

EARTH DAY

JNSBL open for climate business

Petre Williams-Raynor
Contributing Editor

JAMAICA NATIONAL Small Business Loans (JNSBL) is looking to vamp up interest in its US\$2.5-million adaptation to climate change line of credit, catering exclusively to small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) from the agriculture, tourism and related sectors.

"In the coming months, JNSBL will be strengthening its efforts through collaborations with related parties in the tourism and agro value chain to further promote the special loan facility," said Jacqueline Shaw Nicholson, JNSBL's communications and client services manager.

"We will also support the education of persons on matters of climate change as well as adaptive and mitigation techniques available to them," she told **The Gleaner**.

So far, SMEs have drawn down on J\$19.5 million of the available funds to finance the installation of rainwater harvesting systems, drip irrigation systems, water recirculation systems, solar water heating system, and energy smart system.

The first loan was approved in December, following the official launch of the line of credit earlier in the year.

"JNSBL is pleased with the take up of the loan facility so far, with 51 per cent to the tourism sector and 49 per cent to the agro sector in disbursements," said Shaw Nicholson.

SELECTION CRITERIA

For those persons wishing to draw down on the funds, criteria for selection include not only that they be operating a tourism or agro-related business, but also that proposed projects must enhance their capacity to cope better with the increased changes and effects of climate change.

"Collateral is required and can include machinery and equipment of trade or to be purchased, motor vehicles that can be comprehensively insured



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Seated (from left): Audrey Sewell, permanent secretary in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation; Milverton Reynold, managing director of the Development Bank of Jamaica; Gillian Hyde, general manager of JN Small Business Loans, and Allison Rangolan McFarlane, chief technical director, Environmental Foundation of Jamaica sign the memorandum of understanding to facilitate the administration of the Climate Change Adaptation Line of Credit last year. Looking on are Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister Daryl Vaz and Therese Turner-Jones, general manager of the Inter-American Development Bank's Caribbean Department.



or registered titles as well as lien on deposits, guarantors are also acceptable," added Shaw Nicholson.

The maximum loan amount that can be awarded is \$5 million, with an interest rate of four per cent per annum on the reducing balance.

However, Shaw Nicholson said that "borrowers can also utilise other loan facilities available at JNSBL to further support project implementation where needed".

The line of credit is one of two financing mechanisms under the Pilot Programme for

Climate Resilience (PPCR). The other is the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCAF) that is being administered by the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ).

The SCCAF finances adaptation and disaster risk-reduction projects and cover associated programme management cost.

It is accessible by community-based organisations, other civil society groups and select public-sector agencies specifically for "clearly defined high-priority activities, particularly related to building the resilience of the natural

environment and contributing to livelihoods protection and poverty reduction", according to project documents.

The EFJ recently awarded 18 grants to the tune of \$84.9 million to undertake projects designed to boost the ability of communities to respond to climate change threats.

THREATS

Counted among those threats are increased and/or more severe extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and droughts, which destroy agricultural and tourism livelihoods.

Climate change also brings warmer temperatures, which,

too, have negative implications for not only human livelihoods but also marine life. This is given, as one example, the negative effects of increased sea surface temperatures on coral reefs.

It is a look at these implications that, at least in part, provides the basis of JNSBL's decision to pursue administration of the line of credit under the PPCR.

"Increasingly, agro-related activities were experiencing negative changes in production yield, both in quality and quantity, which affected their ability to earn as per usual. We, therefore, wanted to assist with

educating our clients — and staff — on matters of climate change and assist them to obtain the systems and techniques necessary to adequately respond to matters of climatic variability," Shaw Nicholson said.

"JNSBL is also cognisant of the wider threat climate change poses to food security and as a part of our own mandate to support economic sustainability, JNSBL wanted to provide well needed support to the MSME sector to adequately mitigate and adapt for sustainability," she added.

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Japanese apartment complex a model for effective waste management

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Contributor

HAVING SPENT his life working for a real-estate company, Mineo Yahata is adding value as the superintendent of the three-apartment complex he manages in the city of Kawasaki, Japan. But he is not the security in charge, as his title might suggest. Rather, this calm, petite-framed gentleman is policing waste collection and disposal.

UNIQUE PROGRAMME

Yahata and his team of 21 personnel — all employees of Haseko Community Inc, a Tokyo-based maintenance company — are running a unique and proven effective garbage collection programme for the last six years.

"There are particular days assigned for the type of garbage that is to be disposed of, which is kept outside the apartment door by the owners," informed Yahata. "This is collected and brought to the central garbage-collection centre in the



Mineo Hata, Haseko Community, Inc. supervisor at the Foreseum condominium complex in Kawasaki City, Japan.

apartment complex."

While Mondays are designated for plastic waste, Wednesdays and Saturdays are for kitchen waste, while Fridays are for the collection of recyclable plastic and cans.

The garbage, which is to be put in translucent plastic bags, is brought to a collection centre where it is stored in green plastic bins, and picked up by designated garbage truck.

This service is funded with monthly maintenance fees paid by the residents of the complex.

"The apartments in this

complex move fast," said Yahata, adding that the over 700 apartments in the three-building complex also attract a premium.

'TRASH TO CASH'

Kawasaki, home to more than 1.4 million people, is one of the smallest and cleanest cities of Japan. The effort to make the city clean, sustainable environmentally friendly is a result of the local government implementation of core principle of 'trash to cash'.

The city currently has three waste-treatment facilities, which convert certain plastic and paper to raw materials that are sold to local manufacturing facilities.

Yahata and his team, meanwhile, are working hard to keep their neck of the woods pristine.

"The apartment owners are very happy with this facility," he said. "We never had anyone defaulting on the (maintenance) payment, but if someone does, we will put their photo on the community notice board."

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PHOTOS BY FLOYD K TAKEUCHI/WAKA PHOTOS

Workers at the Ukishima Waste Treatment Center hand-sort plastic bag waste for recycling.