

COP: Diversity portfolios needed for diaspora community leverage

Toronto – The Toronto-based Community of Practice (COP) for Caribbean Immigrant Entrepreneurs has recommended the petitioning of private industry “to include diversity portfolios that the diaspora community can leverage”, and to advocate for “supplier diversity certification status.”

The COP recommendations are part of the findings in a recently released trade impact assessment study.

The study further calls on entrepreneurs to target government and non-governmental programs, as well as existing trade agreements offered by the government of Canada to monitor relevant trade deals, submit written suggestions, and contact trade representatives “while petitioning for specific trade deals”.

It also recommends consultation with MPs

to advocate for inclusion in future “Mandate Letters” for the Minister of International Trade.

The study was conducted by **Kisserup International Trade Roots**, and its findings delivered at the BIDEM (bridged, high impact diaspora entrepreneurs to efficient diasporic markets) 2021 Trade Conference.

COP provides capacity building market linkages and a trade and research hub aimed at reducing the “skills gap” among Caribbean immigrant entrepreneurs.

It is founded by Meegan Scott, who serves as its Secretariat Coordinator.

Through the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, COP received funding to produce the study that supports “the strengthening of diaspora communities (with Caribbean and African roots)”.

The study acknowledges that Canada’s Caribbean and African diaspora communities have contributed significantly to Canada’s economy with international trade businesses.

However, it notes that although these communities have made great strides, “there are vast opportunities to do potentially more from leveraging existing services as well as by proposing new ideas”.

It also notes that Canada has healthy relations with both the Caribbean and African regions, and maintains several free trade agreements with individual countries.

However, it also notes that while there are no regional free trade agreements with either region, there are “offerings and strategies” that the communities can leverage to build up businesses.
