



JAMAICA NATIONAL REMITTANCE PROGRAM

MAKING JAMAICAN BUSINESSES MORE COMPETITIVE

THE CHALLENGE

For the last ten years, Jamaica has been faced with a particularly difficult development challenge: extremely poor economic performance. Only Haiti and Cuba's economies have done worse than Jamaica's. Economic growth was negative between 1996 and 2000, public debt was estimated at 144 percent of GDP, and poverty rates soared to 17 percent. Remittances, which are sums of money that a migrant sends back to his or her country of origin, have become a major source of capital in Jamaica. In turn, a significant portion of this money is being used to support small, medium, and micro enterprise.

THE APPROACH

USAID has partnered with the Jamaica National Bank (JNB) to encourage Jamaica nationals residing in the United States, to open accounts at their local JNB branch. JNB will make funds available to relatives in Jamaica via automatic teller machines, eliminating the need to work through a third party. The alliance is part of USAID's strategy to improve the business environment in Jamaica, and aims to reduce the constraints of doing business and improving the skills of Jamaican business in order to make them more competitive in the global marketplace. The Jamaica National Remittance Program initiatives include technical assistance, training, and equipment for the public and private sectors to increase efficiency; improving business skills of technologically oriented companies; and increase the ability of small and medium enterprises to access a wide range of financial products and services.



RESULTS

- Over 400 small, medium, and micro enterprises have received training in financial management, general accounting, marketing, strategic business planning, managing payroll systems, and effective leadership.
- Through the Cluster Competitiveness Project, 120 firms are will acquire the skills needed to effectively enter and compete in the global economy in agribusiness and tourism.
- Since 1999, approximately 26,000 loans worth a total of \$13 million have been granted.

PARTNERS

Hewlett-Packard, Jamaica National Bank,
Microsoft Corporation

