OECS launches Entrepreneurs Incubation and Acceleration Programme TECHIE

November 29, 2021 (https://www.ieyenews.com/2021/11/)

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Monday, November 29, 2021 — **The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission welcomed the first cohort of entrepreneurs to its incubation and acceleration programme TECHIE; Technology Competitiveness Hub for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. This programme is funded by the Compete Caribbean Partnership facility and is being implemented by GBest Limited from Trinidad and Tobago.**

167 applications were received for the programme and through a rigorous evaluation process, 14 startups were selected to participate in the virtual business incubator, while 32 existing companies were selected to participate in the accelerator. Participants in both components of the TECHIE programme will benefit from training, mentoring, coaching, consultancy services, support to access finance, seed capital and networking opportunities over the next six months. The participants were selected from the six independent OECS member states namely; Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Approximately 57 per cent of the participants are female and the majority are youth between the ages 18-35. While the programme targets technology-based entrepreneurs, the participants operate in various sectors such as manufacturing, tourism, health and wellness, agriculture/agro-processing and creative industries.

The Director of the Economic Affairs and Regional Integration Division at the OECS Commission, Mrs. Jacqueline Emmanuel-Flood thanked the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility for partnering with the OECS to implement such a timely programme. She expressed the Commission's support for the work being done to strengthen the regional entrepreneurship ecosystem by building key partnerships with national and global business service organisations.

The OECS Director General Dr. Didacus Jules commended the entrepreneurs for taking the step to participate in this programme and encouraged them to take advantage of the networking, training and coaching opportunities being offered. He reminded the participants that they have a critical

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role to play in the transformation of the region, especially in the current economic realities, and was pleased with the recent acceleration of digitisation seen by many businesses in response to the demands of the market.

The objective of the programme is to strengthen the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems of the six Member States participating in the project. Overall, the incubator and accelerator programme is expected to support at least 80 OECS entrepreneurs over 18 months, with the second cohort starting in the first quarter of 2022. The third component of the project involves promoting the adoption of digital financial technology solutions by small businesses in the OECS and is also expected to commence in early 2022. Cl

Click here to learn more about TECHIE. (https://www.oecs.org/en/entrepreneurship-and-innovation-ecosystems-in-the-oecs)

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