful training institution would assess applicants to the program based on the Institution's Matriculation Criteria for the particular course; and
- Successful Applicants would be notified. The prospective student would be asked to sign a letter of agreement which would outline the terms and conditions for the training grant.

ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS TO DELIVER PRESCRIBED TRAINING AS IDENTIFIED BY THE CARCIP PROGRAM

I. EVALUATION OF THE COMPLETENESS OF THE PROPOSAL -MAXIMUM SCORE 20 POINTS

- Is the proposal clearly defined as outlined in the guidelines for the submission of a proposal for training -*Maximum score 10*
- Has the training provider demonstrated thorough understanding of the purpose and scope of the training – *Maximum score 10*

II. EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATION – TRAINER –MAXIMUM SCORE 20

- Do the qualifications of the trainer adequately demonstrate the ability to deliver the proposed course material – *Maximum score 10*
- Does the prescribed trainer have the necessary experience in the specific training course area?-*Maximum score 10*

III. METHODOLOGY- MAXIMUM SCORE 30

- Does the methodology depict a logical approach? – Maximum Score 10
- Would the course content outlined in the proposal achieve the desired results? Maximum score 10
- Is the mode of delivery desirable for this course? (Example use of classrooms or e-delivery or a combination of both) Maximum Score 10

IV. TECHNICAL CONTENT OF PROPOSAL- MAXIMUM SCORE 30

- Are there adequate resources available for carrying out this training course? *Maximum score 10*
- Are there adequate evaluation tools for assessing and evaluating the trainees? *Maximum score 10*
- Is there a clear indication of quality standards in the proposal? *Maximum score 10*

Institutions must score a minimum of 80/100 in order to be considered for delivering the training services.

SECTION 6: TRAINING: BUSINESSES AND NON-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible entities are private sector businesses legally registered in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The businesses **MUST** be legally and financially autonomous, operate under commercial law and are not dependent on the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A business may partner with another business for purposes of the project and in which case the lead organization must be legally established or be a citizen of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

- The proposed training **MUST** be ICT related;
- The minimum number of persons to be trained is 15;
- The training **MUST** be completed within the timeframe specified by the call parameters.

The Business, Association or Institution **MUST** be in one of the following industries, identified by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines as areas of priority:

- Tourism;
- Information Communication Technology;
- Agriculture and Fisheries;
- Financial sector;
- Construction;
- Manufacturing;
- Health and Wellness; and
- The Creative and Cultural Industries

COMPLETING TRAINING PROPOSAL FORMS

Businesses may apply for training grants up to EC\$100,000.00 (USD\$37,200.00). Applications must be made in English on the official application form and completed in full. Applications must be typed, dated and signed. Forms would be available on the official project website or at the project office.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE APPLICATION FORM IS SUBMITTED?

All applications under the CARCIP Program, will undergo the same selection procedure. Applications submitted to CARCIP are subjected to a thorough evaluation process to

guarantee impartiality and equal treatment of applicants. The process consists of the following steps:

- Applications are registered and given a reference number;
- Applications would be scrutinized for eligibility;
- The Grants Manager would schedule a site visit or interview with all eligible applicants to verify information submitted;
- Training requests meeting the eligibility criteria and recommended for funding based on the site visit would be further Evaluated by an Evaluation Committee;
- All applicants scoring above the 70% passing grade would be interviewed;
- All applicants would be sent letters in which they would be notified if their application has been successful or unsuccessful; and
- The successful applicants would be required to sign a grant agreement prior to receiving any assistance.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR TRAINING GRANTS

- a. Project goals and objectives are clear and in line with the overarching project goals – Maximum Score 10
- b. Clear identification of issues and how the project would address these issues – Maximum Score 10
- c. Responsiveness to an identified need –Maximum Score 10
- d. Identification of benefits with respect to the enhancement of the ICT sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines – Maximum score 10
- d. Clarity as to how these trained persons would be used in the specified industry? – Maximum score 10

Each project must score a minimum of 35/50 OR 70% in order to be approved for assistance under the facility.

PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES FOR GOODS AND SERVICES

Goods and services will be procured by the Grantee. All single purchases MUST be supported by at least three (3) quotations. All three (3) quotations along with the application for payment MUST be submitted to the Grant Manager of CARCIP. Single source for any amount MUST require the approval of the CPD with the recommendation from the Project Coordinator.

PROCEDURES FOR THE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS UNDER THE TRAINING GRANT

The standard disbursement procedures consist of two procedures as described below:

PROCEDURE 1 – APPLICATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT

A Grantee having made a payment which is eligible for financing under the grant agreement, may apply to the Fund for reimbursement. The applications may cover a number of transactions, however no single transaction should be more than XCD\$20,000.00 or USD \$7,440.00. Any single purchase must follow the procurement guidelines as outlined above. Each item for which reimbursement is requested in the must be pre-approved at the time of signing the “Grant Agreement”.

The application must be supported by the following evidence:

- Original invoice from the supplier;
- Evidence of payment to the supplier; and
- Evidence of shipment if applicable

After approval of the application, CARCIP will make disbursement to the Grantee. Disbursements would be made via cheque. If for any reason an application is not approved by CARCIP, the Grantee will be notified of the disapproval and reasons for same.

PROCEDURE 2 – APPLICATION TO ENABLE PAYMENT TO BE MADE

The Grantee may also submit an application prior to having paid for goods or services. In such a case the application will request that the Fund make a payment directly to the supplier on the Grantee’s behalf. The application must be supported by a contract, purchase order, or supplier’s invoice. Any single purchase must follow the procurement guidelines as outlined above. Each item for which reimbursement is requested must be pre-approved at the time of signing the “Grant Agreement”.

After approval of the application, CARCIP will make disbursement to the Grantee. Disbursements would be made via cheque. If for any reason an application is not approved by CARCIP, the Grantee will be notified of the disapproval and reasons for same. Cheques would be disbursed within fifteen (15) business days.

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