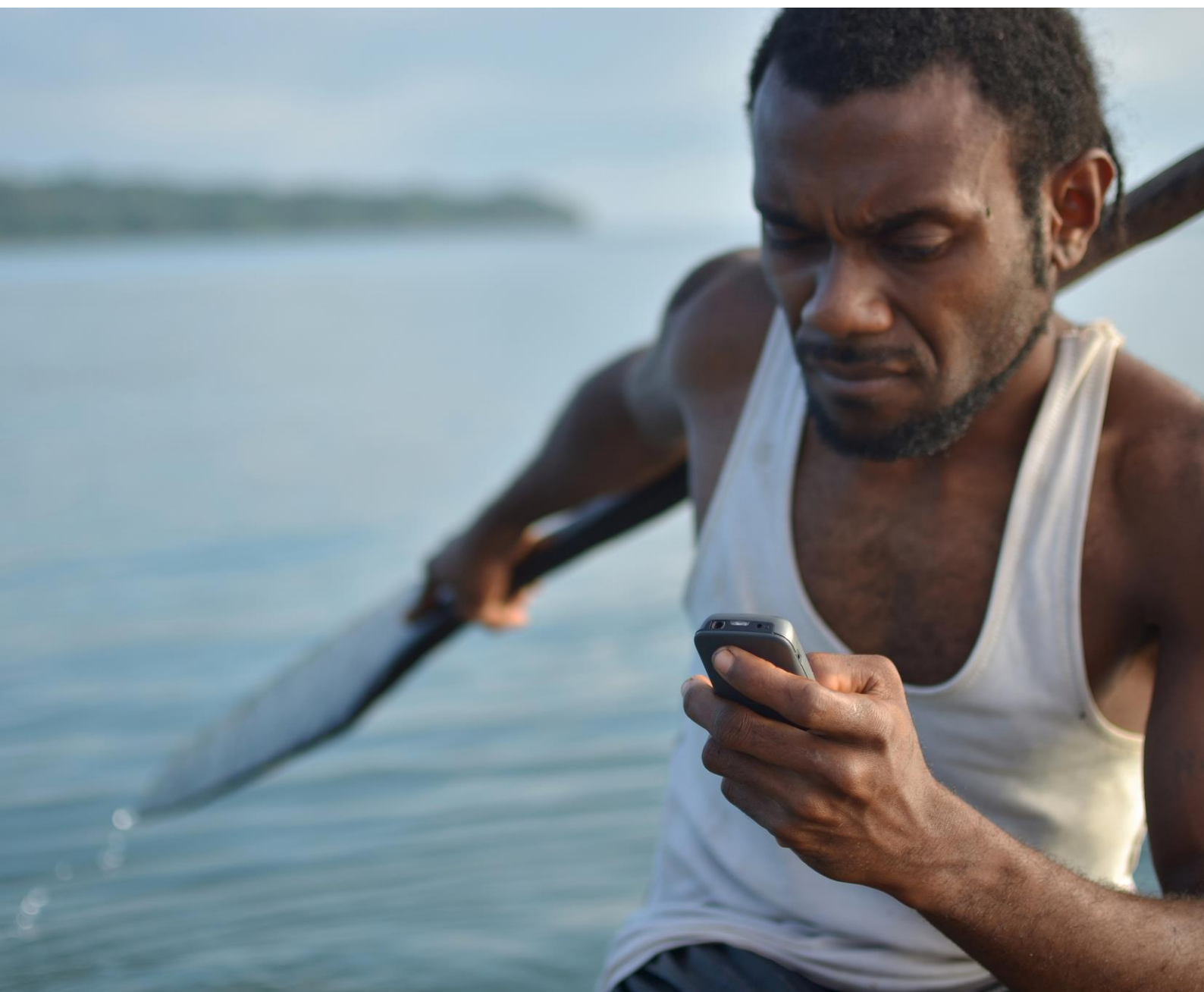


Successful Private Sector Mechanisms for Promoting Trade in Services

Case Study on Barbados



This study is published as part of the “Support to Enhance Development of Trade in Services Negotiations” initiative jointly undertaken by ILEAP, CUTS International Geneva and the University of Sussex’s CARIS. It aims to contribute to the increased and more effective participation of Least Developed, Low and Lower-Middle Income Countries and their Regional Economic Communities in multilateral, regional and bilateral services trade negotiations.

The initiative promotes understanding among policy makers, regulators and negotiators about their services sectors and the role that trade negotiations can play in pursuing their strategic interests therein.

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Abbreviations

BAICOB	Barbados Association of International Business Companies and Offshore Banks
BAS	Barbados Agricultural Society
BBA	Barbados Banker's Association
BCCI	Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BCSI	Barbados Coalition of Service Industries
BEC	Barbados Employers' Confederation
BHA	Barbados Hotel Association
BHTA	Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association
BTA	Barbados Tourism Authority
BIBA	Barbados International Business Association
BIIA	Barbados International Insurance Association
BIOB	Botswana Institute of Bankers
BOCCIM	Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower
BMA	Barbados Manufacturers' Association
BPSA	Barbados Private Sector Association
BPSTT	Barbados Private Sector Trade Team
BSO	Business Support Organisation
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBBA	Canada Barbados Business Association
CBTF	Competency Based Training Fund
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice



CHTA	Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association
COTED	Council for Trade and Economic Development
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
CTUSAB	Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados
DB	Doing Business
DFID	Department for International Development
DTF	Distance to Frontier
EC	European Community
ECEPS	Euro-Caribbean Enterprise Partnership Service
ECCIL	European Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lao PDR
EDF	European Development Fund
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Global Innovation Index
HLCC	High Level Consultative Committee
ICAB	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFC	International Financial Corporation
ILEAP	International Lawyers and Economists against Poverty
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LBF	Lao Business Forum
LDC	Least Developed Country
LIC	Low Income Country
LMIC	Lower Middle Income Country



LNCCI	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MTGS	Medium Term Growth Strategy
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NCTPN	National Committee on Trade Policy Negotiations
NSP	National Strategic Plan
NSSD	National Services Sector Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPD	Public Private Dialogue
PSWG	Private Sector Working Group
SBA	Small Business Association
SBVI	Small Business Venture Capital Inc.
TCTS	Technical Committee on Trade in Services
TDC	Tourism Development Corporation
TFEP	Foundation for Entrepreneurial Participation
VAT	Value Added Tax
WEF	World Economic Forum
WG	Working Group
WGI	Worldwide Governance Index
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Foreword

Services and services trade can play a central role in promoting sustainable development, supporting inclusive economic growth, and reducing poverty in modern economies. However, LDCs, LICs, and LMICs continue to face challenges in catalysing or sustaining progress across this diverse range of economic activities. With respect to trade policy and related negotiations, services have become an increasingly visible feature of discussions – domestically, regionally, as well as at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

A number of challenges impacting services trade negotiations and policy-making have been identified however. Many lack access to reliable services trade data on which to base analysis and decision-making, and skills for processing and analysing existing services trade data to underpin conclusions. Ineffective interactions between stakeholders to support decision-making – within government, and between the government and the private sector, civil society, and other non-state actors - is also a major challenge.

Against this backdrop, ILEAP, CUTS International Geneva and the University of Sussex's CARIS have partnered to undertake a series of interventions that seek to contribute to the increased and more effective participation of LDCs, LICs, LMICs and RECs in multilateral, regional and bilateral services trade negotiations.

With funding support from the UK Trade Advocacy Fund, a set of studies, toolkits and trainings are developed to assist these countries in increasing their participation in services trade. Target beneficiaries range from negotiators, policymakers, regulators, statistical officers and various non-state actors.

In this context, this case study reviews private sector-related institutional mechanisms for services policy-making and negotiations in Barbados, as well as in Botswana and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). It highlights the critical role of business-support organisations in collaborating with policy-makers to improve the business and investment climate.

Executive Summary

This case study reviews private sector-related institutional mechanisms for services policy-making and negotiations in Barbados and, to a lesser extent, Botswana and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Barbados was selected as the main focus for the case study as it has a well organised private sector framework geared towards improving the business environment for service providers. Further, Barbados is quintessentially a services economy marked by a strong base of domestic service providers in addition to a growing segment of international service providers. The selection of Botswana and Lao PDR presents an interesting contrast given these emerging economies are driven by extractive industries. In addition, the assessment of countries with different political traditions also offers a unique perspective in the sense that mechanisms for driving services reform can be successfully implemented in any context.

The research is motivated by the desire to highlight key lessons and challenges which may assist low income countries in better enabling such mechanisms domestically. The study represents a step in providing access to information on 'best practices' for private sector mechanisms to support enhanced services trade.

A number of interesting insights emerged from the discussion of these mechanisms. These are briefly mentioned below.

Business-support organisations (BSOs) play a critical role in collaborating with policy-makers to improve the business and investment climate in which services providers operate and to create opportunities for export-led growth. In order to do so, BSOs must be endowed with the capacity to make quality interventions or, at minimum, be able to access resources to assist in formulating such interventions. Core elements of being able to deliver quality interventions include the availability of knowledgeable persons to undertake research and formulate positions and resources to undertake such research.

In as much as BSOs may be strong advocates for improvements in the regulatory and business environment, unattended governance issues, such as those related to government effectiveness, regulatory quality and the rule of law, are likely to mount a strong challenge to the success of their efforts.

While public-private dialogues (PPDs) offer a potential remedy to such situations, the true test of their efficiency is to be found in the extent to which decisions are translated into meaningful reforms. A key factor for success is in having a government that is a genuine partner that demonstrably takes other views into account.

In terms of the successful mobilisation for services reform, inter-BSO collaboration is an effective tool for coping with the increased technical demands of trade in services negotiations.

In addition, smart partnerships with agencies in the international development community are important. Collaboration with such agencies provides financially constrained BSOs with resources to undertake tasks such as formulating technical inputs into discussions on services policy. It also creates avenues for BSOs to enhance their array of membership services in areas such as skills development.

Overall, the applicability of the best practices identified in the study is likely to be determined by the national context which includes the extent of government involvement and the capabilities of the BSOs themselves.

Introduction

This case study reviews private sector-related institutional mechanisms for services policy-making and negotiations in Barbados, with some additional reference to Botswana and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Barbados was selected as the main focus for the case study as it has a well organised private sector framework geared towards improving the business environment for service providers. Further, Barbados is quintessentially a services economy marked by a strong base of domestic service providers in addition to a growing segment of international service providers. The selection of Botswana and Lao PDR presents an interesting contrast given these emerging economies are driven by extractive industries. A key lesson from this is that effective private sector consultative mechanisms for promoting services reforms are not the unique preserve of services economies. Admittedly, the design of such mechanisms in non-services dominated economies may differ as they need to cater to all economic activities. Given that the cost and quality of service delivery significantly impacts on domestic production and international competitiveness, they are likely to be of concern to all types of economies. In addition, the assessment of countries with different political traditions also offers a unique perspective in the sense that mechanisms for driving services reform can be successfully implemented in any context.

The research is motivated by the desire to highlight key lessons and challenges which may assist low income countries in better enabling such mechanisms domestically. The study assesses key private sector mechanisms in the three selected countries and outlines how business support organisations (BSOs) perform their respective roles within the context of the broader policy-making and trade negotiation machinery. As such the study represents a step in providing private sector stakeholders, alongside government officials, with access to information on 'best practices' for private sector mechanisms to support enhanced services trade.

The importance of the role played by BSOs and the determinants of services export capacity provide a convenient point of departure for the discussion. This is followed by a brief overview of Barbados' services trade performance and the environment for services provision given that the country is the primary focus of the case study. The next section of the paper describes the BSOs for services policy-making and negotiations in Barbados. A closer look is then taken at the mechanisms used to address services issues in Botswana and Lao PDR. The analysis identifies the peculiarities that are likely to influence the effectiveness of BSOs in least developed countries (LDCs), low income countries (LICs) and lower middle income countries (LMICs) and insights are drawn from the overview of institutional mechanisms in Barbados, Botswana and Lao PDR and examples of best practices are highlighted. Finally, the study concludes by pointing to possible solutions to overcoming these challenges.

Importance of BSOs

Skills, institutions and regulatory and governance frameworks represent key determinants of comparative advantage in services. (Van der Marel, 2012) More precisely, developing country participation in service exports is likely to be shaped by a combination of the following elements:

- The “fundamentals,” which are given in the short run, but can be influenced by policy in the longer term. (Goswani et al., 2012) These include a country’s factor endowments, especially of human capital, including skills and entrepreneurial ability; natural resources and cultural endowments, such as those that attract tourism; infrastructure, especially telecommunication networks that facilitate the delivery of services; and institutional quality, particularly the regulatory environment for services;
- Policies affecting trade, investment and labour mobility in services; and
- Proactive policies in services. Such policies include those designed to promote exports, investment, or both, for example, by creating special economic zones or allowing privileged access to land, infrastructure or imported inputs; by providing fiscal incentives for exporters and investors in the form of subsidies or tax exemptions; and by establishing other trade promotion activities, such as trade fairs and information dissemination.

It is worth highlighting that institutional quality as a driver of services export success captures the effectiveness of both governmental and private sector institutions. In the latter case, it has been noted that industry associations can play a particularly important role in improving quality standards. (Goswani et al., 2012)

It is in this context that the quality and effectiveness of BSOs matter for the development of services production and export capacity. As key interlocutors between the private sector and policy-makers, trusted

and respected BSOs enjoy a privileged position in the formulation of policies and regulations which shape the business and investment climate and are well placed to influence governmental actions which affect the abovementioned elements which determine service export capacity. Moreover, BSOs in their own right perform an important function in developing domestic SME capabilities through education, research and networking as well as more targeted export promotion activities. (Hustler and Primack, 2012)

In the specific context of trade policy and negotiations, BSOs traditionally play a pivotal role in keeping the private sector abreast of developments; canvassing the views of sectors to determine defensive and offensive negotiating interests; formulating technical papers and undertaking empirical research to justify positions being recommended to policy-makers; and identifying areas for technical assistance from trade partners, where appropriate, as well as potential areas for co-operation. This role is unlikely to be altered in the context of *services* trade policy and negotiations. Generally, trade negotiations themselves have, in some cases, proven to be an impetus for the creation of special mechanisms as private sector agencies seek to cope with the increased technical demands imposed by active participation in the process. This is particularly important given that trade negotiations are a narrow subset of the wide range of issues dealt with by BSOs.

The Barbados Context

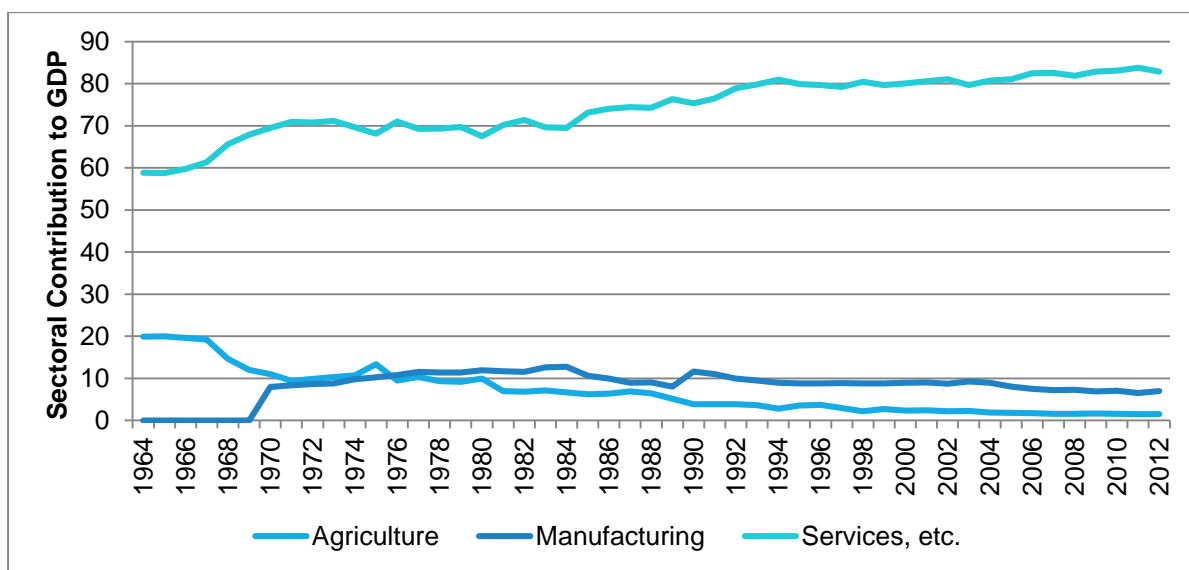
Until the late 1960s, the Barbadian economy was heavily dependent on sugar cane production. Efforts to diversify the economy through tourism and manufacturing produced mixed results; – while tourism has become the leading foreign exchange generating sector, the manufacturing sector initially flourished, but has not been able to return to the previous levels of growth experienced in the 1970s and 80s. In the meantime, the international business sector has emerged as the second largest source of export earnings.

1. Services Performance

Services represent the mainstay of the Barbadian economy with tourism and related activities dominating economic activity. (World Trade Organization, 2014) The contribution of services to GDP stood at 82.9 per cent in 2012 and grew by 1 per cent over the course of 2013. (World Bank, 2014a) (See Chart 1)

CHART 1

SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF GDP



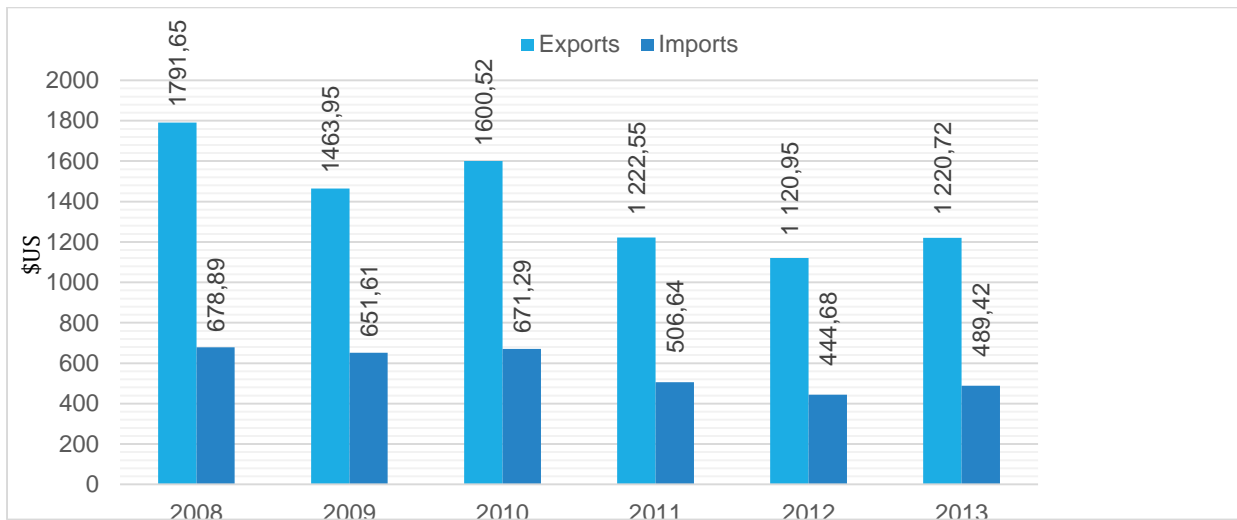
Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators. Available on-line from <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>. Accessed April 7, 2015.

Barbados, a net services exporter, recorded a surplus of US \$ 731.3 million in 2013. Although the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis, among other factors, continues to take a toll on the Barbadian economy, services exports grew by 9 per cent to US \$ 1220.7 million in 2013. (See Chart 2)

According to data from 2011, services industries employ 89 thousand persons. (World Bank, 2014b)

CHART 2

BARBADOS' COMMERCIAL SERVICES EXPORT AND IMPORTS, 2008 - 2013



Source: WTO and World Bank, I-TIP Services, 2015. Available online from https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/itip_e.htm. Accessed February 11, 2015.

2. Environment for Service Provision

The World Bank's Doing Business (DB) survey captures key features of the business environment in which all economic operators – including services providers – operate. Barbados placed 106th of the 189 economies included in the 2015 survey, slipping 3 places from its 2014 position. (World Bank, 2015) (See Table 1) However, there was no change in the distance to frontier (DTF) score which stood at 60.57 in 2015.¹

In both relative and absolute terms, investors and business persons in Barbados have found it more difficult to start a business, deal with construction permits, get electricity, register property and pay taxes.² In absolute terms, the regulatory environment remained unchanged with respect to getting credit, protecting minority shareholders, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency.

1 The DTF score benchmarks economies with respect to regulatory best practice, showing the absolute distance to the best performance on each Doing Business indicator. An economy's distance to frontier score is indicated on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 represents the worst performance and 100 the frontier.

2 This is corroborated by a recent press release from the Barbados International Business Association which points to the difficulties

foreign and domestic investors face in establishing and operating a business in Barbados. See BIBA Comment on Barbados Ranking in World Bank Ease of Doing Business Report, November 24, 2014. Available online from http://biba.bb/news/press-releases/biba_comment_on_barbados_ranking_in_world_bank_eas_e_of_doing_business_repor. Accessed April 9, 2015.

TABLE 1

BARBADOS' PERFORMANCE ON THE DOING BUSINESS INDEX, 2015

Indicator	2015 Rank	2015 Score	2014 Rank	2015 Score	Change in Rank	Change in Score
Starting a Business	94	84.36	86	84.40	-8	-0.04
Dealing with Construction Permits	147	61.06	143	61.08	-4	-0.02
Getting Electricity	118	67.51	113	67.53	-5	-0.02
Registering Property	144	54.95	142	54.97	-2	-0.02
Getting Credit	116	35.00	111	35.00	-5	0.00
Protecting Minority Investors	177	30.83	177	30.83	No change	0.00
Paying Taxes	92	72.99	87	73.00	-5	-0.01
Trading Across Borders	38	83.34	36	83.18	-2	0.16
Enforcing Contracts	160	41.61	160	41.61	No change	0.00
Resolving Insolvency	26	74.09	24	74.09	-2	0.00
Overall	106	60.57	103	60.57	-3	0.00

Source: World Bank, Doing Business Survey, 2015. Available online from <http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/barbados>. Accessed February 7, 2015.

Table 2 provides even more insights into key indicators of Barbados' competitive environment. Cumulatively, the quality of institutions, level of investment in human capital and research and strong infrastructure contribute to the creation of a more innovation driven economy and foster an environment conducive to the generation of increased value added in the services sector. On the Global Innovation Index's (GII) ranking of the world's economies' innovation capabilities and results Barbados placed 41st out of 143 countries with a score of 40.8 – with 0 being the worst score and 100 the best. Barbados' performance on the

innovation index is suggestive of a number of strengths, particularly as it relates to the predictability of the regulatory environment and the availability of skilled personnel.

To the contrary, the low levels of investment in research and development activities, deficiencies in the quality of general infrastructure and the low level of intensity of trade and competition detract from the overall attractiveness of the country's business environment.

TABLE 2

SELECT INDICATORS OF BARBADOS' ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, 2014

Indicators	Score (1-100)	World Rank (1-143)
Institutions	78.5	26
Government Effectiveness	79.6	20
Regulatory Environment	75.3	41
Business Environment	72.8	38
Human capital and research	31.6	58
Education	49.7	50
Tertiary Education	45.0	35
Knowledge workers	61.9	24
R&D	0.0	131
Infrastructure	27.9	103
ICT	40.7	63
General infrastructure	11.3	142
Trade and competition	72.0	97
Investment protection	30.0	133
Intensity of local competition	70.2	48
Global Innovation Index	40.8	41

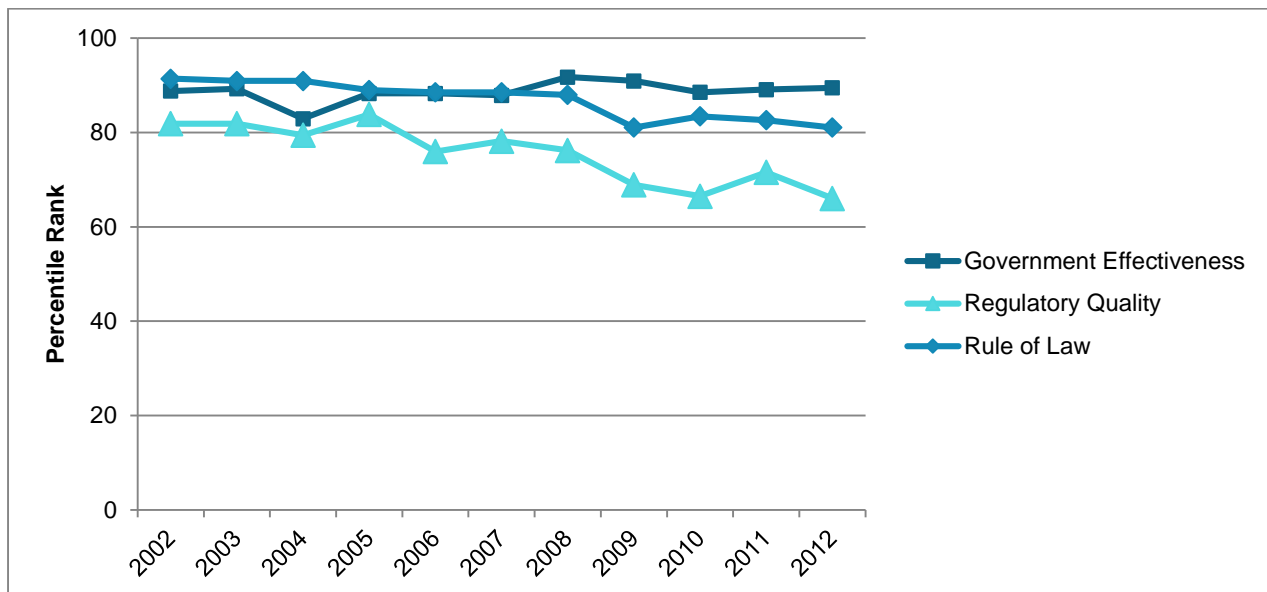
Source: Cornell University, INSEAD, and WIPO. The Global Innovation Index 2014: The Human Factor In innovation. Available online from <https://www.globalinnovationindex.org>. Accessed February 7, 2015.

The Worldwide Governance Index (WGI) provides a useful tool to draw some broad conclusions on the quality of Barbados' institutions. The WGI captures aggregate and individual governance indicators for six dimensions of governance; however, the following three are of concern to the analysis – government effectiveness, regulatory quality and rule of law. The WGI highlights the relatively positive perception of

respondents on these latter three dimensions. Nevertheless, the data does point to some worrying trends, namely a decline in regulatory quality from the 81st percentile to the 66th percentile and a deterioration in perceptions of the rule of law. (See Chart 2)

CHART 2

BARBADOS' PERCENTILE RANKING ON THE WORLD GOVERNANCE INDEX, 2002 – 2012



Source: World Bank, World Governance Index, 2014. Available online from <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/worldwide-governance-indicators>. Accessed February 7, 2015.

Chart 3, which provides an estimate of the three indicators of governance on a scale of -2.5 (the lowest score) to a maximum of 2.5, sheds further light on these broad trends. First, the decline in confidence in the country's ability to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations which permit and promote private development sector is reflected in the downward side of the estimate of regulatory quality from 1.06 in 2002 to 0.42 in 2012. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these figures reflect developments on the ground. A ready example is the speed at which legislative amendments to address challenges faced by the international business sector are introduced. Service providers have been lobbying for the urgent finalisation of additional legislation that will facilitate new business opportunities. (BIBA, 2014b). These include amendments to the Companies Act and the Mutual Funds Act as well as the formulation of a Limited Liability Partnership Act.

Similarly, tourism service providers have been engaged in a prolonged campaign to secure concessions to assist operators in revitalising their hotel stock and reducing the costs of importing inputs into the industry. Specifically, operators have pressed their case for the

extension of tax concession similar to those granted to the recently established Jamaican based resort operator Sandals in 2013. (BHTA, 2015)

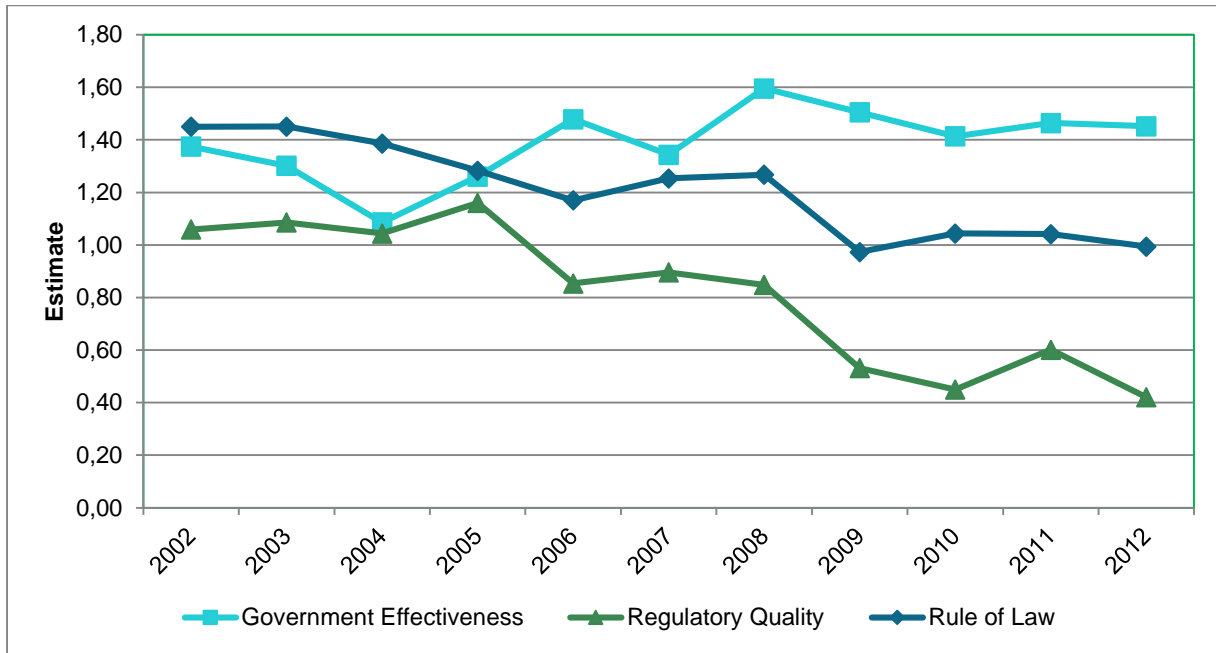
Second, there has been a noticeably negative trend in perceptions of the rule of law/ the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police and the courts. The speed at which justice is delivered has been of significant concern to policy-makers and the business community alike. In fact, in recent years, Barbados' legal system has come in for harsh criticism from the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) – the country's final appellate court – for excessive and inordinate delays. (CCJ, 2015)

Finally, despite reaching a high point in 2008, there has been a slight decline in the level of confidence in the quality of public services; the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures; the quality of policy formulation and implementation; and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. These sentiments are captured in public complaints about the

length of time taken by agencies such the Immigration Department and the Town and Country Planning Department to complete processes. (Madden, 2014)

CHART 3

ESTIMATES OF GOVERNANCE, 2002 – 2012



Source: World Bank, World Governance Index, 2014. Available online from <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/worldwide-governance-indicators>. Accessed February 7, 2015.

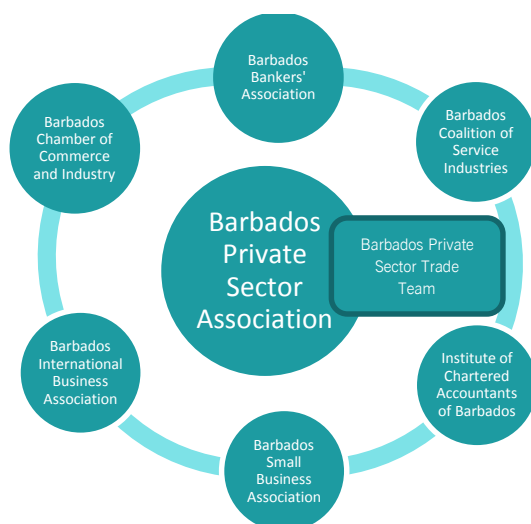
Landscape of Private Sector BSOs for Services

1. Barbados

Barbados is host to a dense population of BSOs. (Diagram 1 presents a snapshot of the BSOs which deal directly with services as well as those whose mandate touches on services issues) At times it appears that BSOs with similar mandates compete to address stakeholder concerns. In spite of the odd instances of overlapping mandates, private sector institutional mechanisms for services policy-making, advocacy and negotiations are well organised with the mandate of each institution being clearly mapped out and documented. These institutions are intimately involved in the policy making and negotiations process either through their respective sectoral ministries or in consultation with the Foreign Trade Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

DIAGRAM 1

BSOS REPRESENTING SERVICE INDUSTRIES



Source: Authors

BSOs which cater to the needs of service providers are present in a number of permutations. Some BSOs are not specific to service industries. For example, the oldest BSO, the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), which was established in 1825, represents businesses across the broad spectrum of the economy. The BCCI's membership includes both domestic firms and a number of large international services firms such as those operating the telecommunications, financial services and business services sectors.

Similarly, members of the Small Business Association (SBA), which was established in 1982, also operate across the three main economic sectors. As the name suggests, the SBA caters to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME). Membership includes service suppliers engaged in the provision of business services, communications services, construction services, distribution services, health and social services, tourism services and transport services.

On the other hand, there are a few sector specific BSOs. The Barbados International Business Association (BIBA), which was established in 1993, primarily represents international investors, particularly those from Canada. The service operators which participate in the industry are both international firms and domestic firms. Services provided include professional services such as legal, accounting, computer and related services, real estate and other business services; and financial services.

There is also the Barbados Banker's Association (BBA) which, as the name suggests, caters to the banking sector. The Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), which was established in 1952, addresses the needs of a wide range of traditional tourism service providers as well as transport service providers, i.e., car rental agencies; business services such as other

business services, e.g., photography; and recreational and cultural services.

The Barbados Coalition of Service Industries (BCSI), which was established in 2002, is the only BSO which has a concentrated focus on a broad array of service industries. BCSI membership boasts of large number of association members in addition to individual members. The main sectors where the BCSI operates are the professional and business services; creative industries; health, wellness, recreation and sports services and information and communication technology services as well as number of emerging services sectors.

BCSI's leadership in the area of services is particularly noticeable in services sectors which were less cohesive. For example, there are a number of well-established professional trade bodies; however, the BCSI represents a critical interface which links these disparate bodies together thereby giving the broader business and professional services sectors a more unified voice. Moreover, the impact of the BCSI is evident in services sectors where there were previously no associations.

Clearly, the prevalence of a relatively large number of services related BSOs raises questions of institutional coherence. In reviewing the trade support environment for services provision, a few points bear noting for readers unfamiliar with the Barbados landscape. First, while the BCSI is an important institution, it should not be assumed that it is the only mechanism through which services related issues such as trade negotiations are articulated. Second, although on the face of it, it may seem logical for sector specific institutions to be members of the BCSI, it is important to recall that these BSOs pre-date the BCSI; they have built up specialised knowledge and skills; they play an important role in the development of their respective industries; and they generate a significant level of value for their members. All of the above, therefore points to the importance of co-ordination mechanisms to optimally utilise resources.

Indeed, in more recent times, two related trends have served to foster a more collaborative approach amongst BSOs. Namely, the prolonged economic recession has reduced the capacity of private firms and service providers to fully commit to financially supporting the BSOs. Additionally, in the case of BSOs which are

partially or predominantly funded by the Government, the fiscal crisis has reduced the capacity of the Government of Barbados to provide the accustomed level of financial support.

It is in this context that the importance of the Barbados Private Sector Association (BPSA) as a co-ordinating mechanism is paramount.

BPSA

The BPSA is the umbrella organisation which represents the major BSOs in the tripartite mechanism referred to as the Social Partnership. This mechanism was formed in the early 1990s to provide a collective and coherent response to the economic and societal pressures created by an International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programme. This partnership comprises the Government of Barbados, the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB) and the BPSA. (BPSTT, 2015)

Since its inception the BPSA has worked with its partners on a number of wide-ranging issues affecting the economy. Membership in the BPSA is limited to the major BSOs although other BSOs may be granted associated membership. The origins of the BPSA lay in the desire of the Government to have a single interlocutor for the private sector as it was considered to be inefficient to seek the views of individual BSOs. The mechanism commenced informally with a Chairperson (a well-respected and long-standing member of the business community) calling the different associations to get their responses on key issues and proposals and relaying the information back to the Government. As there was no formal structure, the chairperson would use his company's resources to facilitate this process and do any necessary preparations.

However, by 2007/2008 it was determined that a more formal structure was required. As such the BPSA was established as a non-profit organisation with a secretariat comprising a Chief Executive Officer and an Administrative Assistant. The BPSA consists of BCCI, BSBA, BIBA, BHTA, BBA and BCSI in addition to the Barbados Manufacturer's Association (BMA), the Barbados Agricultural Society (BAS) and the Barbados Employers' Confederation (BEC). The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados (ICAB) is an associate member.

Members of the BPSA meet on a regular basis to coordinate efforts, establish positions on national issues and to be briefed on developments affecting the business community. While the individual BSOs are represented by this organ, each one maintains its autonomy. In addition, each BSO utilises its own technical and administrative structures to prepare its inputs into the BPSA process.

The BPSA is mandated to promote and defend the interests of the private sector at the national level. For Social Partnership issues, the BPSA leads the discussions by raising the relevant issue on behalf of the associations. Thereafter, the latter are free to contribute their specialised knowledge on the particular subject. For matters falling outside of the Social Partnership's remit, the BPSA receives briefings from the affected associations and provides advice on the issue. In addition, it may provide additional support to the associations. Such support may take the form of issuing press releases reinforcing positions articulated by the associations. Overall, the BPSA provides a convenient avenue for BSOs or a subset of BSOs to co-operate on specific issues of concern.

The Barbados Private Sector Trade Team (BPSTT)

In 2003, the BPSTT was created to deal with the unique and technical issues of trade policy, advocacy and development affecting the private sector. In 2008, the BPSTT became a division of the BPSA. The agency is staffed by a Trade Consultant, a Trade Research Officer and an Administrative Assistant.

Facing the prospect of negotiations on three different fronts – Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU) and multilateral discussions in the context of World Trade Organization (WTO), the Government of Barbados determined that a mechanism needed to be established to provide high quality and well researched private sector input into the negotiations. As such the BPSTT is mandated to represent and promote the interests of Barbados' private sector in the arena of international trade negotiations. In effect, this mechanism provided the entire private sector with a pool of trade expertise. This

represented an important innovation in the sense that some BSOs had research capacity while others did not.

The main objective of the BPSTT is to improve the capacity of private sector stakeholders in Barbados to make more informed assessments of their interests in trade negotiations; and participate more meaningfully in national regional and international consultations aimed at formulating trade policy and advising negotiators of threats, challenges and opportunities arising within the new trade frameworks.

The BPSTT is actively involved in trade policy formulation and development and performs a number of functions. Namely, it continuously provides a two-way channel of information between the private sector and the Foreign Trade Department. On one hand, it keeps the business community apprised of trade developments by hosting briefings and workshops and regularly producing industry and country trade profiles. In addition, it consults with the various sectors to identify their defensive and offensive trade interests by collaborating with the sectoral BSOs to gather feedback from their members. As late as 2010, the BPSTT collaborated with the sector specific BSOs to host focus groups to determine trade interests. Sectoral BSO would use their channels of communication to ensure participation from their members while the BPSTT provided the technical expertise to facilitate discussions as well as any other materials such as questionnaires and briefing materials. On the basis of the discussions, the BPSTT would document requests and offers for each sector of interest to the Barbados private sector and submit them to the Foreign Trade Department. Examples of such collaboration include working with the BHTA to run focus groups for tourism services for the EPA negotiations and co-operating with the BCSI to convene focus groups for the accounting, auditing and bookkeeping services, architectural services and engineering services for negotiations with Canada.

Further, the BPSTT provides comments on negotiating texts and other documents on behalf of the private sector. For example, for the Canada – CARICOM negotiations, the BPSTT met with the BIBA to capture their views on the proposed text on investment. Additionally, the BPSTT prepared discussion papers on the inclusion of newer trade topics such as labour and

environment to assist the private sector in developing a position on these issues.

On the other hand, the BPSTT was the primary conduit through which the Foreign Trade Department would receive critical information and data from the private sector, which are inputs into national policy positions. The BPSTT is a valued member of the Ministry of Foreign Trade's Technical Committee of Officials which meets as needed to discuss different trade issues. (Sauvé and Ward, 2008) However, this relationship has been modified by a number of factors. First, Barbados is only engaged in Canada – CARICOM negotiations and as such the intense pressure of multiple negotiations which propelled the birth of the BPSTT has been reduced. This is not to imply that the BPSTT is obsolete as it still plays a critical role in advising on private sector positions in the context of CARICOM's Committee on Trade and Economic Development (COTED) and it continues to work actively on the Canadian negotiations. Further, preparations for the Canada – CARICOM negotiations have progressed to the stage where much of the technical work undertaken by the BPSTT has already been incorporated into Barbados' national positions.

Second, and relatedly, the Foreign Trade Department utilises a slightly different mechanism to receive feedback from the private sector. Specifically, it convenes meetings with the BPSTT, the sectoral BSOs and the other BSOs with broader remits such as the BCCI and the SBA as well as industry players in some cases to discuss specific issues related to the negotiations on an as needs basis. As such, information from these stakeholders is likely to be relayed directly to the Ministry.

Third, the trade capacity in some BSOs has increased and hence those BSOs are better equipped to deal with trade issues.³ Finally, in the case of the BCSI, while the mandate of the organisation appears to be evolving to focus more on building supply side capacity (among other things) and significant energies are being devoted to these initiatives; the BCSI has taken a policy decision to play a stronger role in facilitating

consultations with the services sectors which fall under its remit in preparation for trade negotiations.

Beyond negotiations related activities, the BPSTT is also involved in securing technical assistance for private sector oriented projects, providing training, building capacity, disseminating information via workshops and other events and undertaking research. The work of the BPSTT revolves mainly around three key areas: the evaluation of the competitiveness of Barbadian businesses; the assessment of the impact of trade agreements; and the identification of opportunities for operating in a liberalised international trade environment.

Funding for projects is sourced from the international donor community while the Division's operating costs are supported by BPSA's members and a small subsidy from the Government of the Barbados – which has been decreased in recent times.

The BPSTT has scored a number of successes in improving its capacity to address trade issues through the use of smart partnerships. A smart partnership essentially involves BSOs partnering with institutions in the international development community to secure funds for projects or to temporarily acquire skilled human resources to undertake assignments. Funds were secured for two projects from the Department for International Development's (DFID) CARTfund which is administered by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). First, the Private Sector Communications Enhancement Project enabled the BPSTT to strengthen its relationship with BPSA's membership. The project highlighted that some private sector organisations lacked an understanding of the role of the Division and viewed them as too highly technical to understand their basic business needs or to appreciate what the various sectors required to grow. In response, the BPSTT was able to create a more user friendly environment for the stakeholder organisations by improving email communication and producing newsletters and bulletins; identifying and improving upon its brand identity; devising communication

³ This has been facilitated by the movement of skilled professionals between BSOs and the policy of full funding for Barbadian students during the initial years of operation of the Master's in International

Trade Policy programme which is offered by the University of the West Indies.

strategies; and producing information packages as marketing tools for members.

Second, it was realised that there was a dearth of project proposal writing skills in the private sector. As such a Project Proposal Hub was conceptualised to give the private sector access to a consultant with expertise in developing proposals to satisfy some of the major donor agencies, such as the European Community (EC), some individual members of the EC 28 and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). In addition, the project also sought to create and strengthen capacity within private sector organisations and individual enterprises through the design and delivery of short-term specialised training courses on project proposal writing.

A key insight here is that BSOs can use smart partnerships to enhance their offerings to members, to execute their work plans and thereby contribute to overall organisational sustainability. It is important to note that these initiatives have benefitted the entire range of economic sectors represented in the Barbadian economy and not only service industries.

BCSI

The BCSI was set up in 2002 following the decision by the Heads of Government to focus on the development of the national services sector as a measure to achieve sustainable economic growth in the Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) member states. Inspiration for the establishment of national services coalitions was drawn from a study which proposed the creation of a Caribbean CSI. (Gill, 1999) At that time, CARICOM member states faced the prospect of negotiating with regional partners on an agreement to create the FTAA as well as with multilateral partners under the auspices of the WTO. As such, it was felt that it was important to facilitate a deeper level of private sector involvement in the consultation process and the coalition model was considered to be a useful mechanism to do so.

The BCSI's membership consists of a number of professional associations and independent members. (See Table 3 below)

TABLE 3

BCSI'S ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

1. Association of Music Entrepreneurs, Barbados
2. Barbados Bar Association
3. Barbados ICT Professionals Association
4. Barbados Arts Council
5. Barbados Association of Architectural Technologists
6. Barbados Association of Bailiffs & Debt Collection Agencies
7. Barbados Association of Chiropractic Physicians
8. Barbados Association of Energy Professionals
9. Barbados Association of Engineering Draughting Technicians
10. Barbados Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors
11. Barbados Association of Journalists
12. Barbados Association of Masqueraders
13. Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners
14. Barbados Association of Office Professionals
15. Barbados Association of Podiatrists
16. Barbados Association of Professional Engineers
17. Barbados Association of Professional Massage Therapists
18. Barbados Association of Professional Valuers
19. Barbados Association of Quantity Surveyors
20. Barbados Association of Reflexologists
21. Barbados Association of Rehabilitation Practitioners
22. Barbados Association of Security Companies Inc.
23. Barbados Contractors Association
24. Barbados Custom Brokers and Clerks Association

25. Barbados Dental Association
26. Barbados Estate Agents and Valuers' Association
27. Barbados Film and Video Association
28. Barbados Institute of Architects
29. Barbados Institute of Environmental Professionals
30. Barbados Land Surveyors Association
31. Barbados Nurses Association
32. Barbados Occupational Therapy Association
33. Barbados Pharmaceutical Society
34. Barbados Physical Therapy Association
35. Barbados Reiki Association
36. Barbados Veterinary Association
37. Caribbean Association for Public Entertainment
38. Caribbean Creative Cluster
39. Caribbean Institute of Certified Management Consultants
40. Caribbean Spa and Wellness Association – Barbados Chapter
41. Copyright Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers Inc.
42. Fashion And Design Association of Barbados
43. Human Resource Management Association of Barbados
44. Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados
45. Shipping Association of Barbados
46. The Craft Union of Barbados Inc.

Source: BCSI, Barbados Coalition of Service Industries' Association Members. Available online from <http://bcsi.org.bb/membership/bcsi-members/>. Accessed March 10, 2015.

The BCSI offers a number of services to its members. These include training courses, workshops and seminars; advocacy and lobbying; service association start up and incubation; trade enquiries; business match facilitation; study tours; trade shows and exhibitions; trade promotion events; business information and advice; provision of export opportunities; market research and intelligence; and the facilitation of regional linkages.

BCSI's achievements include securing funding from the Government of Barbados/IDB Competency Based Training Fund (CBFT) for a programme to enhance the skills of established health and wellness professionals. Another successful initiative is the European Development Fund (EDF) financed Quality Standards Mark initiative. The initiative aims to certify that providers are equipped to provide high quality, high-end services. This quality control mechanism is intended to, *inter alia*, enhance the export credibility of service providers and support the sustainability of these service providers in the export market. This is particularly important as services are more often traded on reputation, quality and availability than on price. Failure of domestic suppliers to meet the demands of the international market often reflects negatively on

reputation and the capacity to supply high quality services. (BCSI, 2014)

The BCSI is staffed by four technical professionals and two administrative support staff. It is important to note that the BCSI's staff complement includes a few competent trade professionals including the Executive Director. The appointment of the BCSI's current Executive Director represents an interesting feature of Barbados' BSO landscape – the cross-fertilisation of skills and knowledge between institutions. Before assuming responsibility for BCSI, the Executive Director was employed with the Commonwealth Hubs and Spokes Project.

Prior to joining BPSA, the BCSI participated in services trade policy-making and negotiations in its own right, but there was some collaboration with the BPSTT in terms of undertaking consultations to determine service providers' strategic interests. The BCSI had not joined the BPSA previously as membership fees were considered to be high. In addition, the agency was not convinced that there was sufficient value-added for its membership especially as the BCSI had nurtured a close relationship with the public sector. In addition, as the BCSI was invited to participate in Social Partnership meetings, it did not find itself excluded

from national-level discussions on issues of concern. As such, the BCSI did not experience any difficulties in finding avenues to express its views.

However, by 2012, the BCSI recognised that as the quasi-umbrella agency for services it was important to be a part of the macro-institutional framework which supports the Barbadian private sector. The decision to subscribe to the BPSA in that same year was driven by a number of important realities. First, the BCSI's new strategic direction focuses on a value chain approach to services development and explicitly recognises that services are key inputs to other production processes. In this context, fostering a closer relationship between the BCSI and the other BSOs is a precursor to the different sectors working together. Second, there is little understanding of the true impact of services activities on the Barbadian economy and joining the BPSA represented an important step in effecting a shift in thinking at the highest levels of the private sector. Third, it was recognised that it was critical to have a voice in the BPSA mechanism as it is the private sector umbrella body.

Also in 2012 the organisation also sought to enhance its effectiveness especially in relation to attaining previously identified development objectives for service providers in potential growth sectors. In line with its new strategic vision – “No Barriers, Only Frontiers” – the BCSI has reoriented its operations to focus on the creation of projects and programmes that would assist it in fostering the international competitiveness and export potential of the Barbadian services sector and positioning Barbados as the services hub of the Caribbean. In this regard, the National Services Sector Development (NSSD) strategy represents a central plank in the BCSI's plans to achieve this objective. (See Box 1)

BOX 1

BARBADOS' NATIONAL SERVICES SECTOR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Although economic activity in Barbados has long been dominated by services production, developmental initiatives have disjointed. The National Strategic Plan (NSP) of 2006 – 2025 identified a number of priority areas of action in relation to services activities such as legal, educational, health, sports, cultural and professional services. However, implementation of these actions has remained fragmented and uncoordinated in the absence of a macro-economic or institutional framework to set policy direction, articulate a long-term vision or formulate an operating modality for the attainment of the objectives in the NSP.

While the 2013 Medium Term Growth Strategy (MTGS) incorporates a number of services sectors with an emphasis on the non-traditional growth sectors, it conceptualises services sectors as distinct strands unrelated to each other and to the wider economy. In addition, the overall approach has been to focus on export promotion of services as opposed to targeted initiatives aimed at strengthening the supply of services.

It is against this context that the National Services Sector Development (NSSD) strategy seeks to provide a coherent policy to guide developmental interventions in the sector. The BCSI has spearheaded the process of formulating the strategy. In concrete terms, it secured funding from the Commonwealth Secretariat to underwrite the cost of hiring a consultant to develop the strategy; it provided leadership for the national consultative process; facilitated the work of the Public – Private Committee which guided the work of the consultant; and is in the process of securing resources to implement it.

The NSSD strategy will take into account the role played by each service sector and the interconnected nature of the relationship between these services activities and other economic sectors.

The NSSD is intended to facilitate a number of policy shifts. These are:

- Mainstreaming of services as a central pillar of national economic development;
- Transitioning from a silo approach to services which disaggregates the activities into separate pillars to a more holistic approach which places an emphasis on the synergies among sectors;
- Elevating education and health services beyond their traditional role of social or public goods to dynamic sectors which underpin enterprise development and economic planning;
- Prioritising sectoral twinning at the policy level to ensure that those services which are intermediate inputs into other production processes conform to the highest quality standards and are competitively priced;
- Attracting international services firms which complement Barbados' efforts to develop itself into a competitive services economy and exporter.

Key expected outcomes from the implementation of the NSSD strategy are:

- The development of a sustainable framework for services provision and policy making and implementation;
- The creation of a sophisticated high-end domestic services sector; and
- The use of the domestic services sector as an export platform for high quality niche services and services intensive products in every sector.

The NSSD strategy has been submitted to Government of Barbados for its endorsement. Once this occurs, the document can truly be considered a national strategy.

Source: Adapted from BCSI, Concept Paper for the National Services Sector Development Strategy, 2014.

The BCSI is funded by the Government of Barbados and receives supplementary financing from donor agencies in the international development community. The importance of the latter source of funding is heightened in the face of declining levels of governmental subsidies. One challenge which confronted the BCSI was the need to illustrate the financial impact of its activities. As such, a monitoring and evaluation mechanism is being devised to measure the BSO's contribution to its member associations.

BIBA

The BIBA represents both local and international businesses engaged in the international business sector through advocacy, lobbying and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship with the Government

of Barbados. The organisation is a conduit between the international business sector and the Government of Barbados especially on policy and other matters related to its members. BIBA's mandate is to create a better working/enabling environment for its service providers. The agency works closely with the Ministry of International Business along with the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, Invest Barbados, the Barbados Revenue Authority and the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Office. With respect to trade in services issues related to negotiations, the BIBA works in partnership with the BPSTT.

BIBA's origins lay in the Barbados Association of International Business Companies and Offshore Banks (BAIBCOB) which was formed in 1993. BIBA's current membership includes the members of the former

Canada Barbados Business Association (CBBA) and the Barbados International Insurance Association (BIIA), along with the former BAIBCOB members. The BIBA is managed by a Board of Directors and its day to day operations are managed by an Executive Director and a small secretariat. The work of the organisation is limited by its limited human resources and budget.

The BIBA is mainly financed by membership subscription fees and a small subsidy from the Government of Barbados. It is actively seeking to identify avenues to make the organisation more financially sustainable and attract international resources. It is anticipated that additional resources will enable the BIBA to expand its role by providing more benefits to its membership such as professional training and development courses which are aligned with the National Human Resource Policy of Barbados.⁴

The BIBA is particularly active in lobbying for improvements in the framework within which the international business sector operates. For example, it utilises dedicated committees to comment on proposed regulatory and legislative changes and recommend improvements on existing regulations and guidelines. (BIBA, 2014a) In addition, it collaborates with other private sector associations such as the Barbados Bar Association to improve the legal justice system by advocating for a dedicated commercial court. The BIBA also issues regular electronic bulletins to alert its membership to developments in the international business sector both in the domestic market and in the exports markets.

Two areas of weakness in the business environment highlighted by the BIBA are the immigration regime and the archaic decision making structure of the civil service. In the first instance, the BIBA has campaigned for the streamlining of government procedures related to special entry permits for high net worth individuals. In the second instance, the lack of

accountability in the civil service is viewed as a strong deterrent to the improvement of the business climate.

In addition, challenges associated with short-term decision making have stymied the development of long-term strategies for achieving growth in the sector. Moreover, the lack of co-operation at all levels is considered harmful to the survival of the international business sector.

BHTA

The Barbados Hotel Association (BHA) commenced as a lobby to formalise the establishment of the tourism sector. The 1994 revision of the BHA's name to the BHTA reflected a recognition of the wider nature of the industry. Central to the BHTA's mission is the task of bringing together people, research, knowledge and technology to resolve the challenges of business and to provide strong advocacy while fostering unity amongst tourism partners.

The BHTA's primary functions include lobbying; labour relations and human resource development; public relations and public education; information dissemination; and marketing and product development. The BHTA executes its lobbying initiatives by participating in over 60 boards and committees of agencies which have responsibility for areas which impact on the tourism sector. Among BHTA's strategic partners are the Barbados Tourism Authority (BTA), the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Development Corporation (TDC).

In terms of sectoral development, the BHTA has been on the forefront of lobbying for a number of improvements in the operating environment for tourism service providers. Among its achievements are successfully advocating for the revision of outdated legislation such as the Hotel Aids Act and the passage of new legislation such as the Tourism Incentives Act; value added tax (VAT) and land tax concessions for the hotel industry; the establishment of a BDS \$30 million Tourism Investment Fund to establish the Small Hotels and Tourism businesses;⁵ and the creation of a fast

4 The policy details skills training and the enhancement of vocational and professional skills within the country in an effort to build a vital service sector.

5 1 USD equals BDS\$ 1.98.

track model within Government which facilitates investment applications and entrepreneurship in the industry. (BHTA, 2013) The BHTA has also been proactive in negotiating the BDS \$20 million Small Hotels Fund to facilitate the formation of the Small Hotels of Barbados Inc., which is a group of small hotels that trades under the brand of Intimate Hotels of Barbados and functions under the umbrella of the BHTA.

On issues related to trade in services negotiations, the BHTA works in conjunction with the BPSTT. (Sauvé and Ward, 2008)

BCCI

The BCCI is actively involved in advocating for a more enabling business environment, both domestically and at the level of the CARICOM Single Market (CSME).⁶ The BCCI lobbies for improvements in state-run mechanisms that influence the productivity and effectiveness of business such as VAT collection and trade facilitation. It also provides assistance and information on potential joint ventures and facilitates direct links with key local and regional business leaders and organisations. With respect to trade in services issues related to negotiations, the BCCI works in partnership with the BPSTT.

The BCCI is funded through membership subscriptions and maintains a small staff of 6 persons. This BSO is led by an Executive Director who has experience (gained at the Foreign Trade Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) and specialised training in international trade policy.

Small Business Association (SBA)

The SBA seeks to expand business opportunities for its members in addition to providing education and development services and engaging in advocacy to ensure an enabling environment for the growth and sustainability of the MSME sector. Specifically, the SBA lobbies the Government of Barbados for an improved regulatory framework, business facilitation,

⁶ The CSME is the regional economic integration of the CARICOM member states.

access to financing and other business support services. (SBA, 2014) In addition, the SBA explores business financing possibilities for its members. The SBA works in association with the BPSTT to address issues related to services trade negotiations.

Small Business Venture Capital Inc. (SBVCI) – the SBA's financial arm – operates as a business development organisation. It provides equity financing for business start-ups and existing enterprises with good prospects in addition to technical assistance for the incorporation of businesses.

The SBA's successes include the joint execution of the Tourism Micro Project with the IDB and the Ministry of Tourism. The project provided training and technical support for small hotels, agro-processors and the arts and craft subsectors. It also assisted with skills development for practitioners in the industry; marketing and brand development; and research and product enhancement. Other achievements include partnering with the Foundation for Entrepreneurial Participation (TFEP) of the United Kingdom to establish the Euro-Caribbean Enterprise Partnership Service (ECEPS). The ECEPS supports the establishment of international enterprise partnerships.

Much of the organisation's work is funded by its members, a subsidy from the Government of Barbados and its network of international donor agencies.

2. Botswana

Given that Botswana's economy is largely driven by extractive activities⁷, it is hardly surprising that there is no umbrella body for services generally. As such, a number of services specific BSOs are members of the Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower (BOCCIM).

BOCCIM

BOCCIM represents employers in all sectors of the Botswana economy in an advocacy capacity. The organisation was formed in 1971 and has been the

⁷ In 2014 diamonds constituted almost 85% of merchandise exports (UNCOMTRADE, 2015) and industry contributed roughly 40% of GDP (WDI, 2014).

main voice of the private sector in Botswana. BOCCIM's membership includes association members as well as individual members.

Services offered by BOCCIM include outreach business management advisory services; training of employers and their employees; industrial relations advocacy; economic policy advocacy; facilitation of business networking; business/economic information dissemination; a small business insurance scheme; trading outlets for small business in the form of flea markets; and the organisation of trade and investment missions abroad.

It is worth mentioning two important structures through which BOCCIM works with the Government of Botswana to contribute to policy formulation and trade negotiations. The High Level Consultative Committee (HLCC), which was established in 1996, is a national-level forum that meets twice a year for dialogue between the highest levels of government and private sector leadership. (Dewah, 2007) The main objective is to discuss major policies affecting the business environment that are difficult to resolve at the Ministerial level. (Skarshinski, 2009) Ministers report on current issues affecting the private sector in their respective areas of responsibility. BOCCIM representatives then analyse the reports. In many cases, BOCCIM uses its association members to represent the organisation on the HLCC, for example, the Botswana Institute of Bankers (BIOB) represents BOCCIM on issues related to finance while the Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana (HATAB) performs this function for tourism related issues. In other cases, one of BOCCIM's individual members may represent it – this is the case for trade issues. This type of collaboration represents a useful example of inter-BSO co-operation.

Sectoral HLCC forums are held on a quarterly basis. BOCCIM sets the agenda for these meetings which gives the private sector an active role in policy formulation and review. Issues discussed include the regulatory environment and the ease of doing business. BOCCIM uses international rankings such as those produced by the World Bank's DB survey and the World Economic Forum (WEF) to assist in identifying the main issues to be addressed.

For sectoral HLCC forums, private sector positions may be developed with the assistance of the respective line ministry. For example, to prepare a position paper on trade issues related to tourism services, the different tourism BSOs (HATAB, the tour operators association and the tour guides associations) and, in some cases, some of the service suppliers themselves meet with the Department of Tourism to discuss the issues to be included in the document. Technical guidance on trade issues is provided by a representative of the Department of International Trade who attends the initial part of the meeting. Once the sectoral HLCC decides on the substance of the document, then private sector members work with the Department of Tourism to produce the position paper. While the Barbados experience highlighted the importance of government funding, the Botswana experience highlights the importance of the Government's administrative and technical support for consultative processes.

The National Committee on Trade Policy Negotiations (NCTPN) was launched on the March 11, 2004 following a Presidential Directive in 2003. (Skarshinski, 2009) The NCTPN meets four times a year with the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Department of International Trade serving as the Secretariat. There are 45 members drawn from the public sector, private and parastatal organizations, academia, trade unions, consumer representatives and research institutions. The NCTPN is made up of twelve Technical Committees that are expected to perform analytical work on various sectoral issues. These committees are as follows:

1. Agriculture
2. Industrial Products
3. Services
4. Intellectual Property Rights
5. Investment
6. Competition Policy
7. Government Procurement
8. Capacity Building
9. Environment
10. Labour Standards
11. Export Development
12. E-Commerce

Through the NCTPN, the Government is able to coordinate trade capacity building initiatives with a view to deriving maximum benefits from such initiatives while the private sector is able to voice its position on all relevant trade agreements.

Meetings of the Technical Committee on Trade in Services (TCTS) of the NCTPN are usually held on a quarterly basis although *ad hoc* meetings may be convened to address any urgent issues. The Department of International Trade serves as the Secretariat to the TCTS. Participation in the TCTS is not limited to the private sector, but also includes a number of government agencies such as Bank of Botswana and the Botswana Export Development and Investment Agency as well as the non-governmental actor, the University of Botswana. BOCCIM as well as other members of the private sector such as HATAB are members of the TCST. There appears to be a division of labour among BSOs on the TCST. For example, the HATAB representative sits on the committee in its own right and not necessarily as a member of BOCCIM and, in this vein, he addresses tourism issues. On information and communications issues, an individual member of BOCCIM represents that organisation.

While each BSO may use a slightly different method to prepare for these meetings, HATAB's preparation for TCST meetings provides some insights into the process which other BSOs may use to ensure that they are adequately represented. Prior to the meetings, HATAB's representative uses the resources of his own company to undertake simple research tasks such as data collection. Before utilising the information, it is shared with the HATAB Board to provide them with the opportunity to give feedback. After the meeting the HATAB representative provides updates on developments and decisions of the TCST to the Secretariat. However, given the sensitive nature of information related to trade negotiations, while these updates are not provided wholesale to the general membership, they are provided to the Board.

BOCCIM is actively working on converting its structure into an apex body whereby its only members would be associations and individual members would need to subscribe to the associations. The current hybrid structure where both associations and individual members are entitled to membership is considered to be problematic in the sense that companies may be

burdened by subscriptions to both BOCCIM and the sector association and some council members do not represent the sector but their individual companies. (Machailo-Ellis, 2014) It is anticipated that the BSO in its future iteration will serve as an employers' organisation; an umbrella organisation which concentrates on building the capacity of associations; and a Chamber of Commerce which provides business support services.

A key insight here is that resources may not be optimally utilised where many stakeholders participate in multiple mechanisms. In addition, the use of individual members for representational purposes opens the mechanism to the risk of the member 'hijacking' the process to pursue an agenda which is more suited to the interests of his/her own company. Finally, some organisational structures for consultative mechanisms are more clearly more effective than others. However, it is difficult to conclude that a particular structure works better as this depends on the institutional landscape and cultural norms in any given country.

BOCCIM is funded through membership subscriptions and fund raising. The BSO does not have a research capacity and as such it contracts out this function in some instances. In other cases, one of the association members may undertake the necessary research on behalf of BOCCIM. In the 1990s, USAID funded a policy chief to address this lacuna, however, the position proved to be unsustainable once donor funding ceased. This highlights the importance of sustainable funding mechanisms, and conversely, the ability of BSOs being able to deliver outputs which members consider to be value added and worthy of paying for.

BOCCIM's achievements include the effective organisation of the business sector to be a major player in the formulation of a number of national economic issues; establishment and institutionalisation of the HLCC; liberalisation/abolition of exchange controls in Botswana; lowering of both the corporate and personal tax from a high of 35 per cent to a low of 15 per cent for manufacturing and 25 percent as a general tax rate for Botswana; and establishment of a local procurement/set-aside programme.

3. Lao PDR

Lao PDR is an extractive economy with a strong focus on the production of hydropower. Consequently there is not a strong imperative to create an umbrella consultative mechanism for services activities⁸.

Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI)

The LNCCI was established in 1989 as an independent body to represent the business community in Lao PDR. LNCCI is the largest and most representative business community in the Lao PDR with more than 1,000 members represented through Chambers of Commerce in 13 provinces, business associations and groups.

LNCCI's sphere of activity includes the articulation of issues of concern to the business community to the Government of Lao PDR with a view to influencing the development and revision of policies and legislation to improve the business environment. It also represents the business community by undertaking business negotiations and addressing trade and labour issues at both regional and international levels with a view to expanding trade and investment. In addition, LNCCI works to strengthen the provincial chambers of commerce (CCI), the Vientiane CCI, business associations and groups by assisting them with upgrading their services offerings and management capabilities. Further, LNCCI provides mechanisms to disseminate knowledge and enhance skills through seminars, business meetings and exhibitions. Other services include the provision of business information, business matching and assistance in finding business solutions and resolving disputes.

Lao Business Forum (LBF)

In 2006, Lao PDR established formal mechanisms and procedures for public consultation in the form of the Lao Business Forum (LBF). (Ward, 2015) This mechanism has been subsequently reinforced by the Law on Legislation which mandates that stakeholder

consultations be undertaken. Generally, the LBF is designed to improve the business enabling environment by providing a platform for effective dialogue between the business community and the Government. It is also intended to facilitate information-sharing with potential investors. The dialogue aims to promote the consistent enforcement and non-discretionary interpretation of laws and regulations, remove market-entry or -exit barriers for businesses, provide feedback on draft government laws and regulations relevant to the private sector and to assist the Lao Government in developing the private sector.

Consultations cover a range of issues which are important to the broad spectrum of private sector players and are firmly linked to the regular regulatory process. For example, among the issues discussed by the 8th LBF in 2013 were problems related to labour and skilled labour development, an amendment to the Prime Ministerial Decree on the leasing law, implementation of court verdicts and the appellate process, the management and development of tourist transport services, preservation of eco-tourism sites, the tourism promotion board, high domestic and international transport costs, the high cost and time consuming process for checking goods transport documents at border checkpoints, the cost of electricity and the construction of hydropower dams and issues related to the construction business.

As Diagram 3 illustrates, PPDs such as the LBF represent strong mechanisms to drive reforms to improve the business climate. Interestingly, DFID, the World Bank Group and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have published useful guidance on establishing and maintaining PPDs. In addition, a wealth of resources on this mechanism is available online at <http://www.publicprivatedialogue.org/>

⁸ Services in 2014 contributed a mere 41% of GDP (WDI, 2014)

DIAGRAM 3

BENEFITS OF PUBLIC PRIVATE DIALOGUES



Source: Andrei Mikhnev and Benjamin Herzberg, The PPD Handbook + Assessing the impact of the Mekong business forums on the business environment. International Finance Corporation. Available online from <http://www.businessenvironment.org/dyn/be/docs/124/Session3.4Presentation3.4.2MikhnevHerzberg.pdf>, accessed April 9, 2015.

In terms of organisational effectiveness, a World Bank 2009 review of 30 public-private dialogues (PPD) worldwide placed Lao PDR 4th on the rankings. (Toland, 2009) The PPDs were assessed on the basis of 12 dimensions on a scale of 0 to 10 with the latter representing the best possible score. Lao PDR scored at least 8 on 7 of the 12 dimensions. These dimensions are:

- Assessing the optimal mandate and relationship with existing institutions;
- Deciding who should participate and under what structure;
- Identifying the right champions and helping them to push for reform;
- Engaging the right facilitator;
- Choosing and reaching target outputs;
- Elaborating a monitoring and evaluation framework; and
- Making sector-specific dialogue work.

Initially the LBF Secretariat was co-ordinated by the International Financial Corporation (IFC); however, in 2011 the Secretariat transitioned from LNCCI management with the assistance of the Ministry of Planning and Investment. Nevertheless, IFC remains available to provide support for LNCCI as it performs this function.

The Forum is structured into six sector-specific working groups and biannual meetings. Sector-specific working groups (WG) focus on overarching issues such as tourism; services and trade; manufacturing; energy and mining; banking and insurance; and cross-sectoral issues.

The consultation processes appears to be quite open and participatory with the WGs being hailed as the engine of the LBF. Each WG is co-chaired by a senior government official and a designated leader chosen by members of the respective private sector working group (PSWG) and benefits from the participation of members of an Inter-Ministerial Team from relevant WG ministries and private sector representatives chosen by the respective PSWG. The WG discussions focus on an agreed agenda of issues that generally relate to restrictions on business, planning and prioritisation. Importantly, WGs are empowered to set up task force groups to investigate specific issues.

PSWG members meet prior to the formal WG meeting to review the progress of the previous LBF and WG meetings, produce position papers on issues of concern, discuss new issues and recommend an agenda for the formal WG meeting.

PSWG meetings are open to representatives from the LNCCI, representatives of other business associations such as the European Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Laos (ECCIL), the Indian, New Zealand and Australian Chambers of Commerce and all persons working in private enterprises legally operating in Lao PDR that wish to attend. Preparation for the PSWG requires a significant amount of effort as all position papers need to be prepared in advance by either working groups or industry associations. This type of preparation is frequently undertaken by consultants with the support from donor funded projects.

However, some BSOs do have technical capacity and are able to formulate inputs into the different consultative processes. For example, ECCIL performs

regulatory impact analysis and assessments of new laws and regulations of particular interest to the European business community. These papers are normally prepared by legal experts, tax experts, trade or other experts, depending on the subject and they tend to relate to a law, a draft law or the practice of a law. The formulation process is undertaken by experts within the Chamber and the staff of the Chamber, i.e., the Executive Director. To date, ECCIL has rarely made use of external consultants; however, the possibility always exists that this could change in the future. Position papers are not normally circulated to members before being submitted to the authorities, but the general membership is often approached for comments on new legal drafts before ECCIL commences its preparation of a position paper.

In terms of the sharing of information from the PSWG, the minutes of PSWG meetings are provided for the BSOs. Some BSOs such as ECCIL either circulate them to its members or upload them to their homepage. In addition, if there is substance to the minutes, the information is incorporated into ECCIL's newsletter.

The LBF process in recent years has been hampered by insufficient support. In addition, the only PSWG which seems to be functioning well is the one on energy and mining. It can be conjectured that the reason this PSWG is working is related to the participants – players in the mining and energy sector tend to have significantly more resources at their disposal. The Government of Lao PDR is considering providing technical assistance in the form of a coordinator to facilitate the preparatory processes between WG and LBF meetings.

In some quarters, however, the view is held that neither the LBF nor the PSWGs are really the relevant platforms for achieving advocacy results. It has been suggested that real advocacy work is done in ministries, with the national assembly or in drafting committees. It should be noted that unsolicited input is not likely to be welcomed.

Key Insights

The case study captured some of the challenges faced by private sector institutional mechanisms which deal with services trade policy (either on an exclusive basis or in conjunction with a range of trade issues). In the context of LDCs, LICs and LMICs, it is likely that such challenges are intensified by an operating environment which is, by definition, even more resource scarce. Critical issues which BSOs in these countries may face include:

- an overall dearth of skills and resources in private sector institutions;
- limited technical capacity to make contributions to the trade policy formulation process;
- limited funds to outsource technical work which are inputs into the consultative processes;
- poor industry understanding of the importance of trade and the opportunities offered by trade negotiations;
- operation of BSOs within ‘silos’ with limited mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of resources;
- limited contact with the trade ministry in contexts where BSOs interface with line ministries and there are weak inter-ministry linkages;
- low prioritisation of services issues by policy-makers;
- perceptions by policy-makers that the views of the BSOs are not representative of the industry; and
- the excessive creation of trade associations which weakens the key messages emanating from the industry and dilutes the pool of available resources.

A number of interesting insights emerged from the discussion of private sector institutional mechanisms which address services policy formulation and trade negotiations.

Quality Interventions are the Hallmark of Effective BSOs

As trusted development partners, BSOs play a critical role in collaborating with policy-makers to improve the business and investment climate in which services providers operate and to create opportunities for export-led growth. Concretely, BSOs are best placed to alert policy-makers to developments which negatively impact on service providers and to proffer business friendly solutions to these challenges. In order to do so, BSOs must be endowed with the capacity to make quality interventions or, at minimum, be able to access resources to assist in formulating such interventions. Core elements of being able to deliver quality interventions include the availability of knowledgeable persons to undertake research and formulate positions and resources to undertake such research. The case study highlights various modalities for preparing to actively engage with the public sector to address issues of concern. In Barbados, the BCSI employed a consultant to undertake the production of the NSSD strategy. Also in that country, the BIBA uses the expertise of its membership working in committee format to contribute to the development of legislation to govern the international business sector. Similarly, in Lao PDR, ECCIL uses the expertise of its membership.

Governance Issues can Undermine BSO Effectiveness

In as much as BSOs may be strong advocates for improvements in the regulatory and business environment, unattended governance issues, such as those related to government effectiveness, regulatory quality and the rule of law, are likely to mount a strong challenge to the success of their efforts. This is highlighted by the Barbados experience where BSO efforts are hampered by, *inter alia*, the speed of decision-making within civil service structures, inordinate delays in the delivery of justice within the legal system and the slow pace of amending and implementing regulations. The impact of these

challenges is becoming evident in Barbados' slide on international rankings such as the DB survey.

While PPDs offer a potential remedy to such situations, the true test of their efficiency is to be found in the extent to which decisions are translated into meaningful reforms. In other words, a key factor for success is in having a government that is a genuine partner (which should not to be confused with doing whatever private sector wants) that demonstrably takes other views into account. In this regard, Botswana and Lao PDR's PPDs suggest that the gains from utilising these structures can be significant. In both cases, the importance of private sector institutions in setting the agenda and managing the process is clearly illustrated. As mentioned earlier, BOCCIM plays an important role in the PPD process by determining the issues on the agenda.

Inter-BSO Collaboration facilitates the Optimum Use of Resources

In terms of successful mobilisation for services reform, the Barbados experience highlights that inter-BSO collaboration is an effective tool for coping with the increased technical demands of trade in services negotiations. The nuances of trade in services issues are often not intuitively grasped by those unfamiliar with the area. As such, the existence of the BPSTT to substantively address this aspect of trade (along with the other traditional areas) is a positive example of inter-BSO collaboration. The combination of sectoral BSOs facilitating access to critical feedback from their members and the BPSTT undertaking research to formulate professional submissions to the Government has proven to be a useful innovation.

The case study also highlights other successful forms of co-operation. For example, in Botswana, BOCCIM makes use of BIOB and HATAB to lead discussions on financial services and tourism respectively in the context of the HLCC. However, care must be taken to avoid situations in which, individual members who are representing the umbrella body pursue their own

narrow interests. Finally, some organisational structures for consultative mechanisms are more clearly more effective than others. However, it is difficult to conclude that a particular structure works better as this depends on the institutional landscape and cultural norms in any given country.

BSO collaboration in Barbados is facilitated by the rich culture of cross-fertilisation of agencies through the movement of skilled professionals. For example, both the BCCI and the BCSI are headed by professionals with substantial experience in trade policy gained through employment with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade as well as with trade programmes such as the Commonwealth Hubs and Spokes project. Other examples include resources moving from the BPSTT to work with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) to assist with trade negotiations.⁹ (Sauvé and Ward, 2008) Such cross-fertilisation has tended to happen informally in Barbados as a result of a relatively small community of trained persons.

Governments can shape and encourage Inter-BSO Collaboration

Finally, governments play a number of important roles in the development of services oriented BSOs. With respect to the mechanisms for collaboration, although BSOs may manifest individualistic tendencies, governments can indirectly promote deeper levels of BSO co-operation by concretely determining the avenues through which BSOs may raise their concerns. This was highlighted in the early stages of the operation of BPSA where views from the different BSOs were transmitted via this mechanism to the Government of Barbados.

Moreover, governments can facilitate the advocacy process for some BSOs by hosting the secretariat for the consultative mechanism as is illustrated by the Botswana case and the TCTS. However, it should be

⁹ BPSTT's lead consultant on tourism issues was recruited to the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association as its Industry and Advocacy Manager specifically for the EPA negotiations.

recalled that this mechanism is not limited to the private sector.

In addition, in the initial stages of BSO development, government assistance may be critical in overcoming financing deficits. However, a clear plan to achieve economic sustainability should be vigorously pursued. As the BCSI case highlights, even where government support is forthcoming, implementation of initiatives still requires access to additional funds.

Intra-BSO Information Dissemination may be Selective

The picture related to intra-BSO information flows is somewhat mixed. Where trade negotiations are concerned, given the sensitivity of information, the dissemination of information internally is generally limited. In theory, it may be argued that the limited information flows limits the opportunities for members to contribute to association positions; however, in practice, it is difficult to persuade a wide cross-section of members to exercise discretion in the use of information being made available to them; and many

members are only able to respond to highly summarised forms of information as they face time and resource constraints related to their own business and a lack of capacity to digest information and provide substantive responses.

Smart Partnerships are useful in addressing Resource Constraints

Another crucial insight is that smart partnerships with agencies in the international development community are important. The example of the BCSI acquiring donor funding to underwrite the production of the NSSD strategy and the BPSTT securing funding from the CARTfund for its trade communications enhancement project and its project proposal hub are good examples of this. Collaboration with such agencies provides financially constrained BSOs with resources to undertake tasks such as formulating technical inputs into discussions on services policy. It also creates avenues for BSOs to enhance their array of membership services in areas such as skills development.

Conclusions

The key insights from the review of institutional mechanisms do point to potential solutions to these challenges. For example, some human resource limitations in low income countries may be addressed through the use of both formal and informal methods of co-operation among BSOs. Ideally, decisions on mechanisms for collaboration should be made on the basis of strategic plans which seek to improve private sector institutional coherence. The study provides two examples of such an approach. First, where the decision is to create a collaborative mechanism (Lao PDR's PSWGs which are guided by the DFID, IFC, and OECD model) or where there is a decision to join a consultative mechanism (BCSI's subscription to a BPSA to achieve strategic objectives).

Additionally, smart partnerships with international development agencies present another avenue for reducing skills and financial deficits through the provision of technical assistance for clearly defined assignments and projects, such as producing high quality technical interventions and improving industry knowledge.

PPDs represent strong mechanisms to address questions pertaining to substantive services trade policy and negotiations as well as to inter-ministry communication and co-operation on questions related to, *inter alia*, services trade. In general, PPDs constitute a strong basis for the private and public sectors to engage in joint efforts to create a positive business climate and monitoring the implementation of decisions aimed at achieving agreed upon goals and actions.

The relative importance of these solutions varies not only in terms of countries, but also according to BSOs. Based on the experience of the BCSI, the formation of smart

partnerships and financial assistance from national governments appear to be two of the relatively more important solutions for enhancing services advocacy. For other BSOs which deal with service industries, it would appear that a strong mechanism for inter-BSO collaboration has significant value.

Overall, the utility of these solutions is likely to be determined by the national context which includes the extent of government involvement and the capabilities of the BSOs themselves.

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Annex 1

List of Persons Interviewed/ Consulted

Anne Reid	Executive Director, Barbados Private Sector Association
Dichaba Molobe	Director of Policy and Advocacy, Botswana Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Manpower
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Mazwi Mmango	General Manager, Gaborone Sun, Botswana
Meshia Clarke	Programme Officer, Barbados Coalition of Services Industries
Michelle Hustler	_____
Ramon Bruesseler	Executive Director, European Chamber of Commerce in Lao PDR
Sengxay Phousinghoa	National Implementation Unit, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
Shardae Boyce	Consultant, Barbados Private Sector Trade Team

Support to Enhance Development of Trade in Services Negotiations

With support from the UK Trade Advocacy Fund, ILEAP, CUTS International Geneva and the University of Sussex's CARIS are undertaking a series of interventions that seek to contribute to the increased and more effective participation of LDCs, LICs, LMICs and RECs in multilateral, regional and bilateral services trade negotiations.

Through the studies, toolkits and training to be delivered, the envisaged results aim to assist these stakeholders in increasing their participation in services trade.

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