30 AUG NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN BEING DEVELOPED FOR SAINT LUCIA'S HONEY INDUSTRY

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National Strategic Plan Being Developed for Saint Lucia's Honey Industry

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.

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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.

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