



**PRESS RELEASE
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JAMAICA'S AGRO-PROCESSING SECTOR BEING ENHANCED BY JOINT CDB, EU, JBDC PROJECT

July 21, 2021, KINGSTON, Jamaica – Jamaica's agri-entrepreneurs will get access to a range of manufacturing, training and marketing support under a new two-year project which is being implemented by the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC).

The initiative, the **Increasing the Export Capacity of Micro and Small Agro-Processors Using the Cluster Approach Project** includes access to an upgraded food incubator, training in world class agriculture and manufacturing practices and branding and marketing support for the Jamaica Harvest brand.

Daniel Best, Director Projects Department at the **Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)**, which is supervising the initiative, says the project will *"build infrastructure and capacity and increase the economic participation and opportunities of those in agriculture, especially women while also contributing to post COVID-19 recovery."*

The project, which focuses on growing exports and increasing the economic opportunities available to women and those along the agriculture value chain, is financed by the European Union.

According to **Ambassador Marianne Van Steen, Head** of the **European Union Delegation** in Jamaica, *"It is expected, that with the execution of this project...there will be enhanced access to local and international markets for Jamaica food producers. This will come as a direct result from the improvements in infrastructure, technology, brand development, and market promotion in the agro-processing cluster."*

The **Honourable Norman Dunn, Minister of State** in the **Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce** Jamaica provided the national context for the export-oriented, capacity building project valued at EUR197,130. He indicated that the government was committed to equipping MSMEs and the business sector with the resources necessary to enhance their competitiveness, innovation, productivity and internationalisation. He added that the mandate to transform the agro-processing sector was part of the state's strategy to support MSMEs and enable them to leverage opportunities and achieve their potential.

The cluster approach being utilised in project activities seeks to leverage relationships of those along the agriculture value chain and capitalise on opportunities in agriculture and agro-processing to the benefit of all involved. Beyond this, the project will also create much needed entry points for Micro Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) involved in agro-processing.

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Ivy Gordon, Director of the Jeffery Town Farmers Association who represented the project's beneficiaries at the launch of the project on July 21 welcomed the intervention adding that *"Jamaica needs as many of us as possible to be producing and exporting to improve our economy."*

Valerie Viera, JBDC's Chief Executive Officer, highlighted the strategic importance of the cluster approach. *"JBDC has always been a strong proponent of the cluster approach to development, having launched brands cross various industries. Our biggest food brand to date has been Jamaica Harvest, a line of gourmet food items produced by agro-processors from across Jamaica. Jamaica Harvest, which includes flours, cereals, snacks and spices, is currently sold exclusively through our Things Jamaican™ retail store chain. The entrepreneurs who form this cluster brand stand to benefit immensely from the upgrading of our food incubator which will improve their production capacity and quality."*

Desmond John, Director, Development Cooperation Unit, CARIFORUM Directorate also endorsed the value of the project to CARICOM's work by deepening regional trade and further integrating our economies. *"The rebuilding of our economies, including our agriculture sector will require collective efforts. The objective of strengthening Caribbean economies and advancing towards integration into the world economy is still alive, even as it may be more challenging,"* he stated.

The Standby Facility is a EUR8.75 million resource managed by CDB, which offers opportunities to 15 Caribbean economies to grow trade, deepen integration and economic involvement; and impact competitiveness, market access, and exports by implementing targeted projects in thematic areas.

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ABOUT

The Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) was established in 2001 as the premier government agency providing business development services to Jamaican Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs)...' *From Concept to Market'*, JBDC provides guidance for business start-ups and expansion, offering business advice and consultation, research services, business monitoring, training and capacity building, project management services, financial advice, design and product development as well as market penetration support and access. The organisation which operates within the ambit of the Ministry of Industry, Investment & Commerce (MIIC), strives to continually fuel the local economy through its services and programmes designed to support the growth and development of the MSME sector.

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