

# Providing expertise and training



The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) plays an important role in building the capacity and skills of member countries to advance their sustainable development. In this way the CFTC seeks to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals including the reduction by one-half of the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

The CFTC bridges the 'skills gap' in two main ways: by placing experts in key public sector posts on assignments that range in length from a few days to two years; and by providing various types of training to public sector employees in strategic areas. The two approaches are complementary, building the capacity of the institutions in which the experts are placed through in-country and external training programmes and on-the-job attachments.

Largely demand-driven, CFTC assistance responds to the Commonwealth's comparative advantages and the priorities of member governments. These currently include public sector reform, trade and export development, agriculture and enterprise development, debt management, delimitation of maritime boundaries and assisting with attracting inward investment, particularly into the mineral and petroleum sectors.

## Expertise in the field

More than 300 experts and consultants were fielded to developing member countries over the past two years, in a variety of areas including trade and investment promotion, legal drafting, infrastructure development, health, education, environment and gender equality.

In Cameroon an expert assisted in compiling its common and civil laws, while Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu received support in the promotion of effective administration of justice and civil litigation. Experts in Solomon Islands assisted in keeping the courts functioning during the conflict and advised the Government on the drafting of a new federal constitution. In Uganda support was provided for law revision.

In Lesotho, Papua New Guinea and Sierra Leone, experts assisted in electoral

management by developing appropriate electoral legislation and governance processes. Support to constituency demarcation and voter registration was provided for Malawi.

Community health care was boosted in Malawi and Seychelles. The Commonwealth Regional Health Secretariat in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, benefited from advice on options for regulating allied health professionals in East, Central and Southern Africa. An anaesthetist improved the clinical and surgical services at Vaiola Hospital in Tonga and trained anaesthetists who were posted to outer island hospitals.

Engineers were provided to train graduates and technicians in Dominica in structural design, to advise on drainage and irrigation as well as new town development in Guyana, and on road construction and maintenance in Grenada.

A financial expert assisted the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force to strengthen the regional anti-money laundering infrastructure. An expert assisted with the establishment of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group Secretariat to serve the region. In Fiji Islands and Cook Islands an expert assisted in setting up systems for investigating and prosecuting the financing of terrorism. Other countries in the Pacific benefited from the services of an expert at the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering.

Four Pacific countries shared the benefits of a regional adviser in debt management, while Samoa was assisted in establishing a regulatory framework for the offshore finance sector and prevention of harmful tax practices.

Experts assisted Nauru, Tonga and Cook Islands in developing small and medium enterprises, to generate employment for women and youth. An expert attached to the

### Above:

Some 3,000 public officials of developing countries benefit from Commonwealth training activities each year

### Opposite:

Seasoned professionals offer advice to small entrepreneurs through the Commonwealth Service Abroad Programme

Women's Textile Training Centre in Papua New Guinea trained women in garment manufacturing and assisted them in setting up small businesses.

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat has benefited from the services of a multilateral trade adviser to assist countries in preparing for the Doha Round of trade talks. Trade advisers are also assisting the Southern African Development Community and Caribbean countries in preparing for the negotiations, and in enhancing national capacities in trade policy formulation and negotiation.

### Volunteers for development

In order to enhance its capacity to meet the short-term technical assistance needs of member governments, the CFTC runs the Commonwealth Service Abroad Programme (CSAP), under which professionals offer their services as volunteers.

In 2001–2003, CSAP's projects included assistance to grassroots projects involving large numbers of women and young people in Jamaica and St Lucia, using web-based models of delivery in secondary and tertiary education for out-of-school young adults. Computer systems for credit administration for youth businesses were installed in Barbados to enhance the financial accounting of small businesses. Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines benefited from the provision of credit to small entrepreneurs and farmers, resulting in reports of 1,000 job opportunities being created within 18 months. Artisans in Fiji were exposed to contemporary trends in the design and marketing of handicrafts.

### Training

More than 6,000 public officials from developing countries have benefited from training activities in 2001–2003. Training has been aimed at enhancing managerial skills and organisational capacities in support of national priorities, including implementing public sector reform agendas and improving the delivery of public services.

The building of strategic partnerships with regional organisations and institutions assisted member countries in advancing their public sector and economic reform agendas. In working with the Economic Community of West African States the focus has been upon gender mainstreaming. The Commonwealth Secretariat arranged executive management training, targeted at senior officials and provided by partner institutions in Africa and the Caribbean. Rural governance and diplomatic training was delivered through the



Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to senior government officials of the region. Public policy on governance also received attention in the Asia region.

Training in computer-based financial management for small states and for the development of women entrepreneurs was conducted in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Grenada, Kenya, and Trinidad and Tobago. Policy workshops on corporate governance in the private and public sectors were organised for ministers and senior government officials. Directors' training programmes were also conducted in which Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu participated. A total of 104 individuals benefited from corporate governance policy workshops and directors' training programmes.

Governments benefited from Training Needs Analysis. In Brunei Darussalam, all public service ministries participated in the process and a report was published of their findings.

Regional and pan-Commonwealth centres of excellence conducted short courses targeted at middle and senior level officials and focusing on such areas as public sector executive management, knowledge management, financial and records management, information technology, total quality management, productivity improvement and health management.

Graduate courses were supported in

computer science, international maritime law and international shipping, policy studies and legal drafting, business administration and human resource development. These programmes have helped strengthen the capacities of regional institutions.

Gender mainstreaming remained a priority. Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania and Uganda hosted projects that empowered women to manage their own businesses as well as to participate in environment management.

Through the Grameen Bank Dialogue Programme, senior policy and decision-makers as well as practitioners from Africa, Asia and the Pacific were exposed to the Grameen model of 'micro-credit lending' in Bangladesh. This has helped in building critical mass for successful replication in other Commonwealth countries. Support has been provided by the Grameen Trust to facilitate some of the projects developed by CFTC-funded scholars.

Learning from the Singapore Economic Development Board model, the foreign direct investment programme has been cascaded to the regions of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the initial indications are positive in that investment promotion agencies have networked among themselves and have adopted a more aggressive approach to ensure inward flow of foreign direct investment to their countries.