

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic project data

▪ Country/Region:	The Bahamas
▪ TC Name:	Support for the design of a prisoner reentry system
▪ TC Number:	BH-T1046
▪ Team Leader/Members:	Robert Pantzer (ICS/CBH), Team Leader; Arnaldo Posadas; Lina Marmolejo, Andrés Restrepo; Karelia Villa, Melissa Gonzalez (IFD/ICS); Everette Sweeting (CCB/CBH); and TBD (LEG/SGO)
▪ Indicate if: Operational Support, Client Support, or Research & Dissemination.	Client Support
▪ Reference to Request: (IDB docs #)	39899269
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	June 2015
▪ Beneficiary (countries or entities which are the recipient of the technical assistance):	Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDOCS)
▪ Executing Agency and contact name (Organization or entity responsible for executing the TC Program) {If Bank: Contracting entity} {If the same as Beneficiary, please indicate}	IDB, through the Institutional Capacity of the State Division (ICS)
▪ IDB Funding Requested:	US\$350,000
▪ Local counterpart funding, if any:	none
▪ Disbursement period (which includes execution period):	24 months
▪ Required start date:	September 2015
▪ Types of consultants (firm or individual consultants):	firms and individuals
▪ Prepared by Unit:	IFD/ICS
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	IFD/ICS
▪ Included in Country Strategy (y/n);	Yes, Country Strategy (GN-2731), includes objectives related to the public sector's institutional capacity to respond to crime and violence
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ GCI-9 Sector Priority:	Institutions for Growth and Social Welfare (GN-2587-2); Citizen Security

II. Objective and Justification:

- 2.1 The Government of the Bahamas in its Charter for Governance, Vision 2030, identifies a course of action to “move upward, forward and onward” and prioritizes the fight against crime and the prevention of violence. Also, the Government has been committed to promote a sustainable national crime agenda which incorporates effective crime prevention, detention, prosecution and rehabilitation strategies, while addressing social issues. A fundamental action under this agenda has been the improvement and restructuring of correctional services, which started with the approval of a new the Correctional Services Bill in 2013¹, which marks a policy shift from a punitive view to a focus on rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into society, and provides for the conversion of the sole prison in the country into a correctional facility. In addition to this

¹ The previous Prison Act was 70 years old.

philosophical shift in the criminal justice system, and as a result of the Bill, prisoner re-entry has become an important policy issue in The Bahamas.

- 2.2 The rate of incarceration for the country is 379 per 100,000 inhabitants, significantly higher than the median rate of incarceration for the Caribbean region (around 277 per 100,000 inhabitants). The Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDOCS) currently holds approximately 1,506 inmates, the majority of whom (92%) are males between the ages of 18 to 35 years old (55%). A large number of these prisoners are awaiting trial (42%). These inmates will be eventually released; making their successful reintegration into society a considerable public policy challenge. Many countries such as the United States, Canada and England have made noticeable advancements in exploring re-entry programs for inmates. For instance, evidence from inmates in the United States shows that most returning offenders have difficulty managing the basic elements for successful reintegration, such as finding and maintaining employment, finding a place to live, reconnecting with their families, and accessing other social services that will help them with substance abuse and mental health problems².
- 2.3 In the Bahamas, some efforts have been made to understand inmates' views on reintegration,³ however, the translation of those findings into actual public policy is still a work in progress.. The most recently conducted inmate survey showed that, consistently with international experience, the majority of Bahamian inmates were concerned about employment opportunities, 47% indicated that they already had a job lined up after release, 53% indicated that their incarceration had a negative impact on their family life and in terms of housing, and 79% indicated that they anticipated living with family member upon release.
- 2.4 Consequently, understanding that the process of reentry starts at the moment of imprisonment and that it extends beyond release is critical. There is an implicit relationship between the experience of incarceration and the events upon release that marks the reentry process and must be taken into consideration when thinking about different approaches to deal with inmate rehabilitation. A comprehensive definition of reentry includes "how they (ex-prisoners) spent their time during confinement, the process by which they are released, and how they are supervised after release."⁴ However, it would be difficult to assess program effectiveness under such a broad definition. Therefore, a more narrow definition of reentry will allow policy makers and practitioner to focus on programs that aim to manage the transition from detention to the community. This narrow definition includes programs that specifically focus on the transition from prison to community (such as prerelease, work release, halfway houses among others); or initiate treatment (such as substance abuse, life skills, education or mental health) in a prison setting and link with a community program to provide continuity of care⁵.

² Travis, Jeremy 2001; Western, Bruce 2008; Visher, Christy 2012.

³ To date, three surveys of prison inmates have been conducted: In 1998 an unpublished survey conducted by the National Crime Commission, a 2009 unpublished survey conducted by HMP's Inmates Activities Unit & Research Department and a 2010 unpublished survey conducted by the researchers at the College of The Bahamas which served as the input for the unpublished paper "Profile of The Sentenced Inmates At Her Majesty's Prison Fox Hill, Nassau, The Bahamas." By Minnis, j. et. al, and presented at Violence Symposium, 3rd November 2011, Nassau, The Bahamas.

⁴ Petersilia, Joan (2004). What works in Prisoner Reentry? Reviewing and Questioning the Evidence. Federal Probation. Vol. 68.

⁵ Seiter, Richard., Karen, Kadela (2003). Prisoner Reentry: What works, What doesn't and What's promising. Crime and Delinquency, 49.

- 2.5 In order to address this challenge and to provide opportunities for the Bahamian inmates to successfully return to their communities and reduce their probability to reoffend, the BDOCS has put in place different programs and treatments, such as the electronic ankle-bracelet surveillance system for suspects on bail or awaiting trial; a work-release program that benefits inmates in their last years of their sentences; and several treatments dealing mainly with substance abuse and life skills training. However, the supply of these services lacks a policy framework providing structure and systematic approach to a national re-entry strategy.
- 2.6 The Government of The Bahamas has sought the Bank's assistance to stem the rise of crime and violence and improve living conditions in the country. In its dialogue with the government the Bank has advocated for a crosscutting, intersectoral crime and violence strategy emphasizing crime and violence prevention and combining the strengthening of key sector institutions and targeting different risk factors affecting community life in a coordinated way, using evidence-based interventions.
- 2.7 The objective of this technical cooperation is to inform policy dialogue and debate about a comprehensive reentry strategy that will allow the Government of The Bahamas to address offenders' needs and challenges as they return to the society. Furthermore, the knowledge generated by this TC will feed into a broader knowledge strategy of the Bank's Citizen Security and Justice Cluster, to better inform the public debate and decision makers about institutional performance of the criminal justice sector.

III. Activities:

- 3.1 **Component 1: Information on prisoner re-entry needs and challenges.** This component will seek to generate information about the post-release needs and anticipated challenges of the offender population, factors facilitating or impeding successful prisoner's re-entry, both from the administration, inmates' and ex-offenders point of view. The component will: (i) collect correctional administrative data; (ii) conduct two types of surveys (a survey to inmates and a needs assessment survey of institutional capabilities); (iii) produce an analytical study summarizing the findings of both surveys; and (iv) carry out a literature review pertaining to offender reentry. As a result, solid information and evidence will be available and will serve as a basis for the design and development of a re-entry strategy in The Bahamas.
- 3.2 **Component 2: Design of a parole supervision strategy.** This component seeks to support the design of a structured gradual release program with supervision, control and treatment support that will enhance reentry outcomes for inmates under parole and strengthen citizen security in communities where offenders will be released. The component will finance the production of a parole strategy, drawing on evidence-based practices and accompanied by a communication strategy. Activities will include exchanges of knowledge and best operational practices with correctional departments that have put in place successful and efficient parole strategies, community engagement sessions, awareness and advocacy workshops with local authorities, academia, community leaders, civil society and private sector.
- 3.3 **Component 3: Evaluation of a re-entry program.** The objective of this component is to support the evaluation of one of the re-entry programs in place and assess whether the selected program can be scaled up to benefit a wide range of inmates in their transition to society. The selection of the program to be evaluated will be made jointly by BDOCS, the IDB project team and experts in evaluating prison and correctional systems.

IV. Budget:

Component	Description	IDB Financing	Counterpart Financing	Total Financing
Component 1: Information on prisoner re-entry needs and challenges	1 administrative data gathering 1 inmates survey and institutional needs assessment 1 analytical report	125,000	-	125,000
Component 2: Design of a parole supervision strategy	3 Public consultations 2 Exchanges of experiences 1 Parole supervision strategy	70,000	-	70,000
Component 3: Evaluation of a re-entry program	1 Evaluation Methodology 1 Evaluation Implementation 1 Synthesis report/ analysis	155,000	-	155,000
TOTAL		350,000		350,000

V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure

- 5.1 As this TC will generate knowledge and dissemination products originated by the Bank, the operation will be implemented by ICS/CBH in close coordination with BDOCS and with support from IFD/ICS and CCB/CCB. The TC will be implemented over 24 months. The IDB will conduct the procurement of consulting services required for TC implementation, according to the Bank's policies and procedures.

VI. Project Risks and Issues

- 6.1 Working with citizen security institutions, such as the police and the correctional system may pose reputational risks for the IDB. As suggested by the Operational Guidelines for Program Design and Execution in the Area of Civic Coexistence and Public Safety (GN-2535-1); the project team will draw upon the experience of expert organization to support, guide prison work and ensure implementation in accordance with international best practices.

VII. Environmental and Social Classification

- 6.2 There are no environmental or social risks associated with the activities outlined in this TC, therefore its environmental classification is "C" (See [IDB Docs #39692692](#)).