



Features

SMEs and BSOs Tackle Competitiveness Through Clustering

February 15, 2018 10:19 am

Share      

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).

Share      



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.

Share      

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.

Share      

© 2023 The Voice Publishing Co. (1953) LTD, All rights reserved.

Share      