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Compete Caribbean gives boost to Business Process Outsourcing Sector in Jamaica

Montego Bay, Jamaica – Since the 1990s, Jamaica has been successful in attracting Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) operations and currently represents 9% of the region's market in terms of workers, revenue and number of firms. However, as the country seeks to progressive move up the BPO value chain, support is needed in order to improve the business environment via policies and strategies in order to maintain the competitiveness and viability of the sector in a dynamic global industry.

The Business Process Industry Association of Jamaica (BPIAJ) is a cluster of organizations that provide Business Process Outsourcing services to near shore markets such as the United States. The cluster consists of 25 institutions, including 14 BPO companies, 7 private enterprises, and 4 public organizations including JAMPRO and the University of the West Indies (UWI).

On June 16, 2014, Compete Caribbean (CC) officially began providing technical support to the BPIAJ to position itself as viable and competitive supplier of BPO services for near shore markets. This began through the establishment of a 200 seat contact centre incubator which can house 4 nascent firms simultaneously. The introduction of the incubator has proved effective in aiding new entities to enter the market with ease with its turn-key/plug n play design. By the end of the project, five (5) new firms had joined the Contact Center Incubator of which three have already graduated into their own spaces within the Montego Free Zone,

employing more than 600 young Jamaicans between them. Additionally, the cluster has been able to leverage the project to prepare the member firms for certification and to forge stronger relationships with its external partners such as the HEART Trust/ National Training Agency, which provides technical vocational training to the active work force. Through this partnership, revised curricula have been developed to assist in the training of employees for contact centre operations with additional focuses on technical support and sales. The cluster has also been able to devote resources from the project to support language training in Spanish for its employees, conducted by UWI..

Since the project's inception, the BPIAJ has diversified and moved up the value chain in the range of services offered; with the cluster reporting approximately 4,500 full-time jobs being created; and a significant boost in the number of international markets serviced, including the United Kingdom, Australia and the Philippines. .

Overall, Compete Caribbean has supported Jamaica to establish itself as a credible and formidable provider of BPO services, and the BPIAJ's incubator has become a key input to attract new providers to the Industry.

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