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Companies in Wildey go green

BUSINESSES IN WILDEY, St Michael, have gone green under an initiative being executed by the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI). BCCI executive director Misha Lobban-Clarke shares more on the Wildey Green Business Support Pilot Project.

What is the Wildey Green Business Project?

One of the key priorities of the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) is to advocate for and to promote environmental sustainability best practices among businesses.

Against this background, the Barbados Chamber has been leading the implementation of a Green Business Support Pilot Programme to provide capacity building and compliance support for the greening of businesses – small and medium enterprises and large corporations – in a designated commercial district/industrial zone – Wildey Business District.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Barbados Chamber signed the agreement for the implementation of this innovative programme from September 2023 and ending on June 30.

The programme is designed to provide capacity building support to help transform businesses in Wildey to become greener, more environmentally sustainable businesses by placing special focus on solid waste management, pollution prevention, water and energy conservation, and other environmental and sustainable best practices with the objective of reducing the negative consequences of climate change.

The project also ensures that the youth become more aware of the issues related to sustainable development.

The programme affirms the BCCI's commitment to act as an advocate in promoting the adoption of sustainable greening best practices and fostering more environmentally conscious businesses in Barbados.

Why was Wildey chosen as the location for this initiative?

The Wildey business district was chosen as the geographic specific area for the programme because it is a central district known for its industrial, commercial, and retail activities.

It was also chosen because of the diverse business types located within this business cluster, which would allow for comparative data analysis and assessment for this pilot programme.

Between 30 and 35 per cent (29 out of 80 businesses in Wildey) actively participated in the programme. The indication from these businesses is that there is a consciousness and interest among businesses to embrace a "greener" approach and to adopt sustainable practices at the forefront of their operations.

What is the Chamber's role in executing the programme and who else is involved?

Funded by the ILO and the UN Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), this pilot project is multisectoral in its focus and impact. The implementing agency for this programme is the BCCI on behalf of the private sector and businesses in the Wildey district in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, National Beautification, and



BARBADOS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE and Industry executive director Misha Lobban-Clarke. (FP)

the Blue and Green Economy and the Ashley Lashley Foundation, project coordinators and a civil-society organisation that empowers youth and advocates for climate change. The financial contribution of ILO/PAGE for the programme is US\$68 557.

What are the key components of the project and the progress made so far in implementing them?

The initiative has made significant progress in its efforts to promote greening best practices among businesses in Wildey.

With coordinated project management, stakeholder engagement and targeted initiatives, the key objectives achieved include an updated database of businesses in Wildey and outreach to the over 80 businesses in Wildey.

A Green Business Development Education Initiative for Wildey business stakeholders was implemented as a key programme objective. This included training guides and training seminars specifically designed to build the capacity of property/facilities and environmental staff of businesses in Wildey.

The completed **State Of Green Business Survey Findings Report** of

the Wildey Area is a key deliverable for this pilot programme. Of the 80 businesses in the Wildey area, 29 participated in the survey and have affirmed their commitment to environmentally friendly best practices and to enhancing their sustainability efforts.

There was the successful training of a cohort of ten youth environmental/green business assessors – four males and six females aged 20 to 28 years old. The team of youth assessors executed the State Of Green Business Survey.

Of the 80 businesses in the Wildey area, 29 participated in the Knowledge, Attitudes and Perception of Greening in Business Survey and have affirmed their commitment to environmentally friendly best practices and to enhancing their sustainability efforts.

What are the next steps for the programme?

It is our hope that the results from the assessments, training and capacity building will result in positive change among the participating businesses in Wildey. The Chamber's goal is to continue

to engage the business owners and managers in the Wildey area towards developing a sustainable and environmentally friendly approach for their businesses.

We are hopeful that through the lessons learned from this initiative, it will serve as an example for other business communities to follow across Barbados. We believe that this pilot programme can be a model for Barbados and can positively inform similar future initiatives locally and regionally by the ILO and other partners.

With the recent devastating impact of **Hurricane Beryl** on Barbados, Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica and predictions of even greater threats to small island developing states, we are once again reminded that taking the necessary actions to reduce the negative impacts on our environment is no longer a "nice to have" or "a check box" – it is an imperative!

Going green is not only crucial to the sustainability of our planet and its people, it makes good business sense as it can result in greater efficiencies and cost-savings.