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#BT Column – Projects in innovation challenge get assistance

written by Barbados Today • Updated by Asminnie Moonsammy • 21/09/2022 • 4 min read • • A+A-



(From left) Finalists Antonio Hollingsworth, Michael Hinds and Dr Shelly-Ann Cox along with Minister of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology, Davidson Ishmael; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology, Wayne Marshall; CEO of Export Barbados, Mark Hill; Kelvin Carter and Dr. Sylvia Dohnert, Executive Director of CCPF.

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By Marlon Madden

Efforts are on to significantly increase Barbados' export potential in the blue economy, as operators of three companies walked away with cash prizes on Friday to fund projects they presented during the National Innovation Challenge 2022 – Ocean Edition.

During the official closing ceremony for the challenge, which began in June and was hosted by Export Barbados (BIDC) in association with Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), the projects were presented as officials pointed to the need to protect the ocean space and capitalise on its potential.

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The winners, Michael Hinds of WestPoint, Shelly-Ann Cox of Blue Shell Productions and Antonio Hollingsworth of Bajan Digital Creations Inc. received up to $20 000 each which is allocated for a pilot phase so the projects can be tested.

Hinds presented Skeete's Bay Market Project, an aqua culture project designed to ramp up production of specific families of fish while reducing pressure on the island's fish stock. Cox showcased her Digifish, a project for fisheries monitoring and traceability to address fragmentation in the fisheries industry and increase the island's export of fish while Hollingsworth presented his BlueBot Project, which is designed to engage in ocean reef data mining to aid with the increase of the island's ocean stock and fight against climate change.

All projects are aimed at reducing the island's seafood trade deficit, save foreign exchange for the island and generate jobs, while linking various sectors.

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The Ocean Edition of the National Innovation Challenge 2022, is the second in a three-part series. The first was the Beauty Edition, and a third edition is to be launched soon.

Chief Executive Officer of Export Barbados (BIDC) Mark Hill said the challenges formed part of the stimulation of an innovative culture and ecosystem being built out by Export Barbados (BIDC), which focuses on the ocean, biological resources and people.

"So this particular challenge is very critical because it taps that key market – the oceans, which is currently contributing less than US$1 million to our exports – and we want to see that grow significantly, and the only way for that to grow is through new innovations [and] new products that we can put into our export markets," said Hill.

Pointing out the island was already exporting some fish products including the yellow fin tuna, Hill said "What we want to see are other products in the biotech space also within the marine engineering space as well. We also want to see our boat engineering capacity and boat-building skills also leveraged as well," he said.

"We are excited about this initiative. It is not the last because we have to come back at this again and encourage a broader cross section of people to participate as we continue to build out our economy," he added.

Compete Caribbean presented the cash prizes to the three companies. The companies can then get up to US$100,000 in financing to implement the project successfully, depending on its viability.

Executive Director of Compete Caribbean Sylvia Dohnert said the support being provided to the participants in the ocean innovation challenge was one example of that organisation's support for entrepreneurship in the blue economy.

She noted that under Compete Caribbean, which is supported by a number of partners including the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Canada, the UK and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), some US$4.5 million was earmarked for the blue economy – one of the areas for development of entrepreneurship in the Caribbean.

"Barbados has a huge potential on everything innovative, very high human capital and how to add the knowledge that is produced by that human capital into products of more and more value-added. From the Compete Caribbean standpoint we are completely enthusiastic about supporting any initiative that leads towards that," she said.

Minister of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology Davidson Ishmael congratulated the winners of the challenge, describing them as bold to have taken the step to pursue the projects that will contribute to the island's development goals.

"You have an unrelenting drive to break the status quo and develop anew where few have dared to go. In this context, you have recognised and accepted an opportunity for you to take your businesses to the next level," he said.

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consumers at home and internationally as well.

“Through Ocean Challenge 2022, you are contributing to a brighter and more sustainable tomorrow. This innovative and entrepreneurial drive has the potential to be a game-changer,” said Ishmael.

marlonmadden@barbadostoday.bb

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CCPF Pleased to Partner with Export Barbados

EXPORT BARBADOS / SEPTEMBER 24, 2022 / BLUE ECONOMY, OCEAN ECONOMY

The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) has pledged its commitment to encourage entrepreneurship in new growth areas for the Caribbean, including Barbados, and noted it was pleased to partner with Export Barbados recently to facilitate enterprise in the blue economy.

Dr Sylvia Dohnert, Executive Director of CCPF, spoke to this recently as Export Barbados and the CCPF successfully concluded their Ocean Challenge, allowing three firms to implement their blue economy innovation projects. The projects th...

will receive support are:

1. DigiFish – Dr Shelly-Ann Cox of Blue Shell Productions
2. Blue Bot Project – Antonio Hollingsworth of Bajan Digital Creations Inc.
3. Skeete's Bay Market – Michael Hinds, Westpoint Culinary Inc.



"In the blue economy, we've actually earmarked US$4.5 million to invest in a global economy, not only to support entrepreneurs, but for example, we supported the Ministry of the Blue Economy in its previous iteration, and continue to support the Ministry of the Environment that has absorbed that portfolio, with a blue economy policy roadmap for Barbados. We also provide support for clusters in the blue economy, but those projects are outside Barbados," she said.

Regarding the Ocean Challenge, Dr. Dohnert said the collaboration between CCPF and Export Barbados allowed for the pooling of resources to assist in building out prospective projects in the blue economy. She added that through the Challenge process, they have identified Barbadian entrepreneurs with good business propositions and are now prepared to help them take their ideas to the next leve



The Executive Director explained that each project would have an incubation period and access up to US$20,000 to test their pilots. She added that after the incubation, they would be eligible to receive up to US$100,000 in financing.



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Minister of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Commerce, Dwight Sutherland (right), who represented the Government of Barbados and Kim Osborne, Executive Secretary in the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development who represented the OAS, as they signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to aid the establishment of the Caribbean Network of Small Business Development Centres (SBDCs).

COMMITTED TO SECTOR

Thu, 09/19/2019 - 12:06am

The development of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Barbados is on an upward trajectory.

Minister of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Commerce, Dwight Sutherland, pointed out the above just yesterday, ahead of the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of Barbados and the General Secretariat of the Organisation of American States (OAS), through the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, to aid in the establishment of the Caribbean Network of Small Business Development Centres (SBDCs). The signing ceremony, as well as a roundtable discussion, took place at the Hilton Hotel.

Sutherland said the occasion was indeed a historic one as the event underpinned Government's continued commitment to enfranchise Barbadians and build out a modern MSME sector, through intentional stakeholder engagement, global collaboration, and strategic reach to those in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Speaking specifically to the "Caribbean Small Business Development Centre Project", he noted that it is a partnership programme with the US Permanent Mission to the Organisation of American States (OAS), the OAS and the University of Texas at San Antonio, which assists in the creation of sustainable



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small business assistance networks in CARICOM member states, based on the proven US SBDC model.

“The project aims at engaging and actively enlisting the support from the government, higher education, NGOs and private sector, for a more effective and integrated infrastructure for MSME assistance, to help improve upon existing programmes. This would ensure an effective, efficient and integrated regional Caribbean SBDC network that would provide micro, small and medium enterprises with the high-value assistance that will enable them to grow sales, improve competitiveness, create sustainable jobs and long-term economic impact,” Sutherland said.

“It is in this regard that the Government of Barbados expresses profound gratitude to the Organisation of American States and its strategic partners, the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and the Caribbean Export Development Agency, for the invaluable contribution you continue to make towards the development of the island’s MSME sector and by extension the wider network of regional MSMEs,” he added.

Sutherland, who noted that the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC) Model was first introduced to Barbados in 2011, when a Ministry officially undertook a Fellowship sponsored by the OAS to understudy the SBDC Model in the US, stated that on April 10, 2015, the Barbados SBDC Network was launched with the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation and the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme being the two SBDCs, while the lone partner was the Barbados Agency for Micro Enterprise Development (Fund Access).

As the Network was further built out, the Student Entrepreneurial Empowerment Development programme of the University of the West Indies and the Barbados Small Business Association became SBDCs.

“Within recent weeks, the Cabinet of Barbados gave approval for the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology to become the fifth SBDC, while the Barbados Youth Business Trust, the Barbados Trust Fund Limited and the Financial Literacy Bureau were assigned as Partners within a reconfigured National SBDC Network, which will shortly be rebranded SBDC Barbados,” he revealed.

“Additionally, a reconfigured SBDC framework will see the establishment of a national steering committee, under the chairmanship of Senator Lynette Holder of the SBA, whose invaluable experience and expertise is being sought,” Sutherland also indicated. (RSM)

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CTO launches Caribbean Community Tourism Network

written by Barbados Today • Updated by Desmond Brown • 01/08/2021 • 2 min read • • A+A-



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Tourism product development authorities in the region now have a resource from which to draw when developing their community-based tourism (CBT) programmes.

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has launched the Caribbean Community Tourism Network (CCTN) to provide a platform to support the continued development of CBT in the Caribbean.

The network will facilitate the exchange of best practices among CTO member countries and interested tourism development partners and help identify capacity-building needs as well as challenges and opportunities for CBT development.

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local people in the tourism," said Amanda Charles, the CTO's sustainable tourism specialist.

"This network provides an avenue for CTO members to share knowledge, resources, and best practices to improve community tourism experiences and economic impact."

Among the functions of the CCTN are the promotion and support of regional development strategies in CBT, providing input into, and recommending activities and actions with a view to enhancing the visibility and value of CBT as a regional tourism product, and the exchange of experiences on national and regional initiatives.

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The network is one of the initiatives of the CTO, which has identified CBT as a regional tourism development strategy, and is seeking to optimise its role in supporting local livelihoods, stimulating entrepreneurship and community social and economic development, while also creating authentic experiences and unique product offerings for visitors.

Other initiatives include a toolkit for product development, produced in partnership with the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF). The toolkit includes a "how to" guide to assist communities and entrepreneurs develop profitable CBT experiences and enterprises, with information on product development, pricing, marketing and creating business plans. It also includes guidelines and templates to support experience design and product enhancement and a tool to measures communities' capacity and CBT states of readiness.

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CTO World Tourism Day 2020 message

September 27, 2020 239 0

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the region's tourism development agency, joins the global community in celebrating World Tourism Day 2020 under the theme, "Tourism and Rural Development".

This year's international day of observation comes at a time when the global tourism industry is facing a crisis of historic proportion due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the true impact of the pandemic may not be known for some time. However, the immediate impact on our region is very evident. Having begun 2020 on course for a new record in tourist arrivals, the closure of airports in March was followed by virtually no travel to the Caribbean in April and May. The result was a 57 percent decline in arrivals between January and June.

This translates into an estimated 50 percent to 60 percent fall in visitor spend, which can be seen directly in the form of closed tourism businesses, and across the economic spectrum in the form of significantly reduced revenues in both the public and private sectors. In addition, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that almost half a million Caribbean tourism workers face the prospect of job losses, reductions in working hours, and loss of incomes as a result of the pandemic.

Several Caribbean countries are considered among the most vulnerable by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as international tourism revenues account for the majority of total exports in these states. It also goes without saying that women, youth, and workers in the informal economy have been, and will be, among the hardest hit.

The CTO has recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic forces us to rethink our approach to tourism and to forge closer alignment of tourism and health functions. We also recognised that we need to ensure that on the restart of the sector, the benefits of tourism activity accrue as quickly as possible to all facets of our societies. This means that while the traditional players in tourism restart, we also need to help those businesses which are often away from the coast and beaches, in our rural areas.

To this end, the organisation has forged ahead in its collaboration with the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) which will be funding community-based tourism projects in some rural areas in Caribbean countries. The lessons learnt can be used as a blueprint to encourage similar projects across the region and be a catalyst for income generation and development in our rural communities.

Some of the characteristics of rural communities such as population demographics, lower income levels and relatively limited access to technology and infrastructure lead to an increased vulnerability in such areas, to the impacts of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism can work hand in hand with other economic sectors in the Caribbean such as agriculture, transportation and culture to empower rural communities.

Bringing people together in such an environment of solidarity and trust, advances the cooperation and collaboration needed to help us move beyond the pandemic. By providing a lifeline to the vulnerable in our societies, we reduce the tug on social services and further enhance the capacity of Caribbean people to play a leading role in their own development. Since the greatest resource in the Caribbean is our people, any investment will result in benefits for generations to come.

While we continue to work diligently on ensuring a safe and healthy environment for our visitors and locals alike, let us contemplate the opportunity that this pandemic affords us to tweak our tourism sector, and indeed all other sectors of our economies, to reach a level of sustainability that is resistant to crisis.

We urge our Caribbean people to join the world tourism community in rebuilding this sector and ensuring that starting now, the benefits of tourism consistently spread beyond the traditional coastal and urban bailiwick to areas of our countries often overlooked, but which can be positioned to sustainably diversify the already rich treasures awaiting visitors to our shores.



Focused on Building out the Ocean Economy

EXPORT BARBADOS / SEPTEMBER 23, 2022 / INNOVATE CHALLENGE, OCEAN ECONOMY

Export Barbados (BIDC) is working on developing a solid Ocean Economy portfolio for Barbados.

The disclosure has come from Minister of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology Davidson Ishmael, during the recently held closing ceremony for the Oceans Challenge. The Oceans Challenge was a collaboration between Export Barbados and the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility.

According to Minister Ishmael, there is scope for employment, job enhancement, venture creation, and the advent of new industrial sub-sectors, and ultimately exports within the Blue Economy. As such, he stated that the Oceans Challenge is just one of the first steps by his Ministry towards facilitating increased investment in the sector.

“We are confident that there are significant under-tapped and as yet untapped resources within our waters and related industries which we can explore”.

The Minister explained that the Ocean Economy is one of three strategic pillars under Export Barbados, and the Corporation is currently executing two pilot projects in that area. They are:

- The development of a sea moss industry to create value-added products beyond the traditional sea moss drinks, such as nutraceuticals and health and wellness products
- A wave energy project through a Netherlands-based firm with expertise in wave energy. The project explores a new clean energy source in keeping with the Government’s vision to reduce the dependency on fossil fuels by 2030.

Additionally, he revealed that the Government is also advancing plans to explore other opportunities in ocean energy, looking at such areas as the production of hydrogen, ocean thermal energy conversion and the conversion of Sargassum seaweed into biofuel.

On top of energy, he said his Ministry sees the need to support businesses interested in areas such as mariculture development, sustainable fisheries, marine biotechnology, waste management and data collection. All of these areas, he said, were among Barbados’ national priorities for the Challenge.



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New projects to get energy and fuel from the ocean

written by Barbados Today Traffic • 18/09/2022 • 4 min read • • A+A-



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by Marlon Madden

If all goes according to plan, Barbados could soon be producing energy from the ocean and biofuel from the pervasive sargassum seaweed as Government presses ahead with plans to make the island 100 per cent reliant on clean energy while capitalising on the blue economy.

Minister of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology Davidson Ishmael gave the indication on Friday, while noting that work has already begun with two significant pilot projects.

While not providing specifics, he gave the assurance that Barbados' efforts to move towards the use of more renewable forms of energy and energy efficiency were gathering momentum. He said no stones were being left unturned in the effort.

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energy conversion and the conversion of the seemingly ubiquitous Sargassum seaweed into biofuel," he said.

Ishmael was speaking at the Bagnall Point Gallery at Pelican Village on Friday during the closing ceremony for the **National Innovation Challenge 2022 – Ocean Edition**, which was hosted by Export Barbados (BIDC) in association with Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF).

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During that ceremony, three entrepreneurs walked away with cash prizes to carry out various projects aimed at protecting the ocean space and the island's fish stock, collect data, boost employment, while minimising the impact of climate change, among other things.

"Beyond this challenge there remains much work to be done to see increased numbers in our blue economy relative to investment, job enhancement, employment, business creation, and the emergence of new industrial sub-sectors, and ultimately exports," said Ishamael.

"My ministry, through Export Barbados (BIDC), will be pursuing the building out of a solid ocean economy portfolio with these objectives in mind. In this regard, the oceans economy is one of three strategic pillars with Export Barbados, and as we speak, two significant pilot projects are being executed.

"The first one, the development of a sea moss industry where we anticipate that we can create value-added products beyond the traditional sea moss drinks; exploring such products as nutraceuticals and health and wellness products.

"The second project is a wave energy project in conjunction with a firm from the Netherlands with expertise in wave energy. This project is aimed at exploring a new clean source of energy in keeping with the government's vision for significantly reducing dependency on fossil fuel by 2030," Ishmael reported.

He told the gathering that there were significant untapped and under-tapped resources in the island's ocean space that should be explored.

The minister said as Government continued to better define and understand how to leverage the ocean's asset, it would be done in a way that also helps to "improve how we eat, how we travel and transport our goods, how we mitigate climate change, how we harness our energy and how we protect our coastlines, among other things".

"Equally critical is that, such activities must be done in a manner that is restorative rather than destructive, we need to continuously replenish our fish stocks, prevent the loss of our biodiversity, reduce the pollution and overall declining health of our waters. In other words, it has to be done in a manner that assures sustainability. Within this context of sustainability, it becomes crystalised that the ocean economy is of paramount importance to our sustenance and survival," said Ishmael.

Pointing out that his ministry and related agencies were dedicated and ready to lead the country forward in the development of the blue economy, he said in addition to energy, there was a need to support businesses interested in areas such as mariculture development, sustainable fisheries, marine biotechnology, waste management and data collection.

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Ocean Innovation Challenge giving thousands of dollars to Blue companies

written by Barbados Today Traffic • 31/03/2022 • 3 min read • • A+A-



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Barbadian innovators and private sector firms operating in the blue economy now have the opportunity to take their existing businesses to the next level.

Export Barbados (BIDC) and the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility have partnered to launch the **Ocean Innovation Challenge 2022** – an initiative to provide technical and financial support to Barbadian companies that are operating in sectors within the blue economy. Up to USD$100,000 in technical assistance grants are available to the selected firms to cover a maximum 75 per cent of the total budget necessary to implement the project successfully.

The firm will finance the remaining 25 per cent of the project budget through cash and in-kind contributions.

Technical assistance includes but is not limited to research and development (R&D) support, product development, marketing, and technical interventions required to bring commercially sound, sustainable, and innovative products and services that fulfill market needs.

The **Ocean Innovation Challenge 2022** is specifically targeting firms that wish to export their products and/or services, as well as those using new technologies or solutions to foster the long-term sustainability of the blue economy in Barbados.

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They should employ cutting-edge technologies and should generally contribute to the sustainable management of oceans and coastal resources as the basis for livelihoods, food security and economic development of Barbados.

Priority will be given to companies innovating and utilising leading technology around the national challenges or priority areas of Barbados' blue economy.

These include fisheries, mariculture development, marine biotechnology, waste management, data capture, and energy generation.

Chief Executive Officer of Export Barbados (BIDC), Mark Hill, said: "what may be considered a perennial problem may actually be a profitable business waiting for the right innovation and entrepreneurial lenses to bring it to market. We are excited to support any
such initiatives".

The blue economy has been widely acknowledged as a source of economic wealth and diversification, as this sector spans a range of industries that are tied to the sea, from tourism to shipping, fisheries, energy generation, marine biotechnology, and much more.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) had projected a doubling of the ocean economy from 2010 to 2030, to reach USD$3 trillion and employ 40 million people.

For the Caribbean, there is an expectation that a new approach to the blue economy will facilitate a sustainable path towards economic growth, as there is an abundance of maritime resources within the region.

From sargassum to biofuels, from algae to cosmetics, from fish scale to fashion – what might appear in the first instance to be a nuisance or waste may well be Barbados' next thriving export product or service.

Those interested in the Ocean Innovation Challenge 2022 can find the full details of the Call for Proposals at the website www.innovatebarbados.com, as well as on Compete Caribbean's website at www.competecaribbean.org. **(PR)**

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Ocean Innovation Challenge Launched to Provide Support to Blue Economy Companies

EXPORT BARBADOS / MARCH 31, 2022 / BLUE ECONOMY, INNOVATE CHALLENGE

Barbadian innovators and private sector firms operating in the Blue Economy now have the opportunity to take their existing businesses to the next level. Export Barbados (BIDC) and the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility have partnered to launch the Ocean Innovation Challenge 2022 – an initiative to provide technical and financial support to Barbadian companies that are operating in sectors within the Blue Economy.

Up to USD$100,000 in technical assistance grants are available to the selected firms to cover a maximum 75% of the total budget necessary to implement the project successfully. The firm will finance the remaining 25% of the project budget through cash and in-kind contributions. Technical assistance includes but is not limited to research and development (R&D) support, product development, marketing, and technical interventions required to bring commercially sound, sustainable, and innovative products and services that fulfill market needs.

The Ocean Innovation Challenge 2022 is specifically targeting firms that wish to export their products and/or services, as well as those using new technologies or solutions to foster the long-term sustainability of the Blue Economy in Barbados. It is looking for innovative Barbadian businesses to create new products and services, improve their processes and scale their commercial models. They should employ cutting-edge technologies and should generally contribute to the sustainable management of oceans and coastal resources as the basis for livelihoods, food security and economic development of Barbados.

Priority will be given to companies innovating and utilizing leading technology around the national challenges or priority areas of Barbados' Blue economy. These include fisheries, mariculture development, marine biotechnology, waste management, data capture, and energy generation.

Chief Executive Officer of Export Barbados (BIDC), Mark Hill, remarked, "What may be considered a perennial problem may actually be a profitable business waiting for the right innovation and entrepreneurial lenses to bring it to market. We are excited to support any such initiatives."

The Blue Economy has been widely acknowledged as a source of economic wealth and diversification, as this sector spans a range of industries that are tied to the sea, from tourism to shipping, fisheries, energy generation, marine biotechnology, and much more. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) had projected a doubling of the ocean economy from 2010 to 2030, to reach USD$3 trillion and employ 40 million people. For the Caribbean, there is an expectation that a new approach to the Blue Economy will facilitate a sustainable path towards economic growth, as there is an abundance of maritime resources within the region.

From sargassum to biofuels, from algae to cosmetics, from fish scale to fashion – what might appear in the first instance to be a nuisance or waste may well be Barbados' next thriving export product or service.

Interested persons can find the full details of the Call for Proposals at the website www.innovatebarbados.com, as well as on Compete Caribbean's website at www.competecaribbean.org.



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SOURCE: CMC — St Lucia says it is implementing a project with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), that will position the island's honey in specific overseas markets through the development of a cluster model.

Export Saint Lucia said with the funding from the IDB's Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), it is in the process of implementing the Bee City Honey Cluster Project.

Bee City seeks to increase the competitiveness of stakeholders within the sector, build the capacity of local stakeholders in the beekeeping industry and encourage the entrance of new members to drive and expand apiculture.

Consultant Melvin Edwards, has been engaged to develop a three-year strategic plan for the operations of beekeeper groups participating in the Bee City Honey Cluster.

The authorities said that during his consultancy, Edwards will also develop and facilitate training workshops and provide instruction in governance and cooperative management to the beekeeping cluster and industry stakeholders.

"Like other IDB Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility Projects, Bee City will contribute to an improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of participants. The programme is also expected to result in an increase in the production of honey, and the number of beekeepers and apiaries on the island."

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"St Lucia's honey industry is brimming with export potential. As a trade promotion agency, Export Saint Lucia understands first-hand that the entrance of local honey to international, niche markets will result in increased economic prosperity at home.

"The strategic plan being developed will be in tune with the overall plan of the Government for the sector's development. The work in cooperative governance and management will assist in the proper maintenance of current and future cooperatives and groups," she said, noting that Edward's consultancy will take place over a four-month period.

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Environment 4 min read

The Blue Economy: An opportunity to increase the capacity in Barbados

Loop News | September 22, 2022 04:18 PM ET



Barbados' maritime space is over 424 times bigger than its land space, covering 183,436 km2 and representing an opportunity that must be utilised in a sustainable way to advance the economic interest of the country, while at the same time protecting the environment. Recently, new and more potent threats have emerged related to climate change and the ferocity of its consequences, including the influx of sargassum seaweed on many of the island's beaches.

Blue Economy Opportunity in Barbados

On a global scale, ocean potential also known as blue economy (BE) should not be underestimated. Covering over 71 per cent of the Earth's surface, the ocean is responsible for 80 per cent of global trade and it is estimated that it concentrates 50 times more carbon than the atmosphere (around 2bn tonnes of CO2 per year). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) the contribution of the ocean economy to global value-added has recently been estimated in a $1.5 trillion annually contribution in value-added to the overall economy and this number could reach $3 trillion by 2030.

How to Think in Blue

An ocean-based approach to development not only offers a sustainable opportunity to exploit marine and coastal resources, but also an inclusive strategy to tackle some of the key challenges related to high unemployment, food security, poverty and resilience to climate change. Some aspects of the blue economy have traditionally been part of the nation's socio-economic landscape, which could include for example tourism activities, fishing, seaport services and others. However, the blue economy as an economic sector remains far from achieving its full potential. This has reinforced the need to think blue.

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The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), a partnership between the UK Foreign Commonwealth Development Office, Global Affairs Canada, Caribbean Development Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, has been assisting the Barbados Ministry of Environment and National Beautification, and Green and Blue Economy (MENB), through a technical cooperation to develop a Strategic Roadmap, seeking to strengthen the institutional framework to support the growth of the relevant blue economy sectors.

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What is the size of Barbados' maritime space compared to its land space?

- 424 times smaller
- 424 times bigger
- The same size
- Not mentioned

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As an integral part of the capacity building strategy included in the roadmap, a professional skills development programme was designed for public sector officials, that aims at supporting the coordination capacities of the MENB in its role of leading the national BE growth and development agenda.

The first cohort of 33 public officials attending the two core courses included key staff in MENB, as well as other planning and regulatory authorities across the public service with shared interest in the Blue Economy sphere.

The program builds on the findings and recommendations of the Blue Economy Institutional Capacity Assessment conducted in March 2021, which identified three overarching priorities:

1) Enhancing intra-agency coordination capacities,

2) Implementing the Blue Economy policy, and

3) Supporting the execution of the Blue Economy roadmap.

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The program's five courses – two core courses and three electives - introduce the Blue Economy main topics, ranging from Marine Spatial Planning theory and practice to communicating the health and wellbeing benefits of Blue Economy approaches and Natural Capital and Blue Economy financing. They also provide an overview of the interdependencies it seeks to promote including economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas. The post-completion surveys from the participants revealed promising preliminary results as perceived increase on the participant's knowledge on the topics delivered was of 25 per cent.

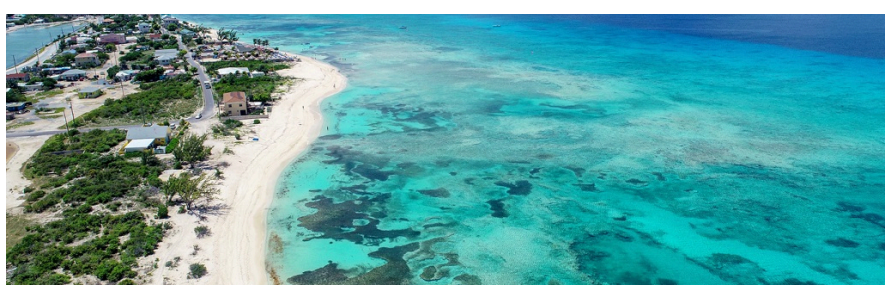
While the three elective courses of the program's first edition, namely, Sustainable Ocean Finance, Marine Protected Area (MPA) Management, and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)) will be delivered in September-October 2022, the Government of Barbados will seek to enlarge the reach of future cohorts to the civil society at large, including private sector and NGOs. It is also envisioned by the IDB that this program will be further delivered to various interest groups in other Caribbean islands, particularly those where the blue economy is part of the priority industries to be developed further.

Small Island States like Barbados have traditionally faced challenges related to their limited economic diversification, fiscal fragility and their exposure to the effects of global warming such as hurricanes, sea level rise and increasing temperatures. The persistent nature of a lingering recession demand that governments be more strategic in its programs and policies, including those affecting ocean resources and its management. The Blue Economy is indeed an opportunity to increase the capacity in Barbados, and CCPF will continue providing support to Barbados and other Caribbean countries to spark a sustainable and inclusive recovery given the vast coastal and marine space in the region.

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The urgency of transforming Caribbean tourism

written by Barbados Today • Updated by Desmond Brown • 27/09/2020 • 4 min read • A+A-



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By Therese Turner-Jones

World Tourism Day, celebrated on Sept. 27, comes at a sobering time for the Caribbean. Travel is unlikely to return to normalcy for another year, or even well into 2022. We need to make this a transformational moment to emerge from the pandemic stronger. We must move away from being merely tourist dependent. We need to harness the industry to make our islands safer, greener and more resilient.

Tourism has had a big but narrow economic impact. Big in that it is our main economic sustenance. Pre-pandemic it accounted for between 34 percent and 48 percent of GDP in The Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica. Aruba, Antigua and Barbuda and The Bahamas are the three most tourist-dependent economies in the world. Fourteen of the 15 most tourism dependent nations in the Americas are in the Caribbean.

But the impact is also narrow. Many tourists came in cruise ships and stayed for short periods. Or they stayed in

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We can do much more, however, to make the experience for tourists richer, to the benefit of more Caribbean citizens.

Of course, in the short term, we must continue to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, by supporting individuals who have lost their incomes and protecting our productive assets so we can bounce back quickly. We need to have our hotels and restaurants ready when the visitors return. The staff who have been laid off will need training to engage our visitors in a different way.

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We also need to be smart in how we reopen. Many small island states flattened and even crushed the infection curve through social distancing measures and travel restrictions, at a big cost for our citizens, so countries are looking to reopen. This carries risks. Cases spiked in The Bahamas in July, when restrictions were relaxed. We need to base our reopening decisions on the prevalence of the virus in each source country and manage risks by insisting on either pre-testing before arrival or on-site testing upon arrival. Barbados has been particularly strong in implementing these risk management techniques.

At the same time, we can begin working on a new kind of tourism, more attuned to the future and to the needs of our island economies.

Indeed, **environmental sustainability** has to underpin any actions as we reinvent the sector. This is the lesson of Hurricane Dorian and so many others. The Galapagos Islands are looking to enhance the local sustainability of tourism by balancing ocean resources and human needs. This includes lengthening the stays of tourists to reduce the number of arrivals, producing more food locally and in sustainable ways, housing visitors in hotels that use renewable energy sources, and using boats that are powered by non-carbon fuels, among other measures.

A second key to the future of tourism is making it a much **richer experience** than beach trips. According to a consumer research by Euromonitor in 2019, four out of five American visitors would be interested in culture-based tourism. Visitors want to learn and interact more with local communities. They are eager to try local foods and enjoy adventures that become stories they can tell friends upon their return. Getting more visitors in communities generates new revenue sources for local business, enhances culture, community identity and pride. The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility has worked with the Caribbean Tourism Organization to develop a toolkit for community-based tourism that appeals to the digitally-savvy, adventure-seeker by providing easier access to authentic experiences.

An example of this kind of eco-tourist experience is happening at Walkers Reserve in Barbados, where the regeneration of the sand quarry aims will create recreational, sustainable agriculture, commercial and tourism opportunities for surrounding communities. Similarly, at Barbados' Coco Hill Forest, visitors learn about regenerative agriculture and organic farming in hiking treks, group planting activities and farm-to-table dining.

The Caribbean has natural resources for nature-based as well as culture-based solutions – scuba diving in the reefs, shark diving in The Bahamas, exploring the rich biodiversity of the forests in Trinidad and Tobago, to cite a few examples.

Several initiatives are looking to help make these riches more locally relevant. IDB Lab, in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organization, has launched a challenge to support innovative technologies to bring new life to the tourism sector in 15 countries in Central America and the Caribbean. We have convened a movement to gather "moonshot" ideas that will transform the Caribbean, including for tourism.

I am confident these will be the seeds that add to an ecosystem of innovation and creativity that has marked our cultures. We have so much to offer to visitors and to the world. Let's turn this pandemic into an opportunity.

Therese Turner-Jones is manager of the Caribbean department for the Inter-American Development Bank.

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LOCAL NEWS • NEWS • TOURISM • TRAVEL

World Tourism Day 2020 Message by Neil Walters, Acting S-G CTO

written by Barbados Today • Updated by Desmond Brown • 27/09/2020 • 3 min read • • A+A-



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The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the region's tourism development agency, joins the global community in celebrating World Tourism Day 2020 under the theme, "Tourism and Rural Development".

This year's international day of observation comes at a time when the global tourism industry is facing a crisis of historic proportion due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the true impact of the pandemic may not be known for some time.

However, the immediate impact on our region is very evident. Having begun 2020 on course for a new record in tourist arrivals, the closure of airports in March was followed by virtually no travel to the Caribbean in April and May. The result was a 57 per cent decline in arrivals between January and June.

This translates into an estimated 50 per cent to 60 per cent fall in visitor spend, which can be seen directly in the form of closed tourism businesses, and across the economic spectrum in the form of significantly reduced revenues in both the public and private sectors.

In addition, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that almost half a million Caribbean tourism workers face the prospect of job losses, reductions in working hours, and loss of incomes as a result of the pandemic.

Several Caribbean countries are considered among the most vulnerable by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as international tourism revenues account for the majority of total exports in these states. It also goes without saying that women, youth, and workers in the informal economy have been, and will be, among the hardest hit.

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The CTO has recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic forces us to rethink our approach to tourism and to forge closer alignment of tourism and health functions. We also recognised that we need to ensure that on the restart of the sector, the benefits of tourism activity accrue as quickly as possible to all facets of our societies. This means that while the traditional players in tourism restart, we also need to help those businesses which are often away from the coast and beaches, in our rural areas.

To this end, the organisation has forged ahead in its collaboration with the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) which will be funding community-based tourism projects in some rural areas in Caribbean countries. The lessons learnt can be used as a blueprint to encourage similar projects across the region and be a catalyst for income generation and development in our rural communities.

Some of the characteristics of rural communities such as population demographics, lower income levels and relatively limited access to technology and infrastructure lead to an increased vulnerability in such areas, to the impacts of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism can work hand in hand with other economic sectors in the Caribbean such as agriculture, transportation and culture to empower rural communities.

Bringing people together in such an environment of solidarity and trust, advances the cooperation and collaboration needed to help us move beyond the pandemic. By providing a lifeline to the vulnerable in our societies, we reduce the tug on social services and further enhance the capacity of Caribbean people to play a leading role in their own development. Since the greatest resource in the Caribbean is our people, any investment will result in benefits for generations to come.

While we continue to work diligently on ensuring a safe and healthy environment for our visitors and locals alike, let us contemplate the opportunity that this pandemic affords us to tweak our tourism sector, and indeed all other sectors of our economies, to reach a level of sustainability that is resistant to crisis.

We urge our Caribbean people to join the world tourism community in rebuilding this sector and ensuring that starting now, the benefits of tourism consistently spread beyond the traditional coastal and urban bailiwick to areas of our countries often overlooked, but which can be positioned to sustainably diversify the already rich treasures awaiting visitors to our shores.

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WORLD TOURISM DAY MESSAGE FROM CARIBBEAN HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

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WORLD TOURISM DAY MESSAGE FROM CARIBBEAN HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

By Patricia Affonso-Dass

President, Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association

The Caribbean's tourism sector is uniquely important to economic and social life in the region, and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) will indeed be celebrating World Tourism Day 2018 when it is launched in Budapest, Hungary on September 27.

Apart from the importance of tourism to sustainable development, this World Tourism Day highlights the importance of digital technologies to the sector.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also hails the power of innovation to boost growth for a more sustainable and responsible tourism sector.

Competing, as we do, in a global market, we in the Caribbean are leveraging digital technology to attract visitors and keep them coming, and also transferring those skills to our wider economy.

Digital technology helps us to customize our product, so that discerning travelers can decide what they want to do and what they want to experience.

The internet has fostered our economic growth through tourism by shortening the trip planning and purchase process, bridging the gap between dreams and the decision to book, allowing small operators to show their wares and answer questions, and allowing online bookings and follow-up.

Data-driven marketing and promotion allow suppliers to understand guest preferences so travelers can connect with our people and our destinations even before they land on our shores.

CHTA members are investing heavily in digital technology and we look forward to the upcoming launch of *The Rhythm Never Stops* marketing campaign as we, along with our partners in the public

As the preeminent private sector travel and tourism association in the Caribbean, we will continue to lead the search for innovative ways to market our destinations and to improve the product and the profitability of the industry.

We welcome World Tourism Day with vibrant Caribbean enthusiasm and pledge our region's support for, and involvement in, technological innovation.
About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 50 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 32 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean's future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether navigating new worlds like social media, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most.

For further information, visit www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com.

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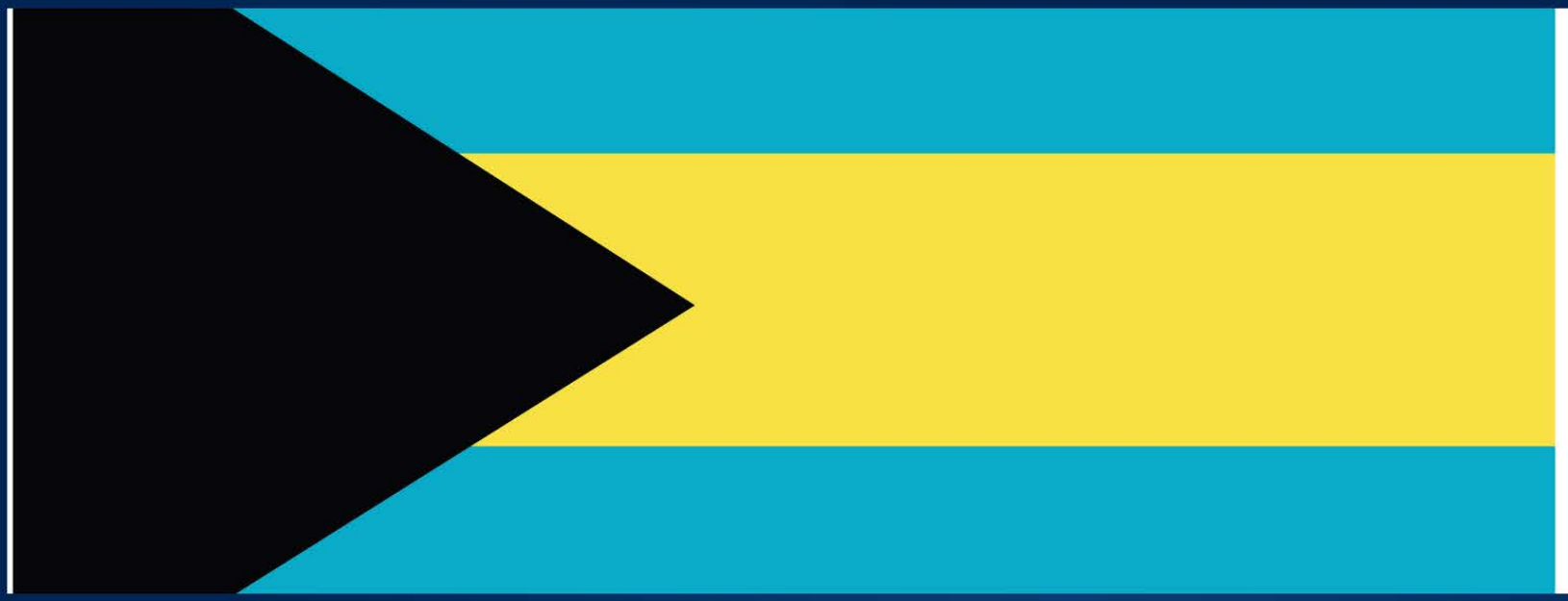
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Community Based Tourism Initiative for The Bahamas

Published on January 12, 2020 | |

The Bahamas Community Based Tourism initiative (CBT) encourages collaborative participation by local communities in Andros in the delivery and development of tourism products and services that add value to the tourism experience while managing the natural resources responsibly to preserve the Island's biodiversity, natural eco-systems, cultural norms and traditions. International agencies partnering in this initiative include Compete Caribbean, Canadian Government, UK Aid and the Inter-American Development Bank as the facilitating agency. The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism is coordinator of this Pilot Project in The Bahamas.

The CBT Initiative was introduced to The Bahamas by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility comprising the Caribbean Tourism Organization, Inter-American Development Bank, UK Aid, Caribbean Development Bank and the Government of Canada. The initiative's objective is to create equity and balance in the three sustainability pillars (socio-economic, cultural and environmental) on the island of Andros and promote Andros as a successful, year-round sustainable and nature-based tourism destination that can provide sustainable livelihoods for its communities. The Project's activities will centre around capacity building, marketing and product development to increase business development and employment of fishing, birding, soft adventure, eco- tourism guides and promote conservation efforts on Andros. The CBT benefits would see Andros branded as a the premier eco-tourism and nature-based tourism destination in The Bahamas, raising its profile in the market place and creating sustainable livelihoods for Androsians. The success of this initiative will enable the Ministry of Tourism to engage other Bahamas destinations in CBT initiatives with a private-sector led, multi-stakeholder approach to tourism development and management, with this initiative serving as a model for future tourism planning, CBT development and implementation. The project launched in the latter half of 2018 with the assignment in 2019 of a Cluster Facilitator charged with preparation of the Cluster Development Plan. The project is intended to attract up to $400,000 in grants from international funding agencies with the Cluster contributing approximately $248,000 in cash and in-kind contributions in a private-sector led presentation to an Investment Panel on 5 February 2021. To date 67 firms, partners and supporting agencies are members of the Cluster, 56 of which are core businesses. If successful, a Cluster Manager will be hired to implement the plan over a two-year timeline. Initiatives completed under the CBT Initiative include the following: 1a) Andros Cluster Development Plan; 1b) Andros Asset Inventory 1c) Cluster Membership 2a) Terms of Reference - Cluster Manager; 2b) Cluster Implementation Plan & Budget 3a) Bye-Laws and Articles of the Cluster for Cooperative Formation 3b) Procurement Plan The North and Central Andros Pilot Project will generate additional economic benefits in local communities by creating linkages between Andros' cultural and environmental and agro-tourism sectors and incorporate local activities such as handicraft and basket weaving, woodwork, nature guiding, environmental services, heritage, fishing, birding, diving medicinal bush medicine tours, culinary and other authentic Bahamian products into the visitor experience. The project will showcase Andros' natural attractions such as the Andros West Side National Park, one of the largest Marine Protected Areas in the region; trails to heritage sites and naturally occurring features such as the Blue Holes National Park ; Andros' spectacular interwoven underwater cavern system; dives to the world's third largest barrier reef, just offshore; sightings of migrating and endemic birds, and promotion of its signature, Cultural, Crab, Arts and Culinary festivals. The eco-sporting activities of diving, snorkeling, flatsfishing, caving, camping, kayaking, birding and hiking in Andros' pristine ecological setting are expected to attract nature enthusiasts, outdoor sportsmen, birders and flats anglers, thus creating a dynamic ecotourism and nature-based tourism industry and generating significant improvements to the socio-economic standard of the local communities of Andros. The project will strengthen niche market sectors and the development of a tour guide curriculum will enhance knowledge and skill set. Service providers will be required to possess Bahamahost and Health Safety Certifications with further formalization of the industry through business compliance and governance mechanisms. The formalization of the Cluster into a legal entity, or Cooperative, by end of year one will enable stakeholders to benefit from general and specialist workshops and technical support in digital marketing, improved accountability and business reporting, product development, packaging, heritage interpretation and sustainability. The Ministry of Tourism will further build industry resilience through sponsored employee training in health and safety COVID-29 protocols, corporate governance, marketing, disaster risk and business management. A branded product, improved product and service quality and delivery, enhanced market access and social media presence should enable the Cluster to generate $45.6 million in sales, triple the number of persons trained in guiding, increase the number of women-owned firms by 60% and employment by more than 150% over a three year period Presentation of the Cluster Development Plan, by a core Cluster stakeholder to an Investment Panel of international funding agencies, will take place on 5 February, 2021. If successful, the Cluster's ten (10) public, private and NGO Supporting Agencies (Ministry

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Community Based Tourism Cluster Project and a Cluster Manager will be hired to execute the Plan. The Cluster Manager along with Supporting Agencies would then implement mechanisms to encourage local firms and entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth, to get involved in the Cluster.



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PROJECT START DATE

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PROJECT END DATE

COUNTRIES

Bahamas

Actors involved

Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)

LEAD

REGIONS

Latin America/Caribbean

SECTORS

Environmental Services | Tourism | Education

PROGRAMMES:

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proposals of its Blue Tech Challenge in the Caribbean

March 04, 2019

The **IDB Group** through its **IDB Lab**, Natural Capital Lab, Sustainable Islands Platform, and in alliance with the **Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility**, is pleased to announce that, five proposals were selected to initiate project design under the **Blue Tech Challenge** in the following countries: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Haiti and St. Lucia.

The Blue-Tech Challenge, which was launched in September 2018 and closed for applicants on November 30th, 2018, aimed to identify business models that apply new technologies or solutions to foster long-term sustainability of the ocean economy in 14 target countries: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Fifty applications were submitted by persons or groups in 12 of the 14 target countries, with proposals focusing on a range of topics--such as recycling,

pollution, sargassum reuse, marine exploration, clean energy, and coral restoration, among others. The applications were evaluated by criteria such as degree of innovation, degree of social and environmental impact, scalability potential, financial sustainability, and viability of execution. An internal due diligence process to evaluate the capacity of the applicant entities was conducted by IDB specialists, and members of a Blue-Tech Advisory Panel from the University of West Indies, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), MIT Media Lab, National Geographic, Surfing Tsunamis, Althelia Ocean Fund, and **IDB Invest** reviewed the applications.

The selected entities will initiate project design for their financing and/or technical assistance proposals to pilot their blue economy model in one of the 5 mentioned countries. These selected entities are now part of the IDBG network of global innovators working in the region and poised to exchange knowledge, expertise, best practices, and with ample opportunities to participate in IDBG's relevant regional networking events.

Below are brief descriptions of the proposals selected:

Bahamas
Applicant Entity: Clean Marine Group Limited
Clean Marine's "MARPOL1 Port Reception Facility" in Freeport, Grand Bahama utilizes new and innovative patented technology to break oil and water emulsions and process contaminated water. With a capacity to process in excess of 50 million gallons of waste from cruise ships and other commercial vessels every year, the facility will now be expanded to receive up to 200 million gallons per annum.

1 MARPOL stands for the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.

Barbados
Applicant Entity: Ten Habitat Inc.
"Totally Traceable Tuna: Technology & Blockchain Enhancement of the Barbados Tuna Supply Chain for Export" aims to improve traceability of the tuna supply chain and enhance product quality with advanced testing. It will employ a combination of technologies which include portable histamine testing, electronic radio-frequency (RFID) tags, quick response (QR) code tags, and scanning devices to develop better handling methods and collect information about the journey of a tuna at various points along the supply chain.

Belize
Applicant Entity: Oceana
"Market-based Incentives for Sustainable Fishing" connect Belizean fisherfolk with buyers throughout the country searching for sustainable seafood products through a virtual marketplace and a mobile application.

Haiti
Applicant Entities: Environmental Cleaning Solutions S.A. and Pan American Development Foundation
"Ayiti Blue Ocean Plastics Solution" aims to collect, recycle and transform ocean-bound plastics into high-value synthetic lumber by combining technology (drone mapping, fingerprint identification, and lumber production) and community mobilization. It will turn single-use ocean-bound plastics into a value-added commodity after discarded.

St. Lucia
Applicant Entity: Algas Organics
"Convert Sargassum Seaweed from Problem to Industry" will scale up a proprietary extraction technology/process, which converts sargassum seaweed into world class organic bio-fertilizer for export to the global market.

About the IDB

The Inter-American Development Bank is dedicated to improving lives. Founded in 1959, the IDB is the main source of long-term financing for the economic, social and institutional development of Latin America and the Caribbean. The IDB also conducts advanced research and provides policy advice, technical assistance and training to public and private sector clients in the region.

About IDB Lab

IDB Lab is the innovation laboratory of the IDB Group. It mobilizes financing, knowledge, and connections to catalyze innovation for inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

IDB Lab believes innovation is a powerful tool that can transform the Latin American and Caribbean region, providing unprecedented opportunities to

populations that are vulnerable due to economic, social, or environmental factors.

About Compete Caribbean

The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) is an innovation and partnership facility that delivers innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, increase productivity, and foster innovation and competitiveness in 13 countries across the Caribbean region. CCPF is a partnership between the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Kingdom´s Department for International Development (DFID), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Government of Canada.

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https://www.thenassauguardian.com/business/idb-report-reveals-small-businesses-continue-to-struggle-to-find-funding/article_f9a50b80-6c7e-5df6-a759-27c4dcdd3da1.html

IDB report reveals small businesses continue to struggle to find funding

By Chester Robards
Aug 9, 2022



excerpt

By The Nassau Guardian

A new Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) report suggests having The Bahamas' credit bureau offer more businesses credit reports in order to improve the success of small businesses in attaining funding, which the report contends is an extremely burdensome venture for businesses in The Bahamas.

The report, entitled "Finance for Firms: Options for Improving Access and Inclusion", explains that a 2020 survey by Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, a private sector development program, found that 99 percent of firms said they would not apply for a bank loan or line of credit.

"Only 12 percent of these firms believed that they had sufficient capital," the report states.

"The remainder did not apply for credit for several reasons, including collateral requirements (11 percent), unfavorable interest rates (13 percent), and complex application procedures (11 percent).

"Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are particularly vulnerable to these concerns, because they are less likely to have a dedicated team or person to handle complex loan applications (which may also include know your costumer requirements), more likely to be asset-light (especially in an economy that is service-oriented), and more likely to be seen as risky and thus warrant higher interest rates."

The report suggests that to cut through these concerns, the newly established credit bureau could be made to develop credit reports for these kinds of businesses in order to improve their chances of being favored for financing.

"Operationalizing the credit bureau to offer business credit reports would go a long way to reducing collateral requirements, decreasing approved interest rates, and broadly increasing the confidence of approval for at least some MSMEs," the report said.

"However, The Bahamas' only credit bureau offers credit reports for businesses that have or had a credit facility with a partner institute as recently as April 2018. Therefore, this narrow requirement may limit the scope of businesses that need financing but only have substantial, creditworthy relationships with utility companies, contracts with suppliers, and/or long-term rental agreements."

The report paints a grim picture of access to credit for MSMEs in The Bahamas. It does though credit the actions of the government for attempting to bridge the funding gap through the development of the Access Accelerator/Small Business Development Centre, which helps companies to access financing through government guaranteed loans and grants.

The report reveals that Compete Caribbean's Productivity, Technology, and Innovation in the Caribbean (PROTEqIN) Enterprise Survey found that in 2014, local companies saw access to capital and costs associated with financing as "very severe obstacles" for their business.

"Although the share of credit as a percent of GDP [gross domestic product] has stayed relatively steady for the last five years, access to and the cost of finance, especially during the pandemic, has worsened drastically since 2014," the report said.

"In 2014, 28 percent and 11 percent of Bahamian firms said that access to and the cost of finance were major or very severe obstacles, respectively, according to Compete Caribbean's Productivity, Technology, and Innovation in the Caribbean

(PROTEqIN) Enterprise Survey. By December 2020, these figures almost doubled to 52 percent and 19 percent respectively, according to Compete Caribbean's Innovation Firm Performance and Gender (IFPG) Survey.

"The decrease in the perceived access to and cost of finance is not surprising considering the unique macroeconomic conditions and the fact that domestic banks were broadly tightening their balance sheets in preparations for expected defaults and increase in nonperforming loans,"

It adds that these firms also lack the size and capacity to raise money through the equity markets, and therefore are locked out on that front.

"Beyond debt, MSMEs face difficulties raising funding through equity markets because the Bahamas International Securities Exchange (BISX) expects market capitalization of at least US$1 million or US$400,000 for companies wishing to list equity or debt, respectively. The BISX also requires that firms provide the last three years of audited financial statements."

There have, however, been continued talks of the development of a sort of junior stock market. And firms such as crowdfunding platform ArawakX have stepped in to fill in a portion of the funding gap for small companies.

Op-Ed: The urgency of transforming Caribbean tourism

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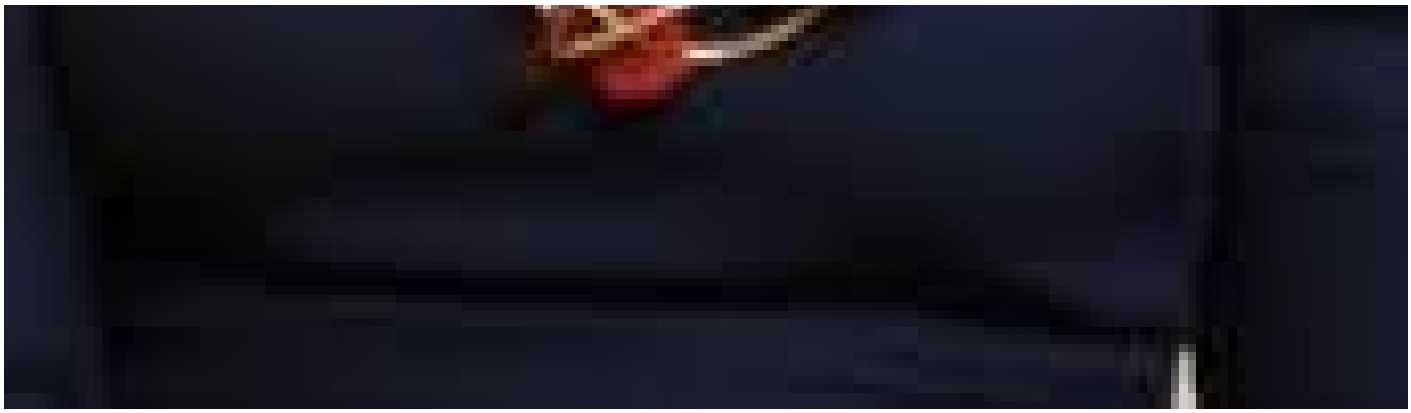
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Therese Turner-Jones.

By Therese Turner-Jones

World Tourism Day, celebrated on Sept. 27, comes at a sobering time for the Caribbean. Travel is unlikely to return to normalcy for another year, or even well into 2022. We need to make this a transformational moment to emerge from the pandemic stronger. We must move away from being merely tourist dependent. We need to harness the industry to make our islands safer, greener and more resilient.

Tourism has had a big but narrow economic impact. Big in that it is our main economic sustenance. Pre-pandemic it accounted for between 34 percent and 48 percent of GDP in The Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica. Aruba, Antigua and Barbuda and The Bahamas are the three most tourist-dependent economies in the world. Fourteen of the 15 most tourism dependent nations in the Americas are in the Caribbean.

But the impact is also narrow. Many tourists came in cruise ships and stayed for short periods. Or they stayed in properties on our beaches to enjoy the warm waters and golden sands. There is nothing wrong with this. Nature has blessed us with coastline beauty we can share with our visitors.

We can do much more, however, to make the experience for tourists richer, to the benefit of more Caribbean citizens.

Of course, in the short term, we must continue to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, by supporting individuals who have lost their incomes and protecting our productive assets so we can bounce back quickly. We need to have our hotels and restaurants ready when the visitors return. The staff who have been laid off will need training to engage our visitors in a different way.

We also need to be smart in how we reopen. Many small island states flattened and even crushed the infection curve through social distancing measures and travel restrictions, at a big cost for our citizens, so countries are looking to reopen. This carries risks. Cases spiked in The Bahamas in July, when restrictions were relaxed. We need to base our reopening decisions on the prevalence of the virus in each source country and manage risks by insisting on either pre-testing before arrival or on-site testing upon arrival. Barbados has been particularly strong in implementing these risk management techniques.

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At the same time, we can begin working on a new kind of tourism, more attuned to the future and to the needs of our island economies.

Indeed, environmental sustainability has to underpin any actions as we reinvent the sector. This is the lesson of Hurricane Dorian and so many others. The Galapagos Islands are looking to enhance the local sustainability of tourism by balancing ocean resources and human needs. This includes lengthening the stays of tourists to reduce the number of arrivals, producing more food locally and in sustainable ways, housing visitors in hotels that use renewable energy sources, and using boats that are powered by non-carbon fuels, among other measures.

A second key to the future of tourism is making it a much richer experience than beach trips. According to a consumer research by Euromonitor in 2019, four out of five American visitors would be interested in culture-based tourism. Visitors want to learn and interact more with local communities. They are eager to try local foods and enjoy adventures that become stories they can tell friends upon their return. Getting more visitors in communities generates new revenue sources for local business, enhances culture, community identity and pride. The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility has worked with the Caribbean Tourism Organization to develop a toolkit for community-based tourism that appeals to the digitally-savvy, adventure-seeker by providing easier access to authentic experiences.

An example of the kind of eco-tourist experience is Barbados' Coco Hill Forest, where visitors learn about regenerative agriculture and organic farming in hiking treks, group planting activities and farm-to-table dining.

The Caribbean has natural resources for nature-based as well as culture-based solutions –scuba diving in the reefs, shark diving in The Bahamas, exploring the rich biodiversity of the forests in Trinidad and Tobago, to cite a few examples.

Several initiatives are looking to help make these riches more locally relevant. IDB Lab, in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organization, has launched a challenge to support innovative technologies to bring new life to the tourism sector in 15 countries in Central America and the Caribbean. We have convened a movement to gather "moonshot" ideas that will transform the Caribbean, including for tourism.

I am confident these will be the seeds that add to an ecosystem of innovation and creativity that has marked our cultures. We have so much to offer to visitors and to the world. Let's turn this pandemic into an opportunity.

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BELIZE

ARTICLES AND PRESS



'Change Dah Story' seeks to stimulate social entrepreneurship in Belize

October 14, 2019 205 0



BELMOPAN, Belize – The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) with its partners in the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) — the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the Caribbean Development Bank and the government of Canada, is conducting a new social innovation challenge in Belize known as 'Change Dah Story'.

Change Dah Story, which is also supported by the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE) and the department of youth services, was launched on October 10 at the Best Western Plus Belize Biltmore Plaza in Belize City and seeks to support the development of innovative technology solutions to solve pressing social and environmental problems impacting vulnerable youth in Belize, including crime and violence.

The launch marked the start of a call for proposals that are open to individuals and organizations including students, professionals, entrepreneurs, private-sector companies, academia, NGOs, community groups and the wider Belizean populace, including citizens living abroad and foreigners with legal residence in Belize. Using innovation and social entrepreneurship as transformative tools, the challenge will engage

these potential solvers to harness their collective knowledge, experience, and creativity to generate innovative business ideas and new business models.

"Innovation and digital technology are transforming economies and societies in profound ways. We hope that through this challenge and the successful implementation of the business models developed, that vulnerable youth and their communities across the country will be empowered to transcend barriers and to contribute more effectively in a digital world to the social and economic development of Belize", says Dr Cassandra T. Rogers, IDB's country representative in Belize.

The challenge is the first iteration of a social innovation lab methodology that has been used by the IDB in the region and is now being piloted in Belize under the theme 'Ideas for Change' by the CCPF in collaboration with the IDB's country office in Belize.

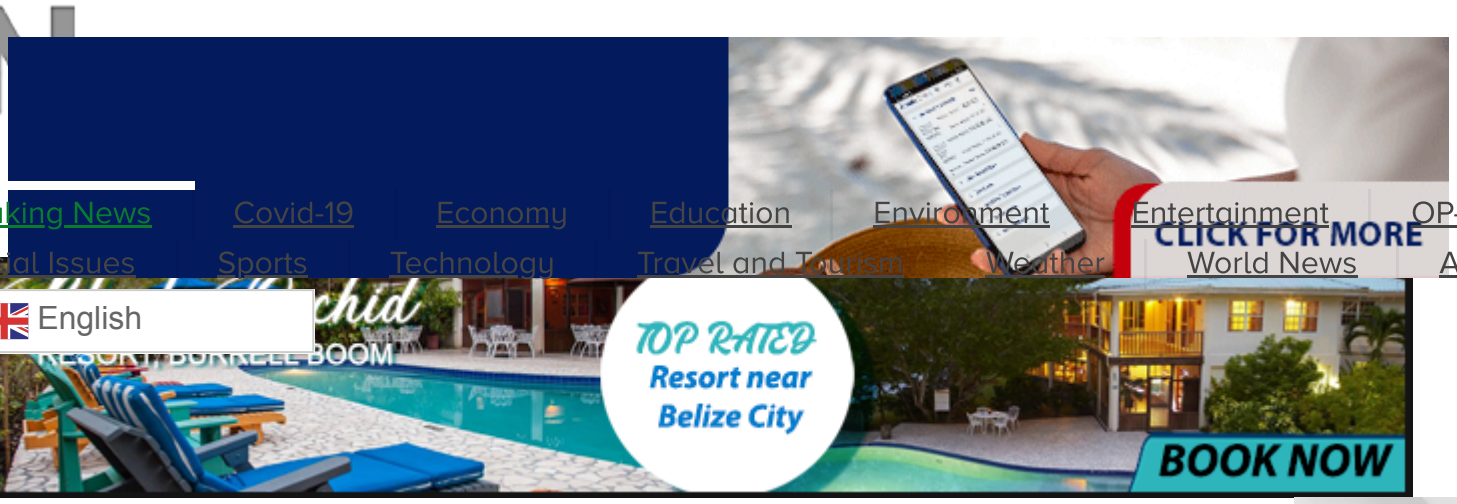
"With this approach, social problems are perceived as opportunities that can provide the impetus for creative and entrepreneurial solutions," says Dr Sylvia Dohnert, executive director of the CCPF and private sector development lead specialist at the IDB.

"Belize was chosen as the locus of this pilot due to its entrepreneurial dynamism and creativity. At the same time, social problems that Belize experiences are similar to those of other countries in the Caribbean and even in the Central American region, which creates conditions for potential scalability of such solutions," she said.

Proposals can be submitted in one or more of four pre-identified categories: education, recreation, parenting and employment, and up to three winning proposals will be selected to receive US$10,000 each in training, mentoring and initial funding to put their ideas and prototypes into work.

The deadline for submission is December 1, 2019. For more information and/or to submit a proposal, please visit www.iadb.org/changedahstory.

The launch event coincides with the celebration of the IDB's 60th anniversary. Belize joined the IDB in 1992 and this year marks the country's 27th year as a bank shareholder.



Belize and Inter-American Development Bank partner to host digital skills Bootcamp

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Views: 88
Posted: Monday, June 7, 2021. 10:28 am CST.

By Zoila Palma: The Government of Belize, through the Economic Development Council, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) – funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the Caribbean Development Bank, and the Government of Canada has announced a partnership with Le Wagon to launch a data analysis training Bootcamp.

Le Wagon is a world-leading coding school and the boot camp is a part-time training to be delivered over 14 weeks.









The training will equip students with the requisite skills for future-fit professions across the globe.

Le Wagon's peer-to-peer approach and immersive, hands-on learning methods build necessary soft and digital technology skills that employers increasingly require and the new world of work.

The program will distribute a limited number of scholarships to any interested Belizean citizen over the age of 18, and there are no prerequisites.

Interested persons must apply through the websitehttps://info.lewagon.com/belize-bootcamp and undergo a selection process.

The partnership reflects the commitment to develop Belizean talent via internationally recognized and successful education models that bolster key competitive 21st-century skills.

With a steadfast focus on driving the employability of young people in Belize, the boot camp will enable students to secure roles at tech and digital companies.

The boot camp will run from July 26th to October 30th, 2021.

The deadline for applications is July 17th.

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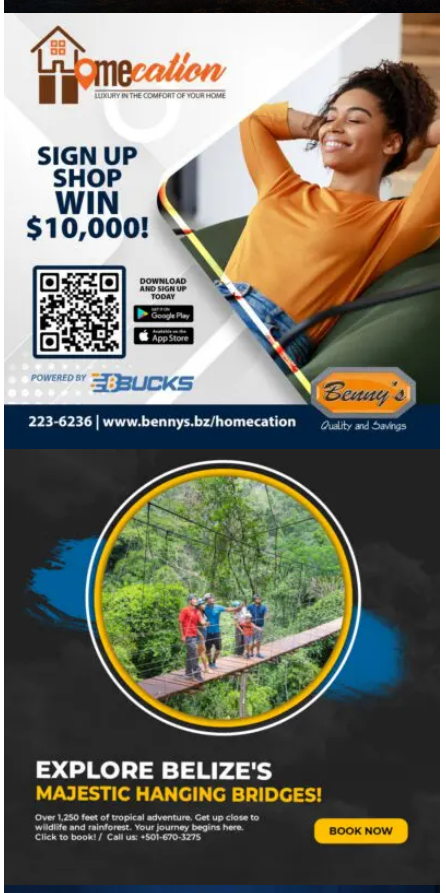
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Innovation 2 min read

Belize to tackle digital skills gaps

CMC | June 8, 2021 02:27 PM ET



The Belize government Monday announced that it had entered into an agreement with the London-based Le Wagon, a world-leading coding school, to launch a data analysis training boot camp targeting young people here.

The government said that the agreement had been reached in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), United Kingdom government-funded Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), the Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank and the government of Canada.

"This boot camp is a part-time training to be delivered over 14 weeks and will equip students with the requisite skills to future-fit professions across the globe. Le Wagon's peer-to-peer approach and immersive, hands-on learning methods build necessary soft and digital technical skills that employers increasingly require and the new world of work," the government said in a statement.

It said that the programme would give each student a human and social adventure with mutual aid between learners, constant exchanges with the 10,000 alumni across 40 campuses worldwide and a vast number of events organized within the host country's tech ecosystem.

It said the programme will distribute a limited number of scholarships to any interested Belizean citizen over the age of 18, and there are no prerequisites.

"The partnership reflects the commitment to develop Belizean talent via internationally recognised and successful education models that bolster key competitive 21-century skills. With a steadfast focus on driving the employability of young people in Belize, the boot camp will enable students to secure roles at tech and digital companies," the statement said, adding that the boot camp will run from July 26 to October 30.

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The San Pedro Sun

Arts & Culture Education

IDB and Compete Caribbean's 'Change Dah Story' Social Innovation Challenge to fund three Belizean projects

Thursday, June 11th, 2020

Three Belizean initiatives to benefit the future of vulnerable youth will receive up to US$10,000 each to accomplish their plans and turn them into practical business models. The winners were among the 15 teams that participated in the 'Change Dah Story Social Innovation Challenge,' commissioned by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Compete Caribbean

Partnership Facility along with its partners. The challenge victors were announced via a virtual event on Compete Caribbean Facebook page on Saturday, June 6th, when all teams pitched their projects. The three teams selected are Animation Graphic Design Learning Center, Full Circle Belize, and Tribz.Eco/Kiyokayo Compass Center.

At 4PM on Saturday, each team had the opportunity to give their presentations virtually via the live broadcasting pitch hosted by an IDB representative. Judging each project was a panel of judges comprised of Dr. Cassandra Rogers – Belize Country Representative – InterAmerican Development Bank, Dr. Leroy Almendarez – Chief Executive Officer – Beltraide, Virgilio Murillo – Chief Executive Officer – Kolbe Foundation of the Belize Central Prison, Alisson Brown-Mackenzie – Director – Department of Youth Services, and Sonia Ceballos – Chief Technology Officer – Belize Telemedia Limited. The winning projects that captured the approval of the judges and promise to improve the future of the many Belizeans who feel hopeless and are becoming vulnerable to criminal activities.



One of the winners, Animation Graphic Design Learning Center, is an animation design social business model aiming to train young Belizeans on how to develop animated graphic content that generates income in both local and foreign export markets.

Full Circle Belize has an economical approach. It is an economic, social business model, which trains youth on how to operate a social and eco-friendly business that sells products. Some of these products would be furniture made entirely from recycled plastic.

Tribz.Eco/Kiyokayo Compass Center is a conservation-focused social business initiative aiming to build the capacities of vulnerable Belizean youth in Integrative Terrestrial Conservation and Exploration and Biodiversity Research of protected areas in the country.

Prior to the announcement of the three winners, the audience watching the live streaming of the event was given the opportunity to select their favorite pitch. The proposal from Ting Pay, a project focused on innovation, creativity, and customer-centricity, garnered 1,084 votes, winning the People's Choice Award. They were awarded US$500, and they will also count with technical support.

The social innovation challenge sought to identify ideas and models related to issues of crime and violence in Belize and find a way to change their 'story.' The winning teams are expected to accomplish this goal with the funds awarded and the technical support the teams will count with.

The IDB announced this competition in October 2019. They partnered with Compete Caribbean, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the Caribbean Development Bank, and the Government of Canada – in partnership with the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (Beltraide), and the Belize Department of Youth Services. A total of 77 proposals were received following the launching of the project via an online portal. After a thorough deliberation by panelists that utilized predefined criteria, 15 proposals were short-listed to participate in a four-week virtual Digital Boot camp that aimed at helping the finalists strengthen their social innovation business models and pitching skills.

The finalists shared social innovation experiences that inspired them and allowed them to better understand the limitations undermining youth's fulfilment of their dreams in Belize. As time went by, the judges engaged in a two-part evaluation process to determine the feasibility of the initiatives in terms of innovation, social impact, and financial sustainability. Proposals submitted and evaluated prior to the pitch weighted 60% of the total score, and the live pitch session weighted 40%.

For more information about the three winners of the Change Dah Story Social Innovation Challenge, visit www.iadb.org/changedahstory. *The San Pedro Sun* congratulates the winners and wishes them the best in their endeavours.

Related Articles

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- IDB helps Belizean schools affected by COVID-19 closures
- Belize to receive support from Japan Special Fund, the IDB and SECOMISCA to confront the health emergency
- IDB Lab launches innovation challenge to revitalize tourism sector in 15 countries

This pilot project is being funded by Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility and led by the Belize Sugar Industries Ltd of the A.S.R. Group, in partnership with a number of sugarcane associations and local financial institutions. RIPE.IO is an innovative company which specializes in block chain solutions in agriculture and they have provided the design services pro bono for this project. President Phil Harris of RIPE.IO breaks down how it will work.

Phil Harris, President & Co-founder, RIPE I.O

"It has been now to allow for farmer association and the lender and agri-service input provider to go through the use of the platform to replace a physical visit by a person to a branch; a stamp on a piece paper; a signature and that constant follow-ups and back and forth of visits, appointments and interviews. Now we are taking all of that manual and physical movement of paper and we are digitizing it. So that now a farmer can come on the platform and upload a basic set of documentation alongside the load application; like a utility bill to confirm ID; a sugar license for an association; and this information is shared over the platform to the lenders so that we can expedite that process over the platform so that the process and review of the document happens much faster and very importantly that the documents are complete; and very importantly we are putting the farmer in front of this. This is called an RFID. The idea is that this particular RFID tag will be attached to a truck and we will track the truck through the mill as a part of the traceability program and the second phase we will be able to track the sugarcane from the seed to the field to the mill and that will take us into the summer or fall of 2022. So we will know when the truck arrives, what it is weighed and when it exits. And what that will do it is that it will help us to know how efficient the mill is; were there any problems with mud or extra material; or mechanical failure? Ultimately, when this particular device leaves the mill then we gather all of the information which now is the valuable piece of information to the cane farmer – did my cane arrive at the mill? Did my cane get weighed and what was the weight? What is the first measurement of the quality of my cane? And what is the indication of price?"
via Belize News Feed

The San Pedro Sun

Community and Society

Seaweed Mariculture Project to be Launched in Belize

Saturday, December 7th, 2019



The Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE) supported by The Nature Conservancy Belize (TNC) has secured a grant through the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, Phase 2 of Compete Caribbean, within the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the development of the Belize Seaweed Mariculture Project.



The overall objective of this project is to:
i. support increased fisheries productivity for traditional fisherfolks in Belize through the development of sustainably farmed seaweed;
ii. heighten the sector's competitiveness and assist in the maintaining of product quality;
iii. ensure the effective use of channels to reach premium buyers, nationally and internationally.
iv. support employment in fisheries that will empower women and other persons in fishing communities who are being displaced by the impact of climate change.

These initiatives are intended to tackle current challenges in the seaweed industry in Belize such as capacity gaps that exists amongst traditional fisherfolks, changes in the marine environment that has resulted in decreased fishing income and the depletion of marine resources resulting from overfishing and other destructive fishing methods.

The launch will be held at Robert's Grove Beach Resort in Placencia Village, Stann Creek on Wednesday November 27th at 10:30am.

The public and media are especially invited to attend this event.

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The Belize Shrimp story – Big and small farmers thrive after threat

How a global crisis inspired more efficient and environmentally sustainable shrimp production in this Caribbean country

Loop Business | August 22, 2023 05:00 PM ET



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It's the smallest in Central America, but Belize's shrimp farming operation is vital to Belizeans nonetheless, bringing with it much-needed foreign exchange, employment opportunities to the country's poorest region in Southern Belize where the farms are concentrated, and enhanced food security.

> *In 2014, Belize reaped the benefits of its largest shrimp production ever*

Disease threatens food security

So when a disease started to impact the shrimp global shrimp industry in 2012, eventually making its way to Belize, the results were devastating.

Early Mortality Syndrome (EMS), or Hepatopancreatic Acute Necrosis Syndrome, a relatively new disease that affects shrimp, first appeared in China in 2009, and by 2012, it had spread throughout Asia. In 2013, it appeared in Mexico, and spread through the Americas. Although Belize borders Mexico to the north, its roughly 386 km of coastline is in the Caribbean Sea, making the country part of the Caribbean. So as EMS spread through the Americas, environmentalists

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This was made possible by an Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) Certification Belizean shrimp farmers completed that year with technical assistance provided by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), a private sector development programme delivering innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, increase productivity and foster innovation and competitiveness, while promoting economic inclusion. The Inter-American Development Bank, the United Kingdom, the Caribbean Development Bank, and the Governments of Canada are donors.

> *Bio security avoids the trends that may lead to the spread of disease*

Disaster strikes

But a few short months later, the disease started making its way through Belize's shrimp farms, decimating the industry, and in 2015, production fell by more than 95 per cent. The number of persons employed by the industry also decreased, from 3,000 in 2014, before the disease struck, to a mere 300 in 2022.

As shrimp farms across the country closed, thousands of Belizeans lost their livelihoods, literally overnight, including single moms who depended on the money they earned in the processing plants. This threatened to derail Belize's efforts to attain key Sustainable Development Goals, such as eradicating poverty, ending hunger and achieving food security, achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls; and promoting sustained economic growth and decent work for all.



Archive shots of dead shrimp back in 2015

The Turnaround

But there is a silver lining in the grey cloud EMS cast over shrimp production in Belize, and today, with support from CCPF, the shrimp farms are using science to build forward better and stronger than before.

"Bio security avoids the trends or operational practices that may lead to the spread of disease," said Mauricio Mejia, Snr.

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What difference does the Bio-security Project make?

The bio-security project has three main angles of focus:

1. Avoiding the entrance of pathogens or disease into the farms;
2. Avoiding the spread of the disease from one farm to another; and
3. Avoiding cross-contamination inside the farms from one pond to the other.

"Before this project, there were no real controls. Any person could easily go from one farm to another, and water discharged from one farm could easily reach another," said Mejia. "So contamination with any disease was easy, because the farms did not have in place the biosecurity measures needed to prevent the spread of the disease," he said.

Belize's bio-security project, which followed the ASC Certification, represents the second phase of support provided by CCPF to Belize's shrimp industry.

"The Aquaculture Stewardship Council Certification is the most stringent social and environmental standard for the production of shrimp, and it opened many new, higher paying niche markets to Belizean shrimp growers, such as England's exclusive Harrods Department store," said CCPF's Executive Director, Sylvia Dohnert.

At the end of Compete Caribbean's first intervention in 2014, 90 per cent of Belize's shrimp growers had the ASC standard, which opened the possibility for country branding in terms of the social and environmental conditions under which shrimp was being farmed. After the EMS virus swept the industry, the Belize Shrimp Growers Association again turned to Compete Caribbean for technical assistance, this time to develop the biosecurity protocols that could enable the industry to be more resilient against shocks such as the one they had recently experienced.

Dohnert said, "Of note, is that on both occasions, the Belize Shrimp Growers Association was awarded the technical assistance as a result of a competitive process for private sector development projects in the Caribbean region that could have large tangible impacts on revenues, employment (including of vulnerable groups), and environmental sustainability."

> *The technology we are migrating to is quite radical*

Win-win for Belize shrimp farmers

Some of the greatest wins as Belize's shrimp farmers make the shift to a new way of farming, are in the areas of sustainability and environmental protection. Previous shrimp farming methods required up to 400 acres of land to produce three million pounds of shrimp, compared to only 12 acres needed to produce the same amount under the new system with robust biosecurity measures in place. This reduction on land footprint means less social and environmental impact.

"The technology we are migrating to is quite radical, so in the midst of all the crisis there has been a lot of innovation," said Alvin Henderson, President of the Belize Shrimp Growers Association and Managing Director of Royal Mayan Shrimp Farm, who shared that he and the Association's members are very grateful for CCPF's intervention, which they described as transformative".

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Shrimp farms in Belize

Royal Mayan Shrimp leads from forefront

Royal Mayan Shrimp, a 320-acre farm, has successfully led on adopting and modifying the new technologies required under the biosecurity project, and is currently producing shrimp for export to the Caribbean, Europe, Mexico and the United States of America.

“The technology is a very small footprint, but out of this has come another level of innovation,” Henderson said. “As we began developing the pilot, we realised we did not have to do a lot of water exchange. We have not released any effluent to the nearby receiving water bodies since 2016 when we modified the farm,” he said.

By utilising a Recirculating Aquaculture System, Henderson and his team have been able to recirculate water on the site, making the new system a win for water conservation.

> *new credit facility currently being developed at Belize’s development bank to assist other shrimp farmers*

Linda shows small farmers not left out with fund access

But the shift to new technologies required when implementing the new biosecurity protocols is pricey. Many small farmers, like Linda Thornton, could not afford it, and have had to close their operations as a result.

Linda’s farm utilized six 25-acre ponds for a total of 150 production acres, a very low density production of only five shrimp per square meter.

“My farm was one of the smallest in Belize,” she said. “I did not even have electricity.”

She produced just 150,000 pounds of product a year, mainly for the local market, with some being exported to Jamaica and Trinidad, and an even smaller amount to Mexico.

Future is bright

But, some small farmers are still benefiting from a new and improved shrimp industry. New intensive farming means

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"I think what will emerge here is that we will probably have three or four farms lead in the push on the migration to the new technology," Henderson said. "But I expect that others will come along, including the smaller farmers, because the Government of Belize has gotten involved, and is very keen to see the industry recover."

A new credit facility is currently being developed at Belize's development bank with the intention of assisting other shrimp farmers, including the smaller farms. With this in mind, Henderson believes that within two years, more of Belize's shrimp farms will be up and running again.

About Compete Caribbean

The **Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF)** is a private sector development programme that delivers innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, increase productivity and foster innovation and competitiveness. We work in 13 countries across the Caribbean region. CCPF is a partnership between the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**, the United Kingdom's **Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO)**, the **Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)** and the **Government of Canada**.

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The San Pedro Sun

Community and Society Youth

The IDB and Compete Caribbean announces fifteen finalists for the Social Innovation Challenge

Saturday, May 16th, 2020



The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) with its partners – the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the Caribbean Development Bank and the Government of Canada – announced the fifteen finalists for the challenge in Belize known as the 'Change Dah Story' Social Innovation Challenge. Change Dah Story, piloted by the CCPF in collaboration with IDB's Country Office in Belize, aims to support the development of innovative business ideas around the issues faced by vulnerable youth in Belize, including crime and violence.



The challenge is also supported by the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (Beltraide) and the Department of Youth Services (DYS). The Bank received a total of 77 proposals from participants in the Change Dah Story' Social Innovation Challenge (www.iadb.org/changedahstory). The proposals presented several ideas on social innovations within the Belizean ecosystem. The fifteen finalists were selected by a panel of experts based on pre-defined criteria. The finalists will participate in a virtual pre-incubation program that will provide guidance on how to improve their social innovation business models and pitching skills. The finalists are:

- 501 Skills Compete
- Animation/Graphic Design Learning Center
- Anonymous Reporting System
- Belize Online Academy of Arts
- Check Yu Change
- Club Tech
- Compass Center TDZ-0
- DIGITALCORE
- Full Circle Belize
- Harnessing the Sun
- Ich Kool Chan Luuch-Coco
- Paper Boyz
- South Side Music Program
- TING PAY
- Youth Advocacy Through Arts (YATA)

During a virtual pitching event that will be Livestreamed on June 6, 2020, finalists will present their initiatives and business models to a panel of judges that will assess the level of innovation, impact on the community, profitability, and viability. The top three winning proposals will receive

up to US$10,000 per proposal in training, mentoring and initial funding to turn their ideas into workable business models. The CCPF, Beltraide and the DYS will continue to work with stakeholders to build an inclusive innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Belize that supports actors to discover and prioritize social challenges, to promote collaboration amongst public sector, private sector, and civil society, and to generate innovative solutions with high social impact.
For more information visit www.iadb.org/changedahstory and follow Compete Caribbean on Facebook to learn more about the finalists.

About the IDB
The Inter-American Development Bank is a leading source of long-term financing for economic, social andinstitutional projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. Besides loans, grants, and guarantees, the IDB conducts cutting-edge research to offer innovative and sustainable solutions to our region's most pressing challenges. Founded in 1959 to help accelerate progress in its developing member countries, the IDB continues to work every day to improve lives.

About the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility
Compete Caribbean is a private sector development program that provides technical assistance to support productive development policies, business climate reforms, clustering initiatives and technology and innovation in Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SME) in the Caribbean region. The program, jointly funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Caribbean
Development Bank (CDB) and the Government of Canada, supports projects in 13 Caribbean countries. Visit our website at www.competecaribbean.org

About the I-Lab
The I-Lab is an initiative promoted by the Competitiveness and Innovation Division of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which supports the strengthening of the science, technology and innovation systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://www.bidinnovacion.org/

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Caribbean

10/11/2022

Meet the 2022 Young Caribbean Water Entrepreneurs Shark Tank Finalists

Who will deliver the winning pitch in the Finals of the 2022 Young Caribbean Water Entrepreneurs Shark Tank Competition?

The competition was launched in April by Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) and Cartagena Convention Secretariat through the Global Environment Facility-funded (GEF) CReW+ Project, the Caribbean Climate Innovation Center (CCIC) and DIA (Democratizing Innovation in the Americas), which is a regional initiative of The Trust for the Americas and the Organization of American States (OAS).

The Finals take place on **Friday, October 14th, 2022** with seven (7) candidates/teams from the Caribbean between the ages of 18 to 34 years, pitching their water or wastewater-related projects/ideas.

Two (2) seed funding awards of **US$4,000** will be awarded in the competition. The first for the best water-related project pitch **(Category 1)** under the following themes:

- Water and Agriculture
- Water and Climate
- Water and Health
- Water and Energy
- Water and Tourism

The other **(Category 2)** for the best project pitch under the theme "Integrated Water and Wastewater Management (IWWM)."

The IWWM award has been made possible due to GWP-C's partnership with the GEF CReW+ project through the UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) and Cartagena Convention Secretariat to build awareness and capacity in the area of IWWM in the Caribbean region.

Apart from the two (2) seed funding awards of US$4,000 each, participants in the competition will benefit from:

- Participating in CCIC's entrepreneurial boot camps if hosted/available in a participant's home country.
- Participating in DIA's Caribbean Labs if hosted/available in a participant's home country.

Meet the Finalists

We are pleased to spotlight the finalists in the 2022 Young Caribbean Water Entrepreneurs Shark Tank Competition, as well as briefly highlight the water and wastewater-related projects they will pitch!

Name of Finalist: Gabriel Barinas



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About the 2022 Competition

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Country: Dominican Republic | **Age:** 33

Gabriel is a 33-year old Water Resources Engineer from the Dominican Republic, with a passion for water. He has taught, consulted and researched about water availability and its risks. His goal is to build a platform for consulting, research and training for the mitigation of the imminent increase in frequency and intensity of droughts and floods due to the effects of climate change. After graduating from Civil Engineering and a Master's Degree in Construction Management, he pivoted to a Master's Degree in Water Resources Engineering and Management in Spain. He is now in his second year of a Water Resources Engineering PhD at Oregon State University in the United States of America (USA) with a Fulbright Scholarship.

Project Teaser:

Name of Project: Datagua – Water Resources Data Analysis Platform

About Project: The biggest obstacle in the research and technical analysis of water resources issues in the Dominican Republic is the availability of data. Datagua is a platform that will address the challenge of data access for water resources research and decision-making.

Name of Finalist: Shomar Lindsay





Country: Jamaica | **Age:** 26

Shomar is a 26-year oldfrom the Bohemia district in southwest St. Ann, Jamaica; a small farming community on the dry harbour mountain that is highly dependent on water from rainfall and nearby streams to sustain farms. Shomar is trained in occupational health and safety and environmental management from The University of Technology, Jamaica. His start-up "Synergy Solutions" intends to explore and proliferate climate-smart agriculture and circular economic strategies, in order to limit pollution and conserve resources.

Project Teaser:

Name of Project: Synergy Solutions

About Project: Synergy Solutions aims to reduce the barriers for entry to climate smart agro-technologies, making it easier for average Jamaicans to own and operate sustainable food production systems to feed their families and their communities.

Team: Joshua Prentice and Christianne Zakour

Name of Finalist: Joshua Prentice



Country: Trinidad and Tobago | **Age:** 23

Joshua is a 23-year old graduate student from Trinidad and Tobago. His passion

lies in environmental management and law. Freshwater issues are some of the most important environmental problems for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), combined with the effects of climate change, which is why this project is important to him.

Name of Finalist: Christianne Zakour



Country: Trinidad and Tobago | **Age:** 25

Christianne is a young environmental advocate from Trinidad and Tobago with a passion for environmental governance and climate justice. She is the proud holder of a Master's Degree in Biodiversity, Conservation and Sustainable Development. She is also the co-lead of the T&T Climate Network, the administrative lead for Yugen Stories, a member of UNEP MGCY and SOA Caribbean, a 2022 Ambassador for Island Innovation, and a project officer and tree planting ambassador for the Caribbean Philanthropic Alliance.

Project Teaser:

Name of Project: Algal Bloom Buster

About Project: "Algal Bloom Buster" will create a database/model for the identification of periods of time where algal blooms can occur, as well as preventative measures that can then be marketed to the wider Caribbean region, as well as international markets in riverine or coastal areas where appropriate.

Team: Roubech Frantz Ady Ilan and Kenia Jean-Baptiste

Name of Finalist: Roubech Frantz Ady Ilan



Country: Haiti | **Age:** 32

Roubech is a 32-year old civil engineer and entrepreneur from Port-de-Paix of the north-west department of Haiti. He owns his own company and seeks to provide solutions to different problems in the municipality of Turtle Island, mainly related to the consumption of non-potable water.

Name of Finalist: Kenia Jean-Baptiste



Country: Haiti | **Age:** 31

Kenia is a 31-year old civil engineer and entrepreneur from Port-de-Paix of the north-west department of Haiti. She owns her own business, which is an Agricultural Input Shop and seeks to provide solutions to the various problems of the municipality of Turtle Island, mainly related to the consumption of non-potable water.

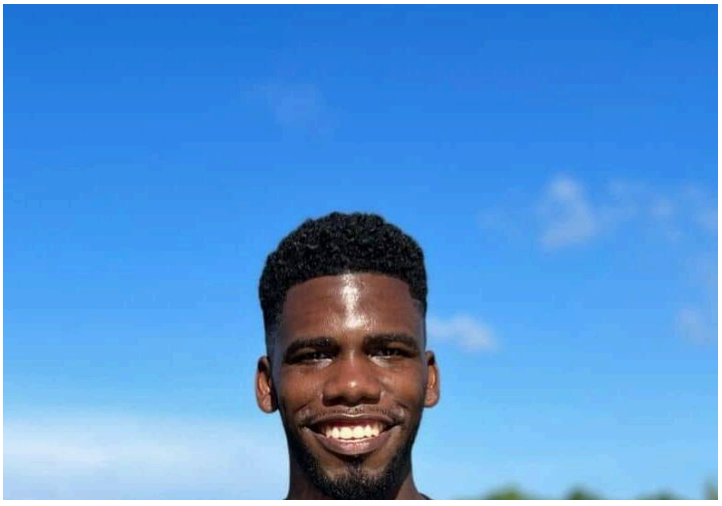
Project Teaser:

Name of Project: Kiosk and Hypochlorinator System in Turtle Island – To reduce the number of cases of disease related to non-drinking water

About Project: The project targets disadvantaged families living in the second section of the municipality of Turtle Island (about 15,000 inhabitants). It aims to offer these residents, clean and drinkable water by installing two (2) kiosks and a hypochlorinator chamber, which will be a point of sale and water treatment.

Team: Nicholas Kee and Dean Morris

Name of Finalist: Nicholas Kee





Country: Jamaica | **Age:** 27

Nicholas is the co-founder and CEO of Kee Farms. Before Kee Farms, he spent most of his time as a technologist and serial entrepreneur. He established Next Gen Creators – a tech non-profit focused on teaching youth in the Caribbean how to code and acquire job roles in the global tech space. The 27-year old multi-hyphenate from Jamaica, spends his time developing frameworks for climate change mitigation that can be adopted for the Caribbean. He is also a winner of the 2017 Prime Minister Youth Awards.

Name of Finalist: Dean Morris



Country: Jamaica | **Age:** 31

Dean is the co-founder and COO of Kee Farms. The 31-year old is also a Product Manager from Spanish Town, Jamaica. Since 2014, Dean has been working with environmental and farming-focused start-ups. His current focus is on developing sustainable mariculture methodologies for fisherfolk communities and sensitising the wider Jamaica and the Caribbean on ocean farming strategies.

Project Teaser:

Name of Project: Kee Farms: Ocean Farming

About Project: Kee Farms is a regenerative ocean farm network, focused on climate change mitigation. Kee Farms' premise is that artisanal fisherfolks can use the same skills they have harnessed over the years to actively participate in climate action, while still being able to feed their families and acquire sustainable income while doing so. This is especially true in the Caribbean region, where conditions are ripe for cultivating and harvesting seaweed, oysters, seagrass, and

sea cucumbers.

Name of Finalist: Keston Singh



Country: Trinidad and Tobago | **Age:** 20

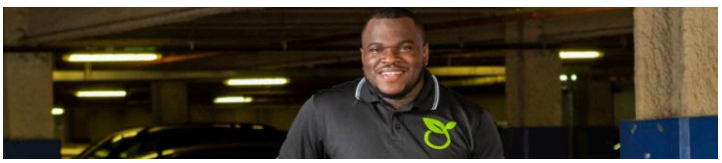
Keston is a 20-year old from Trinidad and Tobago, who is currently a second year Medical Student that is interested in the field of neurosurgery. He also enjoys all things water and looks for opportunities to help people or make the world a better place.

Project Teaser:

Name of Project: Aqua Clean

About Project: Aqua Clean is an intended device, that would take dirty water, whether it be from domestic use or flooding, and purify it into clean water. The project aims to address the challenge of the availability of clean water, the availability of water and aftermath of flooding.

Name of Finalist: Dareem Jeffrey



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Growth & Jobs | Engagement of diaspora youth important to development says JN Bank MD

Compete Caribbean and the London School of Economics (LSE) have partnered on a research project looking at how blockchain technology can assist small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) across the Caribbean to increase access to capital.

They outline that blockchain has the potential to combine dimensions of digital identity by aggregating alternative information and reducing friction between transactions, while increasing security on a decentralised platform.

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HOW DOES IT WORK?

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Blockchain uses cryptography to secure transactions. It literally consists of chunks of blocks in a chain with digital signatures, hashtags and consensus protocols with a non-centralized repository of information. This makes the technology resistant to cyberattacks.

WHAT IS THE STATE OF THESE ECONOMIES?

Low and poor economic growth across the Caribbean remains a cause for concern. Retrospectively, average economic growth in the Caribbean over the last five years has been less than two per cent compared to more than three per cent in other regions of the world. This, coupled with high unemployment, poor infrastructure, low minimum wage and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, in some instances, has increased the need for outside-of-box thinking to increase output and the income for these countries.

HOW CAN THEY IMPROVE?

Small and medium size enterprises are seen as the avenues for

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The blockchain technology will assist these firms in these economies to overcome problems associated with asymmetric information, collateral requirements, a lack of sufficient credit reporting agencies, and Internet data security and cybercrime.

WHAT ABOUT ALTERNATIVE FINANCING?

These alternative means of financing that emerge outside of the regular banking system are now becoming the solutions to market failures associated with banks and credit union systems, but requires certain innovation to assess associated risks. Their findings suggest that current databases in the Caribbean are not as secure as they ought to be. They propose a new system to assess the credit-worthiness of SMEs in the Caribbean. The proposed platform will build a bridge between the banks, the SMEs and the data provider, with blockchain technology being the facilitator.

HOW WOULD THIS SYSTEM WORK?

The loan system will connect technology to how people think and behave to determine whose credit is worthy. The system will link alternative payment data to accounting certificates to mobile and social data to psychometrics. The alternative payment data look at utility payments, rental payments and accounting certificates. Mobile data incorporates information that is available to provide real-life understanding about participants spending habits, while

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WHAT ARE THE ADDED ADVANTAGES?

The LSE explains that the self-sovereign identity system is a digital identity landscape where every human being holds ultimate and autonomous authority over all of their own data. This aids with providing alternative information to determine creditworthiness that can extended to other uses. This method increases security, controllability and portability. It controls all the block of data at once, and any claims have to be authorised and approved by the other parties using algorithms. The approvals are blindfolded and there are zero-knowledge proofs which allow maximum privacy.

The system is also characterised by portability, persistence and interoperability. The identity can be transported and persists as long as the individual wants to, and is mobile among platforms. The existing and emerging regulations must facilitate the use of the emerging technology. The public sector, the private sector and civil society must collaborate to absorb the use of modern technology into traditional credit and payment systems. People's human rights must also be taken into consideration. Sovereignty and privacy is observed according to the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- Dr Andre Haughton is a lecturer in the Department of Economics on the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies. Follow him on Twitter @DrAndreHaughton; or email editorial@gleanerjm.com.

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CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN CARIBBEAN

THE CLIENT

The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) is a private sector development program working in 13 countries across the Caribbean region. It is a partnership between the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the Government of Canada.

THE CHALLENGE

HEALTH

Companies announce partnership to release dengue-fighting mosquitoes in the Caribbean

Updated 9:08 AM AST, December 15, 2023

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Two private companies announced Friday a partnership to release mosquitoes across the Caribbean bred with a bacterium that blocks the dengue virus as the region fights a record number of cases.

Orbit Services Partners Inc., a company registered in Barbados, is partnering with Verily, a San Francisco-based health technology company, for the project. The companies have been meeting with government officials in the region in hopes of launching the project early next year, said Orbit chairman Anthony Da Silva.

It would target nations including Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Maarten, St. Martin, Suriname, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Similar projects using the Wolbachia bacterium already have been implemented elsewhere in the world. Mosquitoes are infected with Wolbachia in a laboratory and then released into the wild, where they pass it on to their offspring. The bacterium prevents the dengue virus from replicating inside a mosquito's gut.

Da Silva said the partnership has been three years in the making and was delayed by the pandemic. The proposal is still pending approval in individual Caribbean nations.

The Caribbean, along with the Americas, has reported more than 4 million dengue cases so far this year, the highest number since record-keeping began in 1980.

Compete Caribbean to propel growth

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Gerard Johnson (left), general manager, country department at the Inter-American Development Bank; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Dr Ken Baugh (centre) and Bruce Bowen, president and chief executive officer at Scotiabank, listen intently during the launch of the Compete Caribbean Programme at the Wyndham Kingston hotel last week. - Rudolph Brown/Photographer

International donor agencies have lauded the establishment of a five-year US$40 million programme to assist regional companies compete and grow globally.

"Business enterprise matters, it matters for growth, development and it matters for the Caribbean and that's why as the UK minister for development, I am backing Compete Caribbean," said Alan Duncan, the United Kingdom Minister of State for International Development, speaking at the launch of the programme.

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The Gleaner Polls

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Compete Caribbean was officially launched in Jamaica at the Wyndham hotel in New Kingston last week.

The programme seeks to increase standards of living by fostering structural transformation of Caribbean economies, defining new areas of competitive advantage, increasing productivity, exports, employment and growth in the independent CARIFORUM countries.

Private sector key to growth

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Duncan noted that external donors could not deliver the growth needed in the Caribbean, noting that it was the Caribbean private-sector companies themselves that could do so.

Pointing to areas of commercial strengths already existing within the Caribbean, Duncan, citing an example, said that "in tourism there has been great success, but with competition, of course, it is getting tougher, particular with the economic climate in the region's main market".

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help make that a reality," Duncan asserted.

Compete Caribbean is expected to contribute to an increase in non-traditional exports, from the average of 2.2 per cent of GDP to 5 per cent by 2017.

It is also expected to create 8,000 new jobs and make measurable advances in gender equality indicators.

A total of 35 projects will be undertaken under the Compete Caribbean programme.

Of those, 16 - valued at US$5,2 million - are already being executed, two of them in Jamaica.

The local projects cover an assessment and implementation of business climate reforms, and an investment promotion and economic development framework which seeks to increase Jamaica's ability to attract productive investment.

Another 19 are in the pipeline for development and are estimated at about US$4.2 million.

Also speaking at the launch, Marie Legault, head of Development Corporation at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) said: "CIDA recognises that investing in the development of the private sector is critical for the Caribbean."

"A programme such as Compete Caribbean, which provides a holistic and comprehensive approach to support private-sector development in the Caribbean region contributes directly to what Canada tries to support in the region. It provides an important step on the way to improving business development and increasing access to small and medium-size firms to compete in national, regional and global markets which is why we have been supporting the programme since March 2010," she said.

CIDA contributed CDN$20 million while DFID provided £10 million to the programme.

sabrina.gordon@gleanerjm.com

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Businesses Need More Innovation and Productivity

May 16, 2023

- *An analysis using an extensive database and recent research sheds light on opportunities and constraints for Caribbean businesses.*
- *The report is part of the IDB's Caribbean Economics Quarterly series.*

Caribbean governments should focus on policies that facilitate businesses' efforts to innovate and improve productivity, according to a new report from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The policies should focus on the constraints expressed by business owners themselves through enterprise surveys conducted in the Caribbean.

Reflections on Innovation and Productivity as Caribbean Businesses Emerge from the Pandemic addressed the question of whether the Caribbean would return to the slow long-run growth of the pre-pandemic period. To answer it, the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, a multi-donor, private-sector development program financed by the IDB, the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada, and the Caribbean

Development Bank, collected business-level data from nearly 2,000 firms across 13 Caribbean countries.

The report includes an overview of the past performance in terms of economic growth and productivity. It then describes the Compete Caribbean data and summarizes recent research papers analyzing that data and conclusions from that research. Finally, country sections draw on the Compete Caribbean database to describe the country level challenges facing firms in The Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The report's key findings include:

1. **Pre-pandemic economic growth performance was relatively poor**. In the twenty years prior to the pandemic, the average growth rate was far below the average for low- and middle-income countries. The average growth gap varies from two to five percentage points. The commodity exporters grew faster than tourism-oriented economies, although that advantage faded during the second decade of the century. Behind this low growth was poor performance in aggregate measures of productivity.

1. **Innovation plays a key role in spurring productivity as well as a gender-inclusive dimension**. Overall, the evidence shows that while proactive innovation positively affects business productivity and efficiency, innovations implemented in response to pressing external shocks (like the COVID-19 pandemic) do not necessarily generate gains in terms of efficiency. This insight points to the relevance of policies geared to continuously promote technological adoption and business innovations across the entire business cycle. The evidence also reveals that, while the pandemic shock affected employment differentially by gender, policies aimed at limiting female unemployment are not only needed for equity but also are effective at improving productivity. The evidence presented shows that firms that effectively mitigated female employment losses, were also more successful in limiting productivity losses.

1. **Each country's business context faces its own challenges**. The report's country sections use the dataset to document the specific productivity challenges of each country. While access to finance and infrastructure challenges (e.g., electricity and telecoms) are common across countries, the depth of those challenges varies, and other specific issues emerge for each country. Business owners and managers face their own unique challenges

depending on the country to improve the performance of their companies, both large and small.

Overall, this report reveals the importance of data and analysis to unlock the key determinants of productivity and innovation in the region. The abundant data sets in the book are publicly available **here**. “We hope that Caribbean researchers and policy makers will draw on this database, as a regional public good, that can improve economic policy design across the region.” said David Rosenblatt, the Regional Economic Advisor for the IDB’s Caribbean Department.

About Compete Caribbean

The **Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility** (CCPF) is a multi-donor, private-sector development program financed by the IDB, the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada, and the Caribbean Development Bank. It provides technical assistance to 13 Caribbean countries to support the Caribbean region in increasing productivity and Caribbean firms’ contribution to economic growth.

About the IDB

The Inter-American Development Bank is devoted to improving lives. Established in 1959, the IDB is a leading source of long-term financing for economic, social, and institutional development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The IDB also conducts cutting-edge research and provides policy advice, technical assistance, and training to public and private sector clients throughout the region. **Take our virtual tour**.

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Create a culture of innovation to ‘recover stronger’ from COVID-19 or maintain the status quo to remain a ‘suboptimal economic achiever’. This was the message to Caribbean countries and companies at an innovation webinar organised by Growth Perspectives (GP) on August 19.

A culture of innovation is defined as an environment that supports creative thinking and advances efforts to extract economic and social value from knowledge, and, in doing so, generates new or improved products, services or processes. Without this, Caribbean countries are unlikely to retain the best and brightest STEM graduates, improve the rankings of individual countries on the global innovation index, and achieve economic independence.

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The cultural transformation factor is largely implicit in calls for innovation stimulation. This was exemplified in Compete Caribbean's 2016 and 2017 summary of the existing and future context of Caribbean innovation. My Op-Ed in **The Gleaner** on March 12 proposed that a stock exchange-listed public-private partnership innovation system can substantially fund and stimulate innovation and Professor Mariana Mazzucato's recent call for Caribbean governments to stimulate innovation now to shape our regional economies in the post-COVID era. Although we acknowledge the subsequent innovation policy and capacity-building work in Jamaica and Barbados, the overarching cultural foundation requires explicit consideration and focus. Therefore, policymakers should now drive the cultural change needed to embed innovation in the psyche, values and practices of government workers, executives and citizens.

CULTURAL BARRIERS

Entrenched cultural barriers to innovation in the Caribbean include but are not limited to distrust of regional neighbours – possibly of self; fear of failure; unfriendly banking policies on patent collateralisation; and an antiquated education system. These have encouraged, for example., the insufficient prioritisation of funding for high-tech and science-based start-ups, as well as protectionist policies that defend existing markets, with little done to create new ones. The above cultural barriers have been institutionalised over time but must be dismantled if innovation is to flourish in the Caribbean.

Ironically, those who prefer the status quo and could themselves benefit from a cultural shift will quietly challenge the change

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they fundamentally believe that the Caribbean will never become a globally competitive innovation region?

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The barriers to innovation are numerous and ferocious. An article in the **Jamaica Observer** of March 7, titled 'Good ideas come to the Caribbean to die', reminded us of the pervasive and challenging nature of these barriers. Still, we do not consider them insurmountable.

CREATING CULTURE OF INNOVATION

It is time to dismantle the barriers and start creating a culture of innovation. The postponement of this process can stymie the innovation being stimulated by the Government of Jamaica and other Caribbean governments, firms, as well as the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, and other local, regional and international development agencies. It is indisputable that a strong cultural foundation is needed to make Caribbean innovation both sustainable and scalable. The question is, given the diversity of Caribbean countries' economic structures and inter-country competition, how can regional public- and private-sector leaders create this culture of innovation?

The process of creating a culture of innovation is not linear but iterative and recursive. It requires both leaders and followers to use multifaceted, data-driven approaches to innovation, to learn from past experiments, and to look to the future for opportunities. It also demands that entrepreneurs accept the benefits of failing towards success, and employers empower employees to provide value in

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creation of a culture of innovation. Broadly speaking, they suggested that Caribbean entrepreneurs should adopt a global mindset, take data-driven and digitalisation approaches to business management, as well as collaborate to scale up and improve the competitiveness of their firms. At the same time, governments should revolutionise the educational system, broaden the tax incentives and funding access for especially high-tech and science-based start-ups, pursue innovation-friendly policies and create an enabling environment with bankruptcy laws that reduce the 'fear-of-failure syndrome' and the personal consequence of business failure.

In terms of implementation, the policymakers should prioritise and reset the innovation and educational policies of Caribbean countries, as well as push governments to enable cultural change – from the kindergarten level upwards. This process involves engaging children, young people and adults to influence their mindset and behaviour regarding innovation, deepening trust and collaboration at the inter-governmental level, and implementing cultural heritage programmes that influence Caribbean people to believe in themselves. For industry, it involves firms investing in applied research and development, as well as engaging top talents to create high-value products that can increase intra- and extra-Caribbean exports and enhance their competitive positions in regional and global markets. All of us need to be part of the cultural change process.

INNOVATION SIMULATION

Finally, the cultural transformation must be linked to the innovation stimulation if Caribbean countries are to derive optimal outcomes in

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and implement the necessary integration. Through our collective efforts, the region can move from primarily being consumers of high-value products and exporters of commodities to become major innovation producers and increased participants in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Joel Allen is managing director of Growth Perspectives (GP), a Jamaica-based international management consultancy firm. Takeese Gilpin Allen, director of GP; Tayaza Fadason, director of GP; Leighton Ellis, associate of GP; Daniel Campbell, associate of GP, contributed to this article. Send feedback to jallen@growthperspectives.com and columns@gleanerjm.com

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Business 4 min read

The technologies that can make a difference to Caribbean businesses

Loop News | September 2, 2022 10:14 AM ET



COVID-19 underscored the importance of digital technologies to continue operating during the pandemic-related lockdowns and accelerated the adoption of digital technology across the world.

Given this context, in 2020, the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility – a multi-donor, private sector development program financed by the Inter-American Development Bank, the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the Caribbean Development Bank, and the Government of Canada – launched a pilot program to assist Caribbean businesses to adopt technology that can make them more competitive in their sectors. This program, called the "Caribbean Technology Extension Services", was rolled out across 13 Caribbean countries to companies in the agro-processing, manufacturing and tourism sectors, which are the most important economic sectors in the Caribbean.

The following lessons learned from this experience can guide Caribbean companies wanting to adopt technology, and business support programs promoting technology adoption in this region.

First, there is an unsatisfied demand from businesses across the Caribbean for technology adoption services. The pilot received nearly 400 submissions from businesses in less than two weeks – a record compared to similar experiences in Latin American countries. Some countries like Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Barbados had many more businesses applying to the initiative than other countries. Given some dedicated marketing to women-owned firms, two thirds of applicants were women-owned businesses, which is much higher than the proportion of women-owned businesses in the total Caribbean business population. Many of those wanting to upgrade their technology were micro-sized businesses (less than US$100,000 in revenue per year). Of the micro-sized businesses that applied, more than half were in the tourism sector.

Second, according to the applications received, in many cases Caribbean businesses are currently focusing their efforts on technology catch-up, which may not provide them with a distinct competitive advantage in their sector. For example

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creation, when digital marketplaces, traceability, preservation of their products, packaging, storage, and distribution systems to adapt to new consumer trends that emerged during the pandemic could have a much larger impact on sales. In manufacturing, businesses are also focused on the office productivity suite and core technologies such as machining, casting and molding, while underinvesting in data monitoring and analytics, sensing, internet of things, automation, robotics, cybersecurity, logistics and supply chain technology, and 2D/3D design. In tourism, Caribbean businesses would benefit from investing more in booking engines, central reservation systems, revenue management, property management systems, channel management, online satisfaction surveys, customer relationship management systems (systems to manage and monitor social media) and business intelligence.

Third, many businesses were very interested – and got assistance with – digital marketing technology, such as properly structured websites, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), and social media marketing and branding. Improvements in content generation techniques, interactive storytelling and promotions, integration of the website to social media platforms, and ability to determine and interpret key performance indicators related to digital marketing and branding allowed businesses to quickly see an uptick in visibility and sales. For example, a group of independent small hotels in Barbados received technical assistance to launch a better structured website that could target tourist groups and associated companies. After the launch of the new website, the number of users increased from 130 in December 2021 to 1,118 in February 2022. A manufacturing company in St Lucia also received assistance in structuring a new website, linking it to different social media channels, enhancing search engine optimisation, and generating different types of content to post across social media. As a result of these interventions, this company is currently number one in website searches, and their viewership of new content on social media has increased from an average 3k to more than 45k.

Another facet of the execution of this pilot involved locating suppliers who could accompany businesses in adopting these technologies. For a region that is so dependent on tourism, we were surprised not to find an organisation, research group, or even large software application providers and consultants supporting Caribbean businesses with digital tools to expand their direct sales and identify ways to improve their revenues. In 2021, we hosted a webinar to acquaint Caribbean tourism businesses with a range of applications available to improve different aspects of their business. For those readers wanting to find out more about cutting edge digital technologies in tourism, here is the recording: https://www.competecaribbean.org/digital-transformation-in-tourism.

Nearly two years later, the pilot has been completed, and 50 businesses received technical assistance to implement the technologies they identified as priority. The inability to travel, the resumption of activity after the lockdowns, which took management time away from the task of absorbing technology (especially in the smallest, owner-managed businesses), and difficulties experienced by some businesses to finance even small capital requirements (for example, software licenses), were obstacles that had to be surmounted during the process. Notwithstanding, with our delivery partners – the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute, the Instituto Tecnologico Hotelero (in Spain), and the Centro de Extensionismo Tecnologico Manufacturero of the University of Concepción (Chile), tangible progress was made.

By Sylvia Dohnert and Jose Antonio Carrasco

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Why Agriculture is Key to Caribbean's Tourism Sector Post-Covid 19 Pandemic

Last updated: February 26, 2021

Colaboradores

Ena Harvey (/taxonomy/term/136)



After a devastating year for Caribbean economies, which nevertheless saw islands contain the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the region is **slowly reopening** with a new proposition for **visitors in 2021**.

The unexpected downturn has provided an **opportunity** to rethink and refresh the **Caribbean's tourism sector** to reduce islands' vulnerability and **draw closer links** with food and gastronomy, which has long shaped Caribbean history, culture and identity.

Industry leaders have also been forced to respond to the **changing needs of tourists**, whose heightened awareness of health, safety and environmental concerns has **increased demands** for smaller, bespoke tours and experiences beyond traditional sun, sea and sand packages.

"By fostering greater collaboration and overlap between the tourism, hospitality, agriculture and gastronomy sectors, Caribbean nations can unlock multiple benefits for both tourists and the tourism industry."

The **future** of the Caribbean vacation in the post-Covid pandemic, then, may lie in **agritourism**.

By fostering greater collaboration and overlap between the tourism, hospitality, agriculture and gastronomy sectors, Caribbean nations can unlock multiple benefits for both tourists and the tourism industry.

Firstly, aligning tourism with island agriculture **can provide mutual resilience** in the event of shocks and stressors.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, many people turned to agriculture (https://www.healthycaribbean.org/backyard-gardening-initiatives-in-our-region-every-seed-counts/) and went out in droves to buy seedlings, both as an economic alternative to tourism and to bolster their own food security (https://www.caribbeannationalweekly.com/caribbean-breaking-news-featured/now-is-the-chance-for-caribbean-nationals-to-eat-what-they-grow/).

Links between **restaurants** and local **farmers** are now stronger than ever, while the renewed focus on **indigenous foods** has increased appreciation of the importance of agriculture for reducing poverty, improving health, boosting employment and encouraging **responsible food production** and consumption.

Maintaining this **link** between **agriculture** and **tourism** will help **diversify Caribbean economies** and reduce the heavy reliance on tourism, which was decimated during the pandemic.

Despite the challenges of 2020, several **agritourism "champions"** have emerged across the region at both public and private sector levels, who are using **innovative approaches** to ensure that trade continues between the agriculture and tourism sector.

The private sector **development program**, the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (https://www.competecaribbean.org/), has continued to support agritourism projects, including a project to **implement precision farming** and a climate-resilient **greenhouse system** in **St. Lucia**. In addition, the same team has developed a marketing platform (http://market.guru.lc/) for a major retailer to use in their **procurement systems** with local farmers.

These systems can help generate **new opportunities for farmers** and producers once tourism fully reopens. For example, beekeeper Lascell Smith (http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/las-bee-making-a-sweet-difference-with-honey_179689?profile=1373), a 2019 finalist in IICA Jamaica's **Youth in Agribusiness** Awards, invested in a custom-built honey sachet machine to meet demand for **single-serve honey packages** for the hotel industry while allowing hotels to offer **local honey**.

Meanwhile, **carving out a greater role** within tourism for Caribbean produce and food culture can also enrich the experience of visiting our islands.

Chefs have become influential **advocates** of **local food culture** and are helping boost the use of Caribbean-produced foods both domestically and internationally, increasing our exports while also providing visitors with a more authentic and sustainable cuisine.

One valuable **platform** is the Chefs For Development (http://chefs4dev.org/index.html) initiative, which aims to promote **stronger links** between actors in the **culinary** and **tourism sectors**. Launched by the EU-funded Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (**CTA**), the project will continue from 2021 under the leadership of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (**IICA**).

Online portals and networks like **Chefs4Dev** have become increasingly important as more of the world lives and works **remotely** during pandemic-related restrictions and lockdowns.

By sharing knowledge, techniques and recipes online, chefs and local food ambassadors can safely continue to contribute to **virtual agritourism** and promote **sustainable food habits**, even in the face of limited travel.

As tourism **gradually** returns to the Caribbean from 2021 onwards, we hope it will be the dawn of a new, more thoughtful and **sustainable** form of travel, that values a **safe** and **authentic exchange** inspired by our cuisine, our customs and our heritage.

A **healthy, thriving agritourism sector** would be a worthwhile destination for all involved.

Note: This article was published originally in https://www.caribbeannationalweekly.com/editorial/op-ed/op-ed-why-agriculture-is-key-to-caribbeans-post-covid-tourism-sector/ (https://www.caribbeannationalweekly.com/editorial/op-ed/op-ed-why-agriculture-is-key-to-caribbeans-post-covid-tourism-sector/)



***Ena Harvey** is the IICA Representative in the Barbados Delegation and the Hemispheric Specialist in Agrotourism*

***Note*: The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the opinion of IICA.**

If you have questions or suggestions for improving the BlogIICA, please write to the editors: Joaquín Arias (mailto:joaquin.arias@iica.int) *and Viviana Palmieri.* (mailto:viviana.palmieri@iica.int)

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The greenhouse in St. Lucia is by no means 'climate resilient'. One minor hurricane and it's gone.

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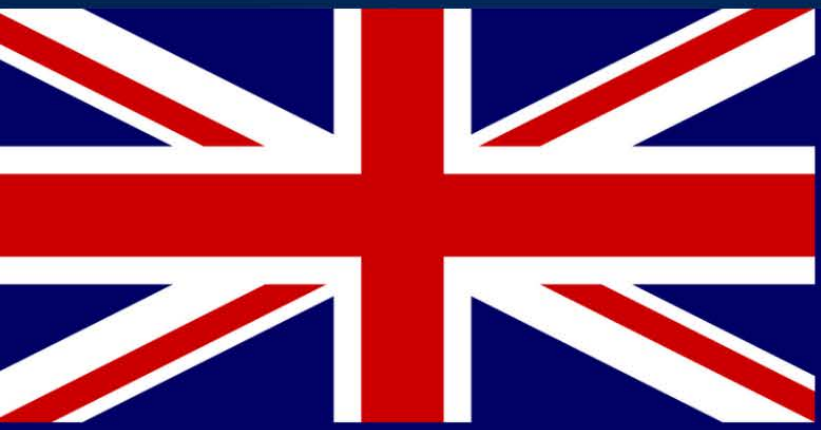
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OECS and Compete Caribbean host successful Digital Payments Expo

April 13, 2021 (https://www.ieyenews.com/2021/04/)

By **Kwesi Roberts** and **Ricardo James**



Thursday, April 8, 2021 â€" **The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission in partnership with the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility hosted a Digital Payment Webinar and Expo on Tuesday March 30, 2021, under**

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the theme: â€œUnlocking The Power Of Digital Payments For the Growth of Micro Small And Medium Enterprises (MSME) in the OECS (https://pressroom.oecs.org/unlocking-the-power-of-digital-payments-for-the-growth-of-micro-small-and-medium-enterprises-msme-in-the-oecs)â€.

The event attracted approximately 277 participants interested in the digital financial solutions available to their region and the digital payment services available to MSMEâ€™s and interested consumers.

Participants heard opening remarks by the Director General of the OECS, Dr. Didacus Jules; Director of Economic Affairs and Regional Integration, Mrs. Jacqueline Emmanuel-Flood; as well as Deputy Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), Mr. Trevor Brathwaite.

Dr. Jules welcomed the Digital Payments Expo, noting that â€˜it is a small but important step towards a more resilient OECS.â€™ The Director General also highlighted the timeliness of the event, stating:

> **â€œWhether we like it or not, our economies are caught in an increasingly disruptive and transformative global economy. The only way to respond effectively is to adapt and in some cases to re-invent. In all cases, we become more agile in the process.â€**

Mr. Brathwaite provided the meeting with insights on the state of payment legislation within the OECS stating:

> **â€œThe Eastern Caribbean Payment Systems Act is existent but we are moving to modernise that piece of legislation with the intention to address some of the recent developments in the digital payment space, so that we can have uniform legislation in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU).â€**

He further indicated that:

home-nm-airport/)

air-welcome-home-nm-airport/)

April 8, 2024

(https://www.ieyenews.com/day-and-emancipation-day-both-to-take-place-in-may-revised-list-of-cayman-public-holidays/)

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March 7, 2024

(https://www.ieyenews.com/announces-private-offerings-of-senior-secured-notes-and-senior-

Vistra Announces Private Offerings of Senior Secured Notes and Senior Unsecured Notes (https://www.ieyenews.com/vistra-

> **â€œIn developing legislation, the effort is not to stifle innovation but to have a legislative environment that protects the interests of citizens in the economic space.â€**

All speakers shared the common perspective that digital transformation of OECS economies and, in particular, the adoption of digital payments solutions by MSMEs is extremely important for the advancement of Small Island Developing States.

The event featured a preview of the ECCBâ€™s Digital Currency â€“ DCash (https://www.eccb-centralbank.org/p/what-you-should-know-1). Delivered by Ms. Sharmyn Powell, Chief Risk Officer, Office of Corporate Strategy and Risk Management, the preview presentation highlighted the benefits of the DXCD DCash wallet for users of the pilot countries which would include Grenada, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

The event also featured an exciting fireside chat hosted by Mr. Jodi Boodhoo, Deputy Chairperson of the Invest Saint Lucia Authority. The fireside chat highlighted the state of payments in the OECS and gave participants an opportunity to learn from the experiences of key players in the payment landscape such as MSMEs (Karibites Grenada); Fintech providers (JAD Cash Saint Kitts and Nevis); the International Trade Centre; and Financial Institutions (Saint Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla National Bank limited).

Exciting discussions and engaging presentations on various payment solutions were delivered by institutions such as the Grenada Cooperative Bank Limited, and the Bank of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Limited. Several other digital financial solutions were presented by the following Fintech firms:

- Penny Pinch (Saint Lucia) (https://mypennypinch.com/)
- IBIS â€“ Management Associates (Curacao and the Eastern Caribbean) (https://www.ibis-management.com/)
- JAD Cash (Saint Kitts) (https://jad.cash/)

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February 26, 2024



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- NNB TECHNOLOGIES (Barbados and the UK) (https://www.nnbtechnologies.com/)
- MPAY (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

Overall, the Expo showcased the power of digital payments and explored viable ways to unlock the potential of digital financial technologies for the growth and competitiveness of OECS businesses and the economy as a whole.

To bring the curtains down on the dayâ€™s event, the Expo received an update from the OECS on the Caribbean Digital Transformation Project (CADTP) and the OECS' project to strengthen the ecosystem for entrepreneurship and innovation (https://www.oecs.org/en/work-with-us/procurements/current-tenders/increasing-the-adoption-of-digital-payment-solutions-among-micro-small-and-medium-enterprises-msmes-in-the-oecs/viewdocument/2791) â€“ which seeks to provide assistance and capacity building to a number of OECS MSMEs to onboard digital financial services and payment solutions.

weather-in-cayman-6/)

April 8, 2024

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OECS and Compete Caribbean partner to strengthen entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems in the OECS

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By Ricardo James

Friday, June 19, 2020 — **The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission (OECS Commission), with the support of Compete Caribbean, recently hosted a Kick-off Meeting for a project that seeks to strengthen the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems in the OECS.**

The project, launched via video conference with stakeholders from across the OECS and wider Caribbean, will be implemented by the OECS Commission, with support from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (https://www.competecaribbean.org/), funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The initiative seeks to strengthen the ecosystem for entrepreneurship and innovation in six (6) OECS Member States, namely Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The project is expected to foster greater collaboration between key stakeholders in the entrepreneurship ecosystem and to support OECS entrepreneurs in scaling their businesses. Over time it is also expected that the survival rate of OECS startups will greatly improve and firms will also access and utilise more digital financial technology solutions.

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The implementation phase will comprise three components, the first of which will be the development of a Hybrid Business Incubator and secondly the development of a regional Hybrid Accelerator Programme for high-potential firms. Component three of the project will focus on Increasing access to digital financial services to SMEs in the OECS.

The project launch featured presentations from the OECS Director General, Dr. Didacus Jules; Director of Economic Affairs and Regional Integration, Jacqueline Emmanuel-Flood; and other Technical Specialists from the OECS Competitive Business Unit. The meeting also received presentations and remarks from the IDB Compete Caribbean Team including Dr. Sylvia Dohnert, Private Sector Lead Specialist, IDB and Executive Director, Compete Caribbean; Annie Bertrand, Coordinator Pillar 1 – Productivity and Innovation in the Private Sector, Compete Caribbean; and Dr. Kieron Swift, Project Development Consultant, Compete Caribbean.

The webinar allowed regional stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the:

- Entrepreneurship Development in the OECS – goals, activities, policy framework, focus areas, challenges, and opportunities;
- OECS Ecosystem Study Findings and Overview of the project; and
- Strategies for Strengthening the Ecosystem for Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the OECS.

There was also a question and answer segment which allowed stakeholders to provide feedback on the project and share their perspectives on entrepreneurship and innovation in the OECS.

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OECS launches Entrepreneurs Incubation and Acceleration Programme TECHIE

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



By **Kwesi Roberts***Technical Specialist –Entrepreneurship Development, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States*

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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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The UWI Open Campus and Compete Caribbean launching Regional Business Plan Competition for Community-Based Tourism Sector

January 20, 2022 (https://www.ieyenews.com/2022/01/)

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Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal. Thursday, January 20, 2022 — The University of the West Indies (The UWI) Open Campus and Compete Caribbean are collaborating on a Regional Business Plan Competition targeting entrepreneurs who currently operate or wish to operate within the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) industry. Entrepreneurs from Compete Caribbean member countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname are eligible to participate.

The Competition is designed to identify entrepreneurs in the sector, and encourage the development of innovative, community-driven ideas with potential for expansion and increase community-based enterprises.

The competition, which opens on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, and closes on Friday, March 11, 2022, will be executed virtually. Participants will be required to register at https://bit.ly/3KhjuM0, upload their business plan to an online space and deliver a five-minute pitch to a panel of judges.

To support entrepreneurs in entering and preparing for the competition, two webinars will be convened as follows:

- Competition Launch & How to Write a Business Plan for Community Based Tourism – **Tuesday, January 25, 2022, 10:00 am AST.**
- Business Pitch Workshop – **Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 10:00 am AST.**

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The webinars will also facilitate the sharing of targeted consumer research that will assist entrepreneurs in pricing their goods and services.

Prizes will be awarded to participants, with the first prize of USD$2,500 in technical support. For information on the competition details and how to enter visit https://www.open.uwi.edu/compete-caribbean.

Community Based Tourism (CBT) is a collaborative approach to tourism in which community members exercise control by actively participating in the appraisal, development, management, and/or ownership (whole or in part) of enterprises. The business typically provide net socio-economic benefits to community members, conserve natural and cultural resources, and add value to the experiences of local and international visitors. This includes both community-based tourism activities as well as goods and services provided to the tourism industry by one or more members of the community.

About Compete Caribbean

The **Compete Caribbean Partnership facility (CCPF)** is a private sector development programme that delivers innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, increase productivity and foster innovation and competitiveness. We work in 13 countries across the Caribbean region. CCPF is a partnership between the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**, the United Kingdom's **Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO)**, the **Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)** and the **Government of Canada**

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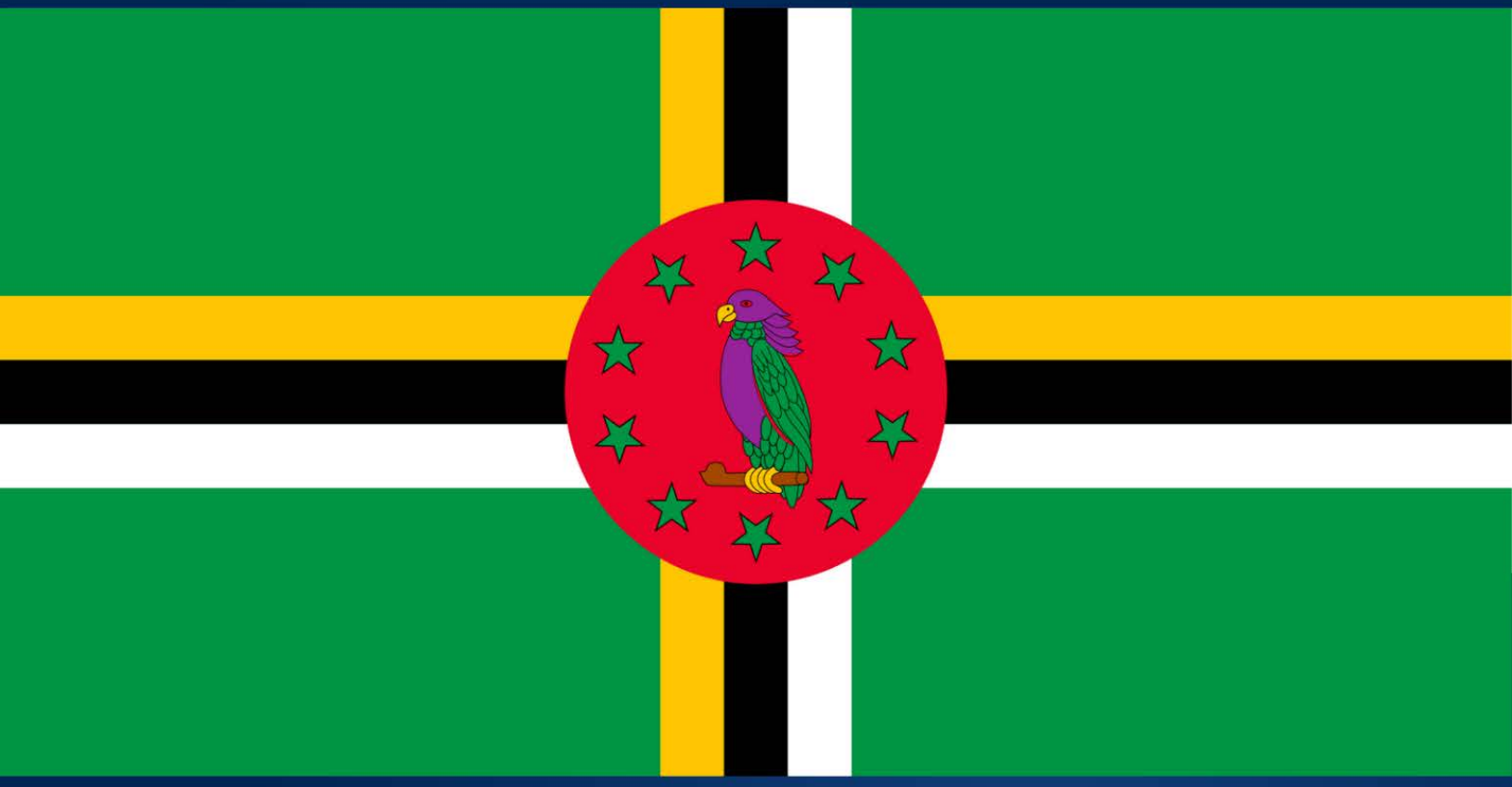
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DOMINICA EDITOR'S CHOICE

“Smooth transition” so far says DEXIA’s new GM

EmoNews Contributor MARCH 8, 2021 0 320 4 Min Read



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Roseau, Monday 8th March 2021: It has been one week since DEXIA’s former accountant Paula Platsko commenced work as the Agency’s new General Manager replacing Gregoire Thomas who served in that capacity for the past 20 years. Ms. Platsko credits the support of DEXIA ‘s former General Manager, Board of Directors, Management, Staff as well as other stakeholders for the ease with which she has assumed her post.

“It really has been a smooth transition for me, most notably because I served as part of the senior leadership team as Accountant and worked closely with Mr. Thomas who over 11 years I replaced o officer in charge during his absence.”

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guidance, coaching and mentoring to other staff. Ms. Plastko represented the Agency in many for a and among its various stakeholders.

Ms. Platsko who holds a Master in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Management, both from the University of the West Indies (UWI) started at DEXIA in 2009. She is proficient in project management, ISO 9000- Total Quality Control Management and several web applications to include Sage ACCPAC. Ms. Platsko has played an instrumental role in crafting the Human Resource (HR) policies and Union agreements for DEXIA as well as the preparation of cabinet papers. She has offered financing management expertise to several programmes under the agencies projects to include the European Union- funded Business Gateway Programme. Caribbean Development Bank funded National Export Strategy (NES), and the Cocoa Cluster Development Project made possible through USD$300,000.00 contribution from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF).

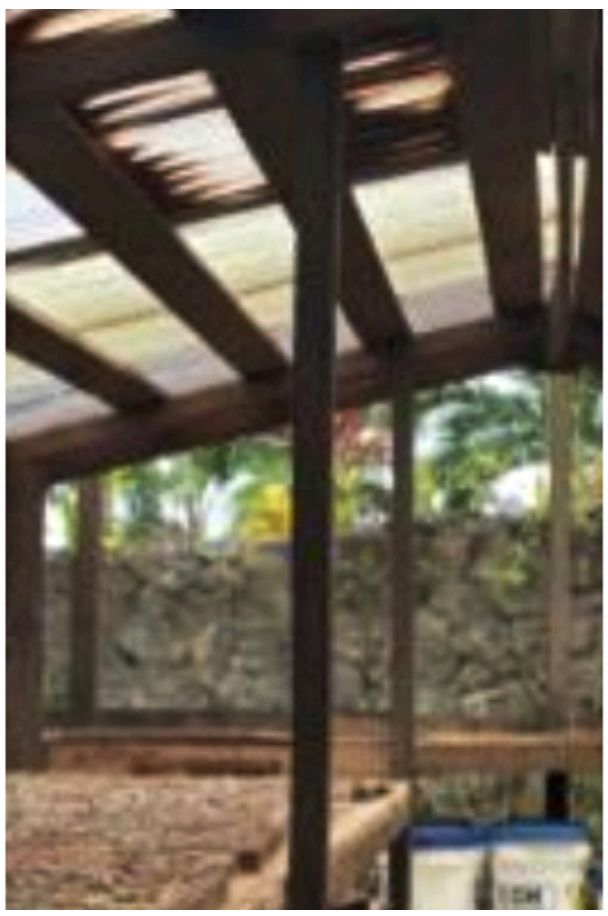


Business 2 min read

Cocoa Cluster Project in Dominica explored by Compete Caribbean

Progress and sustainability observed and praised

Loop Business | August 26, 2023 02:15 PM ET







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The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (COMPETE CARIBBEAN) has concluded a supervision mission to Dominica to assess the strides achieved within the Cocoa Cluster Project, RG-T3519.

The project titled "Experiential Learning of Cluster Development Best Practices in Small and Vulnerable Countries", reinforces COMPETE CARIBBEAN's commitment to fostering sustainable growth and knowledge dissemination.

The recent mission's focus was to review the project's advancement against planned outputs and outcomes, as well as to engage with key stakeholders to identify prime opportunities to provide greater value to beneficiaries.

The COMPETE CARIBBEAN team of Wayne Elliott and Ramona Sinanan met and engaged beneficiaries in discussions to gauge project progress, address implementation challenges, and explore avenues to ensure long-term sustainability.

Throughout the mission in the Nature Isle, the COMPETE CARIBBEAN team engaged with esteemed local stakeholders including the Dominica Import Export Agency (DEXIA) - the implementing agency, and the Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture, and Fisheries.

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Most importantly, interactions with cocoa farmers and processors of chocolate and cocoa-based products offered a nuanced understanding of the project's real-world impact. Integral to the mission were the site visits which enabled the team to witness the thriving cocoa plants that had been propagated and distributed to farmers during the project's implementation.

The project's reach and influence were further validated through expressions of gratitude from the government, farmers, cocoa processors, and Extension Officers at the Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture, and Fisheries. These stakeholders appreciated the depth of insights gained from the training programs conducted by the University of The West Indies' (THE UWI) Cocoa Research Center (CRC) under the project's umbrella.

COMPETE CARIBBEAN's mission to Dominica is a testament which reiterates its commitment to fostering collaborative growth in small and vulnerable countries. Through dynamic interactions and empirical observations, the mission sets the course for an even more impactful and resilient Cocoa Cluster Project, fostering economic and sustainable development in the region.

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Agriculture

Cocoa Cluster Seeks Input From Agro-Processors

DEXIA 7th October, 2020 0 2,169



The Cocoa Cluster Development Project of Dominica, managed by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and the Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture and National Food Security, seeks input from agro-processors in effort to capture valuable data on the cocoa sub-sector, especially value-added aspects of the production cycle.

Cluster Manager, Taletha Laudat says the outreach is necessary because "the agro-processing subsector constitutes an important thrust for development particularly in small island developing states like ours; and therefore, agro-processors plays a critical role in revamping any industry. As such, current information is required to inform the cocoa cluster and related stakeholder agencies of the value-addition prospects in the cocoa agro-processing business."

Information from this digital survey will be used for planning and evaluation by export agencies such as, DEXIA; production agencies like the Ministry of Agriculture and supporting agencies to include CCPF and other partners.

In 2019, DEXIA successfully applied for and received a grant of US$200,000.00 from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) towards the development of Dominica's cocoa sector. Dominica is known for its Fine Flavoured cocoa and the cluster was created to revitalize the industry for improved competitiveness, performance, growth and employment. Ultimately the cluster will serve to encourage and ensure the consistent output of quality cocoa at various stages. The Cocoa Cluster Development Project has 5 improvement areas: Data Management, Pre and Post-Harvest, Change Management, Marketing and Labelling and Product Transformation and Development.

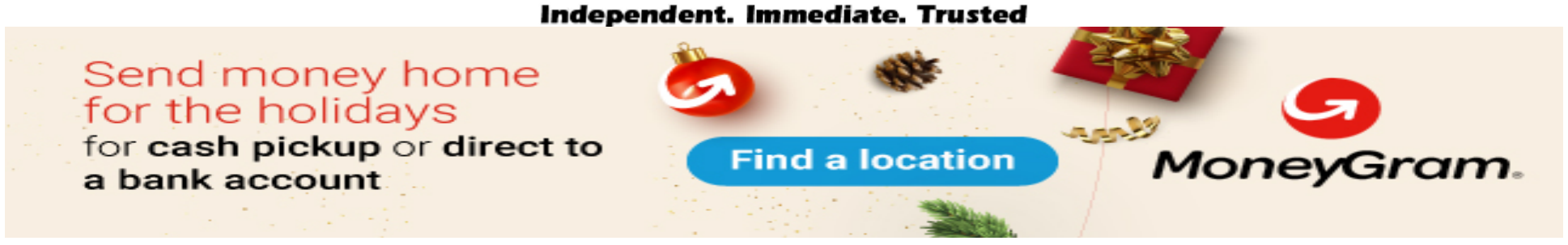
Upon this background, the survey seeks to harness information from agro-processors participating in cocoa value addition through the collection of reliable and up-to-date information on the scope of the cocoa agro-processing industry in Dominica. Fundamental to the high quality of value added products is a clear understanding of the processor needs and wants. Information from Processors is therefore critical to the success of this initiative.

Industry partners also include Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Dominica Manufacturers Association (DMA) and the United Nations Development Programme/ Global Environment Facility-Small Grants Programme (UNDP/GEF-SGP).

Interested persons can fill out the form by visiting www.dominica.gov/notices and clicking on Cocoa Agro-Processor Survey.

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Cocoa Cluster seeks input from agro-processors

DEXIA press release - Friday, October 9th, 2020 at 7:46 AM



The Cocoa Cluster Development Project of Dominica, managed by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and the Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture and National Food Security, seeks input from agro-processors in an effort to capture valuable data on the cocoa sub-sector.





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"As such, she states, "current information is required to inform the cocoa cluster and related stakeholder agencies of the value-addition prospects in the cocoa agro-processing business."

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You can also click this hyperlink to access the survey: Agro-Processor Survey

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UNCATEGORIZED DOMINICA EDITOR'S CHOICE

COCOA CLUSTER SEEKS INPUT FROM AGRO-PROCESSORS

EmoNews Contributor OCTOBER 7, 2020 0 373 2 Min Read



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ROSEAU, TUESDAY OCTOBER 07, 2020: The Cocoa Cluster Development Project of Dominica, managed by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and the Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture and National Food Security, seeks input from agro-processors in effort to capture valuable data on the cocoa sub-sector, especially value-added aspects of the production cycle.

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Cocoa financial model handed over to Ministry of Agriculture

By **Carlisle Jn Baptiste** 23 June 2021 692 0



Dr. Kyra Paul, PS in the Ministry of Agriculture accepts the coca financial model from CREAD CEO Francine Baron

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The Ministry of Blue and Green Economy, Agriculture, and National Food Security now has an additional tool to assist in data management and strategic planning for the cocoa sector with the recent handing over of a cocoa financial model presented to the Ministry at the

start of a training workshop organized by the Cocoa Cluster Development Project of Dominica and held on Thursday 17th June 2021 for extension staff, data and information officers, finance agents, farmers and other cocoa stakeholders who will be putting this financial tool to use.

Dr. Kyra Paul, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, received the document from Francine Baron, CEO of the Climate Resilience Execution Agency for Dominica (CREAD), the organization which developed the model.

In mentioning the government's Cocoa Rehabilitation Project, Dr. Paul pointed that a Cocoa Coordinator has been employed and plants are being propagated to meet annual targets of 25,000 and increases in acreage within the sector which has seen "small but promising growth."

In her remarks at the training workshop, Baron indicated CREAD's satisfaction in developing this model. "CREAD was pleased to have been able to play a part in helping farmers understand the underlying economics of cocoa production. We were able to develop a financial model that provides the farmer with an accurate assessment of expected yield and profit based on their output and outlay of capital and resources," she said.



"Our hope is that by providing farmers with a clearer understanding of all the cost inputs, as well as giving them a view of potential revenues, they can plan appropriately, manage the investments necessary to establish cocoa as a viable and financially rewarding crop, and undertake the long term financial planning that is an essential part of their resilience," she adds.

The Cocoa Cluster was founded in 2019. Funded by Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) with the Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA) as the implementing Agency, the Cluster aims to build on the foundation laid by the Government's Cocoa Rehabilitation Project and seeks to further drive the expansion and development of this promising sector. The cocoa financial model also aligns with the Cluster's focus on change management and data management two of its five areas of improvement, the others being pre-and post-harvest management, labeling and marketing, and product transformation and development.

Wayne Elliott, Coordinator, Productivity and Innovation in Caribbean Firms and Clusters at CCPF, highlighted the organisation's goals to support firms to "grow, compete, innovate and to enter new sectors and markets and to promote an environment that enables innovation and growth."

Cocoa Cluster Manager, Taletha Laudat stressed on the importance of "de-risking in agriculture investments for improved efficiency and profits, and how critical analytics, innovation and sustainable financing tools can improve the competiveness of the cocoa industry."

DEXIA General Manager Paula Platsko expressed further satisfaction with the exercise by stating, "We are quite pleased with CREAD's support of the Project, and their agreement to develop the Cocoa Financial Model upon the request of our Executing Agency, Compete Caribbean. This model aims to support our national resilience objectives, including economic thinking in cocoa farming decisions."

BREAKING!

UPDATED: Death announcement of Jane Cognet, of Bourne, Portsmouth who resided in Queens New York.

UNCATEGORIZED

Community-Based Tourism Cluster Secures Funding

EmoNews Contributor MARCH 31, 2021 0 371 2 Min Read





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(CREAD) -Technical assistance of USD400,000 was secured from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility for a Kalinago Territory and Dominica Essential Oils & Spices Cooperative (DEOSC) Cluster Community Based Tourism project.

Dominica was fortunate to have its project chosen, as one of the three successful projects from a field of six. Submissions were made to an Investment panel comprising regional industry experts assembled by Compete Caribbean. Mr. Louis Hill (Nichie Abo) of the Kalinago Council presented the project to the panel on behalf of the Team and answered questions from the panel.

CREAD was pleased to have provided support to the successful realization of this Project including in drafting the initial proposal on behalf of DEOSC and later when it was merged with the Kalinago Territory Project, which had similar objectives. CREAD views this as an opportunity to share its technical expertise in supporting projects that champion the diversification of our economy. We were delighted to partner with the Ministry of Tourism, the Kalinago Council, and the DEOSC to secure a successful outcome.

The funds will help support a sustainable approach to tourism development in the local communities. There are 24 businesses within the Kalinago community with 16 of these being owned and managed by women. There is a total employment of over 200 people, 60% of whom are women. The DEOSC has 564 active members, more than half of which are women, located in various rural communities, primarily in Southeastern Dominica, and engages in the cultivation of bay leaves and spices. On implementation, the project will benefit the targeted communities by creating more employment while helping to sustain the livelihoods of residents who are highly dependent on the tourism sector.

About Author

EmoNews Contributor

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Business

Compete Caribbean Gives $200,000 To Cocoa Sector Following DEXIA's Proposal

Barbara 7th February, 2020 0 5,534



From Left to Right: Gregoire Thomas- General Manager (DEXIA), Annie Bertrand- Project Coordinator (Compete Caribbean), Taletha Laudat- (Cocoa Cluster Manager) and J. Lloyd Pascal- Head, Export Promotion and Development Department (DEXIA)

The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility has provided $200,000 to the cocoa industry following a proposal submitted by the Dominica Export and Import Agency (DEXIA). The fund is for the Cocoa Cluster Development Programme and is aimed at boosting cocoa cultivation and production in the country.

The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility is a private sector development project that provides stimulation for economic growth, increased productivity, better innovation, and competitive inclusions. The programme was set up to facilitate the cocoa industry's contribution to sustainable livelihood, job creation, rural economy, and food security.

To this end, the Cocoa Cluster Project enables farmers to cultivate high-quality cocoa beans and market them after due packaging among other things. Project Coordinator Annie Bertrand said DEXIA's project was one of the seven in 10 projects selected. DEXIA competed for the selection through due process and emerged one of the seven in 10 Business Support Organizations (BSO) selected in the OECS.

"Dominica has a very competitive advantage just because of the beans that we can grow here and the climate and genetic quality of the beans places it at an advantage," Bertrand said. "There was promise of putting into projection, 300 acres of land and also planting materials would be provided as well as the input required to make sure it was successful."

DEXIA General Manager Gregoire Thomas said the selection would push the cocoa industry forward on the island and would make the sector one of the most competitive in the OECS.

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#Agriculture **#Cocoa** **#Compete Caribbean** **#Farmers** **#Funding**

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Compete Caribbean gives support to innovation

Compete Caribbean Press Release - Monday, July 18th, 2011 at 6:53 PM

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados – Caribbean firms looking to increase productivity, boost exports, expand employment and contribute more to economic diversification and growth, stand to benefit from non-repayable grants ranging from US$100,000 to US$500,000 to support these efforts.

An initiative of Compete Caribbean, a five year private sector development programme involving 15 Caribbean countries, the newly launched Enterprise Innovation Challenge Fund (ECIF) is providing matching grants to encourage innovation by Caribbean firms and support their implementation of such projects.

Grants will be awarded through an open, competitive and transparent process. To apply, firms are first required to submit a brief Project Concept Note (PCN). If they prequalify, the next step involves the submission of a detailed Innovative Business Project (IBP) for consideration by a distinguished panel of Caribbean business executives. The panel will recommend grant recipients.

“The Caribbean private sector is facing a challenging and changing environment in which success depends on international competitiveness and the ability to respond quickly to changes in the market place,” observes Jose Jorge Saavedra, Executive Director of Compete Caribbean





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Located at the Barbados Country Office of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Compete Caribbean is a US$40 million programme benefitting Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, The Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, St Kitts & Nevis, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago.

The IDB, in partnership with the United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), established Compete Caribbean to provide technical assistance and investment funding to support productive development policies, business climate reforms, clustering initiatives and SME development activities. CIDA and DFID have together contributed the lion's share of US$32.55 million.

Noting that innovative ideas exist in every sector, the Compete Caribbean team says it is looking forward to receiving Project Concept Notes from firms engaged in all areas of business activity in the 15 eligible countries. Questions and inquiries should be sent to dfs@comptetecaribbean.org. Full details about the Enterprise Innovation Challenge Fund are available at www.competecaribbean.org/EICF.



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- contain material which violates or encourages others to violate any applicable law
- promote prejudice or prejudicial hatred of any kind
- refer to people arrested or charged with a crime as though they had been found guilty
- contain links to "chain letters", pornographic or obscene movies or graphic images
- are off-topic and/or excessively long

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DEXIA's Business Support Organization's (BSO's) begin week-long Training in capacity building initiatives

3/12/2019 **0 Comments**

The Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA) in collaboration with the Compete Caribbean Partnership

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This training will enable participants to improve the quality of Cluster Development Plans (CDPs) and their potential to impact on employment creation and revenue generation among vulnerable groups.

These CDPs will be reviewed in the 2nd and last quarters of 2019 by two Investment Panels. The CDPs that are deemed suitable for funding will receive up to a maximum of US$300,000.00 in grants DEXIA has submitted CDPs for the coconut and cocoa clusters and hopes the information gleaned in the training will help the Agency improve on its proposal and chances of securing the grant funds.

Here's head of DEXIA's Export Promotion & Development Department, Lloyd Pascal has more.

00:00 00:00

Head of DEXIA's Export Promotion and Development Department, Lloyd Pascal

Meantime, Trade, Energy & Employment Minister Ian Douglas says this marked the beginning of a very important chapter in the service delivery efforts of DEXIA.

The agency is embarking on with its staff and other

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Douglas says the interventions by the management and staff of DEXIA are embraced as well as those of other service providers, stating that his Ministry will continue to play its part.

00:00 00:00

Trade Minister Ian Douglas

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Dominica to receive US$400,000 in technical support for community based tourism

Dominica News Online - Friday, March 26th, 2021 at 7:31 AM

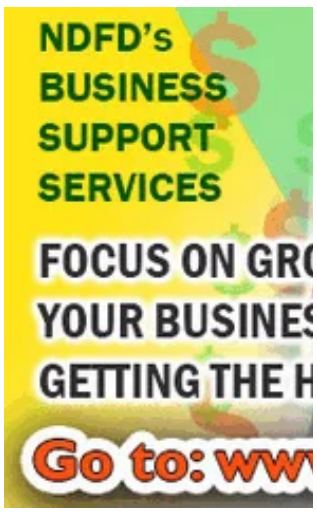


The Government of Dominica will receive US$400,000 worth of technical support for the improvement of community based tourism initiatives.

"The Ministry will receive technical support of US 400,000 towards the improvement of community based tourism initiatives within the community of the Kalinago Territory and those served by the Dominica Essential Oils and Spices Cooperative," Charles said in a statement this week.

She said the government, through the Ministry of Tourism, as well as beneficiaries of the project have also pledged financial and technical







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posed a significant threat to the sustainability of small businesses, highly dependent on the tourism market.

“The intention, therefore, is to strengthen the capacity of product and service providers to enable them to have a global reach, particularly through e-commerce, but by firstly improving their international readiness standards,” the minister stated.

The technical support for the development of the community based tourism clusters, Kalinago Territory and the Dominica Essential Oils and Spices is the result of a successful bid by the Ministry of Tourism to Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF).

The CCPF is a private sector development program that delivers innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, increase productivity and foster innovation and competitiveness. It operates in 13 countries across the Caribbean region.

Charles said Dominica was initially selected among 53 applicants and subsequently short-listed to compete among 8 regional applicants.

“The final regional competition was guided by a rigorous selection process from which only 3 successful proposals were considered for funding towards technical support to improve the products and services offered by the clusters,” she noted.

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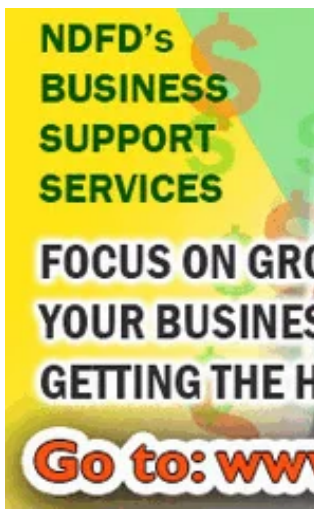
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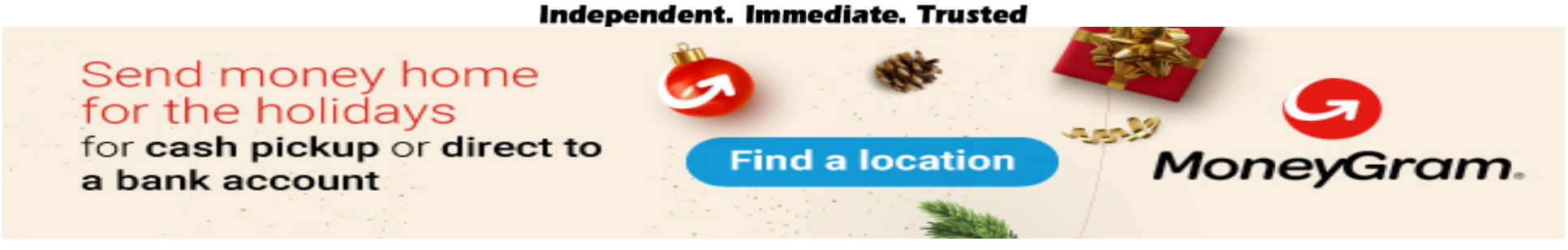




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Invest Dominica Authority gets help to strengthen capacity to attract foreign direct investment

Invest Dominica Authority press release - Tuesday, May 19th, 2020 at 2:32 PM



COMPETE CARIBBEAN

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Invest Dominica Authority (IDA) is pleased to announce that it successfully secured technical assistance from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) to strengthen its capacity to attract sustainable Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). CCPF is a multi-donor Trust Fund, jointly funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, Inter-American Development Bank, Global Affairs Canada and the Caribbean Development Bank.

Following the devastation by Hurricane Maria, the Government of Dominica



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The UK based consultancy firm, Wavteq has been engaged to assist the Government of Dominica in executing the project. Wavteq is a specialist FDI consultancy focusing on lead generation, FDI strategy and capacity building. Wavteq has worked with hundreds of governments and Investment Promotion Agencies in developing and executing investment promotion strategies for increasing FDI in various sectors and capacity building.

The project "Improving Climate Resiliency through Foreign Direct Investment" is aimed at identifying specific investment niches in Dominica for targeting sustainable investments and strengthening the capacity of the (IDA), to attract sustainable investment and contribute to positioning Dominica as the first climate-resilient country.

The project will be undertaken in collaboration and consultation with a wide cross-section of the populace to include stakeholders from civil society and both the private and public sectors. It will be executed in a number of phases, designed to support the country's investment promotion capacity, over an 18-month period starting May 2020.

IDA will be contacting all stakeholders and look forward to your cooperation, participation, and contribution.

Invest Dominica Authority is the Government's Agency responsible for the promotion and facilitation of investments in the Commonwealth of Dominica.

View the latest weather report from the Dominica Meteorological Office

Invest Dominica AUTHORITY

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Ministry of Tourism announces successful bid to Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility which operates in 13 countries across the Caribbean region

3/24/2021 **0 Comments**

Tourism Minister Denise Charles has announced a successful bid to Compete Caribbean Partnership facility. The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility is a private sector development program that delivers innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, increase productivity & foster

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applicants, and subsequently shortlisted to compete among 8 regional applicants.

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Tourism Minister, Denise Charles.

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Trade Minister Ian Douglas says the project to advance Dominica's "Fine & Flavored" Cocoa Industry is moving along satisfactorily with funding from Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility and DEXIA

6/30/2021 **0 Comments**



DEXIA as recently as 2019, following the devastation by Hurricane Maria, introduced the Cocoa Cluster Development Project, in collaboration with a number of key stakeholders to spearhead the development of the island's "Fine & Flavored" Cocoa Industry. The project

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cocoa stakeholders. DEXIA is this week observing its 35th Anniversary.

00:00 00:00

Trade Minister, Ian Douglas.

Like 1 Post

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The Leo & Lions Clubs of Dominica elected a new executive at the club's Annual Installation Dinner on the weekend and Incoming President Janice Hypolite says it is an honor to serve in that position

6/30/2021 0 Comments

A new executive has been selected to lead the Leo & Lions Clubs of Dominica.The clubs held their annual installation dinner on the weekend under the theme "Serving with Renewed Commitment, and Love". Incoming President of the Lions Club Janice Hypolite says it is an honor to receive the position.

00:00 00:00

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opportunities to develop himself, and learn leadership qualities.

00:00 00:00

Incoming President of the Leo Club, Eamon Gibbons.

Like 1 Post

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Health Minister Dr Irving McIntyre announces Dominica will sign an MOU with the World Paediatric program on 12th July, where by surgical services are given to less fortunate children from developing countries

6/30/2021 0 Comments



On 12thJuly Dominica will sign an MOU with the World Paediatric program where services are given to less fortunate children from developing countries regarding surgical procedures. This announcement came from Health Minister, Dr Irving McIntyre.

00:00 00:00

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UWP disturbed by the Skerrit-led DLP Administration's silence about an alleged chattered flight of a senior member of CS Global Partners & a woman who reportedly facilitated Mehul Choksi's kidnapping

6/30/2021 **0 Comments**



'It is weeks now, that Indian International Media has confirmed that a Senior Official of CS Global and Partners, which collects a commission from every Dominican Passport sold through the country's CBI Program, took a private plane chattered to Dominica on the evening that Mehul Choksi arrived in Dominica tortured, given to Dominica's Police and detained possibly on the order of the Ag Chief of Police Lincoln Corbett.'

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Mehul Choksi Saga.

00:00 00:00

Marigot MP, Lennox Linton

Like 10 Post

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WAVE's President Franklyn Cuffy congratulates the management of the Rosalie Resort & Spa, for adopting the Rosalie River, protecting its environment and monitoring against pollution

6/30/2021 0 Comments



WAVE's President Franklyn Cuffy says congratulations are in order for the management of the Rosalie Resort and Spa, for adopting the Rosalie River, protecting its environment and monitoring against pollution.

Cuffy told Q95 news the resort is planning some major activities for this year's World Rivers Day carded for September 26, 2021. World Rivers Day is a global

KFC

Save a Lot

Kubuli Che Bé Sa'w

WAVE President, Franklyn Cuffy

Like 2 Post

0 Comments

CARICOM Secretary-General Ambassador Irwin LaRocque recently received Letters of Credence from the new Ambassador of Belgium to CARICOM His Excellency Hugo Verbist in a virtual ceremony

6/30/2021 0 Comments



CARICOM Secretary-General Ambassador Irwin LaRocque received Letters of Credence from the new Ambassador of Belgium to CARICOM His Excellency Hugo Verbist in a virtual ceremony









developed countries to provide access to vaccines for developing countries.I take due note of Belgium's contribution both in cash and vaccines. We highly appreciate the EU's contribution to the COVAX Facility.

He went on further to state, "We would welcome the support of Belgium in using its important voice in the international community towards the development of a universal vulnerability index. This would be a more relevant criterion, especially for small vulnerable economies like ours, than that of GDP per capita."

00:00 00:00

CARICOM Secretary-General Ambassador, Irwin LaRocque

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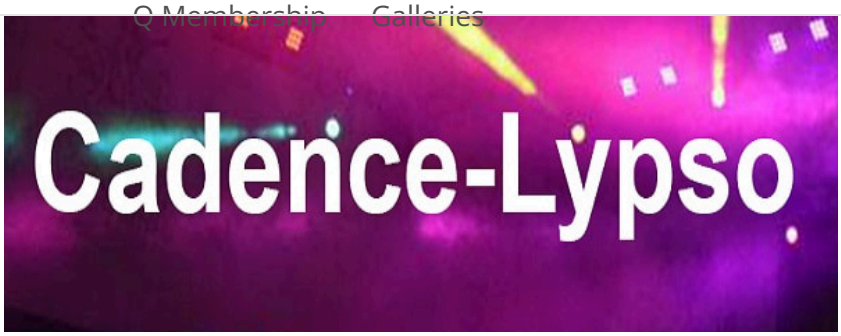
This Friday at 11 am, the Month of July will officially be recognized as Cadence-Lypso Month, at launch ceremony to be held at the UWI Open Campus says Organizer & Promoter Leroy Wadix Charles

6/30/2021 0 Comments

DEPEX Colour Lab www.depexcolorlab.com

National Co-operative Credit Union Ltd.

SEABORNE AIRLINES



The Month of July will officially be recognized and launched as Cadence-Lypso Month this Friday July 2, 2021. That's according to Event Promoter, Veteran Radio Personality and host of the "Creole Heartbeat" Program, Leroy Wadix Charles. He listed the dates of a series of panel discussions to take place throughout the month of June, with an official press launch at 11am at the UWI open Campus.

Cadence-Lypso is a fusion of cadence rampa from Haiti and Calypso from Trinidad & Tobago, that has also spread to other English-speaking countries of the Caribbean. Originated in the 1970s by the Dominican band ExileOne, it spread and became popular in dance clubs around the Creole world and Africa and in the French Antilles.

Gordon Henderson is the leader and founder of Exile One, and the one who coined the term Cadence-Lypso.







RBC

0 Comments

One of the WCMF Initiators, Former Minister of Finance, and Owner of AC Shillingford and Company, Julius Timothy, stresses the significance of the WCMF event to the economy

6/29/2021 0 Comments



One of the WCMF Initiators, Former Minister of Finance, and Owner of AC Shillingford and Company, Julius Timothy, adds that the World Creole Music Festival Project was significant to the economy of Dominica, and provided an overview of what he experienced while he served as Finance Minister.

He revealed that engaging the French neighboring islands to participate in Dominica's WCMF events, was











Timothy also revealed that the Executive of the committee always Executed the event, in ways that would financially benefit Dominicans throughout the Tourism Sector.

00:00 00:00

One of the WCMF Initiators, Former Minister of Finance, and Owner of AC Shillingford and Company, Julius Timothy.

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Owner of Ace Engineering Ltd and Executive Member of the Dominica Business Forum Anthony LeBlanc says Voter ID cards must not only be used for voting but also for voter registration!

6/29/2021 0 Comments



Owner of Ace Engineering Ltd and Executive Member of the Dominica Business Forum, Anthony Leblanc, expresses the need for implementation of the House-

occurred in the 2019 General Elections in Dominica.

00:00 00:00

Leblanc laments to the Dominican Public that the foolish dependency on indelible Ink for voting is ridiculous, taking into consideration the anti-Election fraud systems adopted by other democratic countries globally in recent years.

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Owner of Ace Engineering Ltd and Executive Member of the Dominica Business Forum, Anthony Leblanc

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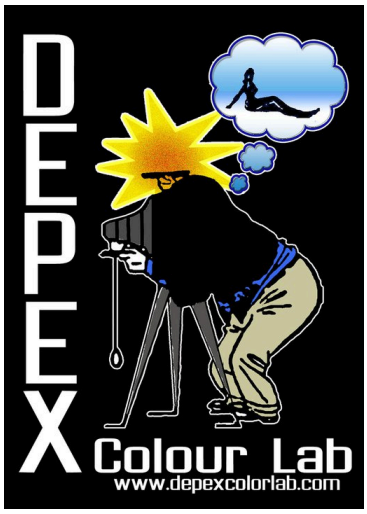
Hospital Medical Director Ruby Blanc says the New Ophthalmology Wing at the Dominica China Friendship Hospital is gearing up to begin seeing patients as soon as next week

6/29/2021 0 Comments









Dr. Ruby Blanc speaking at yesterday's press conference at the Dominica China Friendship Hospital (DCFH) announced a potential screening solution to identify Diabetic Retinopathy in Patients with Diabetes.

The Ophthalmology department of the Dominica-China Friendship Hospital and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) collaborated in conducting research into the use of this technology.

She says many patientsare awaitingfor their opportunity to be seen or treated due to the present circumstance, but the staff is optimistic about the days ahead.

00:00 00:00

She encourages diabetics to take the necessary measures to keep themselves healthy and maintainregular check-ins, as it is with a collaborative effort that much can be accomplished.

00:00 00:00

Dr Ruby Blanc, Hospital Medical Director.

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Regional program launched to boost competitiveness in the Caribbean

Press Release - Wednesday, October 12th, 2011 at 7:43 AM

Kingston, Jamaica – Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding launched the largest donor-funded regional private sector development program in the Caribbean on Tuesday, 11th October 2011 in Kingston. The Rt. Honourable Alan Duncan MP, Minister of State in the UK's Department for International Development joined the Prime Minister in addressing the event.

The US$40 million Compete Caribbean program is a five-year joint initiative of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United Kingdom Government's Department for International Development (DFID), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). It was developed, in consultation with governments, regional institutions and private sector bodies, as a response to the need for greater coordination among development agencies.

In the key note address, Prime Minister Golding said "The launch and implementation of the Compete Caribbean Program is appropriate and timely because it adds to the work already identified in the region and it brings new energy, resources, and further strength and velocity to the





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The UK Minister for International Development, Alan Duncan, who is on a 3 day visit to the region, praised the partnership between the UK, Canada and the IDB that developed the COMPETE Caribbean initiative. He noted that "Growth was poor in the Caribbean even before the global downturn. Tinkering at the edges of the problem won't work. The Caribbean must find new markets to increase exports and create jobs. COMPETE Caribbean aims to do exactly this."



The one-day launch event was attended by senior Caribbean government officials and leading Caribbean business people including John Williams, CEO of Cave Shepherd and Co Limited of Barbados and Joseph Matalon, Chairman of Industrial Commercial Developments Group Limited in Jamaica. Andrew Downes, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Planning and Development at the University of the West Indies (UWI) and Chairman of the Caribbean Competitiveness Centre at UWI which was established with support from the program, also participated in the event held at the Wyndham Hotel in Kingston, Jamaica.

In addition to panel discussions on "Fostering Economic Growth through the Private Sector in the Caribbean" and "Experiences Doing Business in the Caribbean", a special panel on attracting investment featured representatives from Portland Private Equity, Leopard Capital and Scotiabank.

Executive Director, for Compete Caribbean, Jose Jorge Saavedra highlighted that "Improving competitiveness is the key to success for every country in the globalized economy of the 21st Century. It is also the predominant issue that will determine what kind of economic future lies ahead for the Caribbean". Mr. Saavedra also provided details on a number of exciting special initiatives that were already underway, such as the Caribbean Competitiveness Centre, the Conversations on Growth Initiative and the Compete Caribbean Fellowship Program.

With a focus on increasing growth and creating jobs, the program recognizes that competitiveness is particularly important to Caribbean small states if they are to overcome the inherent limitations posed by their size and take advantage of global trade opportunities. The program will work with governments regional organizations and the private sector to develop better policies and strategies for to promote private sector growth; improve the investment climate and cut red tape; and through a Challenge Fund, provide grants to firms that seek to develop innovative products and services for export.

Full details about Compete Caribbean and its various projects can be obtained by visiting www.competecaribbean.org.

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Bee Keeping A Growth Industry In Caribbean, As It Declines In US



When the International Monetary Fund projected recently that Guyana's economy could jump by 86 percent in 2020, it credited recent oil and gas discoveries. But a different buzz is exciting two of the South American nation's premier industries, agribusiness and tourism. They're looking to marry their sectors to offer a new attraction to visitors: bees.

Guyana is not alone. For decades, the Caribbean has counted on its **pristine beaches — and Guyana on its lush rainforests — to draw millions of visitors**. Now, the region's countries are increasingly looking to broaden their draw with **bee tourism** — also known as apitourism — at a time the populations of more than 700 North American bee varieties are on the decline, according to the Center for Biological Diversity.

20190213_155024

Safari guests examine a colony of European bees at an apiary in Canaan, Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago is hosting a bee safari in early 2020, publicizing the event as a way to beat the winter blues while gaining insights into tropical beekeeping. In St. Lucia, the Washington-based Global Environment Facility — a

partnership of 183 nations and civil society organizations — is backing local beekeepers who are offering four-day bee safaris and one-day bee farm tours.

Starting in 2020, Eden Farm Tours in Grenada will offer apitherapy spa packages. The company is also trying to launch the Caribbean's first medical-grade honey. The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility — a collaboration of regional private sector firms — and the Caribbean Tourism Organization recently announced grants of up to $400,000 for innovative new agritourism initiatives, including in bee tourism.

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Guyana plans on offering three- to five-day safari tours for tourists to sample the country's varieties of honey while observing domestic hives. This support from governments and regional and global organizations points to the growing confidence that bee tourism could add to the region's estimated $56 billion annual tourism revenue, and capture a slice of the global apiculture industry that's estimated to touch $10 billion by 2023.

"Guyana has vast agricultural resources and is a strong emerging tourism destination," says Donald Sinclair, director general of Guyana's Department of Tourism. "So it is only natural to see how we can use agriculture as a base for providing satisfactory tourism experiences."

The Guyana Apiculture Society plans to take visitors to apiaries near the majestic Demerara and Essequibo rivers, says the body's vice president, Linden Stewart. Tourists will see bees pollinating blossoms, then visit a honey house to observe the extraction, filtration and bottling of honey with an opportunity for sampling.

For the region's beekeepers, tapping into tourism makes sense. "When you are in a Caribbean island … if you are not in tourism, you are not in business," says Richard Matthias, president of the Iyanola Apiculture Collective in St. Lucia.


bees3Photo from Jewel Fraser

Gladstone Solomon at his apiary in a forest in Mount St. George, Tobago. Source Jewel Fraser

For tourists, the Caribbean promises opportunities impossible to find in North America, say experts. Caribbean bees have a very different diet, says Gladstone Solomon, former president of the Association of Caribbean Beekeepers' Organizations. In North America, bees often have to settle for acres of almonds or other monoculture crops. In the Caribbean, bees forage on a range of nectar sources, from forest trees to shrubs to commercial plants. As a consequence, the honey produced in the Caribbean varies throughout the year, depending on the plants flowering at the time, explains Matthias. "At some times of the year some flowers may be predominant; at other times there is a mixture of nice floral bouquets," he says. "At the end of the year other trees come into flower and the honey tastes like licorice."

When Solomon, 70, started bee safaris in Tobago nearly two decades ago, he was a pioneer. Now, increasing numbers of regional players are entering the market. His 11-day safaris target bee enthusiasts and also expose them to local cuisine and a steel band rehearsal in Trinidad. “It’s not a niche that would be attractive to everyone,” he admits, but it works “in an era where increasing numbers of persons are looking for unique experiences.”

For now, Slovenia is the world leader in bee tourism with resorts and marketing dedicated to the sector. Matthias acknowledges the Caribbean has some catching up to do, but adds that it has advantages. For one, there’s its unrivaled natural beauty. Tourists on the St. Lucia bee safaris visit the island’s famous Pitons — mountainous volcanic plugs — mangroves and virgin forest. And Caribbean bee tourism has started receiving significant financial support. The Global Environment Facility has awarded Matthias’ collective a $50,000 grant to establish a tour service targeting the 600,000 cruise ship visitors who come to St. Lucia each year.



Recent research by University of Arkansas scientists also suggests that bees that feast on monoculture crops are **nutritionally deprived**. That means the healthier Caribbean bees might be the future of bee tourism in the Americas.

To be sure, beekeeping in the Caribbean comes with its own challenges — pesticides, beehive theft and inadequate pasture for hosting apiaries are some key ones, says Hayden Sinanan, inspector of apiaries in Trinidad and Tobago’s Ministry of Agriculture. Both Solomon, who runs six apiaries in Trinidad and Tobago, and Ravi Rajkumar, a third-generation beekeeper in Guyana, cite the lack of pasture area as a major concern. The Trinidadian government has promised more land but has yet to deliver, says Solomon, who holds a bachelor’s degree in tourism management and a master’s in agriculture and rural development. Adding to expenses, says Matthias, is that most equipment needed to run apiaries has to be imported.

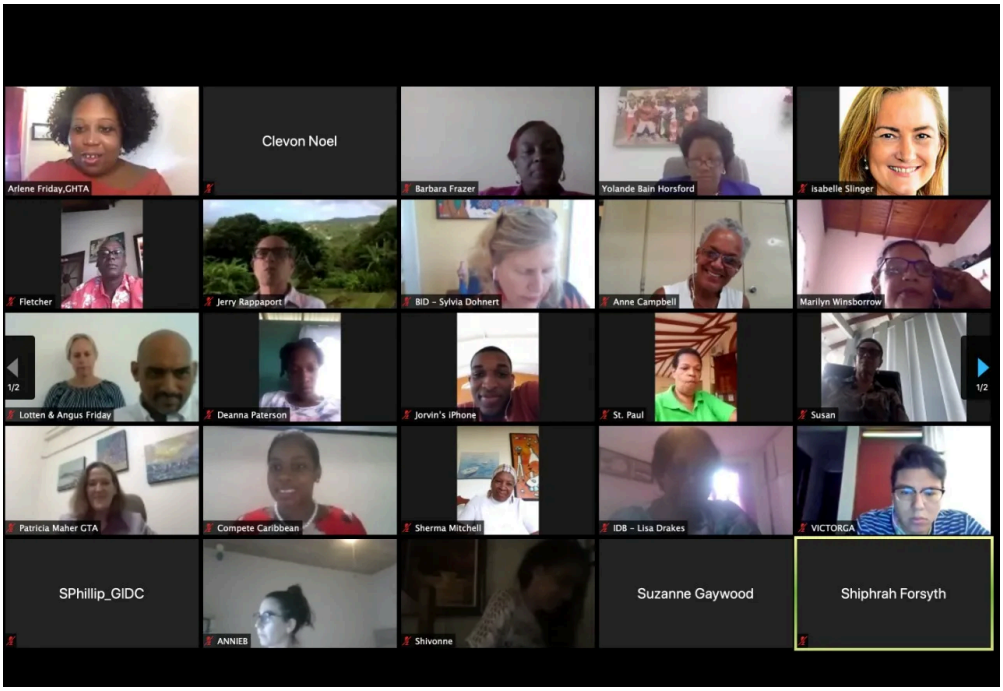
But where there is a will, there is a way. Once decision-makers understand the importance of bees to the environment, they'll do more to support apitourism, says Sinanan. "If there is something wrong in the natural environment it will be seen first in a bee colony," he says. "They are the canary in the coal mine."

(SOURCE) StkittsnevisObserver



Floriculture Cluster Project Officially Launched in Grenada

Floriculture, GTA, Local News, Tourism | June 19, 2020



St. George's, Grenada W.I – June 19, 2020 – The Grenada Hotel & Tourism Association and the Flower Arrangers & Growers Association of Grenada successfully launched the Grenada Floriculture Cluster Project on Thursday, June 18, 2020. Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Honourable Yolande Bain-Horsford was the featured speaker, which took place in the virtual domain due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In attendance also were Dr Sylvia Dohnert, Executive Director of the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), Mr. Jerry Rappaport, President of the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA), Mr. Fletcher Frank, President of the Flower Arrangers and Growers Association of Grenada (FAGAG) Inc. and Ms. Patricia Maher, CEO of the Grenada Tourism Authority (GTA).

Training sessions in Agronomy, Horticulture, export preparedness, best practices, marketing and climate mitigation among others will be the core of the project. In addition, there will be a greenhouse / shade house pilot project as well as a biogas / composting pilot project, and the development of a website and a supply and demand App.

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The project is primarily supported by grants from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) which in turn is funded by a consortium of donors which include the Inter-American Development Bank, the UK Department for International Development, the Government of Canada and the Caribbean Development Bank.

The Minister congratulated the initiative stating that the project 'will provide a significant boost to the floriculture sector.' She further said that the Ministry of Agriculture is 'committed to the revitalization of the sector', that 'agriculture is one of the pillars of Grenada's economy and diversification is critical to economic growth'. She continued in elaborating that the sector 'is well poised to contribute to diversification (of the agricultural sector) … through this cluster.' She lauded the contribution of the CCPF and the Cluster association as well as the business support organisation, the GHTA which had previously contributed to pivoting the tourism industry in Grenada with the development of the Pure Grenada brand in 2014.

Dr. Sylvia Dohnert, Executive Director of the CCPF, explained the rationale behind the cluster thrust by the funding consortium. She outlined that in the 1970s, the Caribbean region was highly advanced where the GDP per capita was 4 times higher than the rest of the small economies compared to today where it is infinitely smaller at .09. This is attributed to smaller older family owned firms, difficulties in accessing finance, lower investments in Research and Development and less involvement in exports.

The cluster initiative therefore serves to support private sector development in the region, falling under the Productivity and Innovation pillar which involves clusters and value chains, entrepreneurship and innovation and technology adoption. She welcomed the launch and lauded the collaborative approach of all stakeholders – Ministry of Agriculture, GHTA and FAGAG Inc.

Mr. Jerry Rappaport, President of the GHTA, gave a history of the project including a remembrance of Mr. Lawrence Lambert, a former president of the GHTA, and flower aficionado illustrating how a seed of a conversation can grow into something substantial. As a socially responsible organisation, the GHTA is committed to supporting sub-sectors which feed into the tourism industry and the floriculture is one in which he believed the potential to flourish would be exponential. At a local level, he gave thanks to the GTA, Sandals Foundation, Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Tourism stating that this project would do what flowers do which is to 'bring joy into our lives'.

Mr. Fletcher Frank, President of the FAGAG Inc, spoke of a new dawn for floriculture in Grenada. He stated that there was 'great potential for increased earnings and livelihoods. With demand exceeding supply, the use of technology and climate smart strategies would assist in modernizing the sector. As did most of the speakers, he spoke to the reputation of the Chelsea Flower Show and said that it was time 'to convert our success at Chelsea' into revenues. In summation, he said 'Let us continue to nurture the participation as it is essential to take the floriculture sector to a sustainable level of growth and development.'

The launch was well attended by dignitaries, members of the cluster, members of the Chelsea Flower Show Committee, TAMCC students and other guests.

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The project is primarily supported by grants from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) which in turn is funded by a consortium of donors which include the Inter-American Development Bank, the UK Department for International Development, the Government of Canada and the Caribbean Development Bank.

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Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association

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GHTA And Compete Caribbean To Boost Grenada Floriculture Industry

By **Mikey Live** - May 26, 2020

Post Views: 171



PR- The Grenada Floriculture Industry will receive a tremendous boost in building sustainability and satisfying local and export demand as a result of a public private sector partnership between the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA), the Flower Arrangers and Growers Association of Grenada Inc., the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and the Ministry of Agriculture. CCPF is a multi-donor Trust Fund, jointly funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, Inter-American Development Bank, the Government of Canada and the Caribbean Development Bank.

Following on the positive synergies created by the collaboration between the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association, the Compete Partnership Facility, the Grenada Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Tourism in the development of the highly successful Pure Grenada brand, the GHTA as a socially responsible business support organization, identified the floricultural sector as an area which required support in relation to its added value to the Grenada tourism product as well as the agricultural sector.

The rise in tourism has resulted in increased stay over visitors and yacht arrivals which has led to increased demand for our exotic tropical flowers. There has also been an increased demand as well as a call for more variety of flowers in both the local and visitors' markets for weddings, graduations, funerals etc. as client expectations with regard to their events require more sophisticated and extravagant outlays.

The project will entail webinars to improve the producers' and employees' knowledge base and technical capacity, pilot greenhouse and bio-gas projects, website development and a supply and demand app to connect producers and arrangers.

The project will kick off in June 2020 with a virtual launch.

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GHTA and Compete Caribbean to Boost Grenada Floriculture Industry

St. George's Grenada W.I - May 26, 2020 - The Grenada Floriculture Industry will receive a tremendous boost in building sustainability and satisfying local and export demand as a result of a public-private sector partnership between the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA), the Flower Arrangers and Growers Association of Grenada Inc., the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and the Ministry of Agriculture.

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Grenada Floriculture Cluster begins horticulture training

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Vacancy: Business Partner/ Data Analyst

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Grenada Floriculture Cluster Project

Share

The Grenada Floriculture Cluster Project, which was funded by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), began 3 months of horticulture webinar training on 1 October 2020.



The webinar training aims at increasing and developing the knowledge base of all participants to improve the level of production and the quality of the flowers produced by the sector.

The Flower Arrangers and Growers Association of Grenada (FAAGAG) and the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA) joined together

more modern approach to the delivery of the horticultural product and also to contribute a more significant share of the nation's economy.

In the recent introductory webinar session, Anne Campbell, a member of the cluster and FAAGAG, expressed her happiness for the training, "Thanks for all the exploratory work…. the course outline has everything everyone wants and more!"

The FAAGAG is comprised of growers and arrangers throughout the length and breadth of Grenada. They range from micro to medium-sized businesses and represent a diverse cross-section of Grenadians including both males and females. The FAAGAG and GHTA have also reached out to TAMCC agricultural students and included them in this webinar component of the project.

In total, 32 participants are expected to benefit from the training by December 2020.

To improve the Grenadian horticulture sector, the Grenada Floriculture Cluster Project was started in March 2020. The project also received financial support from the Sandals Foundation and technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture.

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Grenada Floriculture Cluster Beings Horticulture Training

Agriculture, Floriculture, GHTA, Horticulture, Local News | October 6, 2020



St. George, Grenada W.I – October 5, 2020 – The Grenada Floriculture Cluster Project, which was funded by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), began three months of horticulture webinar training on October 1, 2020. The webinar training aims at increasing and developing the knowledge base of all participants to improve the level of production and the quality of the flowers produced by the sector.

The Flower Arrangers and Growers Association of Grenada (FAAGAG) and the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA) joined together to provide the necessary support and structure to benefit from the CCPF. In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and CCPF, these associations are committed to introducing a more modern approach to the delivery of the horticultural product and also to contribute a more significant share of the nation's economy.

In the recent introductory webinar session Mrs Anne Campbell, a member of the cluster and FAAGAG, expressed her happiness for the training: "Thanks for all the exploratory work…. the course outline has everything everyone wants and more!"

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In total, thirty-two participants are expected to benefit from the training by December 2020.

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Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA)

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The Grenada horticulture sector is in a vibrant resurgence with growth in the numbers of flower growers and flower arrangers, nurseries and gardens.



The horticultural cluster has a significant contribution to make to Grenada's economy in the provision of employment and its economic contribution to Gross Domestic Product. The horticulture cluster comprises a group of 27 companies and registered names. Over 90% of

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At present, the sector continues to benefit from a technical assistance initiative that seeks to introduce and implement climate change mitigating strategies and techniques. These efforts are seeking to build the resilience of the sector and position it to take advantage of local and foreign demand. Through partnerships with the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), the Sandals Foundation, and the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA), the Flower Arrangers and Growers Association of Grenada Inc. is undertaking a series of activities that range from training in biotechnology, climate smart sustainable irrigation practices, agronomy and horticulture best practices to build the knowledge base capacity of the sector.

Now in its second year, the project continues to achieve its goals by incorporating digital technologies, as a result of the broad-ranging impacts of Covid-19. Recognising the potential of the sector's contribution to Grenada, the Ministry of Agriculture is also supportive of the initiative and the cluster members had the opportunity to meet with Minister of Agriculture Hon Peter David in February this year, to discuss areas of mutual interest.

The cluster has participated in several trainings that contributed towards building capacity for the sector so that it can serve the local market

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a website will also be created that will help build better communication between stakeholders.

In the short term, participants will be pursuing certification to strengthen the industry's advancement towards sustainable exports. Scholarships are being offered to TAMCC students to receive certification in CVQ Level 2 Amenity Horticulture, while a further 8 students from the TA Marryshow Community College, 2 Extension Officers from the Ministry of Agriculture and 5 others from vulnerable groups across Grenada will have the opportunity to pursue this accredited certification.

GHTA

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Tags: ccpf compete caribbean floriculture ghta grenada hotel & tourism association horticulture

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JenJen 3 years ago

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that allow you to grow any plants. The more destruction the less rain, the more erosion etc. It is more than just talk it is action to protect the rainforest.

Reply

Jan 3 years ago

This is a very good initiative. Flowers can be cultivated and sold on the export market. Locally markets can be created for plants which we are not too famliar with but which will thrive in our climate such as flowering succulents. Flowers enhace the surroudings and add beauty.

Reply

Kesri Johnson 3 years ago

If Grenadians really care about flowers I dont see it nor do I see this vibrant demand, that this article claims.

Other than a few areas where Expats luve, the Flowers that grow in Grenada for the most part is despite their neglect and bad treatment rather than any care and nurture.

Yet another article subliminally pushing Covid, Technology and Climate Change propaganda.

Reply

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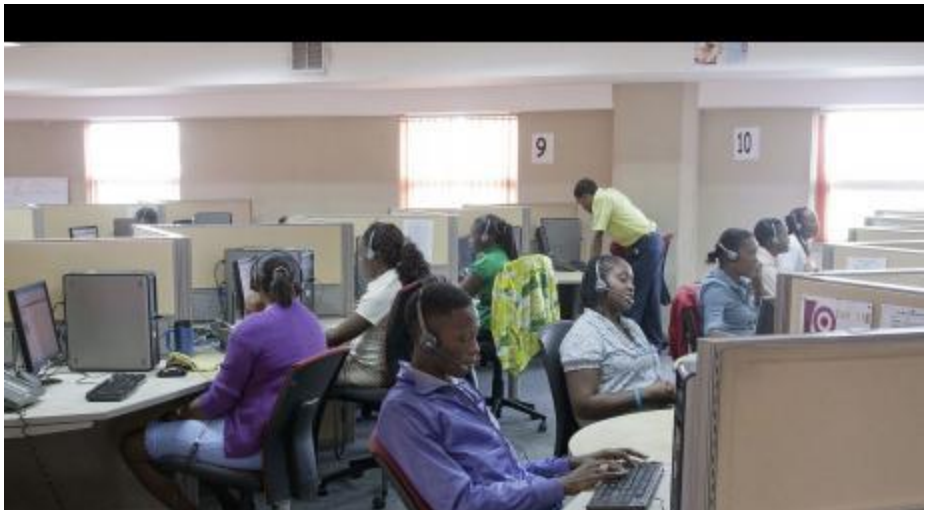


10 small J'can BPO firms to benefit from US$480,000 growth project

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Published: Sunday | August 18, 2019 | 12:00 AM

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95-y-o farmer Vera Baker enduring despite vision trouble

About 10 small operators in the flourishing business process outsourcing (BPO) industry are to be selected for a US$480,000 project aimed at enabling them to move up the value chain.

The Jamaica GSS Project will assist these firms to digitise their operations and embrace growing trends in the sector.

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Which "Kung Fu Panda" movie is your favorite?

"Kung Fu Panda"

"Kung Fu Panda 2"

"Kung Fu Panda 3"

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The project will also assist with the development of a general GSS strategic road map to help members refine and

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for scaling up. This will be done by increasing the institutional capacity of the association to better serve its growing membership, improve advocacy capabilities, and develop more effective rules and procedures.

BPIAJ president, Gloria Henry, explained that 10 companies will be selected for the project and they will receive critical support over an 18-month period.

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A consultant will be engaged to develop the criteria to identify the firms. Henry said the consultant should be on board by October "so we expect to end the year with the project already started".

She noted that the project is a continuation of critical support to Jamaica under the Compete Caribbean programme, and follows the establishment of the 200-seat incubator facility in Montego Bay in 2015.

"Since then, we have accommodated eight firms and we have created employment opportunities for over 2,000 employees directly and that has continued on a sustainable model," Henry said.

"We have since re-equipped the facility, put in new furniture, redesigned it, increase it by 10 per cent and we continue to evolve with that model to the extent that we are expanding the model into Kingston," she added.

Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Pearnel Charles Jr., said the Jamaica Global Services

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He was speaking at the launch of the project on Wednesday at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) headquarters in Kingston.

Charles Jr. noted that the initiative, which is a partnership between the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and the Business Process Industry Association of Jamaica (BPIAJ), is in keeping with the government's commitment to support expansion of the BPO sector by assisting small, local firms.

"We reaffirm our commitment. We acknowledge all of the work that has been done by the stakeholders in the sector," he added.

CCPF - a co-financing facility established by the IDB, United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), Government of Canada and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) - is providing US$400,000 for the undertaking with US$80,000 from the BPIAJ.

The Complete Caribbean programme funded over 100 private sector projects across the region over the period 2010-2016.

The projects generated nearly 12,000 jobs; a 23 per cent increase in exports (US$153 million), as well as improvement in the business climate for some countries through policy or regulatory reforms.

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«UN road safety envoy recommends certification of

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The Faculty of Science & Technology



CCPF conducts in-country review of MIAS' led Jamaican Black Castor Oil Project



Ms. Liz Bower, Team Leader, Inclusive Economic Growth, Caribbean, UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) visited the Mona Campus on Wednesday, May 3, 2023 to take a look at the research work being done by the Mona Institute of Applied Sciences (MIAS) team that is aimed at giving Jamaica dominance in the US$300 million per annum Jamaican Black Castor Oil market for which the island currently commands less than US$5 million.

Ms. Brower visit was on behalf of the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) Grant Funders of project. The CCPF is a private sector development programme that delivers innovative and practical solutions that stimulates economic growth, increase productivity and foster innovation and competitiveness. CCPF works with 13 countries across the Caribbean region and is a partnership between the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the Government of Canada.

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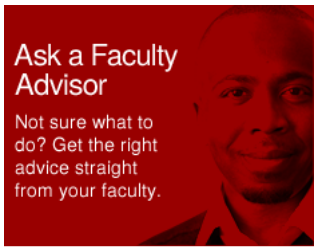


Photo caption: Members of Mona Institute of Applied Sciences (MIAS) Grow Castor Bean Project Team with Ms. Liz Bower, Team Leader - Inclusive Economic Growth, Caribbean, UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). From left to right- Romario Smith - Project Officer, Steven Stone - Project Officer, Akeem Robinson - Project Development Officer, Shirley Lindo - Community Outreach Project Assistant, Liz Brower and Dr. Howard Reid - Director, MIAS and Principal Investigator for the project.

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Facility to drive climate-resilient projects and funding coming for Jamaica

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private partnerships, International Finance Corporation; Bill Winters, group chief executive of Standard Chartered and Mehdi Tazi-Riffi, the chief executive officer of Tanger Med, a logistics and port operator. -Contributed photo

95-y-o farmer Vera Baker enduring despite vision trouble

Jamaica is working with several international financial institutions and donors to establish a mechanism to fund climate initiatives and boost private sector investment in the country.

The collaboration was announced today at the 2023 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Morocco. It involves the IMF, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Green Climate Fund (GCF), the United Kingdom, and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

How concerned are you about gang violence in your neighborhood?

Very concerned

Somewhat concerned

Not at all concerned

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The institutions are pursuing a three-pronged approach to enhance Jamaica's climate-smart development. This includes the development of a project preparation facility to be known as the Jamaica Green Facility, to open next year and be based locally.

The facility is expected to help generate "bankable projects" required to scale up private investments across Jamaica, while reducing the financing burden on the public sector, according to a media statement. The costs involved were not stated.

The Government, the GCF and EIB will lead in establishing the facility. The GCF will provide credit and capacity development to finance local climate projects directly or through local financial institutions. Climate-smart agriculture, energy efficiency, water resource management, sustainable transport, among other investments, are some of the targeted areas.

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Once established, the facility is expected to pave the way for Jamaica's other bilateral and multilateral financing partners to offer their support through additional funding, technical support and capitalisation

Finance Minister Dr Nigel Clarke said the Government is "absolutely delighted" at the collaboration.

"Jamaica's development will require significant and sustained infrastructure investment that outstrips the resource capacity of the Government. We will therefore need to attract local and international private investment through structured transactions. In

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Clarke added: "These developments represent substantial policy dividends for Jamaica accruing from our climate finance reforms which have been supported by the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust program."

Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, EIB vice-president Ricardo Mourinho Félix, IDB President Ilan Goldfajn, and the GCF's Executive Director Mafalda Duarte welcomed the partnership.

Georgieva said the fund "is committed to supporting our members' economic and financial sector policies to meet their climate goals".

"We're happy to be launching the region's first dedicated project preparation facility for public private partnerships. These and other related initiatives will be crucial to help catalyse new and larger volumes of private financing for resilient and climate-smart investment," Goldfajn said.

This latest initiative follows the US$764 million resilience and sustainability arrangement approved by the IMF for Jamaica last year. That arrangement supports reforms to strengthen Jamaica's physical and fiscal resilience to climate change.

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Government to allow pension funds to access venture capital

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Published: Tuesday | November 20, 2018 | 12:00 AM | Paul Clarke/Gleaner Writer

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service, disclosing plans to change the investment limits for pension funds holders, allowing them the latitude to invest in venture capital.

He made the point while delivering the main address at a Compete Caribbean event at the Marriott Courtyard in New Kingston on Tuesday.

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Compete Caribbean is an innovation and partnership facility that delivers innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, increase productivity, and fosters innovation and

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Clarke said that institutional capital available to pursue venture capital activities and risk-taking activities is non-existent in Jamaica, but the Government intends to change that stance.

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"In recognition of our desire, our intention, our commitment for economic opportunity for all, to see every child born in those circumstances, whether you are from the top of the hills of St Andrew or you are from inner-city Kingston, you possess the drive, the grit, the determination, and the ideas that you too can access capital," the finance minister said.

"And for that reason, we are going to change the investment limits for pension funds to give pension funds the ability to invest in venture capital."

MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

He noted that in modern Jamaica, pension funds are restricted from investing in venture capital.

"Their limit is zero. That's crazy if we are interested in growth and innovation. And it's crazy as well in the context of entrenched macroeconomic stability, where we are pursuing low, stable; and predictable inflation because no longer will we be able to satisfy pension liabilities by investing in government bonds. You will have to take risks," Clarke said.

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stance, moving the limit from zero, to make an abundance of capital available.

"When we move the limit from zero to five per cent, based on the $550 billion in pension funds, over $25 billion in capital will be available for investing in venture capital. That is a game changer, for innovation, for opportunity, and for growth," stated Clarke.

He said that the strategy going forward is to make the most of the unprecedented opportunity, where all the country's macro variables are aligned and are moving in the right direction.

paul.clarke@gleanerjm.com

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Intellectual property being positioned as collateral for MSME loan access

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95-y-o farmer Vera Baker enduring despite vision trouble

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) operators will soon be able to use their Intellectual Property (IP) as collateral to access loans from financial institutions.

This was disclosed by the Executive Director of the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO), Lilyclaire Bellamy, during an interview with JIS News on Thursday.

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Bellamy said the Security Interests in Personal Property Act, 2013 makes provisions for businesses to tap into a more comprehensive

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Consequently, JIPO, which falls under the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, partnered with key stakeholders to embark on a pilot project in March 2021, aimed at training evaluators to assess the value of IP for small businesses.

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The project is titled 'Strengthening the Intellectual Property (IP) Ecosystem to Increase Innovation, Competitiveness and Growth of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Jamaica'.

The initiative has an overarching goal of supporting the Act's implementation by addressing gaps in Jamaica's intellectual property ecosystem, to create the conditions for IP commercialisation and collateralisation.

Strengthening of the IP ecosystem will allow MSMEs to capitalise on their intellectual property for economic advancement, and promote innovation, competitiveness and growth in Jamaica.

Bellamy said the pilot is expected to be completed by March 2023, with the attendant arrangement anticipated to become standard, thereafter.

“We are actually in the process of training evaluators [who] will look at your designs, trademarks or patents and ascribe a value to it. Based on that value, you will be able to go to a commercial bank and say, 'this is the value of my IP, can you give me a loan on the basis of my intellectual property?'” she explained.

Among the key project stakeholders are the Inter-American

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Bellamy indicated that “we're planning to have further discussions with the International Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank about how we can continue the project and see if we can get further funding to train more evaluators”.

Persons interested in gaining access to the approved list of trained evaluators, may contact the JIPO at (876) 946-1300 or visit their website at https://www.jipo.gov.jm/.

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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY BEING POSITIONED AS COLLATERAL FOR MSME LOAN ACCESS



Executive Director, Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO), Lilyclaire Bellamy.

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Micro, small and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) operators will soon be able to use their Intellectual Property (IP) as collateral to access loans from financial institutions.

This was disclosed by Executive Director of the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO), Lilyclaire Bellamy, during an interview with JIS News on Thursday (January 26).

Ms. Bellamy said the Security Interests in Personal Property Act, 2013 makes provisions for businesses to tap into a more comprehensive range of collateral options, besides land, to access secured loans.

These include inventory, accounts receivables, and intellectual property and are aimed at offsetting limitation challenges MSMEs experience when seeking to access financing for their operations.

Consequently, JIPO, which falls under the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, partnered with key stakeholders to embark on a pilot project in March 2021, aimed at training evaluators to assess the value of IP for small businesses.

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Strengthening of the IP ecosystem will allow MSMEs to capitalise on their intellectual property for economic advancement, and promote innovation, competitiveness and growth in Jamaica.

Ms. Bellamy said the pilot is expected to be completed by March 2023, with the attendant arrangement anticipated to become standard, thereafter.

“We are actually in the process of training evaluators [who] will look at your designs, trademarks or patents and ascribe a value to it. Based on that value, you will be able to go to a commercial bank and say, ‘this is the value of my IP, can you give me a loan on the basis of my intellectual property?’” she explained.

Among the key project stakeholders are the Inter-American Development Bank, Caribbean Development Bank, and the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, the latter of which is providing funding and support for the initiative.

Ms. Bellamy indicated that “we’re planning to have further discussions with the International Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank about how we can continue the project and see if we can get further funding to train more evaluators”.

Persons interested in gaining access to the approved list of trained evaluators, may contact the JIPO at (876) 946-1300 or visit their website at https://www.jipo.gov.jm/ (https://www.jipo.gov.jm/).

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Welcome to the official website of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce.

The Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce is described as Jamaica's "Business Ministry." It's mandate is to lead the development of policies that will create growth and jobs, while achieving social inclusion and consumer protection. The Ministry, working its stakeholders is primarily responsible for business policy development, monitoring and evaluation, while giving direction and oversight to a cluster of implementing departments and agencies.

We have, therefore, placed much energy and enthusiasm into the development of this website to provide timely information on the Ministry, our agencies and programmes.

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Jamaica enters conch cluster project

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Published:Saturday | February 26, 2022 | 12:09 AM

Photo Video

Jamaicans are making their mark in the Compete Caribbean project with Conch Clusters. Compete Caribbean is a private sector development programme that provides technical assistance to support productive development policies, business climate reforms, clustering initiatives and technology and innovation in small and medium-size enterprises (SME) in the Caribbean region.

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The programme, jointly funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Government of Canada, supports projects in 13 Caribbean countries. According to Roderick Francis, CEO of B&D Trawling, Jamaica wants to tap into this programme to expand local production.

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SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH for conch

"Jamaicans have entered the programme with their own cluster project, aptly named the Jamaican Conch Cluster. Current Cluster members are B&D Trawling Ltd (cluster lead), Ton-Rick Enterprises Ltd., Newport Fish & Meats Ltd. and Seafood Incorporated Ltd. This Cluster Development Plan (CDP) details the strategic direction for the Jamaica Conch Cluster (JCC) to address the challenges and opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth of its queen conch business. This CDP is submitted as a funding proposal for technical assistance grants from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF)," explained Francis.

MSC certification will validate the sustainability of Jamaican conch and appeal to environmentally aware customers. The cluster is far advanced in achieving MSC certification. An independent MSC pre-assessment exercise, funded by the CCPF, was recently conducted in June to July 2021. The study concluded that the cluster can proceed to full assessment for certification. MSC certification will distinguish the Jamaica queen conch fishery as the only MSC-certified queen conch fishery in the world.

Research has shown that North American customers have increased willingness to pay premium price for sustainable products and 48 per cent are willing to pay more for seafood from a certified fishery. Among North American seafood consumers, sustainably sourced/environmentally friendly seafood is ranked as the 6th most important driver for purchase and 58 per cent agree that consumption of sustainable seafood is necessary to protect the ocean.

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"We have joined together to form this cluster, because we see it as the most effective and efficient means to achieve these goals. We recognise that the long-term sustainability of their businesses also hinge on the policy, legislative and governance regime impacting the sector as well as innovative strategies to enhance their competitive advantage," Francis said.

The IDB, FCDO, CDB and the government of Canada have contributed US$27.5 million to the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, of which US$4.5 million is earmarked for technical assistance to Caribbean public and private stakeholders to support development of the blue economy. The JCC wants to tap into this US$4.5 million in order to increase employment, generate and sustain exports, foster sustainable economic growth and increase the revenues of SMEs.

The Jamaica Conch Cluster is a blue economy-based cluster that employs 699 workers (67 per cent women). It comprises four of 12 Jamaican private queen conch producing companies.

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Jamaica taps Conch Cluster Project to expand local production

Loop News | February 28, 2022 10:20 AM ET - Updated February 28, 2022 10:40 AM ET



Jamaica wants to tap into this programme to expand local production, according to Roderick Francis, CEO of B&D Trawling.

Jamaicans are making their mark in the Compete Caribbean project with Conch Clusters.

Compete Caribbean is a private sector development programme that provides technical assistance to support productive development policies, business climate reforms, clustering initiatives and technology and innovation in Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SME) in the Caribbean.

The programme, jointly funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Government of Canada, supports projects in 13 Caribbean countries.

Jamaica wants to tap into this programme to expand local production, according to Roderick Francis, CEO of B&D Trawling.

This Cluster Development Plan (CDP) details the strategic direction for the Jamaica Conch Cluster (JCC) to address the challenges and opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth of its queen conch business.

This CDP is submitted as a funding proposal for technical assistance grants from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), explained Francis.

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Current cluster members are B &D Trawling Ltd (Cluster Lead), Ton-Rick Enterprises Ltd., Newport Fish & Meats Ltd. and Seafood Incorporated Ltd.

The cluster is far advanced in achieving MSC certification, which will validate the sustainability of the Jamaican conch and appeal to environmentally aware customers. It will also distinguish the Jamaica queen conch fishery as the only MSC certified queen conch fishery globally.

Research has shown that North American customers have increased willingness to pay a premium price for sustainable products and 48 per cent are willing to pay more for seafood from a certified fishery.

Among North American seafood consumers, sustainably sourced/environmentally friendly seafood is ranked as the 6th most important driver for purchase, and 58 per cent agree that the consumption of sustainable seafood is necessary to protect the ocean.

“We have joined together to form this cluster because we see it as the most effective and efficient means to achieve these goals. We recognise that the long-term sustainability of their businesses also hinges on the policy, legislative and governance regime impacting the sector as well as innovative strategies to enhance their competitive advantage,” Francis said.

The Inter-American Development Bank; the United Kingdom’s Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office; the Caribbean Development Bank and the Government of Canada have contributed US$27.5 million to the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, of which US$4.5 million is earmarked to technical assistance to Caribbean public and private stakeholders to support the development of the blue economy.

The Jamaica Conch Cluster wants to tap into this US$4.5 million to increase employment, generate and sustain exports, foster sustainable economic growth and increase the revenues of SMEs.

JCC is a blue economy-based cluster that employs 699 workers (67 per cent women). It comprises four of 12 Jamaican private queen conch producing companies.

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Ministry signs contract to implement electronic health records system

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Published: Friday | March 3, 2023 | 12:10 AM | Rasbert Turner/ - Gleaner Writer



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shortly after they signed the contract during a ceremony at the hospital. Looking on are Tariq Alli (left), general manager, Caribbean Country Department/representative, Jamaica Country Office, Inter-American Development Bank, and Orett Clarke (right), programme manager of the Health Systems Strengthening Programme (HSSP).

Minister of Health and Wellness Dr Christopher Tufton says Jamaica has become a regional leader in the provision of modern healthcare with the planned implementation of an electronic health records system to serve 13 health facilities across the island in the first phase.

“(Jamaica) is the only country within the Caribbean to move into the modern era of this nature,” Tufton said, “It is clear that our greatest assets, our staff, can now serve patients more efficiently.”

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He was speaking at the official contract signing ceremony hosted by the health ministry at the Spanish Town General Hospital in St. Catherine on Tuesday, February 28.

“Today, as we usher in the electronic health records system, we mark an important milestone on the road to delivering equitable, comprehensive and quality health care for the people of Jamaica, and to making reliable and modern infrastructure available for health service delivery,” Minister Tufton said.

The EHR system is being implemented as part of the Health Systems Strengthening Programme, for which Jamaica has received a loan of US$50 million from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

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It includes a patient registration system for appointment setting and assignment of patients in the triage process of a facility, which will mean shorter wait times for diagnosis and treatment, reduced cost in providing services, increased productivity, reduced staff frustration, and increased service-satisfaction levels.

EHR will allow healthcare providers access to review a patient’s full medical history via a database, whether at a health centre or hospital, enabling health professionals, in a controlled environment, to access patients’ medical history and to be able to deliver faster responses.

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“This is a programme which will be fully developed over 18 months, so (it is) at Spanish Town now, but over time the programme will serve all public health facilities in three parishes,” Tufton said.He said the addition of the system will no doubt add to the efficiency of record keeping at the 220-bed hospital.

“When you have plans to fully develop the health sector, there has to be a place for technology. The addition of computer-based activities can only work to advance the projected direction of ... accountability and workers’ efficiency,” Tufton said.The Spanish Town Hospital, built in 1952, is the largest type B facility in Jamaica.

The system will operate as a seamless ‘one-patient, one-record’ process, and will have patients’ records at the literal touch of a button.

The health ministry’s Website notes that the UK firm, The Phoenix Partnership (TPP), has been contracted to deliver the system. TPP, with its 26 years of institutional experience, it notes, is the leading global provider of healthcare technology, with a reputation of working alongside governments to improve health outcomes and tackle inequalities in care. Their contractual obligations to Jamaica also include a 15-year support period, along with additional functionality, such as a patient-centric mobile app.

Clinical director of Phoenix Partnership United Kingdom, Dr John Parry, said the system was launched over 20 years ago (1998) and so far has 50 million patients on record.

“The data on these patients will be available at the health centres or the hospital. It helps with real-time delivery of patients’ records, which follows them in a confidential way throughout.”

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Over 300 trained in intro to IP valuation

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BY ANDREW LAIDLEY Senior business reporter laidleya@jamaicaobserver.com
December 29, 2021



The headquarters of JIPO in New Kingston, Jamaica

14 trained as IP valuers

The Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO) is well advanced with plans to ensure that the intellectual property (IP) ecosystem in Jamaica is strong.

Project manager for the IP Strengthening Project – Jamaica Kayanne Anderson disclosed that there is limited knowledge of IP valuation generally. So as to facilitate commercial lending using IP as collateral, there is a need to develop a cadre of experts in Jamaica in IP valuation. In that regard, she noted that the IP strengthening project has already achieved relative success

“There was a massive interest and registration from over 400 persons locally and across the Caribbean. Eventually, around 340 were trained in understanding introduction of valuation to intellectual property.”

Deputy director of JIPO Dr Marcus Goffe said this was an important part of the project because many financial institutions were concerned with how IP will be valuated.

“Having done some consultations some years ago we recognised that one of their main concern was this inability to value IP rights and to therefore assess their risk if they were to decide to lend to a MSME using IP as collateral.”

JIPO hopes to improve the IP monetisation culture in Jamaica, reduce obstacles for accessing credit by IP-based firms and improve the IP ecosystem to facilitate increased innovation, competitiveness and growth in Jamaica.

The project is financed by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility – a private sector programme jointly funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Kingdom’s Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Government of Canada.

Anderson highlighted that “In most cases, legal and financial regulations and/or the lack thereof, limit the options for IP to be optimally used to leverage its true financial potential in national and international markets. The absence of supporting financial structures makes these limits appear insurmountable. IP owners in some countries have benefited from the existence of legal and financial frameworks that have enabled them to leverage the financial potential of IP through mechanisms such as auctioning, collateralisation, securitisation, direct sell and licensing, of IP assets.”

The project comprises of five components:

Component 1 (Roadmap and Toolkit for Improving the IP Monetisation Culture) will finance the development of a three-year road map for strengthening the IP ecosystem to facilitate an increase in the monetisation of IP assets in Jamaica. This will include the development of an IP toolkit tailored to the Jamaican context to bridge knowledge gaps within the private and public sectors on the steps which need to be taken to create, manage, monetise and protect IP assets in Jamaica.

Component 2 (Capacity Building in IP Valuation) will fund the drafting of valuation guidelines for the different categories of IP assets (patents, copyrights, designs, and trademarks) adapted to the Jamaican context. The component will also finance the design and conduct of training workshops for bankers, lawyers, accounts, auditors and insurance risk managers in valuation and valuation techniques in order to build local understanding and expertise in valuation, a necessary prerequisite for the recognition and acceptance by financial institutions of IP assets as collateral.

Component 3 focuses on Piloting IP Collateralisation. The consultants under this component are currently researching and will design and roll-out a financial product(s) to test the use of IP assets as collateral in Jamaica. This component will be piloted by one or more financial institutions.

Component 4 (Support for the Digitisation of JIPO's Administration of IPR) provides support for digitising JIPO's paper-based IP registration system in order to increase the efficiency of business processes related to IPR and to improve the experience of users of the IP system. This component will also produce an action plan detailing and costing priority activities that must take place for a fully automated IP administration system to support the digital economy.

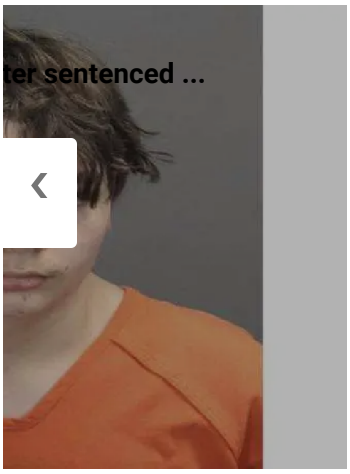
Component 5 of the project covers Project Management and Communications and includes (i) a local project manager; (ii) an awareness campaign strategy; and (iii) the development of public relations materials highlighting successful cases of IP commercialisation in Jamaica.

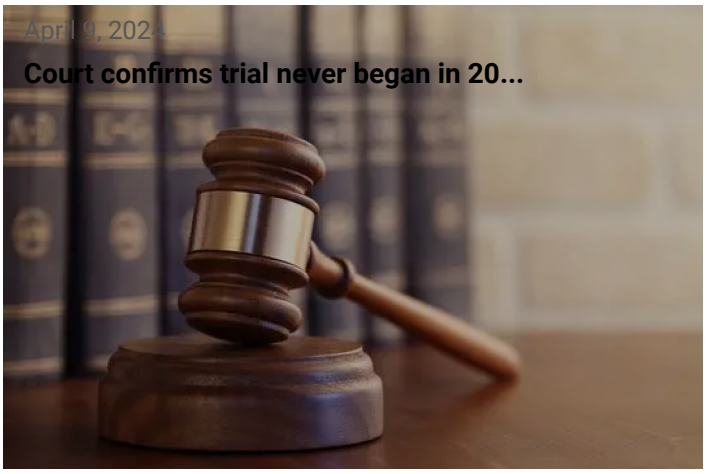
Looking ahead, JIPO representatives along with Intellect Management Services Inc, Barbados (Component 1), Valuation Consulting, UK (Component 2) and Kozolchyk National Law Centre, USA (Component 3) will be contacting stakeholders in the financial and MSME sectors to commence consultations and workshops for this exciting watershed project, which promises to remove barriers and open opportunities for IP-based financing for MSMEs in Jamaica.

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Queen conch push

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February 8, 2022



Shanna-Lee Thomas (right) shows C B Facey Foundation Executive Director Anna Ward the anatomical differences between a male and female conch.

AMAICANS are making their mark in the Compete Caribbean Project with a conch cluster designed to ensure the sustainable economic growth of the country's queen

J conch business.

Compete Caribbean is a private sector development programme that provides technical assistance to support productive development policies, business climate reforms, clustering initiatives and technology and innovation in small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) in the Caribbean.

The programme, jointly funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Government of Canada, supports projects in 13 Caribbean countries.

Jamaica has entered the programme with its project dubbed 'Jamaican Conch Cluster'.

The Jamaica Conch Cluster is a blue economy-based group that employs 699 workers (67 per cent women). It includes four of 12 Jamaican, private, queen conch producing companies.

Current cluster members are B&D Trawling Ltd, Ton-Rick Enterprises Ltd, Newport Fish & Meats Ltd, and Seafood Incorporated Ltd.

A Cluster Development Plan (CDP) has been developed which details the strategic direction for the Jamaica Conch Cluster to address the challenges and opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic development in the sector.

This CDP has been submitted as a funding proposal for technical assistance grants from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF).

The queen conch is an edible marine gastropod harvested mainly for the foot muscle (conch meat). Often the meat is eaten raw in salads but also in value-added products such as chowders and soups.

Queen conch has culinary and cultural significance for the wider Caribbean and residents in the Florida Keys in the United States. The consumption and use of queen conch food and non-food products is dominated by the people from these regions and their Diaspora communities across the world.

The Jamaica Conch Cluster is also far advanced in achieving Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification.

MSC certification will validate the sustainability of Jamaican conch and appeal to environmentally aware customers.

An independent MSC pre-assessment exercise, funded by CCPF, was conducted in June to July 2021. The study concluded that the cluster can proceed to full assessment for certification. This certification will distinguish the Jamaica queen conch fishery as the only MSC certified queen conch fishery in the world.

Research has shown that North American customers have indicated a willingness to pay premium price for sustainable products with 48 per cent saying they are willing to pay more for seafood from a certified fishery.

Among North American seafood consumers, sustainably sourced/environmentally friendly seafood is ranked as the 6th most important driver for purchase and 58 per cent agree that consumption of sustainable seafood is necessary to protect the ocean.

The members of the Jamaica Conch Cluster recognise that the long-term sustainability of their businesses also hinges on the policy, legislative and governance regime impacting the sector as well as innovative strategies to enhance their competitive advantage.

To this end the members have decided that clustering is the most effective and efficient means to achieve these goals.

The Inter-American Development Bank, the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office, the Caribbean Development Bank and the Government of Canada have contributed US$27.5 million to the CCPF, of which US$4.5 million is earmarked to technical assistance to Caribbean public and private stakeholders to support development of the blue economy.

The Jamaican cluster is seeking a technical assistance grant from the CCPF to accomplish an increased value of their queen conch products and by-products through MSC certification allowing for access to new and higher end markets and the reduction of waste and utilisation of the full range of queen conch food and non-food products through value-addition and other means.

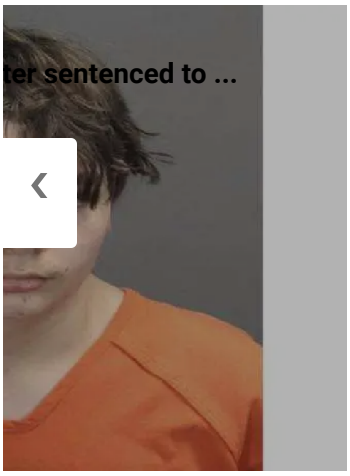
The members of the cluster are also trying to enhance competitive advantages by expanding the membership and augmenting its capacity and capability plus establishing formal mechanisms to ensure their increased involvement in the governance of the

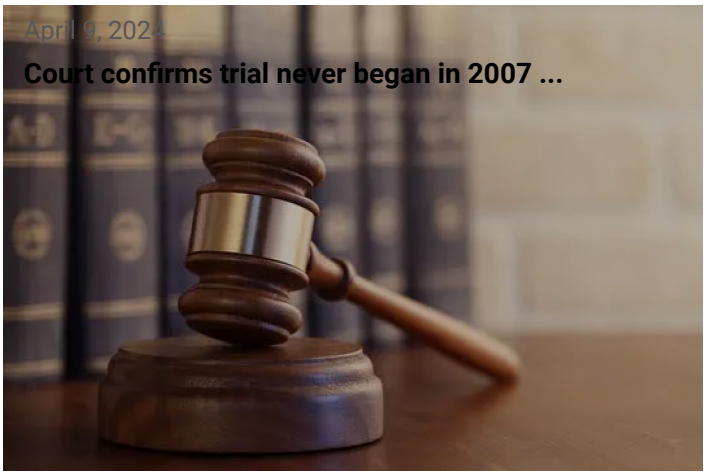
queen conch industry to facilitate and influence policy and legislative interventions to safeguard profitability and the livelihoods of queen conch industry

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Report: Women-owned businesses marginalised by banks

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Published: Wednesday | September 27, 2023 | 12:07 AM

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Ten companies chosen for BPIAJ project

Ten small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the global services sector (GSS) on Wednesday last were chosen for the Business Process Industry Association of Jamaica's (BPIAJ) 'Scale up the value chain: targeting SMEs in the GSS' project.

The chosen companies are: Innovate 10x, QualityWorks Consulting Group, Hacker Hostel, tTech, Shadrok Global Business Solutions, Caribbean HR Solutions, CCServices, Contax360, KnightFox App Design Limited, and MS Tech Solutions.

Through this project, with support from Compete Caribbean and its grant of US$440,000, these SMEs will be provided with support, customised road maps, technical assistance, mentorship, and the requisite help needed for them to become fully digitised and gain access to opportunities within the global value chain.

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could be better enhanced, more productive, and return higher revenues if they were digitised. We're hoping that there will be spin-offs from these businesses into the wider economy of Jamaica," she added.



Innovate 10x's manager of market and commercialisation, Jason Scott revealed that the company's ultimate goal is global domination in the information technology (IT) space and that this project will enable such aspirations.

"We understood that the competition would be an opportunity for us to scale across the region and internationally, and primarily into the North American and European markets. We're looking forward to meeting the mentors and building out that road map and strategy plan to see how best it aligns with what [the company] wants to do, and how quickly we can implement and execute," Scott told this publication.

Debra Fraser, chief executive officer of human resource outsourcing company Caribbean HR Solutions, also expressed her expectations of the project.

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Tuesday, 9 April, 2024

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UWI Open Campus, Compete Caribbean launch business plan competition

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January 26, 2022



Wayne Elliott, Compete Caribbean productivity and innovation coordinator

he University of the West Indies (The UWI) Open Campus and Compete Caribbean regional business plan competition is now open for submission.

Targeting entrepreneurs who are operating or wish to operate within the Caribbean community-based tourism (CBT) industry, the competition will run from January 25, 2022 to March 11, 2022.

CBT refers to the platform for local community to generate economic benefits through offering their products to tourists that range from the local communities, lifestyles, natural resources, and cultures.

The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility is a private sector development programme delivering innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, increase productivity and foster innovation and competitiveness, while promoting economic inclusion.

The competition is open to entrepreneurs from Compete Caribbean member countries. This includes Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname.

Speaking at the online launch yesterday, deputy director of commercial operations in the open campus country sites, Dr Cheryl Sloley, said the business plan competition's objective is two-fold.

"It is intended to harness potential and the energy of Caribbean entrepreneurs in the community-based tourism market but it will also foster exponential growth in one of the top performing sectors in the region's economy. We all do appreciate that entrepreneurs are important to any economy as they're often credited with being responsible for the development of new business ideas in response to needs and gaps in the marketplace. Let the competition begin and may the best man or woman win," she said.

Interested individuals can apply at *www.open.uwi.edu/compete-caribbean*, where they will be required to upload business plans and deliver a five-minute pitch to a panel of judges.

Prizes will be awarded to participants in technical support, with the first prize valued up to US$2,500, the second valued of US$2,000, and the third at US$1,400. Additionally, the top three entrepreneurs will be given a Certificate of Participation from Compete Caribbean.

To support entrepreneurs in entering and preparing for the competition, a business pitch workshop webinar will be held on February 8. The first one was held yesterday during the

competition launch on how to write a business plan for CBT.

Compete Caribbean productivity and innovation coordinator Wayne Elliott added, “At Compete, we believe that community-based tourism is a powerful challenge for sustainable and inclusive economic development in the Caribbean. CBT enables greater market opportunities for broad-based of local entrepreneurs, which in turn creates employment opportunities”.

He pointed out that Compete Caribbean is currently making investments valued at some US$1 million to pilot three CBT cluster initiatives as it continues to demonstrate the power of collective action.

SLOLEY… we all do appreciatethat entrepreneurs are importantto any economy as they’re oftencredited with being responsiblefor the development of newbusiness ideas in responseto needs and gaps in themarketplace

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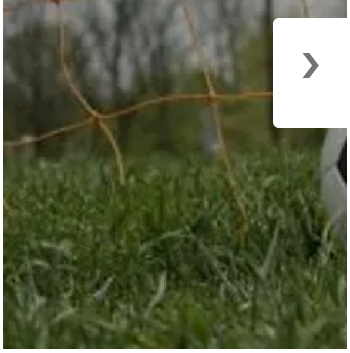
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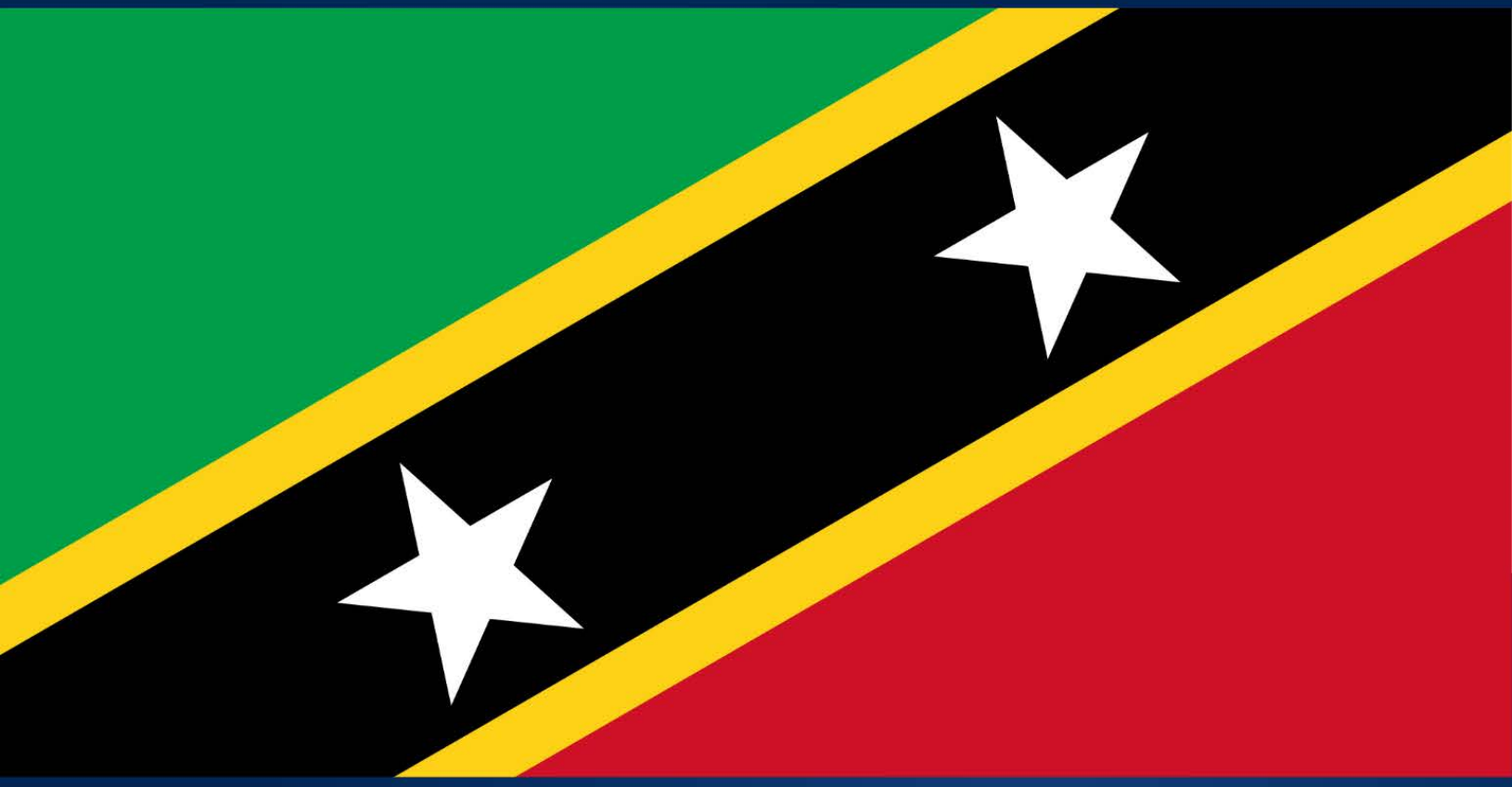
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Community-based tourism driving innovations & experience as Caribbean pushes for inclusive development

By **Monica Walker** - 3 July 2019



The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) is creating a plan for systematic development of community-based tourism as a viable niche and will present the details during the upcoming Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development.

The event, otherwise known as the Sustainable Tourism Conference (#STC2019), is scheduled for 26-29 Aug. 2019 at the Beachcombers Hotel in St. Vincent and is organised by CTO in partnership with the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority (SVGTA).

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CTO has worked with regional partner the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) – a development programme that focuses on innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, productivity and competitiveness – to develop the market research.

Session presenters include a Compete Caribbean representative who will address the need for cooperation in tourism to ensure local enterprises, particularly micro, small and medium enterprises, are integrated in the tourism value chain. Judy Karwacki, president of Small Planet Consulting, and a community-based tourism development specialist, will introduce a community-based tourism toolkit commissioned by the CTO.

Under the theme "Keeping the Right Balance: Tourism Development in an Era of Diversification," industry experts participating in #STC2019 will address the urgent need for a transformational, disruptive, and regenerative tourism product to meet ever-rising challenges. The full conference programme can be viewed via https://www.caribbeanstc.com/program/

St Vincent and the Grenadines will host STC amidst an intensified national thrust towards a greener, more climate-resilient destination, including the construction of a geothermal plant on St. Vincent to complement the country's hydro and solar energy capacity and the restoration of the Ashton Lagoon in Union Island.

Monica Walker

Monica Walker is a journalist at WIC News who is dedicated to uncovering the truth. Her writing covers a wide range of topics, from breaking news to human-interest stories. Contact Monica at contact@wicnews.com

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St KITTS & NEVIS OBSERVER

Not Just Nutmeg And Bananas: Grenada Getting Into Growing A Bunch Of Flowers.

By **story-editor** - October 8, 2020



Photo: Terry Needham./Flickr. The bougainvillea is the national flower of Grendada.

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada–October 7th,2020–The Grenada Floriculture Cluster Project, which was funded by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), began 3 months of horticulture webinar training on 1 October 2020.

The webinar training aims at increasing and developing the knowledge base of all participants to improve the level of production and the quality of the flowers produced by the sector.

The Flower Arrangers and Growers Association of Grenada (FAAGAG) and the Grenada Hotel and Tourism Association (GHTA) joined together to provide the necessary support and structure to benefit from the CCPF.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and CCPF, these associations are committed to introducing a more modern approach to the delivery of the horticultural product and also to contribute a more significant share of the nation's economy.

In the recent introductory webinar session, Anne Campbell, a member of the cluster and FAAGAG, expressed her happiness for the training, "Thanks for all the exploratory work…. the course outline has everything everyone wants and more!"

The FAAGAG is comprised of growers and arrangers throughout the length and breadth of Grenada. They range from micro to medium-sized businesses and represent a diverse cross-section of Grenadians including both males and females. The FAAGAG and GHTA have also reached out to TAMCC agricultural students and included them in this webinar component of the project.

In total, 32 participants are expected to benefit from the training by December 2020.

To improve the Grenadian horticulture sector, the Grenada Floriculture Cluster Project was started in March 2020. The project also received financial support from the Sandals Foundation and technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Grenada is an exporter of several different spices, most notably nutmeg, its top export and depicted on the national flag, and mace. Other major exports include bananas, cocoa, fruit and vegetables, clothing, chocolate and fish.

Being at the southern edge of the hurricane belt, Grenada has suffered from only three hurricanes in the last 50 years, so is well-suited to growing flowers.

Regional News

Unlocking The Power Of Digital Payments In The OECS

March 26, 2021 1083 0


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OECS Media Release

Friday, March 26, 2021 — The goal of digitizing OECS economies will be one small step closer on March 30, 2021, as Micro and Small Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs), Financial Institutions, Financial Technology (Fintech) Firms, and interested consumers operating and living in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) region increase their awareness and knowledge about digital financial services and in particular digital payment solutions available and operating in the region.

This will be achieved as the OECS Commission in partnership with the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility hosts a Digital Payment Webinar and Expo. The theme of the event is Unlocking The Power Of Digital Payments For the Growth of Micro Small And Medium Enterprise (Msme) The OECS. During the webinar presentations and Fireside Chat participants will learn about digital financial services (DFS) which are financial services that rely on digital technologies for their delivery and use by consumers, and digital or electronic payments solutions that facilitate transactions to take place via digital or online modes, with no physical exchange of money.

The Digital Payment Expo segment will provide an opportunity for digital financial service providers operating or whose solutions are available in the OECS to present and promote their existing or upcoming digital payment services to MSMEs and interested consumers in the audience.

Presentations and discussions will include the International Trade Centre, the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, the indigenous OECS Banks, MSMEs and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB). The Expo will also see presentations from several banks and Fintech firms operating in the OECS.

The imperative for this event is can be found in a revelation from the ECCB who suggests that paper-based transactions (cash and cheques) accounted for about 80-90% of all payments and 44% of the volume of transactions in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union. This means that OECS MSMEs are still conducting most of their sales transactions to consumers using cash. Confining payments to cash only, however, can limit the potential of MSMEs to be more competitive, innovative and to experience growth.

Also, in a study conducted by Compete Caribbean titled Understanding the Role of Fintech Companies and Regulations in Enabling Caribbean MSMEs to Innovate and Grow, the constraints to MSMEs in accessing electronic payment channels from traditional banks and FinTech, digital payment systems were identified and included accessibility, high transaction costs, lack of awareness and resistance to change. The World Bank indicates that Digital Financial Services (DFS), enabled by financial technology, has the potential to lower costs, increase speed, security and transparency and allow for more tailored financial services that serve marginalised communities. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) also suggests that disruptive technologies and new entrants are radically changing the financial services industry thereby forcing traditional business models to adapt and transform economies.

In the OECS, the current COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for businesses to digitise and provide contactless solutions to customers thus magnifying the importance of strengthening the regional framework for digital payments.

The event is part of a broader project to strengthen the ecosystem for entrepreneurship and innovation in the OECS and will be followed by a programme to provide technical assistance and capacity building to a

number of OECS MSMEs to onboard digital financial services and payment solutions in their business operations.

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ST. LUCIA TIMES

Bee Prepared – Saint Lucia Moves Closer To Exporting Local Honey

By **Editorial Staff**

1 Comment(s) May 23, 2023

Saint Lucian beekeepers are one step closer to exporting locally produced honey following the final round of consultations under the Bee City Cluster Project.

Initiated in 2019, the Bee City Cluster Project intends to improve the production of Saint Lucian honey with the aim of increasing honey exports.

Implemented by Export Saint Lucia and funded by the Inter-Development Bank (IDB) Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, the project will breathe new life into the island's apiculture industry.

A knowledge exchange session in May 2023 was the project's final component. This included two objectives, the first being to assess the apiaries including the beekeeping practices and hive management, towards increasing their productive capacity; and to provide practical and theoretical training to the Ministry of Agriculture Apiculture extension officers.

"*The mandate of Export Saint Lucia is to increase exports, in some cases by creating the environment which will lead towards that goal. While we are aware of the high quality and high value of our honey, at this juncture we are not producing enough to meet local and international demand. To do this and eventually service the export markets, we must increase, even double, production. This is why the knowledge exchange component of the project is critical. We also wanted to ensure that the extension officers were equipped to advise the beekeepers and keep the momentum of the consultancy towards our final goal",* shared Sunita Daniel, Chief Executive Officer of Export Saint Lucia.

Christopher Davey, an international apiculture consultant, joined representatives of Export Saint Lucia and the Ministry of Agriculture for a series of site visits to beehives across the island.

He was tasked with assessing ways to not only increase production but to train some of the extension officers for the sub-sector on everyday beekeeping best practices. "*From my observations, there are a lot of little things that beekeepers can do to improve their production. The industry is very lucrative here in terms of the cost of honey, and this means that there is a big opportunity for younger people to enter the industry, double the number of hives in Saint Lucia, and subsequently double the amount of honey produced in Saint Lucia*", noted Davey.

The Government of Saint Lucia, in the 2023/2024 budget estimates, has allocated three hundred thousand dollars ($300,000) to the development of Saint Lucia's sea moss and apiculture industries.

3 SHARES

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prospects and anticipated successes of the industry are sustained.

SOURCE: Export Saint Lucia

3 SHARES

Calling all Clusters — grant funding up for grabs

By **Catherine Morris** - June 18, 2019

Reading Time 4 mins

Going it alone in today's challenging business environment is tough. Especially in the Caribbean where small businesses struggle to secure funding, resources and market access. For the region's SMEs, it's often a better strategy to work as part of a team, coming together with other firms in a particular industry niche to improve productivity, increase negotiating and bargaining power or simply realise cost savings by pooling resources.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) defines clusters as "a productive agglomeration aiming at exploiting local linkages to generate and strengthen competitive advantages". It can apply to firms who collaborate on marketing strategies, a company that offers training schemes to another's employees or a business that joins with an academic group for research and development.

Visit Compete Caribbean's website for more information: http://competecaribbean.org/news/call-for-cluster-proposals-2/

Caribbean businesses that have formed these types of clusters can now receive a financial boost, thanks to the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) which is currently on the hunt for well-devised, sustainable, innovative and competitive networks in need of

technical support. Up to $300,000 is up for grabs in this round of grant funding which is available to applicants from 13 countries around the region, including Saint Lucia.

How to apply

The CCPF is looking for clusters of three or more private sector firms who have joined forces to increase their competitiveness. Entrants can also include government agencies and educational or research bodies. Applicants must submit an application form together with three appendices including details of the project, a letter of confirmation and proof of legal incorporation. A short video or presentation is optional but can be included to help the judges get a better understanding of the cluster and how it operates. Deadline for submissions is midnight on July 1.

An independent panel comprised of representatives from both the public and private sectors will review the applications and make a recommendation to the IDB (which supports the CCPF) on which projects should receive funding. In December eight chosen firms will have an opportunity to present their pitches in more detail and devise a plan for how exactly the grant will be disbursed. Grants are a maximum of US$300,000 and will be used for consultancy services covering business development, process re-engineering, research and development, market research and cluster management. They will not financially support the entire endeavour, however; participants must show they can provide 20 per cent of the project budget, with the CCPF funding making up the remaining 80 per cent. The scheme is set to begin in 2020 and run for 24 months.

Success stories

Uptake of grant funding in the Caribbean is generally poor, despite the many support mechanisms available. Some companies are unaware of what opportunities are out there; others are unwilling or unable to do the work involved in securing funding. Development agencies are keen to find projects with the best chance of success but this often requires an onerous and/or lengthy application process. For self-employed entrepreneurs and small businesses, time is money and they may not have the resources to compile a detailed pitch. But proactive businesses who are willing to invest in taking a chance can reap big rewards.

This is not the first grant call for Compete, which has invested in several significant projects in the region. In 2014 Compete granted the Belize Shrimp Growers Association US$500,000 to assist it in gaining the Aquaculture Stewardship Council international certification, opening up more markets for the Belize shrimp growers and making the entire industry more competitive on the world stage. Since it gained accreditation, the cluster has grown its total exports from

US$ 20mn to US$ 45mn and enjoyed a 101 per cent increase in annual sales. According to Compete, cluster employees grew their annual incomes by 46 per cent and 170 new jobs were created. From 2014-2016 Compete supported hoteliers in Grenada with a US$500,000 grant to develop the country’s Geotourism Destination Management Plan. This strategy, led by the Grenada Hotel and Tourist Association, involved a rebranding, a public awareness

campaign and implementing a Community Mapping app which allows tourists to use their mobile phones to locate sites and services across the island.

Compete's previous cluster call, in November 2017, saw 91 applications. The eight finalists included a community-based tourism group in Suriname, a project to digitise Jamaica's outsourcing industry and agri-tourism tours in Grenada. None of the finalists was from Saint Lucia. To try to encourage uptake in the island, Compete and Export Saint Lucia (formerly TEPA) hosted a cluster workshop in February 2018 as Export Saint Lucia became one of ten Business Support Organisations from the Caribbean selected to receive training on how to build cluster networks.

A team of CCPF consultants is working with Export Saint Lucia on how to generate employment and export growth through clusters, looking specifically at marketing, business development and market penetration. Commenting at the time, Export Saint Lucia's former CEO Jacqueline Emmanuel-Flood said, "It is imperative for TEPA (now Export Saint Lucia) to be proficient in understanding cluster dynamics, managing clusters and playing a meaningful role in promoting a business environment in which clusters can thrive."

Assisted by Compete, Export Saint Lucia is currently drawing up a capacity enhancement plan on cluster implementation. The agency says it has already initiated several clustering arrangements in different areas including human resources, process improvement, technology upgrades, commercial collaborations and product development. For more information on the current cluster call, visit the Compete Caribbean website, competecaribbean.org.

Catherine Morris

Lifestyle 7 min read

Entrepreneur finds a solution to sargassum headache

Johanan Dujon solves Caribbean's environmental nightmare; featured in Forbes 30 under 30

Loop News | April 22, 2023 02:43 PM ET



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With rising temperatures and environmental pollutants, like run-off from fertilizers providing ideal conditions for sargassum to grow, this seaweed continues to be a headache for fisherfolk throughout the Caribbean, who heavily rely on the ocean for their livelihoods, and who are among the Caribbean's most vulnerable.

Sargassum also threatens tourism, the main foreign exchange earner for many islands. With pile ups as high as six feet on beaches and the foul, sulfurous smell released as it rots, many Caribbean beaches, once the ideal place to relax and enjoy the island sun, have become a no-go for visitors to the islands.

But one standout innovator from the island of St Lucia, found a solution to this problem.

A decade ago, when Sargassum seaweed started invading Caribbean coasts, destroying ecosystems and threatening tourism, Johanan Dujon, a primary school teacher at the time, asked himself two life-changing questions: "What is the solution to this problem?" And, "how can I monetize it?" The answers to those questions led to the formation of Algas Organics in 2014.

Dujon's startup is the Caribbean's first indigenous agriculture biotech company. It harvests sargassum seaweed, currently an environmental nightmare for several Caribbean islands, and processes it, using their patented Pro-Enzymo™ hybrid fermentation process, to produce a tonic which enhances the efficacy of fertilisers, allowing them to better penetrate plant cell membranes to increase the nutrient uptake of crops by up to 20 per cent, thereby increasing yield. The process also removes heavy metals such as Arsenic, Cadmium, Lead, and Mercury, ensuring growers receive a pure extract which does

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What is the main problem caused by the growth of sargassum seaweed in the Caribbean?

- Decreased fish population
- Threatened tourism industry
- Increased water pollution
- Destruction of coral reefs

Total answers: 1

1/7 Next >

Algas Organics is scaling to produce almost 3,000 metric tonnes of Sargassum monthly, has processed 2 million pounds since the company started nine years ago, and supplies their fertilizer to retail stores and farms throughout the Caribbean, Canada,and the United States of America.



Tanks at Algas Organics warehouse

But at a time where world leaders are calling for greater innovation, potential innovators and entrepreneurs say there isn't enough investment. So how does a 30 year old man from a Small Island Developing State, with a great idea and a modest bank account, transform his vision into a globally recognised and respected brand?

Dujon, who was featured on the **Forbes 30 Under 30** list in 2020, started with his own money, foregoing spending on parties and hanging out with friends, choosing instead to invest in his vision. As the business grew, mum and dad invested a portion of their retirement fund, and came out of retirement to help run it.

"My dad stayed on as Operations Manager. My mom was the Administrative Assistant and my brother was the CFO. I come from a very educated family," Dujon said of his parents and brothers, who all hold Master's degrees. "And they provided not just capital, but also the skillset we needed to scale."

Their support played a huge role, Dujon said, in taking Algas Organics from "just an idea" to attracting technical support and grant funding from regional and international organisations and programmes like the **Compete Caribbean Partnership**

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"Pitbull".

With international farms producing thousands of acres of produce opting to use his product, Dujon believes that throughout the Caribbean, there is unlimited potential, innovative minds that could be on the verge of producing the next solution to a global problem. But two things stand in the way, he says, 1) our failure to believe in our homegrown talent, and 2) the absence of a robust funding ecosystem.

"I think there is a lack of intrinsic value Caribbean wide that comes from what I believe is an inferiority complex many of us have in the region, where we don't believe what we produce is good enough," Dujon said.

"We need to change that, because I have gone to the US and seen some of the largest companies in my industry and others, and if you look at where they started, they don't have more talent. They are not smarter. They are not more innovative. They just believe that they can make a contribution," he said. "And there are ecosystems to support that."

One regional offering he credits with getting it right is the **Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF)**, a multi-donor private sector development programme established in 2011 and working across 13 Caribbean countries to deliver innovative and practical solutions that stimulate growth, increase productivity and foster innovation and competitiveness while promoting economic inclusion.

The Inter-American Development Bank, the **United Kingdom**, the **Caribbean Development Bank**, and the **Governments of Canada** are donors.

"Low rates of growth of Caribbean countries since the 1990s was traced to very low productivity," said CCPF's Executive Director, Sylvia Dohnert. "Compete Caribbean aimed to facilitate ways in which growth could be stimulated by supporting individual businesses and groups of businesses to be more innovative, and to develop new products and services for new export markets. We also support governments with regulations and policies that could make it easier to do business in the region," she said.

Compete Caribbean is now in its second phase, which ends in 2024. Both phases were roughly US$30 million dollars in size, and provided technical assistance for private sector development. Through the financed projects across both phases, Compete Caribbean has helped create nearly 15,000 new jobs, and supported over 2000 businesses to introduce new products, services or processes for export markets. In addition, Compete has strengthened nearly 70 private sector development institutions throughout the Caribbean region.

A pivotal moment in Algas' journey came when Dujon won the **2018 Blue-Tech Challenge**, a partnership between the IDBLab and the CCPF,, which sought out business models that apply new technologies or solutions to foster the long-term sustainability of the ocean economy. Target countries included: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Algas Organics, with its proposal to convert Sargassum Seaweed from Problem to Industry, was among five Caribbean startups with winning proposals.

Blue-Tech winners received assistance with preparing proposals that could be presented to an investment panel, financing for project implementation, manufacturing, marketing and research and development. Compete Caribbean also assisted the winners by connecting them with key networks - governments, academia, investors, and other partners in the multilateral agencies like UNDP or FAO.

"One key connection for Johanan included a CCPF counterpart in Belize's sugarcane industry," said Carlos Marinez, CCPF Project Development Consultant. "Negotiations may lead to important breakthroughs for Algas Organics ," he said.

Through his Blue-Tech Challenge win Johanan received the financial support needed to build out his infrastructure and

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Johanan's story demonstrates what's possible when great ideas are supported by sound investment, technical know-how and key networks; and is proof that the Caribbean has what it takes to innovate at a global level, producing ideas and products that can indeed change the world.

What's needed though, to ensure success stories like that of Algas Organics are the norm, rather than the exception in the region, is greater capacity to support the development of ideas as well as a friendlier business and innovation climate.

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National plan underway for Saint Lucia's honey industry

Friday, August 26, 2022

by Export Saint Lucia

THE BEE CITY HONEY CLUSTER PROJECT WILL IMPROVE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SAINT LUCIA'S HONEY PRODUCT.



Honey production and exports present a viable economic option for a large group of Saint Lucia's rural population. To ensure the development of the sector and maximization of profits, Export Saint Lucia, with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), is in the process of implementing the Bee City Honey Cluster Project.

Succinctly referred to as "Bee City", this project will position Saint Lucian honey in specific markets through the development of a cluster model. Bee City seeks to increase the competitiveness of stakeholders within the sector, build the capacity of local stakeholders in the beekeeping industry and encourage the entrance of new members to drive and expand apiculture.

As work continues in the implementation of Bee City, a local consultant, Mr Melvin Edwards, has been engaged to develop a three-year strategic plan for the operations of beekeeper groups participating in the Bee City Honey Cluster. During his consultancy, Edwards will also develop and facilitate training workshops and provide instruction in governance and cooperative management to the beekeeping cluster and industry stakeholders. Partnering on this consultancy and the project as a whole is the Ministry of Agriculture and specifically the Veterinary and Livestock Services Division.

Like other IDB Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility Projects, Bee City will contribute to an improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of participants. The program is also expected to result in an increase in the production of honey, and the number of beekeepers and apiaries on the island.

The Bee City Honey Cluster Project aims to remove any constraints that currently hinder the development of the honey industry. Export Saint Lucia's Chief Executive Officer, Sunita Daniel, remarks "Saint Lucia's honey industry is brimming with export potential. As a trade promotion agency, Export Saint Lucia understands first-hand that the entrance of local honey to international, niche markets will result in increased economic prosperity at home. The strategic plan being developed will be in tune with the overall plan of the Government for the sector's development. Daniel added that "The work in cooperative governance and management will assist in the proper maintenance of current and future cooperatives and groups. Export Saint Lucia has the utmost confidence in Mr Edwards' ability to perform his duties toward a positive end for the men and women involved in our beekeeping industry."

The consultancy will take place over the course of four (4) months, after which, Saint Lucia's honey industry is expected to be in a more competitive state moving forward.

30 AUG NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN BEING DEVELOPED FOR SAINT LUCIA'S HONEY INDUSTRY

Posted at 13:42h in Press Release, Home, News by Export Saint Lucia

National Strategic Plan Being Developed for Saint Lucia's Honey Industry

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– ENDS –

TAGS: honey

Neighbours to the North: Part II

By **Catherine Morris** - June 30, 2019

Reading Time 5 mins

This is the second part of STAR Businessweek's Canada-Caribbean series.

Canada and the Caribbean may enjoy a strong relationship – economically, politically and culturally – but it is clearly not a partnership of equals. As the wealthier, more populous and more developed partner, the northern powerhouse is lending finance, expertise and support to a range of initiatives throughout the Caribbean region.

Between 2006 and 2016, Canada invested just over CAD$ 6bn in development assistance throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, according to Statistics Canada. This funding covered a wide range of sectors including education, employment poverty eradication, gender equality, sustainable development and technical support.

A group of Saint Lucians at Hewanorra International Airport before departing for British Columbia as participants in the Temporary Foreign Workers Programme.

The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), better known as Compete Caribbean, is directly supported and funded in part by the government of Canada. The private sector development group works in 13 countries in the region to offer technical training, foster innovative new business ideas and help companies overcome common challenges. Canada is just one of a number of international donors involved in Compete, joining up with the Inter-American Development Bank and the UK Department for International Development to

support projects that enhance productivity and competitiveness in the Caribbean private sector.

"Canada contributes with substantial financial resources to the objectives of the facility," says Compete Caribbean's Executive Director Dr Sylvia Dohnert who goes on to explain that it is very much a mutually beneficial partnership. "The CCPF allows Canada to have an impact on private sector development. Historically, Canada has had strong ties to the Caribbean. Canada is very active in international aid and seeks to finance projects that have a proven developmental impact. For Compete, Canada's contribution allows it to implement a larger number of projects in the Caribbean region."

Projects supported by Compete span a variety of industries, including agriculture. The latter is of particular interest to Canada, which contributes to regional agriculture in a variety of ways – mindful of the fact that Caribbean farmers are also exporters to northern markets with a high demand for tropical produce.

According to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), 3,623 OECS nationals worked in Canada's agricultural sector between 2014 and 2018, under the Canadian Temporary Foreign Workers Programme (TFWP) based in Toronto. And the figures continue to be healthy this year with 826 workers already recruited in the first quarter of 2019. These workers not only increase their earnings by taking job opportunities in Canada, they also broaden their skills, experiences and know-how.

Speaking of the success of the initiative, Saint Lucia's Minister of Labour Stephenson King said: "Most of the farmers have been able to educate their children, provide healthcare to their families and strengthen their whole economic base. In addition, a number of farmers have been able to get into their own farm production on their return to Saint Lucia which results in another form of income taking place in Saint Lucia."

Partnering for the future

One of the common criticisms levelled at development assistance is that this type of funding is a hand-out, rather than a hand-up. Dr Dohnert rejects this, saying: "In the case of Compete Caribbean, given that the resources are being used to build capacities that stimulate economic diversification and the competitiveness of the Caribbean region, development assistance is certainly a hand-up."

There are many areas in which the Caribbean can learn from Canada's expertise and experience to develop its own sustainable and independent industries. Canada is particularly keen to assist the region with its energy woes. Given that the Caribbean has some of the highest energy rates in the world, and is trailing behind in green energy generation, the region can learn a lot from its more environmentally-focused northern neighbour.

Developing opportunities in 'clean tech' is one of the Canadian High Commission in Barbados' four priority areas, alongside agriculture, education and infrastructure. Senior Trade Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean at the High Commission, Georges Lemieux says the Commission is paying special attention to the latter in Saint Lucia

as the island moves to revamp and upgrade its transportation networks. "We keep a keen eye on that to make sure we connect Canadian companies with opportunities in infrastructure projects."

In terms of clean tech, Lemieux wants to see Canadians make the transition from supplying expertise, to making projects happen. He says: "Clean tech is so relevant to the region. We have the expertise and the interest. Now we want to move to a different level where we have Canadian companies implementing all the good ideas that are out there."

And it's already happening – whether geothermal generation, solar power or clean technologies, Canada has a number of important projects in the pipeline throughout the region. Canadian group Potentia Renewables is currently working on construction of a 25MW solar power project in the Dominican Republic. An 'Innovation Lab' in Jamaica, managed by the Canadian-funded Caribbean Climate Innovation Centre, is assisting climate-focused start-ups develop the green technologies of the future, and the Caribbean Development Bank, supported by the CAD$ 5mn Canadian Support to the Energy Sector in the Caribbean Fund, is upgrading and enhancing grid modernisation and energy storage in member countries.

Canada may be looking for good investments in the region, but it's also invested socially. According to Dr Dohnert, gender equality is high on its agenda and built into many of its development assistance initiatives. She says: "Canada stimulates projects that are gender-focused. It has a strong focus on gender and therefore ensures that partners such as Compete develop projects that have a development impact on women, girls and vulnerable groups."

CCPF has funded and enabled significant research into the challenges faced by women-owned firms in the region, as well as directly supporting such businesses through grants. Last month, the agency joined with the Canadian High Commission in Barbados to host Women Share, a conference featuring female entrepreneurs and business leaders.

Giving young women and girls empowering and inspirational examples aligns with another of Canada's major priorities in the region – education. Lemieux says the Commission is working to increase educational opportunities in Canada for Caribbean students, partnering with Canadian colleges to tour destinations in the region and present their courses and scholarships to young people. "Canada is a very good option for students to go and study," he says. "We go to Saint Lucia every year with universities to show students what's available."

Global Affairs Canada announced in January that its 2019-2020 Student Exchange Program for Latin American and Caribbean citizens would offer 650 short-term exchange scholarships to promote partnerships between educational institutions in Canada and the Latam region. These will build on the longstanding relationship between Caribbean students and learning centres in Canada, especially those in Atlantic Canada which, over the years, have welcomed thousands of Caribbean young people to colleges in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Islands. Links such as these ensure that the Caribbean-Canadian relationship will continue and deepen as it passes over to the next generation of citizenry.

News

OECS and Compete Caribbean Host Successful Digital Payments Expo

April 10, 2021 9:34 am

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The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission in partnership with the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility hosted a Digital Payment Webinar and Expo on Tuesday March 30, 2021, under the theme: "Unlocking The Power Of Digital Payments For the Growth of Micro Small And Medium Enterprises (MSME) in the OECS".

The event attracted approximately 277 participants interested in the digital financial solutions available to their region and the digital payment services available to MSME's and interested consumers.

Participants heard opening remarks by the Director General of the OECS, Dr. Didacus Jules; Director of Economic Affairs and Regional Integration, Mrs. Jacqueline Emmanuel-Flood; as well as Deputy Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), Mr. Trevor Brathwaite.

Dr. Jules welcomed the Digital Payments Expo, noting that 'it is a small but important step towards a more resilient OECS.' The Director General also highlighted the timeliness of the event, stating:

"Whether we like it or not, our economies are caught in an increasingly disruptive and transformative global economy. The only way to respond effectively is to adapt and in some cases to re-invent. In all cases, we become more agile in the process."

Mr. Brathwaite provided the meeting with insights on the state of payment legislation within the OECS stating:

"The Eastern Caribbean Payment Systems Act is existent but we are moving to modernise that piece of

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He further indicated that: “In developing legislation, the effort is not to stifle innovation but to have a legislative environment that protects the interests of citizens in the economic space.”

All speakers shared the common perspective that digital transformation of OECS economies and, in particular, the adoption of digital payments solutions by MSMEs is extremely important for the advancement of Small Island Developing States.

The event featured a preview of the ECCB’s Digital Currency – DCash, delivered by Ms. Sharmyn Powell, Chief Risk Officer, Office of Corporate Strategy and Risk Management. The preview presentation highlighted the benefits of the DXCD DCash wallet for users of the pilot countries which would include Grenada, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

The event also featured an exciting fireside chat hosted by Mr. Jodi Boodhoo, Deputy Chairperson of the Invest Saint Lucia Authority. The fireside chat highlighted the state of payments in the OECS and gave participants an opportunity to learn from the experiences of key players in the payment landscape such as MSMEs (Karibites Grenada); Fintech providers (JAD Cash Saint Kitts and Nevis); the International Trade Centre; and Financial Institutions (Saint Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla National Bank limited).

Exciting discussions and engaging presentations on various payment solutions were delivered by institutions such as the Grenada Cooperative Bank Limited, and the Bank of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Limited. Several other digital financial solutions were presented by the following Fintech firms:

• Penny Pinch (Saint Lucia)

• IBIS – Management Associates (Curacao and the Eastern Caribbean)

• JAD Cash (Saint Kitts)

• Frubi – mCAT Innovations (Antigua)

• NNB TECHNOLOGIES (Barbados and the UK)

• MPAY (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

Overall, the Expo showcased the power of digital payments and explored viable ways to unlock the potential of digital financial technologies for the growth and competitiveness of OECS businesses and the economy as a whole.

To bring the curtains down on the day’s event, the Expo received an update from the OECS on the

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entrepreneurship and innovation – which seeks to provide assistance and capacity building to a number of OECS MSMEs to onboard digital financial services and payment solutions.

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OECS and Compete Caribbean Partner to Strengthen Entrepreneurship and Innovation Ecosystems in the OECS

OECS Media Release

Friday, June 19, 2020 — **The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission (OECS Commission), with the support of Compete Caribbean, recently hosted a Kick-off Meeting for a project that seeks to strengthen the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems in the OECS.**

The project, launched via video conference with stakeholders from across the OECS and wider Caribbean, will be implemented by the OECS Commission, with support from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The initiative seeks to

strengthen the ecosystem for entrepreneurship and innovation in six (6) OECS Member States, namely Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The project is expected to foster greater collaboration between key stakeholders in the entrepreneurship ecosystem and to support OECS entrepreneurs in scaling their businesses. Over time it is also expected that the survival rate of OECS startups will greatly improve and firms will also access and utilise more digital financial technology solutions.

The implementation phase will comprise three components, the first of which will be the development of a Hybrid Business Incubator and secondly the development of a regional Hybrid Accelerator Programme for high-potential firms. Component three of the project will focus on Increasing access to digital financial services to SMEs in the OECS

Business





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News

Science, Technology and Innovation Policy for Saint Lucia

July 30, 2020 1:11 pm

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Achieving economic diversification, competitiveness, as well as meeting sustainable development goals (SDGs) becomes even more relevant for small island developing states (SIDS) in this COVID-19 reality. Strengthening national Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) capabilities would significantly contribute to Saint Lucia's economic and societal development objectives as well as provide the boost needed to enhance Saint Lucia's overall competitiveness and build resilience.

It is precisely for this reason the government has embarked on the development of an STI Policy for Saint Lucia.

Science, technology and innovation (STI) is being given increased attention in strengthening Saint Lucia's competitiveness and economic diversification strategy. The application of new knowledge and ideas into productive economic activities can stimulate the country's growth potential, generate added value and create new and well-paying jobs.

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Fiona Hinkson NCPC

With funding support via the Inter-American Development Bank through Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC) is spearheading the development of an STI Policy for Saint Lucia. Director of the NCPC, Fiona Hinkson explained that Saint Lucia is now taking steps towards the development of a tangible innovation policy as part of the National Competitiveness Agenda.

“The Science, Technology and Innovation Policy is very important. This is the first time we are having such a policy in Saint Lucia. It gives us the opportunity to bring together the science aspects, innovation and technology into one comprehensive framework. So, we are now better able to help our researchers, our innovators, our business persons to come up with business ideas and solutions to help solve the problems of society. Right now with the Science, Innovation and Technology Policy businesses will be able to come up with new ideas to help them to be more profitable and improve their processes. Researchers and innovators will be able to come up with new solutions that would support economic development, growth and competitiveness.” Hinkson noted.

The NCPC has partnered with the Division of Innovation, the Department of Sustainable Development and the Department of Public Sector Modernization in the formulation of the STI Policy. Science and Technology Officer, Berthia Thomas said this policy will function as the overarching framework to provide strategic direction to the Science and Technology Department.

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Berthia Thomas

"So the journey has been very long. As a matter of fact, the Science and Technology Section was initiated in 2013 and we have had many challenges along the way. So, we are very happy that we can now collaborate with the Innovation Division and specifically the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council, who has lead this process, in the development of a joint Science, Technology and Innovation Policy." Thomas stated.

Innovation refers to creating something new; a big idea, which adds value to a product, good, service, or process. So said Lennel Malzaire, the Director of Innovation in the Department of Education, Innovation, and Gender Relations. She said the STI Policy would help establish an innovation vision and strategy for Saint Lucia and is aligned to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

"We also see it creating a roadmap for the involvement of the various sectors and industries building clusters of networks for organisations, so that there is more communication and more sharing of information and knowledge. The know-how, the know-when, the know-why is important to enable persons to add that kind of value to whatever products or services or processes that they may be interested in bringing to the market. And, also, to build more entrepreneurs." Malzaire Explained.

Policy Links, IfM Education and Consultancy Services, University of Cambridge, has been contracted to provide technical assistance for the implementation of the National Competitiveness Agenda for Saint Lucia and the STI Policy will be one of the deliverables from this project.

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Policy For Saint Lucia – St. Lucia Times Online News

Science July 30, 2020

posted on Jul. 30, 2020 at 11:00 pm

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More in this report from Glen Simon

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For the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council, Glen Simon reporting.

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Features

SMEs and BSOs Tackle Competitiveness Through Clustering

February 15, 2018 10:19 am

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PRESS RELEASE – The Saint Lucia Trade Export Promotion Agency (TEPA) is among one of the ten Business Support Organisations (BSOs) from across the Caribbean selected to receive training from an international consulting firm with a proven record of success in cluster initiatives.

The clustering initiative falls under a Caribbean-wide programme being implemented through the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF).

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Key stakeholders at the recent capacity building workshop.

Cluster projects have great potential to drive employment creation, for women and marginalized groups, and on the generation of revenue and foreign exchange.

Clusters are defined as three or more private sector firms collaborating to produce and sell new or better products/services at competitive costs on the regional or international market.

A team of consultants led by CCPF Pillar 1 coordinator, Annie Bertrand, were on island from February 12-13 to work with TEPA's board and staff to assess the agency's capacity and the potential to implement strategies for employment and export generation through clusters. This assessment will feed into a capacity enhancement plan that TEPA can implement with technical assistance, to coordinate local cluster development.

On day two, the CCPF engaged over 20 key SME and BSO stakeholders in a national workshop on cluster development at the Bay Gardens Resort and the opportunities for inclusive growth of the Saint Lucian economy. The two days began the groundwork that will eventually lead to tailored strategies for each selected cluster to jointly tackle marketing, business development and market penetration.

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the start of the Compete Caribbean's Cluster Capacity Building in Small and Vulnerable Countries project, which aims to increase the capacity of these business support organizations to facilitate cluster initiatives.

The CCPF is a private sector development programme funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The CCPF executes projects in 13 countries across the Caribbean, working with a broad mix of BSOs from the private and public sectors to deliver innovative and practical solutions that stimulate economic growth, increase productivity and foster innovation and competitiveness.

Jacqueline Emmanuel-Flood, CEO of TEPA, explained that global market penetration requires that companies are able to respond to the market with speed, quality, and innovation. Effective networking and building critical mass for more cost competitiveness.

"This is easier for SMEs with combined capability and a joint action plan. It is, therefore, imperative for TEPA to be proficient in understanding cluster dynamics, managing clusters and can play a meaningful role in promoting a business environment in which clusters can thrive," Emmanuel-Flood said, adding that this week's training paves the way for a number of follow-on activities.

According to Andrena Simon, Senior Client Manager — Marketing & Promotions, the consulting firm has already completed an assessment of TEPA's capacity to foster the growth of local clusters, and to co-design a capacity enhancement plan for implementation of the plan over a 15-18 month period.

To date, TEPA has initiated several clustering arrangements among different sectors and producers which allow them to build cooperative platforms for increasing productivity and generally enhancing their international competitiveness. Some of the achievements have been in the areas of human resource upgrading, process improvement and product development, innovation and technology improvements and commercial collaborations.

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NationNews

Editors Pick | Regional

St Lucia exploring new markets for honey

By: Sherrylyn Clarke August 27, 2022

CASTRIES – St Lucia says it is implementing a project with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), that will position the island's honey in specific overseas markets through the development of a cluster model.

Export Saint Lucia said with the funding from the IDB's Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), it is in the process of implementing the Bee City Honey Cluster Project.

Bee City seeks to increase the competitiveness of stakeholders within the sector, build the capacity of local stakeholders in the beekeeping industry and encourage the entrance of new members to drive and expand apiculture.

Consultant Melvin Edwards, has been engaged to develop a three-year strategic plan for the operations of beekeeper groups participating in the Bee City Honey Cluster.

The authorities said that during his consultancy, Edwards will also develop and facilitate training workshops and provide instruction in governance and cooperative management to the beekeeping cluster and industry stakeholders.

"Like other IDB Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility Projects, Bee City will contribute to an improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of participants. The programme is also expected to result in an increase in the production of honey, and the number of beekeepers and apiaries on the island."

Export Saint Lucia's chief executive officer, Sunita Daniel, said the Bee City Honey Cluster Project aims to remove any constraints that currently hinder the development of the local honey industry.

"St Lucia's honey industry is brimming with export potential. As a trade promotion agency, Export Saint Lucia understands first-hand that the entrance of local honey to international, niche markets will result in increased economic prosperity at home.

"The strategic plan being developed will be in tune with the overall plan of the Government for the sector's development. The work in cooperative governance and management will assist in the proper maintenance of current and future cooperatives and groups," she said, noting that Edward's consultancy will take place over a four-month period. (CMC)

NationNews

Regional

St Lucia to revitalise honey industry

By: Nationnews September 4, 2019

CASTRIES – St Lucia is moving to revitalise its honey industry after the island's honey cluster development plan has been successful in securing funding.

A government statement said that the apiary industry has great financial potential and Export St Lucia and the Ministry of Agriculture with assistance from Compete Caribbean have initiated a plan to develop and grow the industry.

"We welcomed this initiative as it provided invaluable capacity building for St Lucia. It also brought about funding which will assist in the development and growth of the Apiary Industry, a very potent industry, one which is growing globally, especially with the health conscious," said Export St Lucia chief executive officer, Sunita Daniel.

"Our desire is to increase production of high quality natural honey which is export ready and globally competitive. We are extremely thankful to all the stakeholders for their hard work and especially Compete Caribbean for this initiative," she added.

Apiculture, the more technical term for beekeeping, is the maintenance of bee colonies, commonly in man-made hives. The honey produced in the hives is harvested and used by various sectors including food and beverage, cosmetics and health and wellness.

The statement said that the by-products of honey production are also very valuable. "Apitoxins and bee-venom are used in the treatment of many nerve-borne illnesses; flower pollen and royal jelly are used by men as aphrodisiacs; beeswax is used a lot by cosmetologists.

Earlier this year, Export St Lucia said that some regional Business Support Organizations (BSO's) and private sector businesses were the beneficiaries of a cluster development training programme by Compete Caribbean that was designed to increase the capacity of the attendees towards the development of clusters in industries that showed the potential to benefit from clustering.

The statement said that following the exercise, seven regional projects, including St Lucia's Honey Cluster Development Plan, were successful in securing funding.

A beekeeper from the Horizon Broth beekeeper from the Horizon Brothers Honey Producers says he is excited about the project, particularly the implementation of standards for honey producers.

"We try to bring in an educational component, because it's no longer an under the bush trade. It calls for proper knowledge and application of apiculture standards, to ensure that we have a product that is a proper representation of St. Lucia. Doing this project in collaboration with various entities like the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards and Export St Lucia we know that it will bring about success."

Another critical component of the project is the implementation of a solid governance structure for the industry.

The Mille Fleurs Honey Producers' Cooperative Society Ltd has been chosen to undertake this governance task and president of the Mille Fleurs, Uraline Alphonse, says she is excited about the plans moving forward.

"With the project we're hoping to see Mille Fleurs as the structure for beekeepers, where they could come and get the necessary input and insight on their business. So, we're using the cooperative to put everything in place to better facilitate the beekeepers." **(CMC)**

St. Lucia seeking to develop overseas markets for honey

By **Caribbean Times** - August 27, 2022



St. Lucia says it is implementing a project with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) that will position the island's honey in specific overseas markets through the development of a cluster model.

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The authorities said during his consultancy, Edwards will also develop and facilitate training workshops and provide instruction in governance and cooperative management to the beekeeping cluster and industry stakeholders.

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CARIBBEAN

St. Lucia seeking to develop overseas markets for honey

August 27, 2022



By **Santana Salmon**

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Caribbean National Weekly

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The authorities said during his consultancy, Edwards will also develop and facilitate training workshops and provide instruction in governance and cooperative management to the beekeeping cluster and industry stakeholders.

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CMC/

Strategic Plan Being Developed for Saint Lucia's Honey Industry

By **Outside Contributor** - August 26, 2022

Reading Time 2 mins

Honey production and exports present a viable economic option for a large group of Saint Lucia's rural population. To ensure the development of the sector and maximization of profits, Export Saint Lucia, with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), is in the process of implementing the Bee City Honey Cluster Project.

Succinctly referred to as *"Bee City",* this project will position Saint Lucian honey in specific markets through the development of a cluster model. *Bee City* seeks to increase the competitiveness of stakeholders within the sector, build the capacity of local stakeholders in the beekeeping industry and encourage the entrance of new members to drive and expand apiculture.

As work continues in the implementation of *Bee City*, a local consultant, Mr Melvin Edwards, has been engaged to develop a three-year strategic plan for the operations of beekeeper groups participating in the Bee City Honey Cluster. During his consultancy, Edwards will also develop and facilitate training workshops and provide instruction in governance and cooperative management to the beekeeping cluster and industry stakeholders. Partnering on this consultancy and the project as a whole is the Ministry of Agriculture and specifically the Veterinary and Livestock Services Division.

Like other IDB Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility Projects, Bee City will contribute to an improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of participants. The program is also expected to result in an increase in the production of honey, and the number of beekeepers and apiaries on the island.

The Bee City Honey Cluster Project aims to remove any constraints that currently hinder the development of the honey industry. Export Saint Lucia's Chief Executive Officer, Sunita Daniel, remarks *"Saint Lucia's honey industry is brimming with export potential. As a trade promotion agency, Export Saint Lucia understands first-hand that the entrance of local honey to international, niche markets will result in increased economic prosperity at home. The strategic plan being developed will be in tune with the overall plan of the Government for the sector's development.* Daniel added that *"The work in cooperative governance and management will assist in the proper maintenance of current and future cooperatives and groups. Export Saint Lucia has the utmost confidence in Mr Edwards' ability to perform his duties toward a positive end for the men and women involved in our beekeeping industry."*

The consultancy will take place over the course of four (4) months, after which, Saint Lucia's honey industry is expected to be in a more competitive state moving forward.

Outside Contributor

COMPETE CARIBBEAN

IDB UKaid Caribbean Development Bank in partnership with Canada

ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

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April 9, 2024

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CED AND CCPF

Abigail Haynes (https://www.nbcsvg.com/author/nbcadmin/) March 1, 2019 2 min read



A three-week training program will be held here from next week spearheaded jointly by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and the Centre for Enterprise Development Inc. (CED).

The two entities will roll out a Cluster Development Training Program for Business Support Organisations (BSOs) that is expected to lead to the certification of Vincentians as cluster facilitators later this year.

The program is part of a CCPF project being delivered in seven Caribbean countries to build the capacity to promote and develop clusters as a tool for economic development. Under this program, one-week workshops will be delivered March 4-8, April 8-12 and May 20-24, by The Cluster Competitiveness Group – a consulting firm specialized in capacity building on cluster-based methodologies for enhanced competitiveness and innovation. At the end of the training program, the cluster facilitators will be better equipped to:

1. Understand how to identify promising cluster initiatives in their own country using a market-driven approach, considering the local context.

2. Identify and coordinate cluster stakeholders to facilitate the completion of Cluster Development Plans (CDPs) eligible for funding by Compete Caribbean or others.

3. Mobilize key stakeholders to secure leadership from the private sector and strategic support from government and non-government organisations.

The three weeks of training in St. Vincent are scheduled to take place at Hotel Alexandrina, Prospect. The other countries where the CCPF project is being implemented are Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana and St. Lucia.

In 2017, CED successfully applied for a grant under this programme to facilitate capacity building within the organization for business cluster development. As a prelude to the implementation at the national level, CED participated in a "Kick-off meeting" in Barbados last year, where participants were introduced to techniques used in developing business clusters and preparations were made for the 'next steps' in implementation at the national level. A national workshop held last February marked the start of the CCPF's Cluster Capacity Building in Small and Vulnerable Countries Project with CED.

An Opening Ceremony for the workshop will be held on Monday, March 4 at 8:30 a.m. at Hotel Alexandrina.



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DEADLINE EXTENDED – OECS Global Startup Hub February 2024 cohort

OECS Secretariat - Wednesday, January 10th, 2024 at 11:04 AM







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The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, in partnership with Draper University and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), has relaunched the OECS Global Startup Hub for a second cohort.

Technology and technology-enabled MSMEs in the OECS are invited to apply and up to 150 successful candidates will be accepted to participate in the free, two-week Virtual Accelerator Program. Twenty-two participants from this program will also get the opportunity to move onto a second immersion experience in renowned Silicon Valley in the Draper University Hero Training Program.The program unfolds in two transformative phases designed to equip startups with the necessary tools for success. In the first phase, up to 150 startups will be selected to participate in an intensive Virtual Accelerator Program, covering key areas such as Technology of the Future, Fundamentals of Growth and Sales, Fundraising, Leadership and Team Building and Business Pitches. The program will continue with a second phase from June 24 to July 26, 2024, where up to 22 of the high growth potential startups will participate in Draper University's five-week Hero Training Program, providing participants the opportunity to delve into an unparalleled experience, engaging with industry titans, visiting renowned tech companies and immersing in the vibrant innovation ecosystem of Silicon Valley.This cohort of the program will be supported by JetBlue Ventures, Caribbean Development Fund, and St. Lucia Electricity Services.**Eligibility requirements:**

- Startups from one of six OECS Member States –
  - Antigua and Barbuda
  - Dominica
  - Grenada
  - Saint Kitts and Nevis
  - Saint Lucia
  - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Startups must have high growth potential, with scalable ideas, and operate in the technology industry or in other industries that are interested in introducing technology to scale their business operations.
- Entrepreneurs with tech-based and tech-enabled startups less than 5 years in operation are strongly encouraged to apply.

Extended deadline for applications: Wednesday, January 31, 2024.

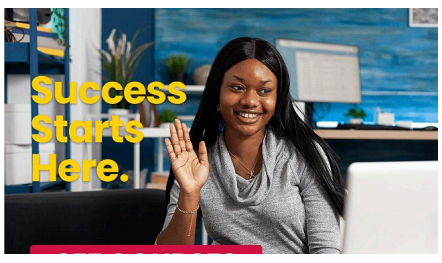
For more information and to **apply** for the Virtual Accelerator Program, visit: https://forms.gle/Bmyvya8QKFkgZi4s6

For more information and to **apply** for the Draper University Hero Training Program: https://forms.gle/f3n4F57BGNx5vGSPA

(Entrepreneurs must participate in the Virtual Accelerator Program to qualify for the Hero Training Program.)

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AUDIO

Invest SVG To Unveil Investment Portal for the upcoming forum

FEBRUARY 20, 2020 NO COMMENTS 7 MINS READ

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On Monday 24th February Invest SVG is expecting to unveil its online SVG Investment Forum 2020 portal, Executive Director Annette Marks revealed. She was addressing audiences at the media launch of the inaugural SVG Investment Forum 2020. An idea, Marks said, that was borne through the difficulties of promoting St. Vincent and the Grenadines to potential investors who are absolutely ignorant about the multi-island state or the wider region to which it belongs.

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Together with private sector partners, the National Properties Limited and the National Insurance Services, Invest SVG worked to identify and package “investment opportunities which will be presented as an investment guide,” Marks disclosed. Of the “approximately elven opportunities being packaged a selected number would be presented at the Forum. However all the investments being packaged will be on our dedicated investment forum website.”

These investment guides would also form part of the invitation packages to be sent to invitees “so that they are aware of the investment opportunities that are available before even coming here and we would also be aware of what they are interested in so that we set up b2b meetings and also arrange for them to see the investments that they are interested in,” the Executive Director also noted.

Cognizant that there must be key performance indicators that should chart the impact of this exercise Marks declared, “we will be measured by the level of interests of qualified leads after this Forum, the increased visibility that the Forum will create and our ability to convert these leads into tangible investments for the country and of course what everyone wants to hear, the jobs that are created as a result of these investments.”

Invest SVG's mission is "essentially to develop the export potential and capacity of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and also to attract investment – foreign and local – across the economic sectors," Board Chairman Anthony Regisford said. He was also addressing the Forum's media launch on Tuesday evening at the Bungalow restaurant in Villa.

The most attractive kind of investment, according to the Chairman, ought to "foster sustainable economic growth, provide jobs [and] create wealth for the citizens of St. Vincent and the Grenadines." He further expressed his opinion that an investment forum of this nature would provide an ideal network for the local business community to network with the high net worth people that I know Invest SVG has invited to this event…. We hope that through that we can get meaningful partnerships and we're able to leverage whatever State assets in terms of land for the various types of development and in the main have local buy-in in what Invest SVG does."

Although investments are being sought for some seven sectors, the Chairman said, "our immediate focus, however, is on four of those sectors. Namely: Tourism, Agriculture, ICT and the Creative Industries – and even within that there's more of an urgency in ramping up the hotel room stock on mainland St. Vincent. But generally speaking tourism is our top priority, in the short term. We are going to develop the services as well as that support the tourism industry so that downstream benefits can be realized."

Gayle Gollop, in her capacity as legal affairs Special Advisor at the Barbados based Caribbean Export Development Agency, reassured media audiences of her organization's continued commitment to support the sustainability of the Caribbean Association [of] Investment Promotion Agencies of which SVG is a member.

Attracting investment into the Caribbean continues to be a shared goal amongst all member Investment Promotion Agencies, Special Advisor Gollop said. "CAIPA also seeks to assist its members in improving the ease of doing business in their territories and by extension the region. One such initiative is the i-guide for St. Vincent and the Grenadines which was launched in 2019. This electronic guide provides investors with easily accessible and up to date information on items such as business costs, procedures, opportunities and conditions. Caribbean Export recognizes that the Vincentian economy is focused on growth in the upcoming years. The IMF projected a 2.3% growth in 2020 for the economy fueled by increased tourist arrivals," Gayle Gollop shared.

Gollop however cautioned “that sustainable growth be achieved by enhancing the competitiveness of the local private sector, increased exports and investments and reaching new markets which would lead to increased GDP, foreign exchange earnings and employment.” Gollop then lauded team Invest SVG for their foresight as “the investment forum [is viewed] as an important step in establishing linkages and promoting investment into the country and achieving this growth objective.”

The eight years old Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility – funded through the multilateral cooperation between the Inter-American Development Bank, the UK Department for International Development, the Caribbean Development Bank and the Canadian government – is another of Invest SVG’s development partners who were represented at Tuesday’s media launch event.

Russell Franklyn, Financial and Operations Coordinator for IDB Compete Caribbean listed his program’s mission as being the provision of “technical assistance to support productive development policies, business climate reforms, cluster initiatives and technology and innovation in small and medium sized enterprises in the Caribbean region.”

Franklyn clued in media audiences to the fact that SVG is one of 13 Caribbean nations who, in this second phase, benefit through his organization. In the first phase of their continuing partnership, he said “we strengthened the capacity of Invest SVG to attract Foreign Direct Investment in niche sectors where St. Vincent and the Grenadines had a comparative advantage. Specifically we supported the development of two sector strategies in business process outsourcing and tourism. Secondly we trained staff within the agency around the themes of investment attraction, investment facilitation and after care services, soft skills for investment promotion and finally fostering strategic partnerships and coordination with public and private entities to leverage Invest SVG’s investment attraction efforts.”

Citing what he considered to be the volatility of local foreign direct investment the IDB’s Operations and Financial Coordinator noted “we recognize however more still needs to be done to boost foreign direct investment in the country. FDI into St. Vincent and the Grenadines have been somewhat volatile over the last 12 years reaching as high as $159 million in 2008 and as low as $59 million in 2015 and partially bouncing back to $100 million in 2018 as per the IMF and World Bank data.” Franklyn pledged his institution’s continued commitment as part of their mandate “to create and support an enabling environment in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.” Additionally, Franklyn said, the opportunity to assist “the

government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines through Invest SVG to [revise] the investment policy to position the country as a more agile attractor of foreign direct investment while maintaining its national identity."

Camillo Gonsalves, Minster with responsibility for Economic Planning, Sustainable Development, Information Technology and Finance shared, "St. Vincent and the Grenadines is at a particularly exciting place in terms of its economic development. We are a young country in terms of mass tourism and we think that we have special talents, special gifts, special opportunities [for] investors in the tourism space. Be it from hotels where we think we're almost virgin territory, on the mainland at least for mass tourism or for yachting where we feel we have a tremendous competitive advantage over other countries in the region. We feel that based on years of investment in education we have a particularly skilled – relative to our regional neighbors – skilled and agile and adaptable workforce. And we feel that that is something that can lend itself to future investment. We feel because of our investments in geothermal energy and other renewable energies that we have a level of stability in energy costs that we can offer to investors that they will not find in other places in the Caribbean."

Minister Gonsalves also tabled SVG's archipelagic geography as well as its relative youth in the global tourism industry as additional delights that ought to entice the discerning investor.

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OECS Launches Entrepreneurs Incubation and Acceleration Programme TECHIE

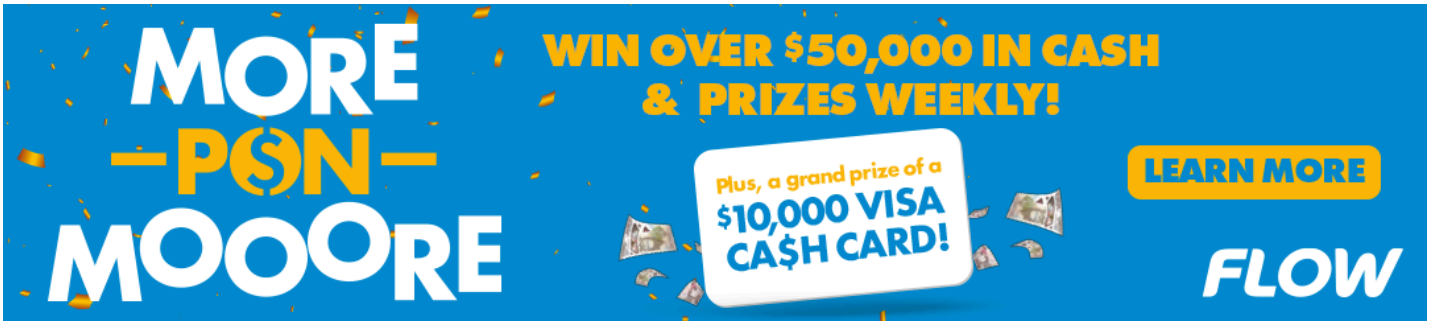
Media Release

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 Triniadad 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

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Business

Sustainable tourism meeting begins in St. Vincent

News Admin
28 Aug 2019 16:32 AST



Acting Secretary General of the Barbados-based Caribbean Tourism Organization, Neil Walters. (Internet photo)

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent (CMC) — The 2019 Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism (STC2019) opened here on Wednesday amid expectations that the deliberations over the next few days will help with the reshaping of the industry that plays a pivotal role in sustaining the economies of regional countries.

The conference is being held under the theme “Keeping the Right Balance: Tourism Development in an Era of Diversification” and the acting Secretary General of the Barbados-based Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), Neil Walters, said the concept of sustainability, almost unheard of three decades ago “has now become a buzz word, as it should.

“More and more, we realise that this word, hardly spoken in previous generations, is now a powerful focal point since it clearly and succinctly defines how we should manage our own lives, in addition to the world around us,” he said in a video message to the conference.

Walters, whose attendance was affected by the passage of Tropical Storm Dorain through the Lesser Antilles on Tuesday, said that stakeholders must ensure the continued survival of the Caribbean which “sustained life for thousands, maybe millions of years and continues to do so even as life everywhere becomes more complex”.

He said it was necessary to keep in the forefront the theme of the conference given the “delicate balance between our development as the human race and the changes we have caused in the world around us”.

Walter said that as the most tourism-dependent region in the world, there is no doubt that tourism is, to a large extent, the region’s economic lifeblood providing sustainability for many citizens that has also translated, in some cases, to almost phenomenal levels of development in some countries in the last 30 years.

He said the conference was extremely relevant as it provides a platform for the dissemination of good practices which can, if properly implemented, help to bridge the gap and ensure a symbiotic relationship between the tourism industry and the environment in which it functions.

“In this region, like other regions of the world, tourism taps into several different resources, not just the sun, sea and sand. Now more than ever before, visitors are collectors of experiences and not just any experience, but an authentic experience. This places demands on the region’s cultural, heritage, human, financial and natural resources as we seek to refine our tourism product to cater to these ever-expanding needs.”

He said with an industry that straddles such a wide cross section of lives in the Caribbean, a sound sustainable framework for tourism is essential, even as there's need to critically examine previous tourism development and look toward the future.



Attendees at Wednesday's opening ceremony. (iWN photo)

"As you can imagine, these changes, like any other form of change, come at a cost. At this point in time, change is being encouraged when most economies can least afford any additional pull on resources."

Walters said the CTO is committed to providing the good practices to its members, which can be used to achieve the ultimate goal of sustainable tourism development.

"Our approach has been to seek out ways to bring these good practices using the most contemporary information and methodologies which are available," he said, adding that the conference will seek to examine the economic, environmental and socio-cultural pillars of sustainability, thereby offering a holistic approach to addressing the sustainable tourism dynamic.

Walters said that two important initiatives being implemented over the past two years have been the Climate Smart and Sustainable Caribbean Tourism Industry project, funded by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) through the ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Management Programme.

He said this initiative has significantly supported the updating of the Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework, the provisioning of training and tools in disaster risk management, and a regional education and awareness campaign to promote sustainability practices.

The Innovation for Tourism Expansion and Diversification project is another pioneering regional initiative being implemented with financial and technical assistance from the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

“This initiative which has a community-based tourism (CBT) focus, will culminate in the provision of a community-based tourism toolkit for Caribbean countries, in-depth primary market research on the demand and willingness to pay for CBT experiences and a project to foster the adoption of digital payments and mobile wallet technologies among Tourism Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.”

The organisers said the conference, which is being held in collaboration with the St Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority, will allow industry experts to address the urgent need for a transformational, disruptive, and regenerative tourism product to meet the ever-rising challenges.

They said that St Vincent and the Grenadines is hosting the event amidst an intensified national thrust towards a greener, more climate resilient country, including the construction of a geothermal plant here to complement the country’s hydro and solar energy capacity and the restoration of the Ashton Lagoon in Union Island.

2 replies on “Sustainable tourism meeting begins in St. Vincent”



RICARDO FRANCIS 28th August 2019 at 7:41 PM

St.Vincent and the Grenadines is an agricultural country first and foremost and will continue to be for all eternity.

Our wealth is in agriculture. The focus is on the wrong policies and agenda. Easy money and the appeal of easy money is a heavy price too pay.

Agricultural money allowed Ralph, the Pharaoh leader to be where he is sitting. He does not like agriculture for it provides independence and does not appeal to the Mustique and



MAIN STORY

SVG Investment Forum 2020 Heads to Bequia

FEBRUARY 21, 2020 NO COMMENTS 4 MINS READ

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As the Dr. Ralph Gonsalves led administration attempts to satisfy its Budget 2020 agenda, Invest SVG is forging ahead in its bid to increase Foreign Direct Investments as well as locally based revenue earning ventures with national impact. To achieve this, the government's leading investment promotions agency has conceptualized a one-day event that is set to woo potential financiers.

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This gathering of both local and foreign prospects (investor leads) is slated for Saturday 2nd May 2020 and is dubbed SVG Investment Forum 2020. The luxurious Amitabah Villa situated on picturesque Bequia is to be the host venue.

Chairman of Invest SVG's Directors' Board Anthony Regisford described the initiative "as a tool in [Invest SVG's] toolkit [being used] to realize and fulfill [its] mandates. It's a very important exercise that we've taken on in 2020."

Invest SVG's Executive Director Annette Marks shed some light on what motivated her team to produce this high net worth, networking event. Marks made mention of the challenges faced when pitching a mostly unheard of multi-island State to potential investors. "The difficulty with actually speaking about St. Vincent abstractedly to investors that don't know about the Caribbean, don't have an idea that the Caribbean are separate islands or think that we are all one island and don't realize that St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a separate [country] with its own independence" propelled the local investment promotions agency to "break the traditional [investor recruitment] mold."

Executive Director Marks said, "we thought that we are going change this," of the usual boardroom/tradeshow type approach. "We're going to bring the investors here to St. Vincent and in bringing them to St. Vincent we wanted them to see the kind of infrastructural development that we have here so that they could realize that St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a premier destination for investments. We also want them to interact with our people and firsthand experience our culture and see the diversity of our nation – experience our music and our musicians…. We're not going to have a sit-down conference. We're going to have a one day event… it would be more of a networking event."

And to the sceptics who may question Bequia as the locale chosen to host this undoubtedly gala affair, Marks says "why not Bequia? Bequia is one of our beautiful sister islands. And can you imagine that the investors are here, they are in Bequia, they are at the meet at our Villa on the hill, on the patio overlooking the beautiful Caribbean Ocean and their senses are awakened and they are excited to the endless possibilities in St. Vincent and the Grenadines?"

Some 100 guests would be entertained inclusive of "qualified leads, local private sector, government officials and our development partners," Marks also announced while explaining that the invited investors have all "gone through a vetting process."

Local businesspersons are especially welcomed to hobnob along with investor leads referred by investors who are already "integrated into our society". Particularly so since, "we want them, when they come to this Forum, to understand the quality investments that we are trying to attract and that we are attracting and the potential spin off of opportunities from these investments," Marks told Tuesday's media launch event. Public sector representatives would also be on hand "to answer questions from the invitees as to doing business from a regulatory and legal stand point. And of course we'll have our development partners there. Who we engaged from the very beginning, who bought into our idea and came onboard from early."
The Executive Director thanked the Caribbean Export Development Agency, the IDB Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Fund and the World Bank for their sundry contributions.

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"Heightened visibility as a prime jurisdiction in the Caribbean for investments, to generate investor leads and to give investors who are not familiar with St. Vincent and the Grenadines an opportunity to meet public officials to understand how we do business here" were listed as some of what, Marks said, "we want from this [forum]."

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NEWS

Bureau of Standards hosts 3-day accreditation workshop

THURSDAY 3 AUGUST 2023



From left, TTBS executive director José E. Trejo, TTBS chairman Lawford Dupres, Trade and Industry Minister Paula Gopee-Scoon, UK High Commissioner Harriet Cross and TT's country representative to the Inter-American Development Bank Carina Cockburn, at the opening of the TTBS three-day workshop on Wednesday at the Hyatt Regency in Port of Spain. PHOTO COURTESY TT BUREAU OF STANDARDS - ttbs

THE TT Bureau of Standards (TTBS) is hosting a three-day workshop in collaboration with the TT Laboratory Accreditation Service (TTLABS), where accreditation as a tool for growing national trade competitiveness was discussed.

The workshop is being held at the Hyatt Regency in Port of Spain and began on Wednesday and runs until Friday. It aims to shed light on the crucial role of accreditation and accredited conformity assessment services in bolstering trade competitiveness.

A TTBS release on Wednesday said the workshop will identify areas for improvement in the trade framework, support exporters, and contribute to development of a sustainable and diversified economy.

Participants are expected to engage in discussions to review successes and challenges from the perspectives of various stakeholders in fulfilling accreditation requirements. Delivering the feature address at the opening ceremony, Trade and Industry Minister Paula Gopee-Scoon underscored the importance of creating a "culture of accreditation" which would aid in strengthening trade and investment deals.

She also highlighted the accreditation of public laboratories programme to improve the competencies and reliability of the testing and calibration services of public labs.

"To date, two public laboratories have been accredited under this initiative. An additional three labs have been selected and are currently developing their quality management systems for accreditation. The intention is to have all local public labs accredited by 2030," she said.

Gopee-Scoon also spoke on the transition of TTLABS saying, "another transformative programme is the accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs). To this end, the ministry in collaboration with the bureau, is currently establishing the TT Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment, TTASCA." TTLABS is the existing national accreditation body responsible for accrediting testing, calibration and medical laboratories in accordance with International Standards. To ensure international recognition of this service, the accreditation body is required to be an independent entity. Government is on a project to transition TTLABS to TTASCA with the technical co-operation of the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility.

So far, there has been:

• Training of local personnel to meet requirements of international standards for the operation of TTASCA;

• Development of change management and communication plans for TTASCA."

Also speaking at the opening ceremony was TTBS chairman Lawford Dupres who said, "This workshop, which brings stakeholders with varying interests, perspectives and experiences in trade together to discuss the effectiveness of the national trade framework, is a good example of the National Quality Policy in action."

He highlighted the critical roles both the TTBS and TTLABS play including facilitating trade through inspection and product certification, supporting local manufacturers in quality control and assurance, developing or adopting standards to support industries, and providing measurement traceability recognised by international trading partners.

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Govt gets $1.55 million to set up international accreditation agency

Loop News | January 9, 2020 04:42 PM ET



The Government has received approval for the Technical Cooperation Grant to the tune of US$230,000 to establish the Trinidad and Tobago Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment (TTASCA). This is equivalent to TT$1,552,000.

The TTASCA will ensure the internationally recognized accreditation of all conformity assessment bodies in the country which include medical laboratories, testing laboratories, calibration laboratories, inspection bodies and certification bodies, as well as proficiency testing providers, reference material producers and verification bodies.

Accreditation is an independent endorsement by a third-party entity of the competence of a conformity assessment body to reliably perform specific quality tasks against internationally recognized standards. Conformity assessment processes are necessary as evidence of compliance with a country's or industry's regulations and requirements.

The establishment of TTASCA will aid in reducing the technical barriers to trade that may be faced by local exporters through demands for repeat testing, certification and/or inspection and other such impediments – real or artificial - when their goods reach foreign markets.

The international recognition of the national accreditation body, TTASCA, will present a number of benefits given its alignment with the vision to improve productivity through quality infrastructure, build globally competitive businesses and aid in private sector development.

The project will be executed by the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, in partnership with the Ministry of Trade and Industry over the course of the next 24 months.

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IDB report finds Caribbean businesses need more innovation and productivity

by *327 days ago* *20230517*

A new report by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is urging Caribbean governments to focus on policies that facilitate businesses' efforts to innovate and improve productivity.

The IDB said the policies should focus on the constraints expressed by business owners themselves through enterprise surveys conducted in the Caribbean.

The report titled " Reflections on Innovation and Productivity as Caribbean Businesses Emerge from the Pandemic, " addressed the question of whether the Caribbean would return to the slow long-run growth of the pre-COVID-19) pandemic period.

The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, a multi-donor, private-sector development programme financed by the IDB, the governments of the United Kingdom and Canada, and the Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), collected business-level data from nearly 2,000 firms across 13 Caribbean countries.

The report includes an overview of the past performance in terms of economic growth and productivity. It describes the Compete Caribbean data and summarizes recent research papers analyzing that data and conclusions from that research.

The country sections draw on the Compete Caribbean database to describe the country level challenges facing firms in The Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

According to some of the key findings of the report, pre nomic growth performance was relatively poor.

It said in the 20 years prior to the pandemic, the average growth rate was far below the average for low- and middle-income countries. The average growth gap varies from two to five percentage points. The commodity exporters grew faster than tourism-oriented economies, although that advantage faded during the second decade of the century.

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Behind this low growth was poor performance in aggre of productivity.

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The report also found that innovation plays a key role in uctivity as well as a gender-inclusive dimension.



Dr Camille U Adams



"Overall, the evidence shows that while proactive innov affects business productivity and efficiency, innovations implemented in response to pressing external shocks (like the COVID-19 pandemic) do not necessarily generate gains in terms of efficiency.

"This insight points to the relevance of policies geared to continuously promote technological adoption and business innovations across the entire business cycle. The evidence also reveals that, while the pandemic shock affected employment differentially by gender, policies aimed at limiting female unemployment are not only needed for equity but also are effective at improving productivity."

The report notes that the evidence presented shows that firms that effectively mitigated female employment losses, were also more successful in limiting productivity losses.

The report's country sections use the data set to document the specific productivity challenges of each country.

It said that while access to finance and infrastructure challenges, such as electricity and telecoms, are common across countries, the depth of those challenges varies, and other specific issues emerge for each country.

"Business owners and managers face their own unique challenges depending on the country to improve the performance of their companies, both large and small."

Overall, this report reveals the importance of data and analysis to unlock the key determinants of productivity and innovation in the region. The abundant data sets in the book are publicly available here.

"We hope that Caribbean researchers and policymakers will draw on this database, as a regional public good, that can improve economic policy design across the region." said David Rosenblatt, the Regional Economic Advisor for the IDB's Caribbean Department.

WASHINGTON, May 17, CMC

CMC/gh/ir/2023

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4

Mensaje del CTO con motivo del Día Mundial del Turismo

Neil Walters, Secretario General Interino de la Organización de Turismo del Caribe ha enviado hoy un comunicado a los medios donde ha expresado su visión sobre la actualidad del sector

September 25, 2020



La Organización de Turismo del Caribe (CTO), la agencia de desarrollo turístico de la región, se une a la comunidad mundial para celebrar el Día Mundial del Turismo 2020 con el tema "Turismo y desarrollo rural".

El día internacional de observación de este año llega en un momento en que la industria del turismo mundial se enfrenta a una crisis de proporciones históricas debido a la pandemia de COVID-19. De hecho, es posible que no se conozca el verdadero impacto de la pandemia durante algún tiempo. Sin embargo, el impacto inmediato en nuestra región es muy evidente. Habiendo comenzado 2020 en camino de un nuevo récord en llegadas de turistas, al cierre de los aeropuertos en marzo le siguió prácticamente ningún viaje al Caribe en abril y mayo. El resultado fue una disminución del 57 por ciento en las llegadas entre enero y junio. Esto se traduce en una caída estimada del 50% al 60% en el gasto de los visitantes, que se puede ver directamente en la forma de negocios turísticos cerrados, y en todo el espectro económico en forma de ingresos significativamente reducidos tanto en el sector público como en el privado. Además, la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT) estima que casi medio millón de trabajadores del turismo en el Caribe se enfrentan a la perspectiva de pérdida de puestos de trabajo, reducción de las horas de trabajo y pérdida de ingresos como resultado de la pandemia.

Varios países del Caribe están considerados entre los más vulnerables por la Organización Mundial del Turismo (OMT) ya que los ingresos del turismo internacional representan la mayoría de las exportaciones totales en estos estados. También es evidente que las mujeres, los jóvenes y los trabajadores

La CTO ha reconocido que la pandemia de COVID-19 nos obliga a repensar nuestro enfoque del turismo y forjar una alineación más cercana de las funciones de turismo y salud. También reconocimos que debemos asegurarnos de que, en el reinicio del sector, los beneficios de la actividad turística se acumulen lo más rápidamente posible para todas las facetas de nuestras sociedades. Esto significa que mientras los actores tradicionales del turismo se reinician, también debemos ayudar a aquellos negocios que a menudo están lejos de la costa y las playas, en nuestras áreas rurales.

Con este fin, la organización ha avanzado en su colaboración con Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), que financiará proyectos de turismo comunitario en algunas zonas rurales de los países del Caribe. Las lecciones aprendidas se pueden utilizar como modelo para fomentar proyectos similares en toda la región y ser un catalizador para la generación de ingresos y el desarrollo en nuestras comunidades rurales.

Algunas de las características de las comunidades rurales, como la demografía de la población, los niveles de ingresos más bajos y el acceso relativamente limitado a la tecnología y la infraestructura, conducen a una mayor vulnerabilidad en tales áreas, a los impactos de crisis como la pandemia COVID-19. El turismo puede trabajar de la mano con otros sectores económicos del Caribe como la agricultura, el transporte y la cultura para empoderar a las comunidades rurales.

Unir a las personas en un entorno de solidaridad y confianza promueve la cooperación y la colaboración necesarias para ayudarnos a superar la pandemia. Al proporcionar un salvavidas a los vulnerables en nuestras sociedades, reducimos el tirón de los servicios sociales y mejoramos aún más la capacidad de los caribeños para desempeñar un papel de liderazgo en su

Mientras continuamos trabajando diligentemente para garantizar un ambiente seguro y saludable para nuestros visitantes y lugareños por igual, contemplemos la oportunidad que esta pandemia nos brinda para modificar nuestro sector turístico, y de hecho todos los demás sectores de nuestras economías, para alcanzar un nivel de sostenibilidad resistente a las crisis.

Instamos a nuestro pueblo caribeño a que se una a la comunidad turística mundial para reconstruir este sector y garantizar que, a partir de ahora, los beneficios del turismo se extiendan constantemente más allá de la jurisdicción costera y urbana tradicional a áreas de nuestros países que a menudo se pasan por alto, pero que pueden posicionarse para diversificar de manera sostenible. los ya ricos tesoros que aguardan a los visitantes de nuestras costas.

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OECS Launches Entrepreneurs Incubation and Acceleration Programme TECHIE

Media Release

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 Triniadad 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

Business Education Economic Development Youth



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ABOUT THE ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES

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The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is an International Organisation dedicated to economic harmonisation and integration, protection of human and legal rights, and the encouragement of good governance among independent and non-independent countries in the Eastern Caribbean. The OECS came into being on June 18th 1981, when seven Eastern Caribbean countries signed a treaty agreeing to cooperate with each other while promoting unity and solidarity among its Members. The Treaty became known as the Treaty of Basseterre, so named in honour of the capital city of St. Kitts and Nevis where it was signed. The OECS today, currently has eleven members, spread across the Eastern Caribbean comprising Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and The Grenadines, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Martinique and Guadeloupe.

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FEATURES

People of Trinitario exhibit at Medulla Gallery

NEWSDAY SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2023



Lawrence James keeps the spirit of his father alive in Brasso Seco. - Photos by Denise Speck

In the old days, cocoa created villages for the year-round tasks on the estates – caring for the trees, harvesting, fermenting and dancing the cocoa. Today, it's calling together a global community, from the Trinidad rainforests where the natural Trinitario hybrid was born to the cities which made an art of the golden bean.

A Story of Trinitario celebrates this new cocoa village and will be presented from October 2-7 at Medulla Gallery, Fitt Street, Woodbrook.

More than ten years ago, Rene Sperber and Tobias Schulze Frenking came to Trinidad on a mission from a German chocolate company. After the project ended, they stayed for the EU-funded programme to help develop the International Fine Cocoa Innovation Centre at the Cocoa Research Centre.


RAZOR



Dr Stephanie Omardeen finds solace in cocoa. -

Their company Ubergreen Organics has attracted a Trinidad cocoa collective – a fine cocoa cluster – that comprises growers, chocolate-makers and innovators to model the new cocoa village.

Sperber and Frenking bring business and innovation backgrounds and understanding of global cocoa and chocolate industry to link local producers with international markets. Ubergreen has produced the first cannabidiol (CBD extracted from hemp) chocolate bar made at origin in a fine-flavour-cocoa country. With funding from IDB Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, Ubergreen led the process of implementing the Organic Fine Cocoa and Chocolate Cluster (OFCCC) project, which transitioned to the Original Trinitario Cocoa (OTC) Education Foundation, which now has over 15 cocoa members and corporate support.



Tobias Schulze Frenking and Rene Sperber bring innovation to farmers like Aaron. -

The members of OTC believe Trinitario is a treasure that must be preserved and celebrated. Trinitario was hybridised by nature and enhanced through selective breeding, and has provided planting material for estates around the world.

OTC identified some challenges and is working to resolve them: availability of planting material; field-management practices; post-harvest practices; low productivity; and unavailable labour.



Javed Omardeen manages the 20 acres of Little Hermit Estate. -

Sarah Bharath, soil and crop consultant, and Junior Bhola, who devised the Bhola Method of plant propagation, work with the members to provide training on the ground.

OTC currently comprises a handful of small farmers, entrepreneurs and cottage businesses operating in the cocoa sector. They know TT is fortunate in its biodiversity – flora and fauna as well as human – and believe in the resilience of community.

Its new model village will be on show at Medulla in the heart of the House of Cocobel fine chocolate built by Isabel Brash.





Martin and Jacqueline Matthew raise a family in cocoa. -

The architect-turned-cocoa entrepreneur and chocolatier has created a brand that is more than cocoa and chocolate production. She says it reflects the entire TT foodscape and cultural collective: “The whole story in one bite.”

The exhibition is the work of Denise Speck, a thesis for her postgraduate degree in digital storytelling. She set out to tell the story of Trinitario, the tree that united and influenced the culture of TT. She has collected the stories of the membership, which include photographs and a short film, Trinitario – On the Edge. These are stories of family, small estates, business and production lines that integrate agriculture, artisanal practices, innovation and art.



Sparkle Charles and her specialty chocolates. -

The exhibition will take visitors through rainforest estates, into country kitchens and see the output of a dozen small businesses. They'll be able to sample and purchase products – cocoa and chocolates – at the cocoa fair on October 7, and meet some of the new cocoa entrepreneurs.

Martin Matthew retired from oil and gas offshore. and now the Matthew family works ten acres in Talparo, producing Tamana Mountain Chocolate. Jacky anchors the chocolate-making process. Oshu, 19, has been trained in post-harvest processes. Zari is providing home-cooked meals, and, with Megan, is figuring out their places in the cocoa world.

Stephanie Omardeen is a practicing doctor, who learned her love for the land and cocoa in Belize. On Tinamou Estate in the rainforest of Brasso Seco, she grows cocoa and other tree crops with a permaculture approach.





Farmer and chocolate maker Nikita Nath is growing into the future. -

“I am a soil farmer,” she says.

In the same area, her son Javed Omardeen manages the 20 acres of Little Hermit Estate. He is, he says, cultivating harmony...with everything in its place. Chocolate made from Tinamou and Little Hermit is marketed under the Omarbeans label.

Richard de Verteuil is in the Central Range, retired from a career in the oilfields. His family has cultivated cocoa for at least three generations so it was in his blood to move to the San Antonio estate, offering organic production since 2019.

Lawrence James practises agroforestry on ten acres which he works with his mother Josephine, in the memory of his father. He is part of the North Ridge Cooperative. He believes there’s a future in cocoa for younger generations. Associations are necessary: he longs to meet other cocoa farmers, to share ideas. His roucou trees provide shade, fertiliser and sauce; trees are very important to the environment. He hopes to expand revenue from his estate through tourism.



Retired oilfield worker Richard De Verteuil returns to cocoa. -

Nikita Nath has accepted responsibility for the past, present and future of cocoa at the Ortinola Great House and Estate, 365 acres in Maracas Valley St Joseph. The biggest investment and challenge, she says, was putting in 5,000 trees in one year to make sense of the high cost of producing cocoa. Ortinola is an old Cadbury estate. Nath is now farmer and chocolate-maker.

Daniel Barcant and Christopher Boodoosingh created Cocoa Republic in 2016, in Diego Martin, crafting award-winning chocolate from single-origin Trinitario cocoa. Roland Thomas is the manager.

Colleen Malwah-Aqui started processing organic skin care and beauty products from Trinitario cocoa butter, establishing her business in 2005 in Trinicity. She grew up in cocoa in Tobago and imbues her products with well-being derived from her experiences and memory of harvesting, sucking the beans from freshly opened pods and dancing cocoa.

Sparkle Charles is an IT professional who believes her Sparkling Gold Chocolates reflect all of Trini culture. Her chocolate kitchen caters to private customers. Her entrepreneurial journey began in 2016.

Trending

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1 **Rare flowering of talipot palm at Botanic Gardens**

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3 **Ex-soldier to pursue claim for gratuity, salary arrears**

4 **Muslims want prayer room at ANR Robinson Airport**

5 **Suspect, 17, in Penal murder still on the run**

6 **Cunupia girl, 8, shot, wounded while playing with air rifle**

7 **Travel abroad to elevate, not embarrass, Trinidad and Tobago**

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"People of Trinitario exhibit at Medulla Gallery"

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BUSINESS

The urgency of transforming Caribbean tourism

NEWSDAY THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2020



In this 2019 file photo, a visitor from the cruise ship MV Ventura takes some steps with a Tobago dancer as other visitors look on at the Scarborough port, Tobago. The Ventura was on its maiden voyage to Tobago, bringing 2,914 passengers. - FILE PHOTO

THERESE TURNER-JONES

World Tourism Day, celebrated on September 27, comes at a sobering time for the Caribbean. Travel is unlikely to return to normalcy for another year, or even well into 2022. We need to make this a transformational moment to

tourist dependent. We need to harness the industry to make our islands safer, greener and more resilient.

Tourism has had a big but narrow economic impact. Big in that it is our main economic sustenance. Pre-pandemic it accounted for between 34 per cent and 48 per cent of GDP in The Bahamas, Barbados, and Jamaica. Aruba, Antigua and Barbuda and The Bahamas are the three most tourist-dependent economies in the world. Fourteen of the 15 most tourism dependent nations in the Americas are in the Caribbean.

But the impact is also narrow. Many tourists came in cruise ships and stayed for short periods. Or they stayed in properties on our beaches to enjoy the warm waters and golden sands. There is nothing wrong with this. Nature has blessed us with coastline beauty we can share with our visitors.

We can do much more, however, to make the experience for tourists richer, to the benefit of more Caribbean citizens.

Of course, in the short term, we must continue to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, by supporting individuals who have lost their incomes and protecting our productive assets so we can bounce back quickly. We need to have our hotels and restaurants ready when the visitors return. The staff who have been laid off will need training to engage our visitors in a different way.

We also need to be smart in how we reopen. Many small island states flattened and even crushed the infection curve through social distancing measures and travel restrictions, at a big cost for our citizens, so countries are looking to reopen. This carries risks. Cases spiked in The Bahamas in July, when restrictions were relaxed. We need to base our reopening decisions on the prevalence of the virus in each source country and manage risks by insisting on either pre-testing before arrival or on-site testing upon arrival. Barbados has been particularly strong in implementing these risk

Indeed, environmental sustainability has to underpin any actions as we reinvent the sector. This is the lesson of Hurricane Dorian and so many others. The Galapagos Islands are looking to enhance the local sustainability of tourism by balancing ocean resources and human needs. This includes lengthening the stays of tourists to reduce the number of arrivals, producing more food locally and in sustainable ways, housing visitors in hotels that use renewable energy sources, and using boats that are powered by non-carbon fuels, among other measures.

A second key to the future of tourism is making it a much richer experience than beach trips. According to a consumer research by Euromonitor in 2019, four out of five American visitors would be interested in culture-based tourism. Visitors want to learn and interact more with local communities. They are eager to try local foods and enjoy adventures that become stories they can tell friends upon their return. Getting more visitors in communities generates new revenue sources for local business, enhances culture, community identity and pride. The Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility has worked with the Caribbean Tourism Organization to develop a toolkit for community-based tourism that appeals to the digitally-savvy, adventure-seeker by providing easier access to authentic experiences.

An example of the kind of eco-tourist experience is Barbados' Coco Hill Forest, where visitors learn about regenerative agriculture and organic farming in hiking treks, group planting activities and farm-to-table dining.

The Caribbean has natural resources for nature-based as well as culture-based solutions –scuba diving in the reefs, shark diving in The Bahamas, exploring the rich biodiversity of the forests in Trinidad and Tobago, to cite a few examples.

Several initiatives are looking to help make these riches more locally relevant. IDB Lab, in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism

bring new life to the tourism sector in 15 countries in Central America and the Caribbean. We have convened a movement to gather “moonshot” ideas that will transform the Caribbean, including for tourism.

I am confident these will be the seeds that add to an ecosystem of innovation and creativity that has marked our cultures. We have so much to offer to visitors and to the world. Let’s turn this pandemic into an opportunity.

Therese Turner-Jones is manager of the Caribbean department for the Inter-American Development Bank

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