

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kelsea Williams

Tel: 441-292-5570

Email: kwilliams@bedc.bm

Web: www.bedc.bm

BERMUDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION RECEIVES 2026 EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SILVER AWARD FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Hamilton, Bermuda September 15, 2026 – The Bermuda Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) received a 2026 Excellence in Economic Development Silver Award from the [International Economic Development Council](#) (IEDC). The award was bestowed for the organisation’s work in the Public-Private Partnership category for the 25,000 to 200,000 population group. BEDC will be honoured at the IEDC 2026 Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, October 25th to 28th.

“The Bermuda Economic Development Corporation is leading the field of excellence in economic development with its Wave of Opportunity Pitch Competition. This award shines a spotlight on BEDC’s commitment to its community and showcases the significant impact of economic development,” said Nathan Ohle, IEDC President and CEO. “IEDC is honored to present this award to the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation to celebrate their leadership and innovation in the field.”

Each year, IEDC honors economic development organizations, government entities, initiatives, and programs that consistently demonstrate excellence in the field. The honorees lead transformational projects that revitalize communities and advance the practice of economic development.

The award recognises the Wave of Opportunity Pitch Competition, a 10-year partnership between BEDC and Global Atlantic launched in 2023 to address one of the most persistent barriers facing Bermudian entrepreneurs, limited access to startup and growth capital. Held each year during Global Entrepreneurship Week Bermuda, the competition awards up to \$125,000 annually in grant funding across three Local Industry Innovator awards, a Young Adult award, and a People’s Choice award.

The program pairs funding with a full development pipeline that includes application screening, preliminary pitch rounds, business coaching, pitch bootcamps, and mentorship. Since its launch, the competition has distributed \$375,000 to date in direct grant funding to local entrepreneurs, drawn more than 200 attendees to its each of the live finals, and created ongoing accountability check-ins with recipients in the year following their win. Global Atlantic supports the initiative through a multi-year funding commitment and participates directly in judging and mentorship.

“To be recognised on an international stage alongside organisations many times our size says a great deal about the development of Bermuda’s entrepreneurial and economic development eco-system,” said Erica Smith, Executive Director of BEDC. “We are proud recipients of a Silver Award for Public-Private Partnership, and this recognition belongs just as much to Global Atlantic and to every entrepreneur who has stood on that stage and pitched their business.”

She continued, “The Wave of Opportunity Pitch Competition was built on a simple idea, that access to capital should not be the barrier that stops a good business from getting started. Watching that idea grow into a program that has already put \$375,000 directly into the hands of local entrepreneurs over the last 3 years, while giving them the coaching and the confidence to use it well, has been one of the most rewarding parts of this work. I am excited about what the remaining 7 years in the partnership will bring!”

BEDC extends its appreciation to Global Atlantic for its sustained investment in Bermuda’s entrepreneurs, and to the judges, mentors, sponsors, and community members whose participation has shaped the competition since its first year.

This year’s awards take on special meaning, as IEDC celebrates its 100th anniversary. In recognizing excellence in economic development, IEDC and its partners are celebrating successes and shining a spotlight on programs that inspire and prepare the field for the next century of economic development.

For more information on the Wave of Opportunity Pitch Competition, visit <https://bedc.bm/events/wave-of-opportunity-pitch-competition/>. For more information on the IEDC’s Excellence in Economic Development Awards, visit <https://www.iedconline.org/pages/excellence-awards/>.

###

About BEDC

Established in 1980, the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) supports Bermuda’s entrepreneurs and businesses while advancing local economic development. BEDC provides business advice, education, financing and other resources to help micro, small and medium-sized businesses start, grow and succeed; and advances strategic economic development initiatives that support investment, innovation and economic diversification. **Bermuda Business Starts Here.** Visit www.bedc.bm.

About the International Economic Development Council (IEDC): Based in Washington, D.C., IEDC is the world’s largest association for economic developers. Originating a century ago, IEDC is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization that represents the entire economic development profession. Members include practitioners in economic development through local, state, provincial, and federal governments, non-profits, public-private partnerships, entrepreneurial support organizations, chambers of commerce, utilities, universities, and a variety of other organizations.

IEDC is the leading voice in driving the future of the field. IEDC provides professional development through courses and certifications, networking, conferences, research, policy advocacy, partnerships,

and other valuable offerings to economic development professionals across the globe. For more information, please visit www.IEDC.org.