

The Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) is inviting proposals for short-term social intervention programmes under its Poverty Reduction Programme (PRP).

The initiative, now in its third phase, is jointly funded by the European Union (EU) and the Government of Jamaica.

JSIF has successfully implemented phases one and two of the programme and in this third segment, which focuses on a number of volatile communities in the parishes of Kingston, St. Andrew, St. Catherine and St. James, non-state agencies are being invited to apply for grants to execute certain projects.

Project Co-ordinator for PRP III, Dr. Eleanor Henry, explains that the proposals must fit into four pre-determined categories.

The first category is skills training, where community-based organizations (CBOs) can get up to \$1.1 million for training and entrepreneurial development. "The amount available will be able to finance 20 such projects," Dr. Henry informs.

The second category is for income generating projects and CBOs can apply for grants to assist them in these efforts. "The individual grant here is in the region of

\$7.5 million per grant," Dr. Henry informs, noting that there should be enough funds to finance eight projects in this category.

The third call for proposals is designed for non-governmental organizations (NGO), to offer remedial education in the communities in which JSIF works. "It is expected that we'd finance maybe about three such projects (with each) receiving about \$6.5 million," Dr. Henry says.

The fourth category is geared towards assisting CBOs and NGOs to improve the scope and quality of work already being undertaken. “The idea behind this one is that they will work with CBOs in the communities in which we operate to help them design their own projects, plan their own projects, develop the skills they need to implement their own projects, and to monitor the projects,” Dr. Henry explains. For this category, four grants of approximately \$7 million will be issued.

In order to be eligible for a grant, applying entities must be duly registered with the Government and be non-profit making.

Applicants may only make one application per category. Another stipulation is that the projects must be implemented in one or more of the 27 communities from the designated parishes.

Dr. Henry also points out that the projects must have a duration of five months or less.

“All of the projects that we propose to fund under these calls must be completed in five months so they must be completed by mid-September, no later than October. We expect to be signing the grant contracts by the beginning of April. It’s something that has to be ready to roll like now,” she states.

Successful applicants will receive 90 per cent of the total cost for implementing their project. “It is a cost sharing grant, which means that we will assist you to finance the project, but in this case, the level of assistance that we are giving is 90 per cent of the total project cost. So each applicant will have to find the other 10 per cent from their own resources,” Dr. Henry points out.

Interested persons or agencies have until 4:00 p.m. on February 8 to submit their proposals.

Meanwhile, in anticipation of the numerous questions persons will have about the application process, Dr. Henry says JSIF will be hosting a public information session on January 15 at the Mona Visitor’s Lodge, St. Andrew, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

“This affords all interested persons the opportunity to come, get additional information on what each of the calls is about and to ask any important questions that they may have,” Dr. Henry says.

Interested persons may also contact JSIF at 968-4545 or visit jsif.org to view the full list of communities and familiarize themselves with the PRP programme.

The Poverty Reduction Programme was started in 2001. The programme is an important part of the European Commission’s assistance to Jamaica and is in line with the National Indicative Programme signed in November 2008, and Vision 2030 Jamaica: the National Development Programme.