



JAMAICA SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

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Press Release

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JSIF/JBI team up on greenhouse farming initiative

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Jamaica Bauxite Institute (JBI) and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) for the provision of greenhouses for use by some 160 farmers in Manchester, St. Ann & St. Elizabeth.

The project is aimed at supporting sustainable livelihoods in recipient communities and also contributes to higher levels of farm production.

Under the JSIF/JBI Water Harvesting Cluster Greenhouse Project, farmers will be provided with greenhouses at a total cost of J\$208 million, of which J\$ 153.27 million has been provided by JSIF under the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) programme; while the JBI has contributed J\$54.78 million.

The project will see the utilization of greenhouse technology to improve production and supplies of fruits, herbs and vegetables and the establishment of 160 greenhouses (20 at each site) to grow cauliflower, culinary herbs, ginger, romaine lettuce, strawberries, coloured sweet peppers, broccoli and red cabbage, tomatoes, among other objectives.

Under the agreement with the JBI, the Bauxite companies are expected to fund pond design and site preparation (\$ 3.02 million/site) and lease of land to farmers.

The Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) which is funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) has made investments in over 100 enterprises across the Agriculture and Tourism sector.

Speaking at the MOU signing ceremony, Mr. Omar Sweeney, Managing Director of the JSIF, revealed that the JSIF and the JBI have been working in collaboration with partners in Government such as the Ministry of Agriculture and RADA, to develop businesses around the concept of protected agriculture.

Under the new MOU, JSIF and the JBI have agreed to work together to address the critical areas of need in communities impacted by the operations of the local bauxite/alumina industry.

A major problem faced by farmers in bauxite mining areas is lack of access to land for farming and the absence of a reliable supply of irrigation water. The solution which was proposed was the conversion of mined-out pits to water catchment ponds and to provide farmers with access to lands around these ponds.

The main objectives of the project are to facilitate farmers' access to mined-out lands for the purpose of farming, through the utilization of over 150 acres of rehabilitated bauxite lands and to develop appropriate water harvesting technologies through the conversion of mined-out bauxite pits to surface water reservoirs to provide irrigation water.

Another objective is to pool the production capacity of the farmers, in order to improve their earning and marketing powers; through the development of greenhouse clusters.

JBI will be responsible for the procurement and Installation of synthetic liners; provision of Irrigation systems; provision of solar pumping systems (\$9.0 million), and the development of seedlings for the first planting season (\$3.0 million).

The JSIF which will contribute \$20 million at each site, which will cover the provision of plastics and shade cloths and lumber for each greenhouse; fertigation and storage drums for each greenhouse; Drip irrigation systems for each greenhouse; Pesticide storage facility at each site; food storage facilities at each site; bathroom facilities at each site; training of farmers in Business Management, Greenhouse production, water management, and marketing support.

Omar Sweeney indicated that the greenhouses will benefit from rainwater harvested and stored in lined mined out bauxite pits in the three parishes.

"This project will contribute 11 acres of greenhouse space to the greenhouse landscape," he stated, adding, "of this amount 8.3 acres will be dedicated to non -traditional crops such as broccoli, cauliflower and red cabbage and 2.7 acres to tomato and sweet pepper."

The head of JSIF expressed his appreciation to all partners who have come on board to participate in project delivery and encouraged farmers to place close attention to the training given, and to work with local groups to ensure that the green houses and equipment are maintained to the required standard. “If you can make this commitment, a more sustainable future for yourselves and your families will be ensured,” he said.

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