

METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

3.1 General

In order to obtain hard information regarding the general economics on Bonaire, which will assist the Think Tank Group in the preparation of the Policy Framework, a study called “Economic Data and Information Researcher (EDIR)” was conducted in the months of February and March 2003.

The SESNA define the EDIR-study as: “A clearly defined scope of data and information stock for the island of Bonaire”.

A complete process of collecting, composing, evaluating, interviews, analyzing data and information was based on a thorough field survey among the concerned areas such as:

- Business Start Ups and running a business*
- Taxation and fees*
- Banking and Financing*
- Schools, institutions and universities*
- Infrastructure*
 - *facilities*
 - *ICT*
- Human Resource Development*
- Technology, Innovation and management*
- Quality and industrial standards*
- Information access to national and international markets*
- Administration, Sector policies*
- MSE promotional Instruments*

3.2 Objective of the Research Study

The research was meant to update and facilitate the available data's and information on abovementioned fields, which will be later analysis and blended into the overall MSE policy framework guideline defined by the island of Bonaire.

The research has also an additional goal, and that is to strengthen the contribution of the small business sector to economic growth and to structural generation and preservation of employment on the island of Bonaire.

3.3 Preparation Stage and fieldwork setup

The best manner of approach in the investigation of the different topics mentioned above was the approach on the basis of a “Sample at snowball-effect random”.

Key persons in the business community were personally approached (informal) and where interviewed about various topics. Furthermore they were asked if they personally knew of other people, institutions etc. who have relevant information that could contribute to the study.

The fieldwork on Bonaire took place in the period January 10 to March 10.

This meant that a lot of desk-research had to take place besides the approaches for informal qualitative interview and telephone calls.

There was no real non-response, but the lack of information or up- to date information was considerably high. Where was expected to have information even in the simplest form (booklet or folder) was not available. Surprisingly to the researcher was that when the information was available they were still not ready to share it. Bureaucracy, non-professionalism all forms part of it.

Entrepreneurs, who are in the process of starting a business, may encounter many difficulties without the accurate information.

SESNA (Small Enterprise Stimulation Programme Netherlands Antilles) **Comments**

For Bonaire is was a long way and a hard struggle to start up the initiative. The executive unit on the island is Centrum Kleinbedrijf Bonaire CKB (SME-center Bonaire), managed by Mr. S.A. Cecilia SBA and established 4 years ago.

As usual bureaucracy had a great impact on the implementation of the non-financial and financial components of the SESNA plan.

After 2 years the non-financial component became available and CKB started providing training an advice to SME and potential starters.

After about a year the discussion on procedures, forms, annexes et cetera was re-opened and the plan came (again) to a stand still.

It would be very desirable to streamline procedures, to avoid bureaucracy and to come to consent with all stakeholders before implementation. Changing procedures and continuing discussions on how and what make the initiative implausible in the market and will lead to (and already led to) unpleasant discussions, even in the press and other public media. This also will avoid a lot of frustration for the C.K.B.-staff and her cooperating advisors and trainers.

Even a bigger problem is formed by the implementation of the financial component.

Although the funds are ready to be used for financing and co-financing SME-initiatives these funds are still inaccessible for the sector.

CKB sent many by her mediation written business plans for existing and new initiatives to the SESNA advisors to be presented to the SESNA Loan Committee. Apparently there is still no Loan Committee and many of the mentioned business plan now are older than one year and some of them even almost two years old. The plans probably ended up in a drawer and are fairly outdated now and will have to be rewritten if the funds for the financial component will become accessible. Even one or two business plans got lost and could not be found back: all together a waste of good money, time and effort and inciting expectations of which coming true is an open question for CKB and the involved clients.

A rapid access to these funds with no more delays and avoiding further bureaucracy will save this part of the SESNA plan for Bonaire and will give CKB and her external advisors back the status they earn.