DEVELOPMENT BANK OF JAMAICA

GEMINI+

Frequently Asked Questions

Growth & Empowerment of MSMEs through Investment-readiness, New market access and Inclusion, PLUS Pathways to Procurement, Lending-readiness, Unlocking capital and Sustainability

About GEMINI+

What is GEMINI+?

GEMINI+ is the DBJ's enterprise-readiness programme for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Rather than being only a grant or training scheme, it gives your business four things in a single pathway: a standardised SME Credit Score, a verifiable SME Credit Profile, certified training, and procurement registration. Together these form a portable evidence base that you own and can use to guide your journey to accessing finance and new business opportunities.

How is GEMINI+ different from the original GEMINI?

The original GEMINI proved the demand and showed what needed to improve. GEMINI+ acts on those lessons. The biggest differences are a documents-first intake that cuts the upfront questions by about 79% (from roughly 120 to a maximum of 25), a new pre-incubator entry tier delivered through workshops, certified online training, and the introduction of the SME Credit Score and Credit Profile as the backbone of the programme.

Who runs the programme?

GEMINI+ is a partnership. DBJ provides oversight, governance, and the digital platforms. The Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) is the primary delivery partner and handles assessments and the pre-incubator workshops. Additional credible Business Development Organisations (BDOs) are onboarded through DBJ's procurement process to deliver technical support, particularly at the Incubator and Accelerator tiers.

Is this a loan? Will GEMINI+ lend me money?

No. GEMINI+ itself is a capacity-development and grant programme, not a lender. It does not make lending decisions on behalf of any financial institution. What it does is make you ready for finance and, for qualifying graduates, refer you to DBJ's credit team for a financial-readiness assessment and a possible pathway into blended financing or a loan.

Eligibility, Cost & Joining

Am I eligible? Who is GEMINI+ for?

The programme is open to informal and registered businesses, new and established, across all sectors. There is a tier for almost every stage: the pre-incubator for businesses still formalising, the Incubator for businesses building a credit profile, and the Accelerator for businesses ready to scale and pursue procurement and investment.

Does it cost anything to take part?

There is no application fee to join. At the Incubator and Accelerator tiers, where individual grants are available, you are required to provide a counterpart contribution of 20%, so for a grant of up to JMD 800,000 you would contribute JMD 200,000 in cash or in-kind. The pre-incubator tier carries no individual grant and asks only for your attendance and participation.

What documents do I need to submit?

The starting bundle is short and mostly things you already have:

- Companies Office of Jamaica (COJ) registration certificate
- Your most recent three months of bank statements
- Tax Compliance Certificate (TCC) or a TAJ filing confirmation
- A valid government-issued ID for the owner or operator
- NIS/NHT contribution confirmation, if you have it (optional; its absence does not disqualify you)

How many questions will I have to answer?

Tier	Questions	Focus
Pre-Incubator	15	Your context, goals, formalisation barriers, and the support you need now
Incubator	20	Business model, existing credit, prior procurement, growth goals, workforce
Accelerator	25	Financial projections, JSX interest, existing contracts, export ambition, planning

The 25-question maximum at the Accelerator tier is the ceiling for the whole programme.

What happens if I'm missing a document?

You won't be turned away. After you submit, the platform produces a Document Gap Report that shows exactly what is missing, explains what each gap means for your placement, and gives clear steps to fix it. You're guided to resolve the gaps before moving on. Often, closing those gaps is itself part of the pre-incubator work.

What if I disagree with the tier I'm placed in?

Your preliminary placement is reviewed by JBDC or your assigned BDO, who can confirm or adjust it. If your placement is adjusted, you receive a Placement Explained summary that sets out which factors drove the decision and what your pathway forward looks like. The rationale is recorded on the platform, so the process is transparent.

The Three Tiers

What are the tiers, in plain terms?

There is a digital entry point (Tier 0) where any interested business can get an early sense of its credit readiness. Beyond that sit the three core tiers:

- Pre-Incubator (getting formal): registration, banking, tax awareness, and basic financial literacy, delivered through workshops.
- Incubator (building credit): this is where your SME Credit Score is generated, your first Credit Profile is issued, and procurement readiness begins.
- Accelerator (scaling up): equity and growth funding, Junior Stock Exchange preparation, advanced procurement, and actively improving your score.

Why is the pre-incubator delivered through workshops instead of online?

Because for early-stage and informal businesses, in-person group learning simply works better. Evidence from the IFC, IDB Lab, and the OECD, together with JBDC's own local data, shows that digital-first onboarding at this stage causes very high drop-off, while workshop-first models keep most participants engaged through their first milestone. The workshops also let facilitators spot who needs extra help, and they build the peer community the programme relies on. Digital tools are layered in progressively as you advance.

How do I move from one tier to the next?

Progression is based on demonstrated readiness, not time served. To leave the pre-incubator, for example, you generally need an active business bank account with at least three months of statements uploaded, confirmed COJ registration, completion of all pre-incubator training, and an activated MCRI profile. From the Incubator onwards, your SME Credit Score becomes an objective input into whether you're ready to advance.

SME Credit Score & Credit Profile

What is the SME Credit Score (SCS)?

The SCS is a standardised credit-visibility indicator for MSMEs, scored on a familiar 300 to 850 scale. It gives the formal financial system a consistent way to see the credit-building progress of a business that was previously invisible to it. The score is validated against DBJ's historical loan-book performance and recalibrated each year by a dedicated governance committee. A higher score means your business is more visible and more active in building its profile. It is an input to a lender's own independent assessment, not an approval and not a statement that you qualify for a loan.

What is the SME Credit Profile and how do I use it?

The SME Credit Profile is a standardised, record generated by the platform that documents your credit-building activity and your current position on the SME Credit Score scale. Its purpose is to address credit invisibility: to make the verified, structured profile of a previously unseen business visible to the formal financial system. It records what your business has done, such as formalisation, compliance, banking activity, and credit behaviour, and it does not express a view on what any institution should do in response. It is institution-neutral, makes no lending or procurement recommendation, asserts no loan eligibility, and creates no obligation on DBJ or any third party. You own it, and you share it solely at your own discretion. Each Profile carries a unique reference number and is valid for 90 days.

What it is: a record of your credit-building activity and current SME Credit Score standing; evidence that a formerly credit-invisible business now has a structured, verifiable profile; institution-neutral and owned by you; an input you may choose to present, with the lender conducting its own independent assessment.

What it is not: a recommendation to grant or decline credit; a statement of loan eligibility or a guarantee of any outcome; a Letter of Credit, guarantee, or financial instrument; or a binding commitment on DBJ or any party.

Is the SME Credit Profile the same as a Letter of Credit?

No. Despite the similar-sounding name, the SME Credit Profile is not a Letter of Credit, a bank guarantee, or any financial instrument. It does not guarantee payment and creates no obligation on DBJ. It is simply a factual record of your credit-building activity that you own and choose when to share. A lender who receives it still makes its own independent decision.

Who can see my score and my data? Is it private?

Your credit profile belongs to you. The SME Credit Profile is issued only at your request and shared only at your discretion, and the programme does not hand your score to lenders on its own. Data on the platform is collected to build and verify your profile and is cross-checked against official sources such as TAJ, COJ, NIS and credit-bureau records to keep it accurate.

How often is my score updated?

Your underlying profile updates as new verified data is added to the platform, and the scoring model itself is recalibrated annually by the SCS Governance Committee. Actively improving your score, particularly your repayment behaviour and compliance, is a core focus of the Accelerator tier.

Grants & Funding

What grant support is available, and how much?

Tier	DBJ contribution	Your contribution
Pre-Incubator	Cohort / workshop delivery (no individual grant)	Attendance and participation
Incubator	Up to JMD 800,000 per MSME	JMD 200,000 (20%), cash or in-kind
Accelerator	Up to JMD 800,000 per MSME	JMD 200,000 (20%), cash or in-kind

What does the 20% counterpart contribution mean?

It means you co-invest in your own grant-funded activity. For a grant of up to JMD 800,000, your share is JMD 200,000. Up to half of that 20% (i.e. up to 10% of the total) may be provided in-kind, for example business assets, workspace, equipment, raw materials, or services, rather than cash. Any in-kind proposal is written into your workplan and must be approved by DBJ.

What can grant funds NOT be used for?

To keep the programme focused and well-governed, certain things are out of scope:

- No cash-in-hand payments to the MSME
- No voucher payments to the MSME
- No funds for equipment purchase
- The programme does not make lending recommendations on your behalf to any financial institution

Procurement & Markets

How does GEMINI+ help me win government contracts?

The Government of Jamaica reserves 20% of its procurement for MSMEs, but most MSMEs aren't positioned to access it because of missing compliance documents. GEMINI+ closes that gap by supporting you through National Contracts Commission (NCC) registration, TCC acquisition and maintenance, bankers' details, and registration on the GoJEP procurement portal, plus coaching on eligibility and bid preparation.

What exactly is the 20% MSME procurement carve-out?

It is a Government of Jamaica policy that sets aside a share of public procurement specifically for qualifying MSMEs. Being registered and compliant, which GEMINI+ helps you become, is what lets you actually compete for that reserved share rather than being disqualified on paperwork.

Training, Certification & Platforms

Is the training online, and do I get certified?

Training is delivered through the GEMINI+ Learning Management System (LMS) across all three tiers, and you earn a GEMINI+ Certificate at each level: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. The pre-incubator combines this with in-person workshops and seminars. The certificates are credentials you keep and can use to signal your readiness to partners and lenders.

What is the DBJ GrantHub?

The DBJ GrantHub is the central hub for grant management: applications, milestones, and disbursements. It links to DBJ's loan systems so that support flows through smoothly. The system will not accept incomplete applications, and only registered businesses can apply, although JBDC and BDOs can upload verified documents on your behalf.

What is MCRI: Your Credit Readiness Journey Map?

MCRI is the platform at the heart of GEMINI+, and it is best understood as a journey management tool rather than a scoring or approval engine. It does three things. It maps your progression from credit-invisible to credit-ready. It captures the evidence of your credit-building activity as you consistently provide business information such as invoices, receipts, and bank activity. And it makes that progress visible to you and, at your discretion, to the formal financial system. The principle is simple: creditworthiness is built through consistent, evidenced activity over time, and MCRI exists to make that activity visible.

MCRI supports your credit visibility; it does not promise a credit outcome. An MSME that consistently builds its profile strengthens its eligibility over time, but lending decisions rest entirely with the relevant financial institution, which conducts its own independent assessment.

What is the Readiness Dashboard?

It is your personal view inside the platform. It shows where you stand in the development continuum, your current SME Credit Score band, and the specific next actions to move forward. The idea is simple: you should never have to guess where you stand. Once a cohort reaches 20 active participants, a Community Dashboard also opens, letting you see aggregate progress alongside your peers.

Graduating & What Comes Next

What happens when I complete the programme?

You leave with credentials, a credit profile you own, and access to markets and capital that were previously out of reach. For eligible graduates, especially in the Accelerator cohort, the Programme Execution team refers you to DBJ's credit team for a financial-readiness assessment looking at profitability, cash-flow stability, and your debt-to-equity position. From there you may be introduced to blended financing (a small, low-interest loan alongside remaining grant support) or full loan integration where possible.

Who can I contact with more questions?

Reach out to the Development Bank of Jamaica's Project Management Office, or to the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) as the primary delivery partner. They can confirm current cohort timing, eligibility specifics, and next steps for your business.