



# PRESS RELEASE

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**Barbados Medicinal Cannabis Licensing Authority discusses with the Diaspora industry growth and investment.**

**December 10, 2021, Bridgetown, Barbados** – The Barbados Medicinal Cannabis Licensing Authority (BMCLA) is working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security towards having small cultivators in the industry have their first importation of plant material, free.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the BMCLA, Dr. Shantal Munro-Knight made the announcement on December 2, 2021 at the first virtual Dialogue with the Diaspora, a discussion about Medicinal Cannabis which included the attendance of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Indar Weir, M.P., Consuls General Sonia Marville-Carter in Toronto, Navel Greenidge in Florida, Mackie Holder in New York, High Commissioner Glyne Clarke in Ottawa, Canada and His Excellency Noel Lynch and his team in Washington D.C.

She said, “The BMCLA is working towards having small cultivators (Cultivator - Tier 1 Licensee) submit an import authorization form as part of their operations, so that for the first import, the fee would be waived. Having the first import fee waived would assist the small farmer to get planting materials needed – seeds, tissue culture, plants – in hand to get their operations off the ground.”

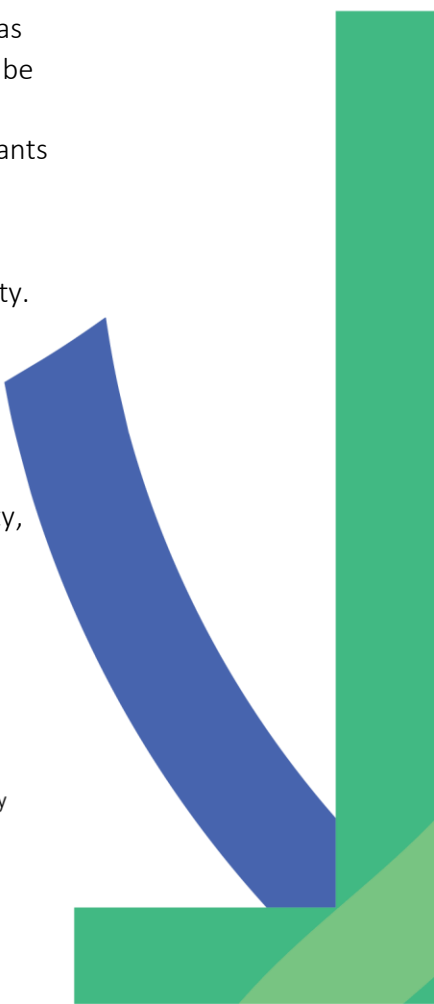
Additionally, during the near three-hour interactive webinar, she noted that the BMCLA was also working to facilitate a seed amnesty.

“Currently, all cannabis seeds within Barbados are considered illegal. Based on the regulatory framework, these seeds cannot be used within the Medicinal Cannabis industry. Hence, we are working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to present a paper to Cabinet to support the need for a Seed Amnesty, which would allow persons to bring in their seeds to be tested, categorised and registered for use in the legal industry,” she said.



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Dr Munro-Knight stated that it was part and parcel of the BMCLA collaborating closely with Minister Weir via the Board to assist the inclusion of small farmers while looking ahead towards a growth strategy.

The CEO reiterated that while this may be new information to the diaspora that it has been said locally that the BMCLA is committed to ensuring that there is a full ecosystem of support for the small players in the industry.

This ecosystem of support, she added, included specialised training attained via the NVQ qualification in cultivation through TVET, access to technical input – some of which already occurred via the BMCLA’s cultivation and processor forums – as well as technical assistance and funding.

“It just takes time as there is a process in place. However, we have an incredibly supportive Board and Minister, and we are working assiduously together to be integrative, innovative, inclusive, and transparent for the industry to move forward, but again, it takes time. We will only be a year-old next month and in that time, we have been learning, growing and improving ” she said.

Dr Munro-Knight also told the diaspora that the Board had set up a National Advisory Committee, led by Dr Damian Cohall, that was tasked to provide advice and recommendation on the future direction of the cannabis industry in three (3) core areas:

1. an assessment of the development of a hemp industry in Barbados;
2. a review of the framework of facilitating small potential local investors and entrepreneurs; and
3. the roll out of a germ plasm bank.

She urged the 100-plus in virtual attendance to reach out to the BMCLA if they were interested in investing back home in Barbados whether it was direct investment which could be 100% ownership or via land, commercial building, or financial investment. She also advised them to ensure they do their due diligence.

She added that if they were cautious about investing one hundred per cent (100%) that they had the option to invest at least 30% direct ownership into any foreign partnership.

She said there was also genuine interest in public-private partnerships to propel innovation within the medicinal cannabis industry.

Additionally, Dr Munro-Knight noted that initial scenarios showed a high profitability for a vertically integrated facility. She cautioned however that various scenarios have shown that while the industry was capital intensive, that there were profitably increases in the long term and that having a strong export and marketing plan would have to be critical.

**-End-**

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**Interviews:** n/a

**Image(s):** n/a

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