



## **JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND**

**ISO 14001:2004 CERTIFIED**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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#### **JPS AND JSIF PILOTS PROJECT IN 7 COMMUNITIES**

In what has been described as the most far reaching public/private partnership aimed at tackling the problem of electricity theft, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) and the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which as its first project, will see the regularization of electricity usage in several communities in St. Catherine and St. Andrew.

Under the MOU, the JSIF will partner with the JPS in the area of Skills Training and education, and Progress through Utility Partnership (STEP UP) Project which will finance the delivery of infrastructure, services and civil works, relevant to the provision of legal electricity connections in seven selected communities.

The communities are McGregor Gardens, Denham Town, Tower Hill, Arnett Gardens, Whitfield Town, Payne Land and Majesty Gardens. The project will run from November 7, 2014 to November 6, 2015 and may become renewable, depending on its results.

Within the first community targeted – McGregor Gully, 100 houses will be wired. Other communities will not be wired, but houses will be re-certified. Community labour will be used in installations where possible.

The project is the partial result of a task force set up by the Prime Minister in May 2014 to assist the JPS in finding a solution to lower non-technical loss rate. Such losses are a high cost on the company itself and the average paying consumer.

Discussions for an electricity pilot to be undertaken by JSIF in inner city communities started in 2004 and were finally concretized in 2012 under an Inner City Basic Services for the Poor (ICBSP) project, funded by the World Bank and the Government of Jamaica.

Under this programme the JSIF carried out electricity regularization interventions in three communities. The JPS was also an integral partner in this venture which continued until early 2013. The programme sought to regularize homes which previously used electricity off the grid without paying. More than half of those homes are now paying customers.

In the project previously pursued by the JSIF, the electrification programme resulted in high satisfaction ratings. It also resulted in an improvement in the percentage of the community utilizing a metered connection for electricity access. Previous projects have also shown an improvement in community esteem as residents previously off grid, became billed customers.

In this instance, STEP Up will be fully funded by the JPS and will see the integration of lessons learnt from the JSIF/World Bank programme on electricity regularization. The initiative will also include skills training and employment opportunities for community residents.

If the pilot intervention is successful, work may be expanded to other target communities, taking into account lessons learned during the pilot, JPS has indicated.

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