

Strengthening business support intermediaries in Jamaica

The successful collaboration between the Development Bank of Jamaica and EBN under the BIGEE Project



This success story highlights a collaboration to strengthen the institutional and operational capacity of Jamaica's Business Support Intermediaries (BSIs). It shows how EBN worked hand-in-hand with Jamaican stakeholders to build quality, resilient, internationally connected innovation intermediaries, empowering them to better serve startups and entrepreneurs across the island.

Europe's leading innovation partner network, fast-tracking your connectivity and certifying your value

We connect exemplary entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem builders to drive greater innovation capacity in European regions – and beyond.

Tapping into our members' best possible actions to create vibrant, thriving startups and SMEs gives us a line-of-sight to identify the main pain points affecting regional innovation capacity. We then focus on unlocking the most efficient path to ensure that innovation ecosystem services are advantageous to local innovation stakeholders and their regions.

We believe that in a world face our global challenges, innovative entrepreneurs are the force for sustainable economic development and greater well-being in our local regions. By strengthening regional innovation ecosystems, governments can boost job creation, enhance regional attractiveness, and foster economic resilience.

- ◆ **180+ members** spanning **37+ countries**, representing leading innovation ecosystem organisations.
- ◆ Over **29,000 startups and SMEs supported yearly**, from ideation to scaling.
- ◆ **9,000+ high-skilled jobs created every year** across the EU|BIC community-supported startups.
- ◆ **€880 million in capital funding raised**, with 60% from private sources and 40% from public sources.
- ◆ EU|BIC-supported companies achieve an **85% three-year survival rate**, significantly higher than the EU average of 58%.

Our Clients and Partners





The project

Funding organisation:

Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ)

The Development Bank of Jamaica is Jamaica's leading development finance institution, promoting economic growth by providing funding, technical assistance, and policy support to strengthen businesses, foster innovation, and enhance the national entrepreneurship ecosystem.



Development Bank of Jamaica Limited

Facilitating Economic Growth & Development

Partners of EBN in the project

EU|BIC Associate Innovos Group

Innovos Group is a Latin American consulting firm specialising in innovation management, entrepreneurship development, and institutional strengthening. It works with ecosystem actors to design and implement promote sustainable economic growth.



InnovosGroup

CONSULTORA EN CIENCIA, TECNOLOGÍA E INNOVACIÓN

ParqueTec

ParqueTec is an innovation park and business accelerator located in Costa Rica and Mexico. It supports startups and SMEs scale operations through mentoring, access to networks, and innovation-driven entrepreneurship programs.



ParqueTec

Incubadora y Potenciadora de Negocios

InBIA (International Business Innovation Association)

InBIA is a non-profit organisation based in the United States of America that empowers entrepreneurship support organisations through training, certification, and knowledge exchange.



EU|BIC members offering expertise

EU|BIC Poznań Science and Technology Park (PPNT)

PPNT is one of Poland's leading innovation and research hubs, providing startups and companies with access to laboratory infrastructure, incubation services, and technology transfer support.



EU|BIC Fundecyt-PCTEX

Fundecyt-PCTEX, based in Extremadura, Spain, supports research, innovation, and technology transfer by connecting public institutions, academia, and industry, thereby contributing to the region's competitiveness and sustainable development.



FUNDECYTPCTEX

un espacio para innovar

The background

Jamaica's entrepreneurial ecosystem has experienced rapid growth in recent years. BSIs, such as incubators, accelerators, and innovation hubs, play a key role in nurturing startups. However, challenges in their sustainability, operational efficiency, and limited international networking affect their long-term success.

Recognising the importance of a strong intermediary network, DBJ partnered with EBN and its consortium to strengthen the institutional capacity of BSIs and align them with global best practices through a structured accreditation and training programme.

The challenge

Despite progress in fostering entrepreneurship, Jamaican BSIs face persistent barriers:

- Limited access to sustainable funding sources and diversified revenue models.
- Inconsistent quality standards across support institutions.
- Fragmented collaboration within the ecosystem.
- Limited exposure to international networks and best practices.

These gaps hindered BSIs' ability to effectively support startups through all growth stages and to attract private and international investment.

The solution

The consultancy implemented a comprehensive programme analysing the main needs of each BSI and providing in response a capacity-enhancement programme including training; impact monitoring, evaluation and quality accreditation; and sustainability plans to enhance the performance, governance, and sustainability of BSIs.

Using EBN's EU|BIC Accreditation Framework, the project guided institutions in self-assessment, planning, and continuous improvement—ensuring alignment with international standards and measurable impact.

The methodology was participatory and needs-driven, ensuring relevance and ownership among BSIs.

Services Delivered

1

Needs assessment and stakeholder engagement

We ran a series of consultations involving the BSIs and the DBJ. These sessions created a participatory dynamic. They allowed attendees to share their institutional realities, strengths, and challenges. Complementing these exchanges, our team conducted a comprehensive training-needs survey designed to identify the most pressing priorities and capacity gaps among the BSIs.

The results provided a clear understanding of each institution's specific development needs. The consultancy team worked collaboratively with DBJ and the BSIs on a training framework, and refining the curriculum, ensuring that the content was directly aligned local needs.

2

Capacity-building program

We delivered a comprehensive nine-module training series designed to strengthen the operational and strategic capacities of Jamaica's BSIs. The sessions covered a wide range of topics: from positioning within the entrepreneurial ecosystem to developing effective fundraising strategies.

Each module was delivered by an international expert. This brought the sessions many perspectives and best practices, ensuring participants gained theoretical insights and practical tools applicable to their institutional contexts.

3

Monitoring, evaluation and accreditation framework for quality services

The accreditation component was a central pillar of the consultancy. It ensured that Jamaica's BSIs aligned their structures, operations, and services according to internationally recognised standards. Using the EBN's Accreditation Framework, a methodology successfully applied across Europe, the project introduced a structured assessment of institutional performance. This greatly supports continuous improvement.

Four international experts - members of the EU|BIC community - conducted on-site visits to assess each institution's governance, operations, and service delivery. They produced individual reports identifying strengths, gaps, and offering tailored recommendations for improvement. Building on these assessments, the project introduced performance indicators and governance frameworks to help BSIs monitor progress, strengthen accountability, and make data-driven decisions.

Together, these measures established a structured foundation for continuous improvement and long-term institutional sustainability within Jamaica's innovation ecosystem.

4

Institutional strengthening plans

Based on the outcomes of the activities above and in collaboration with each BSI, the consultancy designed a customised roadmap outlining short-, medium-, and long-term goals, tailored to its specific context and operational needs.

These roadmaps placed strong emphasis on key areas such as institutional sustainability, effective governance, service design, and the establishment of robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks. To ensure strategic focus and practical implementation, improvement opportunities within each plan were prioritised according to their feasibility and potential impact, enabling BSIs to concentrate their efforts on the most achievable and high-value initiatives first.

The timeline

September 2024: Initial in-country mission and first interviews in person with Support Intermediaries (BSIs)

October - November 2024: Data collection on training needs of the BSIs, including through online and surveys.

December 2024 – May 2025: Delivery of Capacity-Building Programme for more than 50 practitioners from Jamaican BSIs, including a combination of online and onsite activities.

December 2024 – January 2025: Data collection to measure performance of BSIs and establish a monitoring, evaluation and accreditation framework for the quality of the services provided by BSIs to the Jamaica innovation ecosystem.

February 2025: Accreditation in-country mission, to visit the facilities of the BSIs and interview the managing team, the client companies and other relevant stakeholders.

May 2025: Completion of Accreditation Reports and exercise. Delivery of final workshop.

June 2025: Completion of institutional strengthening plans.

The results

- ◆ **A clear vision and governance framework:** The project successfully engaged sixteen Business Support Intermediaries across Jamaica, equipping them with the tools and knowledge to operate more sustainably and effectively.
- ◆ **Engaged stakeholders:** Over fifty participants attended each training session on average, with overwhelmingly positive feedback—90% rated the program as excellent or very good, and 95% reported improved understanding of business models, performance management, and ecosystem engagement.
- ◆ **Ensured sustainability:** Each BSI developed a tailored strengthening plan that set clear strategic and operational goals for long-term sustainability, leveraging on what was learned.
- ◆ **Connectivity with international networks:** The project strengthened Jamaica's entrepreneurial ecosystem by fostering meaningful connections with international networks, enabling local BSIs to exchange best practices, access global expertise, and build partnerships that extend their reach beyond national borders.

Overall, the initiative created a strong foundation for a cohesive, sustainable, and internationally connected network of support organisations driving entrepreneurship and innovation in Jamaica.

A foundation for long-term impact

This project represents a strategic milestone for Jamaica's innovation landscape. It lays out the groundwork for a self-sustaining, high-performing network of business support institutions that can propel startups from local inception to global competitiveness



Key takeaways

This program has been instrumental in building the capacity of Jamaica's Business Support Intermediaries to operate sustainably and align with international best practices.

This case highlights EBN's strong capacity to lead international consortia and deliver impactful, multi-partner projects that strengthen local innovation systems. By focusing on enhancing the effectiveness and measurable impact of Business Support Intermediaries by building upon the consolidated EU|BIC quality framework, EBN's approach has helped Jamaican BSIs become powerful drivers of regional development—fostering entrepreneurship, attracting investment, and contributing to sustainable, inclusive economic growth.

We help you at every stage of your innovation ecosystem-building journey

EBN hosts a pan-European, global entrepreneurial innovation network that helps connect government partners with entrepreneurship and innovation support organisations (ESO/ISOs), such as the EU|BICs, to solve their greatest challenges. Our network serves as both a performance assessor and a capacity-building ecosystem, empowering innovation-driven transformation in regions worldwide.

By collaborating with EBN and its community of entrepreneurship support organisations (ESOs), governments can:

- ✓ **Strengthen Regional Innovation Ecosystems**
- ✓ **Unlock Access to Private and Public Finance**
- ✓ **Promote Policy Coherence and Alignment**
- ✓ **Catalyse Job Creation and Economic Growth**
- ✓ **Foster Internationalisation and Cross-Border Innovation**

We help you at every stage of your innovation journey - from ideation to impactful delivery - ensuring that every country, region and city can leverage innovation to solve its greatest challenges and achieve sustainable growth.

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