

60 mining and quarry operators benefit from entrepreneurial training

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Brussels, 09 March 2021/OACPS: Sixty small and medium-sized mining and quarry operators have benefited from entrepreneurial skills training to better enable their businesses to survive and thrive, through training conducted by the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) under the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States-European Union (OACPS-EU) Development Minerals Programme Phase II.

Among the areas covered by the training were how to build a successful enterprise; formulating a detailed business and quarry plan; preparing business proposals to access financing and knowledge sharing.

The Development Minerals Programme is financed by the EU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and implemented by UNDP. It aims to build the profile, improve the management of, and foster better livelihoods for people working along the development minerals value chain in countries like Jamaica, that are Members of the OACPS.

Development minerals include industrial and construction materials, dimension stones, and semi-precious stones.

Assistant Secretary-General, OACPS, Escipión J. Oliveira Gómez, in his remarks at the virtual closing ceremony on March 4, noted that the training will enhance the contribution of Jamaica's mining and quarry sector to the economy. "We are proud of this initiative. We would like to use Jamaica as an example to other countries in the Caribbean, and small islands in the Pacific, to promote a better mining sector."

Director of Mineral Economics and Development at the Ministry of Transport and Mining, Dennis Miller, in his address, noted that the training will help to achieve the programme's goal of enhancing business skills in the development of the minerals sector.

He commended the course participants and urged them to use the skills learned to grow their operations.

Chief Executive Officer of the JBDC, Valerie Veira, said that the agency is committed to helping businesses to survive and prosper through the provision of technical and business support services.

She said that the development minerals industry is being given increased recognition and the training will better equip them to ensure the sustainability and viability of their operations, including accessing loans.

UNDP Resident Representative to Jamaica, Denise Antonio, noted that the programme has strengthened the capacity of the beneficiaries to manage development in the sector in a sustained way "in order to unleash its potential and move to the next level."

Deputy Head of the EU Mission to Jamaica, Fredrick Ekfeldt, described the programme as "a good example of how the nation can maximise its resources, while adapting to socio-economic changes and respecting the environment."

In his remarks, President of the Jamaica Bankers Association, Jerome Smalling, in his remarks, said that the organisation "stands ready to support the sector towards sustainable growth."

He encouraged the entrepreneurs to consider multiple financial options, such as venture capital arrangements and equity financing "where funders are offered a stake in the business."

Source: *The Gleaner, Jamaica*

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