



Governing

P R O G R A M

2024 - 2028

It's time for the people!

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Prime Minister
Dr. Luc F. Mercelina

A Message from Prime Minister

Dr. Luc F. Mercelina

Sint Maarten stands at a defining moment—one where we must rise to meet challenges head-on and seize opportunities that will shape our future. This governing program is more than just a plan; it is a bold commitment to transforming our country into a beacon of resilience, innovation, and prosperity. We will break barriers, push boundaries, and drive meaningful change that benefits every citizen. The road ahead will demand bold decisions, collective effort, and steadfast determination, but together, we will chart a course that positions Sint Maarten for lasting success.

Our people are the heartbeat of this country, and their empowerment is at the core of our vision. We will invest in education to equip the next generation, strengthen healthcare to protect our communities, and drive sustainable economic growth to create real opportunities for all. Through smart governance, strategic partnerships, and a relentless pursuit of excellence, we will build a Sint Maarten that is not just thriving but leading—regionally and beyond. This is not just about policies on paper; it is about action, impact, and results that improve lives.

This is our time to rise, to lead, and to redefine what is possible. As your government, we pledge to lead with integrity, transparency, and an unshakable dedication to progress. But real transformation comes when we move forward together—with unity, purpose, and a shared belief in the greatness of our country. Let's get to work, let's build stronger, and let's secure the future Sint Maarten deserves!

Principal Themes:

The approach to governance by Cabinet Mercelina II will be one that is based on the following thematic elements:

- Collaboration, through Public-Private Partnerships and structural Tripartite Consultation (i.e. agencies such as the advisory councils, high councils of state, etc.) for strengthening internal and external governance.
- Developing and promoting Social Cohesion throughout St. Maarten by improving public awareness on critical national matters such as mental health, general health, civic responsibility, financial literacy and education.
- Regionalism, by improving and expanding our relationships with our immediate and more distant neighbours, with a focus on enhancing regional cooperation in the areas of security, economic development, transportation and food security, and climate change.
- Improved Quality of Life for All, through collaboration and cooperation throughout ministries to ensure that all areas that impact the lives of our people receive proper attention.
- The development of a New Economic Identity, by exploring and engaging with new funding modalities, enhanced and transparent foreign direct investment policies, and the promotion of social corporate responsibility.

National Objectives:

Throughout this Governing Program, ministerial priorities and targets are outlined in detail, however, at the very core of the overall approach to governance for this term lie nine (9) National Objectives that will require the collaboration and cooperation of all seven ministries, as well as the Ministry Plenipotentiary in the Netherlands, to realize.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Measuring Success and Accountability

To ensure the effective execution of governmental policies, the Ministry of General Affairs will implement a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) framework. These indicators will serve as measurable benchmarks to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and reinforce a results-driven culture within the public sector. The KPI framework will focus on:

- Governance Efficiency: Timely execution of government policies, measured through standardized reporting mechanisms.
- Service Delivery: Enhanced accessibility and responsiveness of government services, with a focus on citizen satisfaction.
- Public Sector Reform: Implementation of performance-based evaluations to improve civil service productivity and accountability.
- Legislative Progress: Tracking the drafting, submission, and enactment of key laws and policies essential for national development.

Legal Advising: Strengthening Institutional and Legislative Integrity

A sound legal framework is the cornerstone of a well-functioning government. The Ministry of General Affairs will enhance its legal advisory services to provide structured guidance on policy development, legislative drafting, and governmental decision-making. Key priorities include:

- Enhancing Legal Expertise: Strengthening the Government's Legal Affairs Department to ensure comprehensive reviews of policy documents, contracts, and international agreements.
- Legislative Modernization: Updating and harmonizing laws to align with contemporary governance standards and international best practices.
- Policy Compliance: Ensuring that all ministries adhere to legal protocols, minimizing risks of litigation and reinforcing good governance.

Electoral Reform: Strengthening Democratic Institutions

To uphold democratic integrity and increase public confidence in the electoral process, the Ministry of General Affairs will spearhead electoral reform efforts aimed at:

- Enhancing Transparency: Strengthening regulations surrounding campaign financing and political party accountability.
- Reducing Political Instability: Exploring mechanisms to discourage frequent government collapses and promote continuity in governance.

- Modernizing Voting Processes: Assessing the feasibility of digital voter registration and streamlining election procedures to improve efficiency and accessibility.
- Voter Education: Launching civic awareness campaigns to educate the electorate on their rights and responsibilities in shaping the nation's future.

Administrative Enforcement: Strengthening Compliance and Government Oversight

A well-functioning public administration requires strong enforcement mechanisms to uphold legal and regulatory frameworks. The Ministry will focus on:

- Institutionalizing Compliance Units: Strengthening oversight bodies within government ministries to ensure adherence to policies and regulations.
- Expanding Digital Governance: Implementing e-governance solutions to enhance transparency and reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies.
- Public Accountability Mechanisms: Establishing stricter monitoring and reporting requirements to prevent maladministration and corruption.
- Civil Service Ethics & Discipline: Enforcing professional standards and ethical guidelines for public servants to improve government performance.

French Side Cooperation Protocol: Strengthening Cross-Border Collaboration

Recognizing the interdependence of both sides of the island, the Ministry of General Affairs will play a leading role supported by all Ministries in formalizing cooperation with the French-side government through a structured protocol. Key areas of collaboration include:

- Disaster Preparedness & Crisis Management: Strengthening coordinated emergency response mechanisms for hurricanes and other natural disasters.
- Economic and Trade Relations: Exploring joint initiatives to facilitate cross-border commerce, investment, and tourism growth.
- Border Management & Security: Enhancing collaboration on immigration, law enforcement, and security protocols to ensure the seamless movement of people while safeguarding national interests.
- Social and Cultural Exchange: Encouraging deeper integration through educational, cultural, and social initiatives that promote unity and shared prosperity.

Digitalization

Sint Maarten, like most nations, has begun to embrace digitalization within government to improve the efficiency and accessibility of public services. The intention of this Government moving forward is to introduce online platforms that communicate with or replace existing systems and will allow citizens to access essential services such as tax filings, permit applications and civil registry information. This requires a comprehensive overview of what is currently in use, examining the scalability, interconnectivity and

viability of existing and potential systems, and ensuring that the country establishes proper Service Level Agreements with providers.

Investments in digital infrastructure and the improvement of the digital literacy of the public are required if digitalization is going to be successful. Engagement with internal and external stakeholders will be vital to driving a digitalization project that will not simply connect systems within Government, but will connect our people to timesaving, secure and reliable processes.

National Child Protection Platform

Critical towards Sint Maarten's development is the implementation of regulations, support and collaborative programs that focus on the well-being of our youth. As such, the National Child Protection Platform will be established through the necessary legislative products and will exist as an inter-ministerial (ECYS, VSA and Justice) and multi-sectoral platform that aims to foster, support and maintain a society where children and young people can grow and develop into self-advocating, self-actualised, world-aware individuals.

One of the core tenets of this platform is that children and young people must feel and be free to express themselves within safe and nurturing environments, while their exposure to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect is minimized and erased.

Safety

Efforts to enhance national safety and security focus on strengthening law enforcement, improving border protection, and advancing crime prevention initiatives. These must include expanding specialized training for law enforcement personnel, adopting advanced forensic tools, and enhancing intelligence-sharing with regional and international partners. By modernizing border security and improving immigration enforcement, we will be better able to mitigate risks and prevent activities such as human trafficking, money laundering, and transnational crime. Strengthening inter-agency cooperation and implementing data-driven strategies further ensures effective crime prevention while maintaining public safety and stability.

A comprehensive approach to public safety extends beyond enforcement to include prevention and rehabilitation. Investments in crime prevention programs targeting youth delinquency and family support play a critical role in addressing the root causes of crime and in ensuring that young people do not remain on an offending path. Rehabilitation initiatives within the correctional system will need to focus on reducing recidivism through education, vocational training, and mental health support. By balancing strict law enforcement with proactive social programs and international collaboration, these efforts must be in line to foster a safer society while ensuring compliance with international standards and safeguarding economic and social stability.

Immigration

Strengthening and improving immigration will require a focus on improving enforcement, modernizing critical processes and aligning our policies with national and international standards. Several key actions will be taken here, including improving immigration tracking and compliance systems to ensure that our immigration laws are effectively applied and monitored. Structural repairs to the House of Detention will also be prioritized to meet international standards, provide humane conditions and establish pathways to rehabilitation for low-level offenders. Additionally, reviewing and amending immigration legislation to better align labour migration with the country's economic needs is necessary to ensure a balanced approach that supports national security and economic growth.

Collaboration with regional and international partners is a principal component of improving immigration control and border security. Continued cooperation with the Netherlands, French Saint Martin, and other regional stakeholders strengthens surveillance, intelligence-sharing, and enforcement at ports of entry. Technological advancements, such as the implementation of the ASYCUDA system for automated customs processing, will improve trade monitoring and facilitate efficient immigration procedures. These combined efforts aim to create a robust, transparent, and efficient immigration framework that enhances national security while supporting economic resilience and fostering international cooperation.



Ministry of General Affairs

The Ministry of General Affairs

The Ministry of General Affairs is the heartbeat of the Government of Sint Maarten. Critical departments and divisions such as Foreign Relations, Interior & Kingdom Affairs, Legal Affairs & Legislation, Personnel & Organization (P&O), the Public Service Centers (PSC) and more exist within the General Affairs ecosystem. This Ministry is therefore not only critical to the proper daily operations of the Government, but to the country's regional and international reputation and engagement.

Vision

To be the central pillar of governance that fosters national development, transparency, efficiency, and resilience in St. Maarten through strategic policy implementation, effective inter-ministerial collaboration, and sustainable growth initiatives.

Mission

The Ministry of General Affairs is dedicated to ensuring good governance, strengthening public administration, and providing quality shared services to facilitate efficient government operations. Through modernization, strategic partnerships, and policy innovation, the Ministry will enhance the functionality of government institutions and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Assessment Agenda

- Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress across governance initiatives. Establishing measurable KPIs will enable the government to monitor the effectiveness of policies and programs over time. These indicators will help assess performance against strategic goals, ensuring that governance initiatives remain on track. By collecting and analysing relevant data, the Ministry can make informed decisions to optimize service delivery and public administration.
- Implement annual reporting mechanisms for transparency and accountability. A structured reporting system will be developed to provide stakeholders with detailed updates on government activities, progress, and challenges. These reports will be publicly available to promote transparency and build trust in government operations. Regular publication of performance data will also enable better decision-making and increased accountability.
- Conduct periodic assessments on shared services efficiency, policy implementation, and operational effectiveness. Regular evaluations will be conducted to identify inefficiencies, optimize processes, and ensure that public services are meeting citizens' needs. These assessments will help identify gaps in policy implementation and provide recommendations for improvement. By continuously refining operations, the government can enhance overall service delivery.
- Introduce a structured monitoring and evaluation framework for inter-ministerial collaboration. A systematic framework will be established to oversee and measure the effectiveness of collaboration between ministries. This will involve setting clear objectives, defining roles and responsibilities, and regularly reviewing progress. Strengthening inter-ministerial coordination will help align policies, avoid redundancy, and improve governance outcomes.
- Improve quality control in legal advisory and litigation processes. The government will implement stricter quality assurance mechanisms to ensure legal advisory services and litigation processes are efficient and effective. This includes better case management, improved legal research capabilities, and enhanced coordination between government legal teams. Strengthening these processes will help ensure fair and just legal outcomes.

Key Focus Areas

Strengthening Governance and Electoral Reform

1. Establish a national screening law to enhance transparency and accountability: The introduction of a national screening law will provide a standardized vetting process for government officials, ensuring that those in leadership positions meet ethical and professional standards. This will include background checks, financial disclosures, and integrity assessments to minimize corruption risks. Implementing these measures will reinforce public confidence in governance.
2. Reform electoral procedures to improve democratic participation and governance stability: Electoral reforms will aim to modernize voting processes, enhance voter education, and promote fair election practices. The introduction of new technologies, such as digital voter registration and secure electronic voting, will be explored to increase efficiency. Additionally, efforts will be made to reduce barriers to voter participation and strengthen democratic engagement.
3. Update and harmonize government policies and legal frameworks to reflect modern governance structures: The government will review outdated laws and policies to ensure they align with contemporary governance needs. This process will involve consultations with legal experts, stakeholders, and international partners to benchmark best practices. By updating these frameworks, the government will improve institutional efficiency and responsiveness.
4. Expand legal expertise by recruiting key personnel, including legislative jurists and senior legal advisors: The recruitment of experienced legal professionals will help strengthen policy development and legal enforcement. These experts will provide specialized knowledge in drafting legislation, interpreting complex legal issues, and advising government agencies. Expanding legal capacity will support more effective governance and policy implementation.

Enhancing Public Administration and Shared Services

1. Streamline government human resource operations for efficiency and standardization: HR processes across ministries will be standardized to ensure consistent hiring practices, performance evaluations, and training programs. This will help eliminate administrative bottlenecks and improve workforce management. By streamlining operations, the government can enhance productivity and service quality.
2. Implement a comprehensive complaint management policy to improve service delivery and public feedback mechanisms: A centralized system will be established to log, track, and resolve public complaints efficiently. This will provide citizens with a clear avenue for reporting issues while ensuring that responses are timely and transparent. Analyzing complaints will also help identify recurring problems and inform policy adjustments.
3. Improve the functionality and efficiency of public services through digital transformation: The expansion of digital government services will make administrative processes more accessible and user-friendly. Online platforms will be introduced for services such as licensing, permits, and public records, reducing the need for physical visits to government offices. Investing in digital transformation will enhance efficiency and accessibility.

National Development and Regional Integration

1. Strengthen ties with the Kingdom and pursue full autonomy based on political democratic equivalency through cooperation and mutual benefit, while actively pursuing full autonomy based on political democratic equivalency. Diplomatic engagement will be increased to define the path toward greater self-governance while maintaining strong partnerships within the Kingdom. Negotiations will focus on securing a balanced and mutually beneficial relationship that supports Sint Maarten's long-term development goals.

2. Secure diverse funding avenues including trust funds, EU funding, and public-private partnerships: Alternative funding sources will be identified to support national development projects. This includes applying for EU grants, attracting foreign investments, and forming strategic public-private partnerships. Expanding funding options will help ensure financial sustainability for key government initiatives.

Establish a Cross-Border Cooperation Platform to enhance policy coordination and service delivery between Sint Maarten and Saint Martin: The platform will facilitate regular dialogue and collaboration on shared interests such as infrastructure, security, and trade. Joint working groups will be formed to address cross-border issues and implement coordinated policies. Strengthening cooperation with Saint Martin will contribute to regional stability and economic growth.

Departmental Alignment

Department of Personnel & Organization (P&O)

1. Streamline government human resource operations to ensure efficiency.
2. Implement digital solutions for personal management to improve service delivery.
3. Update Government policies to enhance retention and attraction (the image of Government).

Department of Interior and Kingdom Relations (BAK)

1. Strengthen regional partnerships and ensure the Kingdom's support for key initiatives.
2. Advance St. Maarten's transition into a Constituent State within the Kingdom with political democratic equivalency and autonomy.
3. Foster regional integration by securing Associate membership with CARICOM and associate membership in OECS.
4. Strengthen diplomatic ties with Dutch embassies to expand trade and economic opportunities.
5. Establish a Cross-Border Cooperation Platform to formalize collaboration with Saint Martin.
6. Drive international advocacy for St. Maarten's inclusion in funding mechanisms like the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI).
7. Implementation of international agendas; SDGs, NDV & SIDS International agendas.
8. Facilitate cross-departmental collaboration to achieve unified strategic goals.

Department of Legal Affairs and Legislation

1. Modernize the legal framework to support innovative governance and social equity.
2. Provide actionable legal recommendations to streamline policy implementation.
3. Establish an overview of all outdated laws per Ministry.
4. Review and update outdated laws to align with evolving national needs.
5. Develop and implement the national screening law for governance transparency.
6. Reform electoral procedures to enhance democratic participation and political stability.
7. Overhaul outdated laws and policies to align with contemporary governance and socio-economic needs.
8. Strengthen legal frameworks for electoral reform and political stability.
9. Finalize the Archive National Ordinance to modernize government information management.
10. Address the shortage of skilled legal professionals through strategic recruitment efforts.
11. Implement a government-wide procurement and contract management policy to streamline purchasing processes.

Department of Civil Registry (Census Office)

1. Digitize civil records to enhance citizen access and reduce processing times.
2. Collaborate on national population data analytics for better resource allocation.

Department of Communications (DCOMM)

1. Launch a public communication strategy to increase transparency and trust.
2. Implement citizen feedback mechanisms to improve government services.

Department of Foreign Relations (DBB)

1. Advance St. Maarten's global presence by fostering international partnerships (CARICOM) and capitalizing existing membership with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
2. Explore opportunities for technical assistance and capacity-building programs.
3. Conduct a carrying capacity study, which will help establish a roadmap towards restoring, maintaining and enhancing St. Maarten's regional hub function.



Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance oversees the country's finances and ensures proper fiscal management is assured through various methods, including ensuring that fiscal legislation keeps us in compliance with international standards, coordinating with stakeholders to ensure compliance with tax obligations and by exploring and applying new methods and technologies to improve, streamline and automate processes.

Vision

The Ministry of Finance plays a pivotal role in ensuring financial stability, transparency, and the sustainable economic development of Sint Maarten through simplifying tax processes, enhancing compliance, investing in continuous development and promoting financial literacy to ensure our community makes informed financial decisions.

Mission

The Ministry of Finance will guide Sint Maarten to a point of financial security and freedom through efficiently managing the country's finances via improved and streamlined budget processes, providing responsible advice to the Government on policy areas that impact fiscal viability and by simplifying tax processes to enhance compliance and improve collection efficiency, thereby increasing government revenue. The Ministry will seek to promote financial literacy and improve public awareness of financial management to empower individuals and businesses with the knowledge to make informed fiscal decisions. Additionally, the Ministry will continue to invest in the continuous development of personnel and the wider community to foster innovation, resilience, and economic growth. The Ministry of Finance remains committed to fiscal responsibility, transparency, and economic stability. By implementing the following initiatives, improving compliance, and diversifying revenue streams, we aim to strengthen the financial future of Sint Maarten while ensuring sustainable economic growth and development.

Strategic Focus Areas

Financial Stability and Efficient Resource Management

The Ministry is focused on maintaining fiscal stability by enhancing revenue collection, refining budget forecasting, and optimizing public spending. Key actions include:

- Digitalizing the tax system to improve compliance.
- Implementing cost-saving measures.
- Strengthening cash flow management to ensure consistent funding for essential services.
- Incorporating a structured plan for loan refinancing and the management of the country's debt to ensure financial sustainability.
-

Transparency and Public Trust

To build public confidence, the Ministry is committed to:

- Implementing comprehensive financial management reforms.
- Conducting regular audits and ensuring transparent financial reporting.
- Enhancing digital compliance systems and tax reforms to align with national and international standards.
- Ensuring seamless implementation of the Caribbean Guilder, including a comprehensive public communication and education campaign.

A Stable Economic Environment

Sustained economic stability is essential for protecting citizens from financial uncertainty. The Ministry will:

- Improve treasury operations and debt management.
- Collaborate with the Central Bank on fiscal policies.
- Develop a targeted debt restructuring plan and implement cost-saving measures.
-

Inclusive Growth and Development

The Ministry is dedicated to ensuring equitable economic growth by:

- Aligning national fiscal policies with broader development goals.
- Collaborating with international partners and regional initiatives.
- Allocating resources strategically to support marginalized communities. Increasing funding to key entities such as SMDF that is key in providing funding to NGOs on the island.
- Enhancing financial literacy initiatives to educate the public on responsible financial management and tax obligations.
- Reducing long-standing acting positions within the Ministry of Finance to ensure stability and efficiency in leadership roles.

Departmental Goals

Fiscal Affairs Department

- Implement tax reforms and compliance measures.
- Support legislative adjustments for improved tax structures.
- Strengthen tax harmonization discussions with regional partners.
- Develop strategies to shift from direct to indirect taxation.
- Implement the recommendations from the General Audit Chamber's 'Ex Officio' report.
- Undertake a trajectory to shift from direct taxation to indirect taxation.
- Address tax legislation for pensioners with income below a certain threshold.

Department of Finance (Policy)

- Develop and implement effective financial policies.
- Improve government budgeting and financial forecasting.
- Ensure inter-ministerial collaboration on fiscal matters.
- Enhance payment processes and optimize treasury operations.
- Improve budgetary processes to comply with national laws.
- Implement a comprehensive plan for loan refinancing and debt management to ensure fiscal stability.

Financial Accounting Department

- Streamline payroll and financial record management.
- Implement digital archiving systems for financial documents.
- Improve internal financial controls and compliance standards.

Tax Administration Department

- Expand digital income tax filing and improve taxpayer services.
- Strengthen enforcement of road tax compliance.
- Collaborate with SBAB and ATS for audits and collections and provide them with assignments to assist the tax office.
- Develop new collection strategies for flexible payment options and case-specific plans.
- Improve tax compliance through targeted measures.
- Enhance compliance and collection of room tax from online platforms.

Receivers Department

- Implement efficiency-focused process changes for better tax collection.
- Enhance monitoring and enforcement of overdue tax payments.
- Improve tax office service delivery and taxpayer engagement.
- Liaise with Curaçao for lessons learned on tax collection improvements.
- Establish a new location for the tax office to consolidate receivers and tax administration in one building.

Critical Issues

The Central Bank of Curaçao & St. Maarten

- Review recent CBCS decisions and assess the viability of the monetary union.
- Ensure corporate governance improvements and the establishment of a complete board with qualified Sint Maarten representatives.
- Assess potential acquisition of Mullet Bay for Sint Maarten
- Monitor CBCS' implementation of supervisory enhancements and advocate for qualified high-paying jobs in Sint Maarten.

Gambling Industry & Gaming Control Board

- Urgently establish a Gaming Control Board, in collaboration with the Ministry of TEATT, to enhance oversight and mitigate risks of money laundering and gambling addiction.
- Ensure financial sustainability of the entity by evaluating inflows and operational expenses.
- Implement tax reform initiatives related to gaming, including taxing winnings and applying turnover tax on casinos and lotteries.

Legislative Agenda

Digital Archiving Law

Implementation of a digital archiving framework to enhance transparency and efficiency and to ensure that the risk of critical data loss through natural or manmade disasters is mitigated.

Digital Income Tax Filing & Tax Procedures

Developing an online tax filing system to simplify compliance and streamline tax data collection and management.

Modernizing Tax Legislation

- Adjusting wage tax, profit tax, and vehicle tax.
- Introducing a tourist tax to diversify revenue streams.
- Reducing profit tax in stages to a minimum of 15%.

Enhancing Payment Processes & Revenue Collection

- Streamlining government payment systems.
- Strengthening tax compliance measures in collaboration with SBAB and ATS.

Debt Swap Discussions & Fiscal Responsibility

- Engaging in negotiations with the Netherlands for debt restructuring.
- Implementing a structured plan for loan refinancing and long-term debt management.

Exploring New Revenue Streams

- Overflight Fees: Charging airlines for the use of Sint Maarten's airspace.
- Tourist Entry Tax: Projected to generate over NAF 20 million annually.

Treasury Management Improvements

Optimizing cash flow management and ensuring timely disbursements to improve Government's business image with service providers both locally and internationally.



The Ministry of Public Health,
Social Development & Labor

The Ministry of Public Health, Social Development & Labor

The Ministry of Public Health, Labor & Social Affairs is responsible for developing and executing policies, programs and initiatives aimed at promoting public health, good governance in healthcare system management, social welfare and development for the most vulnerable in St. Maarten's community, as well as ensuring compliance with labor laws and the country's compliance with international labor regulations.

Vision

Building a Ministry that empowers its employees to fulfill their full potential and in doing so enabling the Ministry to serve the community with passion & compassion, ensuring the quality of services and performance of the Ministry, ultimately improves the lives and well-being of the people of St. Maarten.

Mission

Working to ensure quality products to address the needs of, and responsibility to the population, in sustaining livelihoods while securing a safe and healthy living and working environment in Sint Maarten.

Public Health

With the focus of promoting a healthy nation with an emphasis on preventive health and offering the best affordable health care services.

Not only is the finalization of the hospital infrastructure a top priority for this government, but also finalization of the BIG-registration legislation to ensure qualified doctors from all over the world who meet our standards will be able to work in the hospital.

The government will prioritize the renovation and construction of healthcare facilities to meet the growing needs of the population such as a mental health center. Mental health care will be a top priority of this government and will include all vulnerable groups such as; our youth, parents of special needs children and our seniors, just to name a few. The increasing prevalence of mental health issues, particularly among young people, necessitates immediate and thorough attention. The government aims to provide better access to mental health services, reduce the stigma associated with mental health conditions, and ensure that people receive the necessary support and care.

Legislative Agenda

- Finalization of the BIG registration legislation.
- Finalization of the “Krankzinnigen” legislation & policy
- Finalization of the legislation for General Health Insurance.
- Approval of a fines book for the Inspectorate via national decree.
- Amendment to the legislation governing the Inspectorate of VSA.
- Finalize the amendment to the drinking water ordinance and include legionella prevention and enforcement.
- Amend the environmental ordinance to define the role and responsibilities of the ministries of VSA and VROMI.
- Amend and update the food safety commodities act.

Project & Program Agenda

- Urgently define the state of healthcare on Sint Maarten through stakeholder consultation and research.
- Outline the holistic general health care vision for Sint Maarten.
- Establish a Health care policy for Sint Maarten.
- Invest in preventative health care initiatives such as screenings.
- Support the upgrading of medical professionals and staff, and service delivery, through collaboration with external stakeholders locally and in the regional institutions.
- Stimulate Healthy Living and Wellbeing for all Residents.
- Initiate the building of an adequate Mental Health Care Facility.
- Finalize research and data collection on Mental Health.
- Develop a National Mental Health Strategic plan.
- Develop a Mental Health Crisis management policy.
- Conduct training for mental health specialized nurse practitioners.
- Finalize the construction of the General Hospital.
- Institute a rehabilitation center as part of the Hospital.
- Re-establish the health care bus for community outreach programs.
- Review and establish all pending critical legislation related to health care and preventive health care services.
- Establish a Medical Health Professionals Registry to allow medical professionals outside the Kingdom to register and practice on St. Maarten, thereby diversifying the pool of medical specialists for St. Maarten.
- Expanding the family physician central post (after hours).
- Review existing legislation and policy to improve public access to pharmacies via a rotating 24-hour schedule.
- Assessment of a possible revalidation center.

- Expansion of the facilities and services of auxiliary care providers, in collaboration with SZV.
- Addressing the accessibility of harmful products within society.
- Strengthening and empowering Turning Point to offer structured programs for addiction, including but not limited to gambling (“player protection”), prescription medications and narcotics, as well as adding a women’s wing.
- Explore the expansion of homecare health services, to keep persons out of institutions as long as possible.
- Refocus on cost-effectiveness, prevention programs, and health education.
- Ensure compliance by equipping the inspectorate with the tools and means to execute their tasks.
- Explore ways and collaboration to strengthen our vector control department.
- Finalize the implementation of the Neonatal screening.

Social Development

Focus will be placed on alleviating poverty on Sint Maarten and bettering the overall quality of life of our people. Projects will be put in place to directly impact vulnerable groups in our community such as our youth, seniors, and other vulnerable groups within our community. Focus will also be placed on strengthening the relationships with stakeholders within government and NGO's to better and directly assist persons within the community.

The quality of life for our citizens is a significant concern. As the population ages, cost of living (healthcare, food & water, electricity, housing, education) continue to increase, it is imperative that we ensure the appropriate care, support, and opportunities are available for vulnerable groups. The government's initiatives will include social and empowerment programs designed to support those in need.

Legislative Agenda

- Amendment of the Financial aid legislation.
- Finalization of Financial aid National decree.
- Review and possible amendment of the old age pension legislation (Country package measure).
- Review the possibility of establishing a mandatory secondary pension or savings plan.

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Quality of Life for Seniors:

As the population ages, the quality of life for seniors becomes a significant concern. The government is committed to ensuring that seniors receive appropriate care, support, and opportunities for engagement. Social programs will be initiated to help seniors maintain their health, independence, and dignity. These initiatives include reviewing and redefining Old Age Pensions to better meet the needs of elderly citizens. Strengthening community councils will also play a major role in improving local support systems.

Project & Program Agenda

- Adult literacy program, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport.
- CDFHA Home Repair program.
- Exercise classes for Elderly.
- Independent Guided Living Home for the Elderly.
- Aging conferences.

Labor

The Ministry of Labor will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Sint Maarten's workforce, by determining the tone and direction of labor policies and practices. One main focus of this Government is ensuring current labor laws and policies are instituted and executed in a fair and correct manner.

Legislative Agenda

- Establish an Unemployment Benefit scheme that provides income security.
- Establish an allowance scheme to supplement incomplete AOV of beneficiaries.
- Amend the existing safety ordinance to address issues like ergonomics and psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

Policy Agenda

- Review the possibility to increase the fees related to the import of foreign labor and take measures to streamline processes and procedures.
- Establish a transparent and efficient Foreign Labor Policy, with a differentiation in the foreign labor permit system.

Project & Program Agenda

- Address the number of persons receiving unemployment benefits and identify pathways to employment for those able to work.
- Make employment accessible through second chance and training programs such as a second chance job fair and incentives for employers to hire.
- Streamline the application procedures for employment and residence permits.

VSA Personnel & Organization

To ensure the well-being of vulnerable groups within our community, it is essential to focus on updating outdated laws and policies and finalizing comprehensive country package measures. However, these efforts cannot be successfully implemented without giving due attention and care to the organization of the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor.

Legislative Agenda

- Amending the LIOL to meet the current needs of the Ministry.
- Amending the Organization decree.
- Finalizing the VSA function books.
- Strengthening the Inspectorate with better legislative tools to fine businesses.

Policy Agenda

- Finalize the VSA 2025-2030 multi-annual strategic plan.

Projects & Program Agenda

- Filling of critical vacancies.
- Providing legislative-writing training to management and staff.
- Providing all departments with basic tools they need to execute their work.
- Prioritizing staff mental health.



Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs,
Telecommunications & Traffic

Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Telecommunications & Traffic

The ministry is dedicated to supporting and enhancing the economic and social development of St. Maarten. Our core responsibilities include tourism, economic affairs, traffic, and telecommunications. Most importantly, we are committed to creating opportunities for the people of our island, ensuring that everyone can benefit from our initiatives and projects, towards a sustainable economically developed St. Maarten.

Vision

To play a central role in producing policies geared at developing the economy and sustainable economic development.

Mission

Our aim is to be the primary institute for delivering policy for the stimulation and facilitating of a sustainable economic development of St. Maarten and to provide it in a swift and professional manner to be analytical, objective, and thorough and provide reliable information.

The Ministry is composed of seven different departments that are committed to economic and social development, ensuring that policies and initiatives create meaningful opportunities for the people of St. Maarten. Aligned with the National Development Vision (NDV) and key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the plan focuses on fostering a resilient economy, supporting business growth, and promoting sustainability. Through strategic policies in tourism, economic affairs, traffic, and telecommunications, the Ministry aims to build a strong, inclusive, and future-ready St. Maarten.

Department of Economy, Transportation & Telecommunication (ETT, Policy)

The department's main focus is to achieve sustainable economic development; by means of balancing and synchronizing our efforts in stimulating managed growth in a regulatory environment, towards the enhancement of living standards and the quality of life for all our citizens. It serves as a central hub for integrating and coordinating economic policies to support sustainable development in St. Maarten. Its mission is to align policies across the ministry's departments, government-owned companies and other possible relevant entities ensuring a cohesive approach to economic management.

Key responsibilities include socio-economic development planning, employment growth and sector simulation, advising on key infrastructure and essential services (Harbour, Airport, Transportation, Telecommunications) and developing and supporting economic regulations. In addition, the department monitors the economy and formulates policies to structure, protect and enhance the business and investment environment/climate.

Legislative Agenda

Our focus is to reinforce St. Maarten's socio-economic base through modernization of our legislative system. We will perform a thorough review and ultimately revise outdated rules to eliminate redundant overlaps and align our legal system with international standards and consider best practices. Our goal is to create adaptable legal frameworks which will enable the development of green economic sectors and creative industries (Orange Economy) while supporting marine and Blue Economy initiatives. These updated laws will enable our regulatory system to address modern challenges which will result in enhanced sustainable economic development which will promote local investment as well as attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Essential fiscal and regulatory reforms define our legislative agenda which requires collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and The Central Bank of Curacao and St. Maarten. It is planned to explore the possibilities of Financial Transaction Tax to expand the tax base and create a more practical economic growth environment. The reforms strive to create a business environment that draws investments and improves environmental protection and energy efficiency standards at the same time. We aim to collaborate with the Ministry of VROMI to update regulations promoting renewable energy adoption and eco-friendly transportation standards. This interministerial approach enhances sectors exhibiting our commitment to sustainable development and innovative practices.

Cannabis Regulation and Industry Development

The objective is to establish a full cannabis legislation that will manage marijuana use, cultivation, and distribution throughout St. Maarten. The legislation aims to protect public safety by limiting marijuana consumption to designated environments and situations while enforcing strict health and safety standards. The initiative will reduce possible dangers and build a secure and transparent cannabis market through the establishment of a strong regulatory structure.

The initiative will investigate how cannabis can become a new economic sector for the island while maintaining its regulatory focus. The initiative has great potential to draw additional visitors to the island generating significant revenue. Its introduction will generate opportunities for local entrepreneurs and businesses which will lead to job creation and a more diverse economy. The initiative will depend on educational campaigns and stakeholder consultations to make sure both public and private sectors understand and support the goals of this new industry.

Policy Agenda

The department's policy agenda will prioritize recently approved policies from the past two years to support economic and tourism diversification/investments while also reviewing older policies that may be outdated due to global shifts post-COVID-19, geopolitical developments, or natural policy cycles following full implementation. Regardless of their status, all policies under review will align with the department's goals for sustainable development and long-term economic growth.

Agriculture, Livestock & Fisheries Policy

St. Maarten's Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (ALF) Policy, approved in 2022, has laid the groundwork for enhancing food security, strengthening trade, and modernizing the sector. Several key initiatives have already been launched, including the Agri-in-Schools project, research into hydroponic systems, and partnerships with the Dutch Caribbean and DCALFA to facilitate trade. Additionally, efforts are underway to explore fisheries opportunities within the destination hub, implement best practices for livestock management, and develop financing solutions to support industry growth.

A major priority is the establishment of the ALF Agency, which will require structured financing and governance to effectively oversee sector development. The policy also integrates food security as both a socio-economic priority, ensuring reliable access to nutritious food while reducing import dependency, stabilizing prices, and fostering job creation. Collaboration with the Ministries of VROMI and VSA is essential for land use planning, health regulations, and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the expansion of agricultural and eco-tourism presents opportunities for diversification and economic growth.

While progress has been made, continued commitment to the policy's full implementation lifecycle is crucial to building a resilient, competitive, and sustainable ALF sector for St. Maarten's future.

Investment Policy & Diversification Strategy

St. Maarten's Investment Policy and Diversification Strategy is essential for building a resilient, competitive, and future-ready economy. To attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and stimulate local business growth, the island requires a structured Investment Promotion Agency (IPA) that provides a red-carpet approach to investors while also creating opportunities for local entrepreneurs to connect with international investors. This ensures that investment flows benefit both external stakeholders and homegrown businesses, fostering inclusive economic development.

A major focus is on diversifying the economy by strengthening the Blue, Green, and Orange economies, capitalizing on marine resources, sustainability initiatives, and the creative sector from both an economic and tourism perspective. To support this transition, sector-specific training programs must be developed to enhance the local labour force, ensuring that residents are equipped to fill high-value jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Additionally, fiscal reform is a key consideration, particularly the potential shift from direct to indirect taxation to create a more business-friendly environment. The re-establishment of the Covenant between Justice, VSA, and TEATT, with the inclusion of ECYS and VROMI, is also necessary to align labour policies, infrastructure development, and regulatory frameworks.

By refining its investment and diversification approach, St. Maarten can create a clear, well-structured system that attracts global capital, strengthens local businesses, and builds a sustainable, innovation-driven economy.

MSME Policy Framework

Updating St. Maarten's MSME Policy is essential as it shifts from a post-COVID-19 recovery tool to a long-term economic sustainability strategy. With the Small Enterprise Development Centre (SEDC) now established to provide training, mentorship, and business support, the focus must evolve to expanding trade, export opportunities, and business networking to help MSMEs compete beyond local markets.

Key areas for improvement include facilitating online commerce, ensuring businesses have local banking options for digital transactions, and strengthening consumer protection measures to safeguard fair trade, product quality, and digital transactions. Additionally, intellectual property protection must be reinforced to support innovation and brand security, while a guarantee-scheme is needed to improve MSME access to financing. As new industries emerge, the policy must remain adaptive to evolving business models, digital transformation, and cross-border commerce.

By integrating trade facilitation, financial inclusion, consumer protections, and regulatory safeguards, the updated policy will equip MSMEs with the tools to grow sustainably, foster trust in the marketplace, and compete in an increasingly digital and global economy.

Residential Economic Policy

Updating St. Maarten's Residential Economic Policy is crucial to ensure it reflects current economic realities, evolving business models, and modern development trends. As the island grows, the line between residential and commercial use has shifted, requiring a redefinition of terminology, requirements, and criteria to maintain balance between economic activity and residential quality of life.

The policy must address new and emerging business types that were not previously considered but may now cause disruptions or create regulatory gaps. This includes evaluating the impact of mixed-use spaces and whether revisiting the concept of e-zones is necessary to accommodate certain industries without encroaching on traditional residential areas. Additionally, modernizing the approval process and clarifying zoning and operational guidelines will ensure greater transparency, consistency, and adaptability.

By refining these elements, the revised policy will provide a structured, forward-thinking approach that supports business innovation and investment while preserving community standards and sustainable development.

Beach & Vending Policy

Updating St. Maarten's Beach and Vending Policy is essential to ensure sustainable coastal management, economic opportunity, and environmental protection, considering evolving challenges. Since its implementation, increased tourism demand, climate change impacts, overcrowding, and regulatory inconsistencies have highlighted the need for clearer guidelines and enforcement mechanisms.

A key revision is the separation of beach operations from general vending, recognizing their unique economic and environmental factors. Beach management must consider climate resilience, balancing tourism with coastal preservation, while vending regulations should focus on fair access, business viability, and public space management.

Collaboration with the Ministry of VROMI is critical to align zoning, environmental protection, and infrastructure planning with economic policies. Additionally, addressing gaps in waste management, erosion control, and sustainable business practices will ensure long-term viability. With rising sea levels, changing visitor expectations, and increased local entrepreneurship, this policy must be modernized to support a balanced, adaptable, and well-regulated beach and vending economy.

National Energy (& Climate) Policy

St. Maarten's National Energy Policy must evolve into a National Energy and Climate Policy that ensures sustainability for all—residents, visitors, and investors alike. In collaboration with GEBE, the Ministry of VROMI, and key stakeholders, the policy must address cybersecurity, financial resilience, and renewable energy expansion, while integrating advanced technologies like net metering to empower consumers. To ensure transparent oversight, fair pricing, and investment in modern infrastructure, it is essential to identify a dedicated regulatory body, such as BTP, and establish the necessary legislation to formalize its role. By diversifying energy sources, improving efficiency, and strengthening climate adaptation measures, this policy will create a resilient, future-ready energy system that supports economic growth, environmental responsibility, and long-term sustainability.

Pricing Policy

The need for a Pricing Policy in St. Maarten is a bold and innovative concept, particularly as no country in the world currently operates under a structured pricing policy. However, for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like St. Maarten, where market size, import dependency, and external shocks create economic vulnerabilities, exploring such a framework is essential. A Pricing Policy could help stabilize costs, improve transparency, and ensure fair pricing mechanisms across key sectors, ultimately benefiting consumers, businesses, and investors.

To make this work, the establishment of a Competition Authority would be critical in ensuring market fairness, preventing price manipulation, and fostering a competitive business environment. This regulatory body would monitor market dynamics, address anti-competitive practices, and support sustainable economic growth while still allowing market forces to operate effectively.

By exploring the feasibility of a Pricing Policy, coupled with a Competition Authority, St. Maarten can take a proactive approach to economic stability, ensuring a fair and resilient market structure that supports both business sustainability and consumer protection in an evolving global economy.

Moratorium Policy

St. Maarten requires a unified Moratorium Policy that consolidates all existing moratoriums under a clear, structured framework. Currently, moratoriums are applied across various sectors, but there is a need for greater clarity on their purpose, criteria for implementation, and the conditions under which they can be lifted. A well-defined policy would

establish transparent guidelines, review mechanisms, and structured pathways for industries affected by these restrictions.

This policy must also outline the long-term approach to managing moratoriums, ensuring they remain effective tools for market stabilization, environmental sustainability, and economic regulation, rather than indefinite barriers to growth. Additionally, it should integrate with other policies, such as the Investment Policy, Pricing Policy, and Competition Authority, to provide strategic support or alternatives where necessary, allowing for sectoral growth and adaptability.

By developing a cohesive and strategic Moratorium Policy, St. Maarten can ensure that restrictions are justified, data-driven, and aligned with national development goals, creating a more predictable and well-regulated economic landscape for businesses, investors, and policymakers alike.

Public Transportation Policy

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), St. Maarten must develop a Public Transportation Policy and establish a Public Transportation Authority to regulate the industry, prevent market oversaturation, and ensure accessible, affordable, and reliable transit.

This policy should focus on training and certifying operators to serve as ambassadors for the destination, enhancing the visitor experience while maintaining high service standards. Additionally, it must support modernization efforts, including digital fare systems, designated routes, and improved infrastructure, creating a structured, efficient, and sustainable transportation system that benefits both residents and the economy.

Film Industry Exploration

The Department of ETT will investigate ways to build a dynamic film industry on the island through our film industry exploration initiative which runs alongside our other innovative projects. The goal of this initiative is to transform St. Maarten into a popular destination for creative work by drawing filmmakers from both local and international backgrounds through regulatory changes and incentives. This initiative aims to create additional revenue opportunities through partnerships with industry leaders to further diversify the economy and elevate the island's creative environment.

Project Agenda

From this year onward, the Department of ETT will continue leading projects aimed at strengthening economic sustainability, fostering investment, and modernizing key policies. These initiatives will focus on enhancing regulatory frameworks, supporting sector diversification, and improving infrastructure to create a more resilient, competitive, and future-ready economy for St. Maarten.

- Agri in Schools Project (annually, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport)
- Hydroponics Train the Trainer program (2025-2026)
- Pilot Project Farm to Supermarket concept (2025-2026)
- Agri-Loans Program with Qredits (2025-2027)
- Online overview for establishing businesses and centralizing licensing (2025-2027)
- Digitizing registration/ payment process for Chamber of Commerce (2025-2027)
- Promote & Execute Advanced Education programs for MSME's (2025-2027)
- Stakeholder Consultations (annually)
- Vendors Village (Capex Project 2026-2027)
- ALF Agency (2026-2027)

St. Maarten Tourism Bureau (STB)

The department's focus is on enhancing our tourism sector through increasing the visitor receipts, updating the vision to reflect the current changing product and target sector developments while strategically reducing the inherent seasonality to achieve sustainable employment in this sector."

St. Maarten's tourism recovery and revenue growth depend on product redevelopment, enhanced data collection, and strategic marketing. As visitor arrivals and accommodation capacity increase, resources must be directed toward beautification, lighting, and revitalizing key attractions, including downtown Philipsburg and heritage sites. Given the island's competitive global market, targeted marketing efforts, expanded airline and charter partnerships, and digital promotion are essential to sustain and grow the sector.

Long-term tourism development must focus on cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability, establishing policies that guide planning, product diversification, and strategic marketing. While stakeholders envision a balanced, high-value, and sustainable tourism industry, St. Maarten has yet to fully leverage its natural capital for inclusive growth. Current priorities include expanding stay-over tourism, increasing cruise revenue, diversifying experiences, and ensuring community involvement.

Public-private investment in quality tourism products and service standards will attract higher-spending visitors, strengthen local business linkages, and enhance St. Maarten's competitive position. Improved institutional support and coordination are also critical to developing high-value tourism offerings, mitigating seasonality, and fostering economic and environmental resilience.

Legislative Agenda

To enhance product development and marketing, St. Maarten must establish an independent St. Maarten Tourism Authority (STA)—a specialized body dedicated to streamlining operations, reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, and driving a more competitive and sustainable tourism industry. Unlike traditional government-led models, an STA operates with greater flexibility, agility, and industry-driven decision-making, allowing it to respond quickly to market trends, develop innovative strategies, and attract high-value visitors without being constrained by public sector limitations.

The STA would oversee strategic marketing, destination branding, product enhancement, and tourism investment initiatives, working in close collaboration with private sector stakeholders, industry experts, and government entities. Its primary goal is to ensure that St. Maarten remains a leading destination by improving visitor experiences, fostering sustainable tourism growth, and increasing economic benefits for local businesses and communities.

However, the transition to an STA requires a legislative process to formally establish the authority's legal framework, governance structure, and operational scope. This process will outline the transition of key tourism functions from government to the STA while ensuring public-private alignment and maintaining oversight mechanisms to safeguard transparency, accountability, and long-term success.

By implementing the STA, St. Maarten can create a modern, responsive, and industry-led tourism management structure, empowering the destination to compete more effectively in the global market, improve service quality, and drive sustainable economic growth.

Policy Agenda

Tourism Master Plan

The Tourism Master Plan serves as a comprehensive roadmap for St. Maarten's long-term tourism development, ensuring a strategic, sustainable, and competitive industry. While a plan was previously developed, it was never fully implemented, highlighting the need for a revised and actionable framework that aligns with current market trends, economic shifts, and infrastructural needs. This updated plan will focus on destination management, product diversification, environmental sustainability, investment attraction, and workforce development, while also addressing policy gaps and regulatory enhancements. By integrating stakeholder input, public-private collaboration, and data-driven strategies, the revised Tourism Master Plan will provide a clear execution strategy to drive St. Maarten's tourism sector forward, ensuring growth, resilience, and long-term economic impact.

Sports Tourism Policy

The Sports Tourism Policy will be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of ECYS and the National Sports Institute (NSI) to position St. Maarten as a hub for sports tourism while supporting local athletes both at home and abroad. This policy will focus on enhancing sports infrastructure, attracting international and regional sporting events, and integrating sports with the tourism sector to drive visitor arrivals and economic growth. Additionally, it will establish programs to develop local talent, create pathways for athletes to compete internationally, and leverage sports as a tool for destination marketing. By fostering strategic partnerships, investing in athlete development, and promoting St. Maarten as a premier sports destination, this policy will strengthen both the local sports ecosystem and the island's global tourism appeal.

Hosting Policy

The Hosting Policy establishes clear guidelines for who we host, how we host, and the value chain involved in delivering a quality visitor experience. It outlines criteria for hosting tourists, influencers, media, business delegations, and event partners, ensuring alignment with St. Maarten's tourism goals. The policy will also incorporate incidental management, addressing compensation protocols for trip disruptions, injuries, or negative experiences to enhance visitor satisfaction and accountability. Additionally, it defines metrics for evaluating hosting effectiveness, including economic impact, visitor engagement, and return on investment. By refining service standards, industry partnerships, and performance tracking, this policy strengthens destination appeal, guest experience, and St. Maarten's global tourism reputation.

Festivals & Events Policy

The Festivals & Events Policy ensures a structured, strategic approach to planning and promoting events that enhance tourism, cultural identity, and economic impact. It establishes event classification, funding criteria, public-private collaboration, and destination marketing strategies to maximize reach and visitor engagement. The policy also integrates sustainability, regulatory compliance, and local business participation while encouraging year-round events to reduce seasonality. By streamlining support, promotion, and infrastructure planning, this policy will position St. Maarten as a premier destination for world-class festivals and cultural experiences.

Project Agenda

Cultural Script

A Cultural Script for St. Maarten will be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport (ECYS) to formally define, preserve, and integrate the island's heritage, traditions, and values into education and public engagement. This structured framework will outline local customs, language expressions, historical narratives, and social norms, ensuring that they are **taught in schools, reflected in tourism, and embraced in community life.

As part of this initiative, cultural ambassadors—including **tourism professionals, educators, and key public figures—will be expected to follow and promote the Cultural Script**, reinforcing national pride and ensuring that both residents and visitors experience the authentic essence of St. Maarten's identity. With a focus on curriculum development and mandatory implementation, this initiative aims to create a unified approach to cultural education and awareness, ensuring the island's rich heritage is preserved for future generations.

Soualiga Market Place

The Soualiga Market Place is a strategic public-private partnership initiative focused on enhancing vendor opportunities and improving the visitor experience in St. Maarten. Designed as a modern, organized space, it will provide structured facilities for local vendors, ensuring a cleaner, more accessible, and professionally managed marketplace. This project aims to streamline commerce, support small businesses, and enhance the overall aesthetic and functionality of key commercial areas. By improving market organization and vendor conditions, the Soualiga Marketplace will

contribute to economic activity, tourism appeal, and community development while ensuring a well-regulated and sustainable commercial environment.

Virtual Reality Tours

The Virtual Reality (VR) Tours Initiative will provide immersive, interactive experiences that allow potential visitors to explore St. Maarten's landscapes, attractions, and cultural sites before booking their trips. This cutting-edge approach will serve as a powerful marketing tool, giving travellers a realistic preview of the island, prompting them to make informed travel decisions. Additionally, VR tours will showcase accessible facilities and attractions designed for travellers with disabilities, ensuring inclusivity and highlighting St. Maarten as a welcoming, well-equipped destination for all visitors. By integrating technology with tourism promotion, this initiative enhances engagement, accessibility, and global reach while driving visitor interest and bookings.

Ambassadorship Program

The Ambassadorship Program is currently under development as a key initiative to enhance St. Maarten's tourism experience by developing a network of trained tourism ambassadors. This program will be designed to equip industry professionals, community members, and key stakeholders** with the skills to represent the island's culture, heritage, and hospitality to visitors and international audiences. Ambassadors will receive specialized training in cultural awareness, customer service, and destination knowledge, ensuring they can effectively promote St. Maarten while enhancing visitor engagement. The development of this program will be crucial in fostering national pride, service excellence, and global tourism outreach, reinforcing St. Maarten's position as a premier, welcoming destination.

Department of Economic Licenses (DEL)

The department's focus is to provide responsive, quality, efficient, innovative and professional public service when handling the request for economic licenses. In addition to ensuring that the economic sector is properly informed and regulated to foster an economy which stimulates growth and attracts investment in a sustainable and transparent manner.

The department's primary goal is to execute economic regulations efficiently, facilitate investment, and propose improvements. Key responsibilities include processing economic licenses, ensuring compliance with regulations, advising on business establishment policies, and maintaining administrative procedures.

Challenges in timely license processing have led to dissatisfaction among applicants, largely due to uncertainties in outdated policies and legislation. In the coming years, the focus will be on reducing processing times, updating policies and legislation, improving regulatory frameworks, and training staff, while implementing modern and innovative solutions to streamline systems. Additionally, work procedures will be reassessed to eliminate inefficiencies and enhance service delivery.

To achieve these improvements, the department will work closely with key stakeholders both internally and externally, ensuring that policies and legislation remain practical, relevant, and responsive to economic needs. A critical component of this approach is generating accurate and reliable data to support evidence-based policymaking and legislative adjustments, fostering a more transparent, efficient, and business-friendly regulatory environment in collaboration with ETT and IETA.

Legislative Agenda

The legislative agenda focuses on thoroughly examining and updating the current economic license laws. The plan includes thorough analysis of current laws to find missing sections and remove redundant areas while adjusting fee structure based on present day costs. Along with the review of the Residential Economic Policy (REP) that will be conducted by ETT, consideration will be given to have it transformed into a National Decree Containing General Measures to simplify implementation as well as enforcement. This is to ensure better transparency and consistency. It will also promote sustainable development and address regulatory shortfalls in new industry areas.

Policy Agenda

The aim is to enhance operational efficiency and support business growth through a policy agenda that focuses on making regulatory processes more efficient by digitizing and streamlining them. The strategy involves developing straightforward application forms and clear guidelines that include step by step checklists to make sure submissions are thorough and accurate. The establishment of an online portal that synchronizes information throughout government databases represents a primary policy initiative for standardized data management and the overarching goals of creating an E-Government platform. The digital transformation involves implementing a software solution to oversee license and permit lifecycles while shifting to electronic document management that supports paperless operations and self-service functions. The policy framework features continuous educational programs for businesses to update licensing knowledge, ongoing staff training to maintain professional service standards and timely performance with Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems which enable document verification, workload prediction analytics, and virtual customer support.

Project Agenda

Digital Transformation

The digital transformation initiative will create a new digital system that automates much of the administrative processing of license and permit applications. The system will include self-service options which will enable businesses to independently address their regulatory needs while minimizing administrative workloads. The Virtual Assistance Project will utilize AI technologies to deliver immediate personalized user support.

Backlog Clearance

The department has embarked on an initiative to eliminate the backlog of pending permits by conducting strategic process evaluations and improving workflows. An interdepartmental task force will be established that will bring experienced staff from different departments to temporarily assist in clearing backlog. The collaborative approach allows the ministry to resolve pending applications efficiently while reducing administrative delays.

Department of Statistics (STAT)

The Department of Statistics acts as the essential support structure for evidence-based policies and strategic initiatives during this data-driven age. The department specializes in gathering and interpreting economic and social demographic data to create reliable reports that support government and private-sector decisions.

Through ongoing methodological improvements and digital tool implementation the Department delivers comprehensive public and stakeholder-accessible data that meets transparency and timelines standards. Through the efforts to synchronize major data sources via Open Data/SXM-info, the Port Community System, and GIS-based spatial analyses, informed predictive insights are created which support policymakers, businesses and community stakeholders.

Policy Agenda

The Department of Statistics is dedicated to creating a data-driven environment which supports evidence-based decision-making across the island. The policy agenda aims to sustain and develop the reporting of essential economic, social, and demographic indicators by ongoing data collection initiatives which include the Labor Force Survey, Consumer Price Index, National Accounts & Business Cycle Surveys and Tourism Exit Survey. The objective includes improving on data dissemination practices by distributing frequent press releases along with a dedicated statistical website and creating extensive publications while organizing specific presentations for stakeholders. Policies will establish priorities for synchronizing essential data sources such as Open Data/SXM-info platform

together with the Port Community System for trade statistics and GIS-based spatial analyses to guarantee accurate reporting that meets international best practice standards. Human resource capacity will be strengthened by filling the vacant positions of Department Head and Assistant Researcher (IT). Collection and reporting on core economic indicators such as unemployment, GDP, and poverty will be enhanced with updated methodologies and integrated data systems.

Project Agenda

Several key projects have been pinpointed that will modernize the statistical systems and improve data integration to support the policy objectives. The Statistical Business Register (SBR) Modernization Project that will refresh business records and uphold their accuracy to ensure economic data remains accessible and current.

The Trade statistics Integration Project will improve the way trade data is gathered and reported through the Port Community System which will lead to better economic analysis results.

The 10-Year Population Projection and Indicators Update Project which will enhance demographic projections and refresh population indicators to aid future planning activities.

The development of an online dashboard will bring together main metrics like Labor Force data, CPI/Inflation rates, National Accounts Survey (NAS) outcomes, Business Cycle Survey (BCS) findings, and Tourism Exit Survey (TES) results into a platform for real-time visualization to boost transparency and public involvement.

Inspectorate of Economic and Transport Affairs (IETA)

The Inspectorate of Economic Affairs (IETA) functions as an essential enforcement division of the Ministry of TEATT. IETA's mission focuses on carrying out all required inspection duties with customer service as its priority while adhering to its vision of becoming an influential enforcement department across the economic community through professional and motivated staff. IETA enforces policies and laws across economic affairs and transportation along with school bus safety and taxi dispatching and regulates casinos and agricultural veterinary practices to protect public interest and maintain fair economic operations. IETA executes its tasks through its organizational structure which consists of specialized sections for transportation, economic control, and casino regulation.

Legislative Agenda

IETA's legislative agenda emphasizes thorough evaluations and updates to legal structures which support economic and transportation regulation enforcement. The process consists of a full examination of current enforcement policies which cover the Passenger Transportation Ordinance alongside its related decrees. Collaboration with stakeholders such as industry experts and legal advisors will drive the process of reforming obsolete statutes to meet modern requirements. The legislative agenda aims to complete the first legal sustainability assessment of existing enforcement practices while updating regulation provisions related to economic controls such as weights & measures and price management and business licensing and establishing a solid legal structure for more efficient administration.

Policy Agenda

IETA's policy agenda focuses on creating thorough enforcement procedures for economic transport affairs that prioritize efficiency and customer service. Review and updating of standardized inspection policies will be conducted for driving exams, school bus safety, taxi dispatching and casino operations to ensure consistent national standards application. Updated policies will improve economic controls by regulating prices and overseeing noise nuisances in entertainment businesses while managing agricultural activities and livestock and fisheries production. The policy agenda centres on the integration of modern digital solutions to improve accountability and transparency. Improvement of internal processes will be made and continuous training programs along with BAVPOL certification will be established. Basic orientation courses for Economic Controllers will also be offered. A culture of ongoing improvement will be promoted by monitoring performance and integrating feedback systems.

Project Agenda

Task /Workflow Management Platform Project

This management platform project aims to create and launch a complete cloud-based system which will manage tasks and workflows to control departmental operations digitally. Through scheduling inspections and streamlining case management together with real-time reporting this platform boosts efficiency as well as secures seamless coordination between departments.

Cloud-Based Testing and Digital Taxi Dispatching Project

Deploy a cutting-edge cloud-based solution dedicated to theory driving tests by connecting it to the Public Service Centre for automated scheduling of appointments. The introduction of a digital taxi dispatching system will modernize taxi operations as well as decrease response times while enhancing service delivery for drivers and passengers.

ICT Infrastructure Upgrade and Office Expansion Initiative

The department will eliminate current bottlenecks through ICT infrastructure improvements such as the shift to fibre-optic communications and modern PC replacements as well as by increasing office space for Transport and Taxi Dispatch operations.

Interdepartmental Backlog Clearance Collaboration

An interdepartmental task force was temporarily created by assigning experienced staff from other departments to eliminate permit and inspection processing backlogs.

Department of Civil Aviation, Shipping & Maritime (L&S)

The Department of Civil Aviation, Shipping & Maritime (L&S) works to develop and advance a secure and dependable transportation network for air and sea travel that benefits the island. By managing both aviation and maritime sectors the department works to maintain all operations within international standards. The department plans to create a strong national Maritime Administration which will perform Flag State, Port State and Coastal State duties while reaching top standards of safety and operational performance. L&S delivers coordinated monitoring and regulation through enhanced inter-agency cooperation and continuous oversight.

Legislative Agenda

L&S focuses its legislative efforts on updating and modernizing the regulatory systems for aviation and maritime activities. The civil aviation strategy incorporates the integration of all 19 ICAO Annexes into local regulations while formalizing SAR protocols alongside the Coastguard and harmonizing ANS regulations. The department aims to establish the digital e-Authority database while meeting new 2.10 and 2.11 model regulations to restore CAT 1 status and achieve a positive International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA). Legislative work on maritime issues will concentrate on revising existing regulations to create a national maritime registry that combines flag state and port state functions and on developing both a strategic maritime vision and new ballast water laws along with additional environmental protections.

Policy Agenda

We aim to review and introduce and amend regulations to align with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) annexes and best practices. While the department's priorities remain to achieve compliance in all 19 annexes, we will strive to achieve Category 1 status under the FAA's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) program. Through updated air navigation regulations, we will strengthen Air Traffic Services by creating a modern framework to support efficient operations and allow fee collection to fund future industry advancements.

Our Maritime sector policy initiatives draw from recent Economic Impact Study findings to boost the industry. Our strategy includes updating regulatory systems, as well as enhancing infrastructure and implementing clear zoning and safety standards to support environmental sustainability. These initiatives will take interministerial corporations and the sector will experience growth by drawing investment.

Project Agenda

Civil Aviation

The department's approach prioritizes adhering to compliance requirements related to the ICAO annexes, through continuous review and strict enforcement of operational protocols. Additionally, with the establishment of an air navigation services provider, a revenue-based fee system will be introduced to fund continuous enhancements in aviation personnel and infrastructure.

Establish a Search and Rescue (SAR) collaboration between the Department and the Coastguard by creating a unified SAR command structure. The project will establish standard operating procedures, enhance communication systems, and conduct regular joint training exercises.

To improve operational efficiency and compliance with international standards a modern facility which will function as the joint headquarters for both the Department of Civil Aviation and the Meteorological Department will be built.

Maritime

Implement an online survey platform to collect detailed financial spending information from owners of vessels on a regular basis, to maintain constant economic data of the industry.

Switch from paper-based yacht entry and departure management to a unified online self-reporting platform. The project will update and unify entry procedures at Simpson Bay and Great Bay and implement standardized port fees.

Refurbish the current Simpson Bay police dock, and construct a ferry terminal to improve docking systems and service points for yacht entry and departure. As well as perform an evaluation of the lagoon's depth channels followed by a maintenance program.

Another key priority is to explore the practicality of and engineering specifications needed to enlarge the Simpson Bay bridge structure to support ships with wider beam requirements.

Meteorology Department (MDS)

For St. Maarten to remain resilient and prepared against increasingly complex weather patterns, the Department of Meteorology serves as an essential foundation. Precise real-time weather data and forecasts are delivered to protect lives and property while enabling the government, businesses and the public to make informed decisions.

The Department actively promotes environmental sustainability through the implementation of advanced technologies and research partnerships. The national development strategies receive comprehensive climate insights through the ongoing methodology updates and sensor network expansion that encompass both ground stations. Through this process we demonstrate dedication to transparent practices and innovation.

Policy Agenda

One of the objectives of MDS is the development of policy focusing on the establishment of early warning systems and alert mechanisms through interministerial collaborations. This enables fast delivery of essential weather data to improve safety standards and emergency readiness of residents and visitors

Another focus is to integrate technological innovations through AI technology and advanced data analytics tools. Policies will be introduced to integrate technological solutions that enhance weather prediction and enable effective strategic planning in emergency response scenarios.

We also aim to create structured partnerships with our northern counterparts. These collaborative partnerships will promote knowledge sharing and capacity development, which will improve on unified responses to extreme weather events.

Project Agenda

Construction of new building & purchasing of new equipment

An advanced meteorological facility which will serve as a shared operations center with the Department of Civil Aviation will be constructed. The facility will contain advanced weather monitoring systems, a dedicated observer room, and a broadcast station and will serve as a central hub for both meteorological and aviation needs. The construction of this building meets international standards. This facility along with its state-of-the-art equipment will enhance operational efficiency which will reinforce the island's dedication to resilience and sustainable development.

Country Package Synopsis:

Sint Maarten and the Netherlands have been advancing a series of reforms from the country package aimed at enhancing the country's economic and social resilience. These reforms target sustainable growth and aim to fortify governance, financial stability, and social unity. The Ministry of TEATT is responsible for three projects and due to lack of inhouse capacity, has also requested for additional support to ensure the success of these projects.

H2 Gaming Authority: The project involves drafting new gambling legislation in Sint Maarten, with consultations to finalize by June 2025. It includes discussions on the draft law and its explanatory memorandum, feedback on the proposed structure for the Sint Maarten Gaming Authority, and research into gambling addiction. A business case for the Gaming Authority is also underway, aiming to outline its organizational structure, operational expenses, and revenue projections. This comprehensive approach addresses legislative, regulatory, and social aspects of gambling in Sint Maarten.

E6: SME Development and Investment Centre: Entrepreneurship and the investment climate will be promoted. In connection to this it is essential that, amongst other things, the licensing system be optimized, the costs of doing business lowered and bureaucracy (red tape) removed. Proposals have been developed and will be implemented in 2025 based on an integral review of (among other things) laws & legislation.

A2: Statistical Department: The project involves a Peer Review at Sint Maarten's Department of Statistics, focusing on stakeholder engagement and implementing recommendations. CBS Netherlands assisted with the stakeholder engagements for the conducting of and reporting for the Peer Review. The Plan of Actions include improving the legislation which requires legal expertise, making data available through an Open Data tool, ensuring data confidentiality, publishing a Quality Declaration, and establishing MoU's for better cooperation. A project manager will be appointed to support these implementations, addressing challenges in cooperation and delayed activities.



Ministry of Education, Culture,
Youth & Sport

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport (MECYS) is responsible for the supervision of education, culture, youth, and sports in St. Maarten. MECYS executes this role through the creation and execution of legislation, policies, and projects that support, and supplement new and existing initiatives geared towards these sectors. There are four policy departments (Education, Culture, Youth, and Sports) that are supported by six execution divisions (Examinations, Inspectorate, Study Financing, Student Support Services, Education Innovation, and Public Education).

Vision

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport is the most important ministry within the government apparatus of St. Maarten. We say this boldly because the success or failure of any nation rests on the success or failure of its educational system and pursuits.

Mission

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport, through evidence-based decision-making and policy creation, facilitates an environment where the St. Maarten community is encouraged and empowered to participate in lifelong learning initiatives. These initiatives foster a united force that collectively promotes and protects the island's culture and heritage, strengthens youth advocacy and amplifies youth voices, and contributes to the development and advancement of sports programmes that support a healthy lifestyle from cradle to grave.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport is the driving force behind Sint Maarten's long-term growth and resilience. Education shapes the future of our nation, culture preserves our identity, youth empowerment fuels innovation, and sports foster unity and well-being.

Over the next four years, the Ministry will champion institutional agility, education reform, cultural preservation, meaningful youth participation, and sports development, ensuring that our legislative, policy, and project agendas create lasting opportunities for all.

By strengthening interdepartmental collaboration, modernising our curriculum, improving literacy and numeracy, investing in educators, and expanding youth empowerment initiatives, we will build a more inclusive, dynamic, and forward-thinking society.

As we lay the foundation for the next decade, in 2025, the ministry will embark on the development of a comprehensive 10-year strategic plan to guide our efforts in education, culture, youth, and sports. This plan will align with regional and global best practices, national priorities identified in the country package report recommendations, and the evolving needs of our community. It will also reinforce the sustainability of key achievements, such as the Positive School Connections Programme and the Positive Parenting Support Programme, among others, ensuring that progress is not only maintained but expanded.

Through evidence-based policies and a commitment to excellence, we will shape a future where every citizen has the tools, opportunities, and support to contribute meaningfully to the growth and prosperity of Sint Maarten.

Education

Legislative Agenda

The legislative agenda for the Department of Education is focused on advancing the development, amendment, and ratification of long-pending national ordinances designed to strengthen the oversight and transparency of the education system in Sint Maarten.

This includes the finalisation of key national decrees and ministerial regulations that will support the implementation of these ordinances, providing a more robust framework for monitoring educational progress and ensuring accountability at all levels.

These legislative changes are integral to the ministry's broader commitment to institutional agility, education reform, and enhancing the overall quality of education.

National Ordinances

- Ratification of the Law on Higher Education: The law on Higher Education will regulate the establishment and potential funding of both new and existing higher education institutions.
- Ratification of the Law on Education Supervision: The law on Education Supervision provides further guidelines on the role of the Ministry of ECYS in the oversight and regulation of education in St. Maarten.
- Introduction of the National Ordinance on the Modernisation of School Regulations: The law on the Modernisation of School Regulations seeks to eradicate harmful rules that stem from colonial constructs and prevent our young people from their right to self-expression and advocacy.

National Decrees

- The National Decree for Study Financing
- The National Decree for the Funding of Higher Education
- The National Decree on Higher Education
- The National Decree for Education Supervision and related National Decrees on Safety and Secondary Education

Ministerial Regulations

- MR for the Framework for Education Supervision
- MR for the Establishment of the Education Council
- MR for the Establishment of the National Child Protection Platform

Policy Agenda

The Department of Education has several policy initiatives in the pipeline, each at various stages of completion and implementation. The policy priorities for the department for the years 2025-2028 will be as follows:

Special Needs Education

The Special Needs Education (SNE) Policy was approved by the Ministerial Administrative Decision on 12 February 2024 and published in the National Gazette on February 16, 2024.

A roadmap towards the implementation of the SNE policy will outline the necessary steps, timelines, responsibilities, and resource allocation required to ensure the successful integration of Special Needs Education into St. Maarten's educational framework.

Alongside this roadmap, the Department of Education is in the initial stages of the development of a framework that assists school boards with soliciting funding for students with special needs, as well as indicators that the ministry will use to track progress in meeting the needs of these students over time.

National Policy Regulating Artificial Intelligence in Education & Government

The development and implementation of a National AI in Education Policy is crucial for preparing St. Maarten's education system to effectively and ethically integrate artificial intelligence (AI). This policy will address key challenges, such as learning gaps, teacher shortages, and unequal access to resources, by leveraging AI to enhance personalised learning, support teacher development, and improve overall educational outcomes.

By introducing AI-driven tools, the policy will help to modernise education, provide adaptive learning experiences for students, and ease teacher workloads through the automation of administrative tasks.

In addition to its potential for transforming education, the policy will ensure responsible and ethical AI use, protecting student and teacher privacy while mitigating risks such as biased algorithms and data breaches. It will promote equity by addressing resource disparities and improving access to digital learning materials.

By aligning with global AI standards, the policy will ensure St. Maarten remains competitive while fostering a culture of public awareness and trust. Ultimately, this policy will create a future-ready education system that prioritises innovation, inclusivity, and student well-being.

STEAM In Education Policy

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) is a teaching and learning methodology that incorporates all subject elements into the regular rotation of the curriculum. For example, technology would show up in physical education, which then makes it a connector for all things education. Historically, STEAM education has focused on providing standalone devices, but true STEAM implementation goes beyond just distributing technology. In collaboration with stakeholders and the Division of Education Innovation, a policy will be created to provide guidance and best practices for educational institutions at all levels.

Language Policy for Education

Thus far, the Situational Analysis to inform the Language Policy for Education has been accepted by the ministry. Additionally, the Master's Thesis titled Strengthening Dutch Education in Sint Maarten: Navigating Linguistic Diversity, Equity, and Sustainability will serve as a resource to guide the development of a comprehensive Language Policy that supports the provision of quality education in Sint Maarten.

The Situational Analysis provides a thorough examination of current language use and educational needs across our schools and communities, setting the foundation for a policy that reflects our society's linguistic diversity and aspirations. The Master's Thesis offers insights into enhancing Dutch language education while considering the unique linguistic and cultural landscape of Sint Maarten. Together, these documents align with the ministry's commitment to fostering an inclusive and effective educational environment.

Project Agenda:

Foundation-Based Education

A comprehensive evaluation of Foundation-Based Education (FBE) will be conducted to assess its current state and identify areas for improvement. The evaluation will focus on critical aspects, including the curriculum, teaching strategies, teacher training, core principles, learning methodologies, assessments, and the instructional materials in use.

The findings from this evaluation will be compiled into a detailed report, which will include actionable recommendations for improvement, alongside the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. This framework will serve as a tool for future assessments, ensuring that the FBE system continues to evolve in line with the needs of students, educators, and the broader educational goals of Sint Maarten.

Secondary Education

The assessment of secondary education will include research into the return on investment of the CAPE, IB, and VWO programmes. This research aims to provide recommendations to improve access, participation, efficiency, and effectiveness of CAPE, IB, and VWO programmes in St. Maarten. The goal is to increase the number of students enrolling in and completing pre-university education, ensuring optimal use of scarce resources.

Ultimately, the research seeks to reduce brain drain and better prepare students for the labour market or for Higher Education, whether locally or abroad.

Another component of ongoing assessments in secondary education in Sint Maarten is the comprehensive examination of the vocational education landscape. This includes evaluating the feasibility of transitioning to the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) system as a potential replacement for the current Pre-Secondary Vocational Education (PSVE)/VSBO system.

The review will focus on the alignment of the CVQ with national labour market demands, the adaptability of the curriculum, and the overall effectiveness of the system in providing students with the skills and qualifications necessary to succeed in the workforce. By exploring this potential shift, the Ministry aims to enhance the relevance and quality of vocational education, ensuring that students are equipped with industry-recognised certifications and are prepared for the demands of the modern job market.

Literacy and Numeracy

There is a pressing need to improve literacy and numeracy within the education system, encompassing both primary and secondary levels. In 2022, (international) standardised assessments were introduced in all primary schools on Sint Maarten, starting with the implementation of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA), standardised learning assessments that were executed in the first grade (group 3) in primary education.

The report on the outcome of the assessment showed that there is considerable work to be done to improve the levels of literacy and numeracy on the island. Efforts are ongoing for the introduction of a standardised assessment in secondary education.

The introduction of the (international) standardised learning assessments is the first step in the development of the strategy to enhance literacy and numeracy.

Lump Sum Subsidy Model

The Lump Sum Subsidy Model (LSS) will undergo a thorough review to assess its effectiveness and identify best practices for future funding models in education. The LSS, which has been a longstanding concern for subsidised school boards, will be re-evaluated considering feedback regarding its insufficient capacity to meet financial obligations.

This review, combined with efforts to assist subsidised schools in securing alternative funding sources, aims to address these challenges and ensure the financial sustainability of the education system. The review will focus on creating a more equitable and effective funding model that supports the operational needs of schools while ensuring quality education for all students.

Enhancement of the Teaching Profession

This includes the ongoing Professional Development Program for teachers, strategies to enhance the career trajectory of education professionals, the review of the function book for education, research into the compensation of education personnel, and the development of a framework for professional licensure, which would ensure the continuous professional development of teachers and training in the use of professional appraisal instruments for education personnel.

Study Financing Priority List

The Government of Sint Maarten is actively promoting study financing programmes to address the country's labour market requirements by ensuring the availability of well-qualified workers. To be eligible for this programme, students are required to enrol in courses of study specifically designed to prepare them for positions or professions in high demand in St. Maarten in the short and medium term.

This initiative is governed by legal provisions, particularly Article 3, subsection 2 of the National Ordinance on Student Financing (Landsverordening studiefinanciering A.B. 2019, no. 7). According to this regulation, the Minister of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport is mandated to annually establish and publish, in the National Gazette of Sint Maarten, a priority list of studies that equip individuals for professions or positions currently in high demand within Sint Maarten's labour market, both in the short and medium term.

To prepare and inform the priority list for 2026-2031, the Department of Education will execute comprehensive research into local labour market needs and trends.

Digital School Busing Fleet Management and Tracking System

Over the years, school busing has become relatively expensive and difficult to control due to a lack of structure and not having the necessary staff to carry out the required controls. Student transportation on Sint Maarten averages over NAF 4.5 million annually and has the potential to increase if there is no immediate intervention.

This has led to the signing of Service Level Agreements between the Ministry and School Bus Operators, as well as the intention to implement a

digital fleet management and tracking system, including CCTVs and GPS trackers on the buses of all school bus operators contracted by the Ministry, as well as control devices and web-based software to access and manage the data being collected. This project will introduce new standards for the delivery of the service that will enhance accountability, safety, and financial efficiency.

STEAM in Education

Following the creation of a STEAM policy for education, there will be a project initiated to assist schools with the rollout of this policy in four stages:

- Assess the STEAM-related skill level of all educators through surveys, interviews and testing.
- Assess the STEAM readiness of educational institutions across all disciplines, including digital network mapping and broadband accessibility, in collaboration with Bureau Telecommunications & Post.
- Establish a workgroup to draft a STEAM-centric curriculum that best prepares students of all ages for the digital world we operate in. This curriculum will be deployable as modules under existing subjects (such as integrated science, mathematics, and creative arts).
- Collaborate with stakeholders across all institutions to begin deploying the draft curriculum at varying levels of education.

Culture

Legislative Agenda

The Ministry will prioritise the modernisation of the existing Monuments Ordinance to ensure it is aligned with current geopolitical realities and cultural preservation needs.

This update will include provisions for the creation of a Monument Fund, which will provide the financial resources necessary to sustain the protection of historically significant heritage sites. The updated legislation will introduce zoning regulations to preserve historical architecture, offering incentives for heritage conservation and ensuring that Sint Maarten's cultural heritage is preserved for future generations.

Policy Agenda

Integrated Cultural Policy Framework

The Integrated Cultural Policy Framework, originally established in 2007 by the then-Island Council, will be thoroughly reviewed and updated to reflect the evolving cultural landscape in Sint Maarten.

In partnership with UNESCO, this review will assess the impact of local, regional, and global cultural shifts on the island's identity and heritage. The updated framework will guide future cultural policies, ensuring that they promote the preservation, celebration, and integration of Sint Maarten's tangible cultural heritage while adapting to contemporary needs and global trends.

Project Agenda

- Assessing the existence and level of educational materials surrounding our historical and cultural heritage and developing, in collaboration with the Department of Education, any required new materials related to these critical subjects.
- Assessing all existing cultural programs and initiatives, whether publicly or privately executed, to ensure they are in line with the current and future Integrated Cultural Policy Framework. This will take place parallel to the Policy agenda review of the ICPF.
- The Department of Culture, in collaboration with the Department of Sports, the Department of Youth and the Ministry of Finance, will assess the feasibility of securing CAPEX funding for the acquisition of land and the development of a state-of-the-art indoor facility. This facility will host a variety of sporting, cultural, and youth events, providing a central hub for community engagement and youth development.

Youth

Legislative Agenda

In alignment with the Country Package and ongoing policy initiatives, the Ministry will work to update subsidy legislation to expand access to funding for early childhood development programmes and daycare centres.

This initiative will ensure that early childhood education is more accessible and better supported, laying a stronger foundation for lifelong learning and development.

Policy Agenda

Establishment of the National Child Protection Platform

The National Child Protection Platform of Sint Maarten is an inter-ministerial, multi-sectoral platform committed to fostering a society where children and young people can grow and develop into fully self-actualised individuals. The government approach ensures that they are free to express themselves within a safe and nurturing environment while minimising exposure to violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

The platform aims to establish a coordinated and comprehensive child protection system that operates within a strengthened legal and policy framework. Through effective planning, coordination, and monitoring, it strives to safeguard the well-being of children, young people, and families in Sint Maarten, ensuring their protection even during and after emergency events.

Early Childhood Development Policy

The Department of Youth has developed a National Policy Plan for Early Childhood Development (ECD). This plan is aligned with the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UNESCO's Education 2030 program.

The implementation of this policy will provide Sint Maarten with a comprehensive system of community support for children from infancy through adulthood, ensuring that all children can thrive and reach their full potential.

Project Agenda

The Department of Youth, in collaboration with the Department of Culture, the Department of Sports, and the Ministry of Finance, will assess the feasibility of securing CAPEX funding for the acquisition of land and the development of a state-of-the-art indoor facility. This facility will host a variety of sporting, cultural, and youth events, providing a central hub for community engagement and youth development.

Additionally, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Youth will design and implement crime prevention projects aimed at deterring young people from engaging in negative behaviours, such as bullying and theft, that could lead to a life of crime.

These initiatives will focus on fostering positive youth development, community engagement, and opportunities for young people to build resilience and contribute to society.

Sports

Legislative Agenda

Revisiting the establishment of a sports fund by assessing and executing the legislative changes needed to make it a reality.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport is committed to revisiting the establishment of a dedicated Sports Fund to enhance the development and sustainability of sports programmes across Sint Maarten.

This initiative will include a comprehensive assessment of the legislative framework, identifying necessary amendments to facilitate the Fund's creation and long-term viability. Through this initiative, the Ministry aims to ensure a structured and transparent funding mechanism that supports infrastructure development, athlete training, community-based sports initiatives, and national representation in regional and international competitions.

This effort aligns with the ministry's broader vision to elevate sports as a key driver of youth development, social cohesion, and national pride.

Policy Agenda

- Establishment and publication of an e-sports policy to regulate St. Maarten's vision on the development of an e-sports industry, including the mandating of an official e-sports federation.
- Establishment and publication of the National Safeguarding in Sports Policy to provide rules, guidelines, and regulations for federations, associations, athletes, coaches, and parents where it pertains to safeguarding participation in sports in St. Maarten.

- Establishment and publication of the Sport Subsidy Requirements Policy for sports persons/organisations who wish to apply for an incidental subsidy to support their sports-related activities or events. The Sport Subsidy Requirements Policy outlines, on a step-by-step basis, the process in which a subsidy can be obtained.

Project Agenda

The Department of Sports, in collaboration with the Department of Culture, the Department of Youth, and the Ministry of Finance, will assess the feasibility of securing CAPEX funding for the acquisition of land and the development of a state-of-the-art indoor facility. This facility will host a variety of sporting, cultural, and youth events, providing a central hub for community engagement and youth development.

In connection with the National Sports Institute (NSI), the Sint Maarten Trust Fund, and the NRPB, DoS will continue to monitor and guide the reconstruction and revitalisation of existing sports facilities, including the projects under the Emergency Response Programme (ERP-1) and the Fostering Resilient Learning Programme (FRLP):

- Installation of lights at the Raoul Illidge Sports Complex
- Installation of new flooring at the L.B. Scot Sports Auditorium

Division Critical Activities

Division for Educational Innovation (DEI)

The Division for Educational Innovation (DEI), in collaboration with the Department of Education, will lead the development and implementation of a National Artificial Intelligence in Education Policy. This initiative will involve comprehensive stakeholder consultations and assessments to evaluate readiness, ensuring a strategic and responsible integration of AI into Sint Maarten's education system. By leveraging AI-driven tools and methodologies, the ministry aims to enhance teaching and learning experiences, improve educational outcomes, and equip students with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Additionally, DEI will continue to serve as the primary liaison for the Sint Maarten Trust Fund-related projects that align with the Ministry's educational development goals. These projects include:

- Reconstruction of Sister Marie Laurence School
- Reconstruction of Charles Leopold Bell
- Reconstruction of the St. Maarten Library
- Learning Assessment
- Inclusive Education Learning Project
- Educational Care Center Project
- Ministry Management information system
- Emergency Repairs Programme school gyms, sports facilities & community courts. (ERP-1)

By coordinating these initiatives, DEI will play a critical role in advancing educational infrastructure, fostering inclusive learning environments, and ensuring that schools are equipped to meet the evolving needs of students and educators in Sint Maarten.

Division Study Financing (DSF)

The Division of Study Financing (DSF), in collaboration with the Department of Education and the Division of Education Innovation, will strengthen and expand opportunities for Sint Maarten students pursuing tertiary education abroad.

As part of this effort, DSF will establish new Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with at least five tertiary institutions in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean region. These partnerships will not only increase the availability of scholarships and financial aid options but also improve access to diverse academic programs aligned with Sint Maarten's evolving labour market needs. What about USM?

By broadening international academic pathways, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport reaffirms its commitment to educational excellence, workforce development, and the empowerment of the next generation of leaders and professionals.

Division Public Education (DPE)

The transformation of the Division of Public Education is a key priority for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport, reflecting our commitment to elevating the quality and effectiveness of public education in Sint Maarten. This long-running initiative has been reactivated to drive comprehensive change management efforts that will modernise teaching and learning methodologies, enhance institutional efficiency, and strengthen student outcomes.

Through targeted interventions, including curriculum enhancements, professional development for educators, and the integration of innovative learning strategies, this transformation will foster a more dynamic, inclusive, and resilient educational environment.

By equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and support necessary to excel in secondary education and beyond, the Ministry is laying the foundation for lifelong learning and national development.

Division Inspection (INSP-ECYS)

The primary focus of the Division of Inspection will be to improve the staffing realities of its truancy department.

The Ministry Inspection will conduct a comprehensive quality assessment of all schools during the 2025/2026 school year. This initiative aims to evaluate educational standards, teaching effectiveness, infrastructure, and overall school performance. The findings will be compiled into detailed reports for school boards, providing insights to drive improvements, ensure compliance with national education policies and laws, and enhance student outcomes.

The program reinforces accountability and continuous improvement, ensuring that schools meet the required quality benchmarks for effective learning environments.

Division of Examinations (EXAM)

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport is committed to strengthening the capacity and efficiency of the Division of Examinations through its planned relocation to a more suitable facility. This move will enable the division to significantly enhance its operations and service delivery. A larger, well-equipped space will allow for an increase in the number of candidates sitting examinations, thereby generating additional revenue to support educational initiatives.

Additionally, the new location will provide improved security measures for the storage and handling of examination materials, ensuring the integrity of the testing process. With expanded facilities, the Division will also have the flexibility to broaden its examination offerings, creating greater opportunities for students and professionals seeking certification and academic advancement.

This initiative aligns with the Ministry's broader efforts to modernise education infrastructure, enhance institutional agility, and improve access to quality assessment services in Sint Maarten.

Student Support Services Division (SSSD)

Our goal is to solidify the role of the Student Support Services Division (SSSD) within the educational framework, ensuring its integration into national education laws. This will empower the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport to effectively oversee and enhance student care services in schools.

Strengthening the division's structure will allow for the expansion of human resource capacity, reinforcing its ability to provide comprehensive student support. With a more robust framework, SSSD will be better equipped to monitor, coordinate, and implement critical initiatives, including school safety programmes, crisis management responses, and tailored interventions that foster student well-being and academic success.

This strategic enhancement aligns with the ministry's broader commitment to institutional agility, education reform, and holistic youth development, ensuring that every child receives the support they need to thrive.



Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for overseeing and managing law enforcement, criminal justice and the legal system. Major and critical entities within the Justice chain fall under the responsibility of the ministry and the Minister, including KPSM, Immigration & Border Protection, Court of Guardianship, the House of Detention and more. Sint Maarten's justice system faces challenges, including resource limitations, capacity constraints, and the need to meet local and international obligations, including fundamental human rights obligations. Ensuring compliance with these obligations is essential to strengthening the justice system and maintaining international credibility. Addressing these challenges requires a structured, results-driven approach. The Ministry is committed to reinforcing law enforcement, implementing meaningful reforms, and collaborating with regional, international, Kingdom, and local partners to uphold justice and security.

Vision

To uphold the rule of law, ensure public safety, and safeguard fundamental rights by fostering a transparent, accountable, and effective justice system in Sint Maarten.

Mission

The Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with relevant ministries and departments, will focus on strengthening the rule of law, improving detention conditions, modernizing legislation, and enhancing safety, security and law enforcement. The justice system must be built on a solid foundation that ensures stability, transparency, and efficiency. Law enforcement efforts will be refocused to emphasize strict enforcement of existing laws, ensuring accountability, and fostering public confidence in the justice system. There must be renewed emphasis on ensuring that the rule of law is respected, and violations are met with appropriate consequences.

Policy Agenda

Improving Cooperation with the Collectivite of Saint Martin

Collaboration with counterparts on French Saint Martin remains a priority to effectively combat cross-border crime, enhance judicial cooperation, and align enforcement strategies. Strengthening joint intelligence-sharing and coordinated law enforcement efforts will ensure a more secure and cohesive justice framework for the entire island.

Through a combination of legal, policy, and operational strategies, the Ministry seeks to increase effectiveness, enhance inter-agency coordination, and modernize crime prevention initiatives. This program provides a structured framework for necessary reforms, ensuring a fair and secure Sint Maarten. A whole-of-government approach is required to achieve these objectives, demanding collaboration across ministries, public institutions, and community stakeholders.

Shared Responsibility for Safety & Justice

Supporting the Violence Prevention Program, the National Child Protection Platform & the Positive Parenting Support Program

A secure and just society is essential for economic growth, resident and visitor well-being, and national development. High crime rates, youth delinquency, and social instability directly impact the daily lives of residents, making neighbourhoods unsafe, diminishing overall quality of life, and discouraging investment. Public safety is a governmental responsibility, requiring a well-resourced, transparent, accountable, and effective justice system that ensures oversight, efficiency, and adherence to legal and ethical standards while delivering measurable results in crime reduction, judicial efficiency, and improved quality of life for all residents.

A strong justice system not only protects individuals and communities but also supports economic growth and national development. Crime, instability, and weak enforcement mechanisms undermine the well-being of residents, disrupt businesses, and discourage investment. Ensuring a secure and orderly society fosters trust in government institutions and allows residents to thrive.

Beyond law enforcement and public safety, the Ministry must ensure that the justice system functions effectively and fairly. This involves strengthening legislation, modernizing policing strategies, enhancing enforcement, improving prison and detention conditions, and investing in crime prevention and rehabilitation programs. However, justice cannot be achieved through law enforcement alone. A collaborative Country-wide approach involving other ministries, community organizations, and businesses is essential to address the root causes of crime, reduce repeat offenses, and promote social stability.

The Violence Prevention Program, the National Child Protection Platform, and the Positive Parenting Support Program are key initiatives of the Ministries of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport (ECYS) and Public Health, Labor & Social Affairs (VSA) and are integrated into the broader governance strategy as part of inter-ministerial collaboration, as a demonstration of inter-ministerial collaboration. These initiatives, developed in partnership with the Ministries of ECYS and VSA, underscore the government's commitment to a proactive and preventive approach to social stability. By providing support to at-risk youth and families, these programs aim to reduce delinquency, protect vulnerable children, and strengthen communities. Addressing the social determinants of crime in coordination with other ministries ensures a holistic and sustainable impact.

By striking a balance between prevention, enforcement, and rehabilitation, Sint Maarten can build a justice system that not only upholds the rule of law but also protects its (socio-)economic future. A well-functioning legal system fosters public trust and enhances the island's appeal to residents, visitors, and investors. The goal is a society where all people – whether they live, work, or visit Sint Maarten – feel safe, supported, and protected.

At the same time, Sint Maarten's economy, particularly its tourism sector, benefits from a strong justice system that upholds safety standards and ensures stability. While visitors expect a secure environment, maintaining public safety benefits all by contributing to a resilient and prosperous society.

Addressing these challenges requires cooperation across government ministries, with the Ministry of Justice playing a leading—though not exclusive—role. Law enforcement agencies, social service organizations, businesses, and civil society must work together to prevent crime, promote rehabilitation, and ensure fair and accessible justice for all.

Building a Fairer and More Effective Justice System

A strong justice system is fundamental to ensuring fairness, security, and economic stability. Well-functioning courts and law enforcement agencies enable legal processes to operate efficiently, minimizing case backlogs and fostering public confidence in governance. By ensuring accessibility, efficiency, and effectiveness the justice system strengthens trust among individuals and businesses, enabling disputes to be resolved swiftly and fairly.

This governing program prioritizes legislative improvements, law enforcement modernization, customs and border security enhancements, and rehabilitation-focused policies. By making justice more accessible and efficient, individuals and businesses can resolve disputes fairly and swiftly. Strengthening crime prevention and rehabilitation programs also reduces recidivism, helping former offenders reintegrate into society as productive citizens.

Furthermore, Sint Maarten must meet its international obligations regarding justice, human rights, and financial crime prevention. Compliance with treaties and related global standards—such as those applied by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the United Nations, and Kingdom agreements—not only safeguard the country's reputation but also ensures continued access to global markets and financial systems. Strengthening legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms is crucial in preventing financial crimes, mitigating risks of sanctions, and maintaining Sint Maarten's credibility in the international community.

By fostering a justice system that is fair, efficient, and aligned with international standards, Sint Maarten will strengthen public trust, ensure social stability, and create an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth.

Objectives & Key Actions:

Ensure the proactive execution of key aspects of the Plans of Approach by committing to their structured implementation, reinforcing institutional development, and guaranteeing full compliance with Kingdom agreements.

Strengthening the Ministry of Justice

A strong and well-functioning Ministry of Justice is essential to delivering effective law enforcement, rehabilitation, and legal services. This requires strategic planning, institutional strengthening, workforce development, and financial autonomy. Enhancing internal processes and ensuring well-trained personnel will improve justice administration, public trust, and operational efficiency.

Objectives & Key Actions:

- Finalize the Legal Positions of Justice Workers
 - o Phase 1 will be completed by issuing all national decrees for placements across the entire Ministry of Justice, ensuring that all justice workers are officially placed as of January 1, 2023.
 - o Following this, we will execute Phase 2, which involves calculating and disbursing retroactive salary payments for justice workers covering the period from October 10, 2010, to December 31, 2022.

- Strengthen all departments within the Ministry of Justice
 - o Strengthening strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation
 - o Assess competencies across the entire Ministry and implement targeted training programs to ensure an effective and professional workforce
 - o Establish clear KPIs for all departments within the Ministry of Justice to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.
 - o Adhere to proper HR-cycles

- Increase transparency and oversight within the Ministry by implementing clear accountability measures.

- Improve interconnectivity within the justice chain for seamless operations and intelligence-sharing
 - o Re-implement the software-suite provided by SBIR, ensuring full functionality and integration across all justice departments.
 - o Enhance system connectivity and data-sharing capabilities to enable real-time information exchange between law enforcement, judicial, and correctional institutions.
 - o Provide training and technical support to justice personnel to ensure effective utilization of the software.

Strengthening Law Enforcement & Crime Prevention

Crime negatively impacts economic growth by increasing operational costs for businesses, discouraging investment, and diminishing public confidence in safety. High crime rates raise security expenses, drive up insurance

premiums, and reduce business development, which ultimately slows economic progress and reduces overall quality of life.

A strong and well-resourced law enforcement system is key to ensuring public safety and national stability. This requires a combination of highly trained personnel, modern technology, and inter-agency cooperation to effectively combat crime and prevent financial offenses such as fraud and money laundering. A well-functioning system not only holds criminals accountable but also reinforces public trust in justice institutions.

To ensure Sint Maarten's law enforcement capabilities remain effective, efforts will focus on technological advancements, data-driven policing, and increased international collaboration. A proactive crime prevention approach will improve the effectiveness of police operations, facilitate early intervention, and strengthen partnerships with regional and global security agencies.

Objectives & Key Actions:

- Expand and enhance training programs for KPSM by continuing collaboration within the Kingdom and other international and regional partners.
- Reinforce strict traffic law enforcement by reintroducing a Zero-Tolerance Policy.
- Strengthen crime prevention against money laundering, human trafficking, gun violence, and financial fraud.
- Equip law enforcement with advanced forensic tools and data analytics.
- Develop specialized units for cybercrime and strengthen existing units for financial fraud, and human trafficking.

- Enhance inter-agency collaboration at national and international levels.
- Increase oversight and transparency in law enforcement agencies.

Modernization of Border Security, Customs, & Immigration

Good border control keeps a country safe while also helping the economy grow. A strong system stops illegal activities such as smuggling, human trafficking, and drug trade, which threaten security and public safety. At the same time, modernizing Customs procedures makes it easier for businesses to import and export goods, reducing delays, cutting costs, and increasing government revenue.

Given Sint Maarten's geographical position and open border with French Saint Martin, close cooperation with Dutch and French authorities is not just beneficial but essential. Through longstanding partnerships such as the Versterking Grenstoezicht (VGT) initiative with the Netherlands, Sint Maarten has enhanced border security, improved surveillance, and strengthened enforcement capabilities. These partnerships—enabled by the deployment of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (KMar), Dutch Customs, and the Caribbean Coast Guard—have played a vital role in reinforcing Sint Maarten's ability to detect and combat transnational crime.

To ensure continued progress, it is critical to expand and deepen these collaborations. Strengthening intelligence-sharing, joint enforcement operations, and cross-border security frameworks will further enhance national and regional stability. Continued cooperation with French Saint Martin is equally crucial in securing the island's external borders while ensuring an efficient and integrated approach to Customs, immigration, and law enforcement.

Maintaining and evolving these partnerships will allow Sint Maarten to keep pace with emerging threats, leverage technological advancements in border surveillance and trade monitoring, and ensure long-term security while fostering economic resilience.

Objectives & Key Actions:

- Improve the immigration enforcement process, tracking, and compliance to ensure that immigration laws are effectively applied.
- Execute structural repairs to the Foreigner Detention Centre to align with international detention standards.
- Enhance border security by continuing and expanding partnerships with the Netherlands, Saint Martin, and other regional stakeholders to improve surveillance, intelligence-sharing, and enforcement at ports of entry.
- Amend immigration laws to align labour migration with national economic needs.
- Implement ASYCUDA for automated customs processing and better trade monitoring.
- Secure a permanent headquarters for Customs enforcement.
- Expand maritime patrols and regional security cooperation by reinforcing collaborations with French law enforcement and the Sint Maarten Coast Guard.

Prison Reform & Reducing Recidivism

Sint Maarten's prison system faces chronic challenges, including overcrowding, high operational costs, and insufficient rehabilitation programs, contributing to high recidivism rates. A system focused solely on incarceration without rehabilitation fails to prepare inmates for reintegration, leading to reoffending, increased government expenditure, and persistent community safety risks.

A modernized, Sint Maarten-led approach to corrections must emphasize both accountability and rehabilitation. Expanding education, vocational training, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment within the prison system will empower inmates with the skills and resources needed to reintegrate into society. Addressing root causes of criminal behaviour – such as unemployment, substance abuse, and lack of social support—will lower recidivism rates and reduce the long-term burden on law enforcement and judicial institutions.

Additionally, ensuring stronger financial management within prison administration is crucial. The prison must have a greater degree of financial autonomy to make necessary investments in maintenance, infrastructure, and rehabilitation programs. Empowering prison management with clearer decision-making authority and financial accountability will strengthen its overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Furthermore, forensic care (e.g., TBS, PIJ, and related measures) remains a critical gap. Sint Maarten will engage in deeper collaboration within the Kingdom, particularly through the JVO, to implement structured forensic psychiatric care for offenders requiring specialized interventions.

Investing in a humane and effective prison system is not just about constructing new facilities – it is about implementing soft components such as structured rehabilitation programs, reintegration pathways, and proper staffing. While the prison reconstruction project is a priority, efforts to expand and strengthen rehabilitation programs in the existing prison facility must begin immediately in 2025.

Objectives & Key Actions:

- Complete the Reconstruction of the Point Blanche Prison
 - o Complete the prison reconstruction project, in collaboration with UNOPS, ensuring that the facility meets international human rights and detention standards while being designed to support rehabilitation-focused corrections.
 - o Ensure the integration of soft components in the new facility, including education, therapy spaces, and vocational training.

- Strengthening Prison Management and Staffing
 - o Provide leadership and management training to prison administrators to support accountability and effective decision-making.
 - o Finalize the function book and begin the process for the new function book for the new facility.

- Expanding Rehabilitation & Reintegration Programs
 - o Increase access to rehabilitation programs such as education, vocational training, drug treatment, and mental health care for inmates in 2025 with the assistance of UNODC.
 - o Cooperate with the Kingdom partners on creating a joint framework for forensic care.
 - o Strengthen work programs within the prison, ensuring inmates have job opportunities and skill-building before release.

- Strengthen parole and probation systems to reduce unnecessary incarceration
- Implement alternative sentencing such as community service and electronic monitoring.
- Encourage restorative justice approaches for offender reintegration and victim reconciliation.
- Facilitate employment programs for ex-offenders through partnerships with businesses.
- Explore housing solutions for female youth offenders to ensure appropriate care and rehabilitation pathways.

Youth & Social Justice: Foster Care & Delinquency Prevention

Investing in youth crime prevention is essential to breaking cycles of delinquency and fostering long-term social stability. When at-risk youth receive guidance, education, and support before they get involved in serious crime, they have a much better chance of staying out of the justice system as adults. Investing in early intervention - such as mentorship programs, community support, and alternative sentencing - reduces repeat offenses and lowers the long-term costs of policing, courts, and prisons.

A robust foster care system is also crucial for protecting vulnerable children. When children grow up in safe, stable environments with proper care and guidance, they are less likely to end up in trouble with the law. Ensuring that foster children receive education, emotional support, and life skills helps them become independent, contributing members of society. By focusing on prevention and protection, we create a safer, more stable future for young people and communities.

By prioritizing prevention, rehabilitation, and structured interventions, Sint Maarten can build a safer, more stable future for young people and communities.

Objectives & Key Actions:

- Update foster care regulations to improve oversight and ensure safe placements.
- Expand youth delinquency programs, including HALT (Het Alternatief), to offer early intervention options.
- Develop structured support programs for youth offenders who require rehabilitation and reintegration assistance.
- Develop alternative interventions for youth offenders who require structured support.

Financial Crime Prevention & Compliance

Financial crimes—such as money laundering, fraud, and tax evasion—pose significant threats to Sint Maarten’s economic stability and global reputation. When illicit financial activities go unchecked, they discourage legitimate businesses, weaken investor confidence, and reduce government revenues, ultimately harming the broader economy.

Beyond local consequences, financial crime also exposes Sint Maarten to international sanctions and restrictions. Global organizations such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and international banking institutions closely monitor compliance with anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorism financing (CTF) regulations. If Sint Maarten fails to meet these standards, it could face blacklisting or banking restrictions, making it harder for businesses and individuals to access global markets and financial services. This would hurt trade, tourism, and overall economic growth.

To prevent this, Sint Maarten must strengthen its compliance systems by enforcing stricter financial regulations, improving monitoring mechanisms, and increasing cooperation with international agencies. By doing so, the country can protect its financial sector, maintain credibility on the global stage, and ensure continued access to international banking and investment opportunities. A strong financial system not only prevents crime but also fosters long-term economic growth and stability.

Objectives & Key Actions:

- Ensure compliance with FATF recommendations and TIP report obligations to align with international standards.
- Enhance financial crime monitoring through advanced data analysis and risk detection.
- Improve inter-agency collaboration for better intelligence-sharing and enforcement.
- Encourage financial crime reporting from businesses and individuals.
- Improve the investigative capacity of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).

Legislative Agenda

The following legislative priorities will be pursued during the 2025-2028 period:

1. Camera Surveillance Legislation (Landsverordening Cameratoezicht) – Establishing clear guidelines for the use of surveillance technology to enhance public safety while ensuring privacy protection.
2. Penal Procedure Code (Wetboek van Strafvordering) – Updating the criminal procedural law to align with modern legal standards and improve the efficiency of investigations and trials.
3. Deurwaarderslandsverordening – Implementing regulations governing bailiffs to improve enforcement of legal judgments.
4. Advocatenlandsverordening – Amending legal provisions related to the regulation and professional conduct of attorneys.
5. Policy and Legislation Regarding Human Trafficking (Animeermeisjes) – Strengthening measures to combat human trafficking and protect victims, particularly in the entertainment sector.
6. Amendment of the Legesverordening – Adjusting fees for government services to ensure sustainable revenue generation for justice operations.
7. Revising the Guidelines of the Minister of Justice – Updating policies related to the LTU and Toelatingsbesluit for improved immigration governance.
8. Modernizing Prison Legislation (Landsverordening Beginselen Gevangeniswezen) – Ensuring that prison laws reflect international human rights standards and support rehabilitation efforts.
9. Crime Fund Ordinance – Amend the Crime Fund Ordinance to improve the functioning, allocation, and strategic use of resources for crime prevention and law enforcement.

Investing in a Just and Secure Future

The Ministry of Justice is committed to strengthening Sint Maarten's justice system to ensure fairness, security, and long-term stability. By modernizing legislation, enhancing crime prevention strategies, and expanding rehabilitation programs, the government aims to create a safer and more resilient society for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

For years, budgetary constraints have limited resources for law enforcement, detention facilities, border security, and rehabilitation programs. While these challenges have required difficult financial decisions, they have also underscored the urgent need for strategic investment in the justice sector. Public safety is a cornerstone of economic and social development and failing to invest in justice infrastructure can have far-reaching consequences.

Key priorities include strengthening border security to combat illicit activities, modernizing the judiciary to improve legal efficiency, and expanding reintegration programs to support former offenders. These are not just justice-sector initiatives – they are critical economic policies that reinforce investor confidence, protect businesses, and sustain economic growth.

Additionally, cross-ministerial collaboration is crucial to achieving long-term justice sector improvements. Strengthening cohesion between law enforcement, rehabilitation services, youth programs, and economic initiatives will ensure that preventative and corrective measures are aligned.

By balancing law enforcement, crime prevention, and rehabilitation, Sint Maarten can build a justice system that is fair, efficient, and aligned with international standards. This commitment will strengthen the rule of law, enhance public trust, and ensure a prosperous future for all.



Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial
Planning, Environment
& Infrastructure

The Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment & Infrastructure

The Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure in St. Maarten holds a crucial role in overseeing and managing matters related to public housing, spatial planning, environmental protection, and infrastructure development. The Ministry is intrinsically tied to the development of Sint Maarten. The beginning of this governing mandate coincides with increasing frustration over unsustainable development, unscrupulous and short-sighted governance, and overall environmental and urban degradation. This mandate must address these ills with interventions that support sustainable development and good governance. Within the Ministry, an increased focus will be given to creating frameworks to support these interventions and rebuild trust.

Vision

The Ministry's Vision is to realize an optimal living, working and recreational environment for the Country of Sint Maarten through efficient services for the benefit of the community, the citizenry and the government of Sint Maarten.

Mission

The mission is to ensure an integral design and management of public space by establishing and implementing policy and legislation as well as managing and guaranteeing an optimal living, working and recreational environment for the residents of Sint Maarten.

Overall Organizational interventions:

- Review of Ministerial Objectives, Function Book and Salaries with aim to empower and increase efficiency.
- Reestablish and reinforce the role of the Secretary-General in the Ministry
- Establish clear lines of engagement and regular reporting within the Ministry

Department VROM

The department is the backbone of the Ministry. In its role, it creates the policies and legislation that guides the work of the Ministry's execution services (uitvoering diensten). In 2022, the Ministry established the Spatial Planning Strategy. The policy envisions our national spatial planning until 2030 and provides guidelines on how to carry out this vision. It aims for sustainable spatial development, meaning that spatial development should meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations to meet their own needs. Critical to this development is the optimal use of land, which is supported by the draft zoning plans. The expansion of green spaces and the introduction of national parks is a critical component of zoning that, in some instances, will also address congestion, which itself has far reaching effects on our economy and overall quality of life. The Ministry will also investigate the feasibility of establishing an Environment & Nature Protection Authority to support these larger objectives.

To realize the Spatial Planning Strategy, the department will focus on executing an aggressive policy and legislative agenda that will support the implementation of this strategy. Critical in the success of this agenda is the recognition of the wider impact of such a strategy, and will consider the historical, economic, and social context. The Spatial Planning Strategy, therefore, must be based on cross-sectoral input, in line with the National Development Vision.

Legislative Agenda

During this mandate, the department will support the creation (amendment) of legislation necessary to enhance waste management. Amending the Waste Ordinance is a critical part in realizing waste reforms, including the introduction of a tipping fee. The introduction of this tipping fee will ensure a comprehensive intervention towards waste diversion and improved landfill management. This will be complemented with the establishment of an independent Waste Authority. The establishment of this Authority will be executed via National Ordinance, and will be mandated to manage all aspects of waste on behalf of the Government. In support of good governance and the execution of the law, the department will support the implementation of the National Ordinance on Administrative Enforcement (Landsverordening Bestuurlijke Handhaving). To this end, the Ministry must ensure completion of the National Decree (Landsbesluit) and ensure inclusion of the following:

- The Ministry must designate clear competent administrative bodies within VROMI for enforcement,
- The National Decree must specify which national regulations and ordinances need to be aligned with the National Ordinance
- There must be a defined sanction strategy.

Introducing the draft zoning law to Parliament is a critical piece of legislation to fulfil the Ministry's mandate for proper spatial planning and cohesive development, in support of sound economic development (TEATT) and a good quality of life (VSA).

Environmental Impact Fund

While building will remain part of our continued development, mechanisms must be put in place to complement and reinforce policies that support environmental protection. One such proposal is the establishment of the environmental impact fund. In principle, persons interested in certain developments will contribute to a fund, based on criteria established by various stakeholders from both the private and public sector. The fund will be independently managed by Sint Maarten Development Fund. While discussions are ongoing as to the legal basis and terms of engagement, VROMI, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, will continue to explore options for long-term capitalization of the fund. Finally, the department plans to update the National Ordinance VROMI, ensuring the organization operates efficiently.

Policy Agenda

The department's policy agenda aims to address some of the most long-standing and pressing issues. Identified interventions cover a wide range of areas and are being executed in house and in some instances with the support of external entities and mutually agreed tools. The policy agenda will support the legislative agenda, where necessary, and where better suited because of implementation, policy alone will be the point of departure for regulation.

Support to Environmental Education and the Nature Foundation

The Ministry has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Nature Foundation. The Nature Foundation aims to preserve and enhance the natural environment of St. Maarten in the present moment and for generations to come through a variety of education, preservation, and research initiatives. The Ministry recognizing the invaluable role played by the foundation, will empower it to execute its and enforce its mandate on behalf of the Government. To this end, the Ministry will also seek to increase the subsidy offered for continued service and advice. This will be done in collaboration with the Ministry of TEATT, noting the importance of our natural environment to our tourism sector. This will be brought forth in a budget amendment. In addition, the Ministry will partner with the Ministry of ECYS to enhance environmental awareness and education both in and out of the classroom, collaborating with the private sector when and where necessary.

Within the Ministry initiatives to build resilience through energy security will be pursued, in collaboration with the Ministry of TEATT. This will include support in the updating of the energy policy and overall support across the Ministries as it relates to the realization, promotion, and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Country Packages

The Country Packages (Landspakketen) is one such tool. It sets out a list of reforms and investments aimed at enhancing the country's economic and social resilience. The Ministry of VROMI, through the country packages, under Theme E: Economic Reforms, and specifically subsection E7, is tasked with developing and implementing a land policy and a spatial plan policy.

Government remains committed to these initiatives. The spatial plan policy outlines the most optimal way to use our land. The introduction of a land policy will ensure transparency and fair and equal opportunity to domain land, as required by the DIDAM verdict. The land issuance policy will work hand in hand with the zoning law and the spatial plan policy. Moreover, the introduction of zoning laws will equip the existing hillside policy with the necessary legal basis for enforcement and inform the policies on drainage and sewerage.

Housing

Housing remains a lingering issue for many in our country. Despite some efforts, interventions have not structurally addressed the complexities of housing. The situation is twofold. The first is the state of social housing, managed through the St. Maarten Housing Foundation, and the second is availability of affordable housing. During this mandate, a stronger focus will be given to affordable housing. The reason for this is because of the increasingly polarized housing market. Giving focus to affordable housing has two benefits; it creates opportunities for the reinforcement of the middle class and supports social mobility, facilitating 'flow' (doorstroming) from social to affordable housing. This 'flow' is particularly important to ensure that sufficient social housing is available for those most in need and that the terms of use for such housing can be respected and enforced.

Partnerships with the private sector for the construction, wherein the expertise and capital often lie, will be explored. The provision of affordable housing units through the St. Maarten Housing Foundation (SMHF) will also

be explored to diversify their portfolio and ensure financial sustainability of the organization, through rental, rent-to-own, and outright purchase options. A significant step towards this sustainability is the finalization of a revised management agreement. This agreement will strengthen the relationship with mutually agreed terms of engagement. The Ministry will also be looking at strengthening the rent committee through, among other avenues, legislative review. This will enhance the options available for dispute resolution and bring regulatory mandates more in line with market realities.

As the Ministry works to bring forth a new housing policy, including conditions that support energy and cost efficiency, enhancing the relationship with the SMHF is paramount in ensuring alignment. Moreover, a clear housing policy, complemented by sound rules of engagement supports the creation of housing initiatives and institutions in the private and semi-public sector.

An often-overlooked element of housing is inclusivity. Housing must also consider those with physical limitations and the Ministry will, where possible, take these factors into account. From a standpoint of social reintegration and support to the most vulnerable in our community, the Ministry will also investigate the possibility of establishing a shelter or halfway house and will do this in close collaboration with the Ministry of VSA.

Finally, the Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, will finalize the establishment of the Mortgage Guarantee Fund to support first-time homebuyers, thereby making home ownership more accessible

A revamped Hillside Policy to include landslide prevention. Drainage and Sewerage Policies will be addressed, and a new Enforcement Policy is being developed. Finally, Spatial Planning is a key element of the agenda, ensuring Sint Maarten's sustainable development.

Dienst Infrastructure

Infrastructure Services manages and maintains existing infrastructure such as roads, public spaces, drainage systems, and utility networks. Its role includes ensuring long-term functionality, conducting repairs, and improving urban infrastructure resilience.

The next four years will be marked by increased collaboration with the National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB) and the World Bank in the realization of trust fund projects related to solid waste and wastewater reforms. Interventions to address the landfill through the Emergency Debris Management Project (EDMP) and efforts to promote waste diversion, recycling, and composting will be strongly supported. Next to this, Infrastructure Services will work closely with all stakeholders to finalize the establishment of an independent waste authority, its interim structure, and the auxiliary financial and legal framework to enhance proper waste management.

On a more operational level, Infrastructure Services aims to conduct a comprehensive review of roads, drainage, and waterways to establish a strategic approach for road repair, maintenance, and development. Longstanding issues around drainage and erosion will be addressed through interventions in line with the zoning law and the hillside policy. During this mandate, the Government will explore ways to enhance overall management and improve maintenance. The implementation of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for road maintenance is one of the identified interventions to ensure a higher quality of network infrastructure. Critical to this is the implementation of the Road Fund, as established in the National Ordinance for the Levying of Taxes on Motor Vehicles (Article 24A). This will ensure adequate funding and improved quality and will be executed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. The introduction of a regulatory framework for the use of public space for advertising and ad-hoc vending and storage will assist in maintaining order and preserve an orderly aesthetic throughout the country.

Finally, in support of the development of vocational skills, the Ministry has launched a pilot project to channel students from the National Institute of Professional Advancement (NIPA) into the VROMI Yard Division. While the Ministry works towards an organizational review, the introduction of these much-needed skills offers opportunity for hands-on learning, knowledge exchange, and execution. This program will continue in close collaboration with the Ministry of ECYS to ensure continuation of the Ministry's mandate and in support of the construction sector.

Dienst Domain Affairs

Domain Services oversees the management and use of Government-owned land. To that end, Domain Affairs ensures compliance with land-use regulations and supports urban planning initiatives.

The lack of a clear land issuance policy has led to unfair and non-strategic distribution of land. Combined with the lack of a comprehensive, modern database management system, the Government's ability to enhance spatial and strategic planning is limited. Over the next four years, Domain Affairs intends to assess and improve the management of all long leases, working in line with the new land lease policy and related regulations currently under preparation. This ensures a proactive and transparent approach to addressing the DIDAM verdict. This will be supported by the spatial policy plan that mitigates environmental concerns and prevents overdevelopment. In addition, critical investments will be made in technology, particularly CRM software, to maintain a comprehensive and transparent overview of government land assets and associated finances.

Dienst Permits

Permits Services handles the issuance and regulation of permits related to construction, zoning, environmental impact, and public infrastructure projects. It ensures legal compliance for development initiatives and supports responsible sustainable development.

Over the next four years, Dienst Permits will focus on resolving the current backlog. A source of frustration across all socio-economic lines, delays in processing permits have considerable impact on planning and financing. Such impacts are detrimental to our position as a regional economic and logistics hub and will be addressed through key interventions to not only increase staff but enhance staff efficiency and skillsets. This will include streamlining internal processes and investing in new technology. The implementation of Microsoft Dynamics or similar software will be explored to automate and expedite the permit application process, ensuring a more responsive and transparent system.

Dienst New Works

New Works Services is responsible for the planning and execution of new infrastructure projects, including road construction, drainage systems, and public works. This department ensures projects align with urban development goals and sustainability standards.

Dienst New Works aims to continue the execution of European Development Fund (EDF) and Trust Fund-related projects while establishing new partnerships to address infrastructure challenges with a focus on technological advancements and environmental considerations. During this

mandate, focus will be given to increasing the road network, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Part of this initiative includes policy changes to increase efficient use of roads and existing infrastructure. This will aim to enhance traffic flow, support economic development and improve overall quality of life; in close collaboration with the Ministries of TEATT and Justice. New Works will also focus on the introduction of new drainage, in support of Infrastructure's enhancement of existing systems. While increasing the road network is important, adequate drainage to support new network interventions and urban development is critical for flood and erosion mitigation and building resilience. Upgrading the sewerage network through the 11th EDF and the Sint Maarten Wastewater Project (SWWMP), in collaboration with the NRBP and the World Bank, is a critical component to infrastructure resilience and ensuring a clean and healthy environment.

Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs) with local, Kingdom, and international stakeholders in pursuit of these goals is paramount, the establishment and reinforcing of these partnership lines offer a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and financing and embodies the principles of corporate social responsibility, collaboration, and community building.

The Ministry is committed to issuing the tender for the construction of a new Parliament building as well as projects that enhance parking and support facilities for the Government. All projects will be executed with strong considerations for green spaces and efficient use of land and space.

Finally, the introduction of financial frameworks for sustaining such interventions, including the Road Fund and the Environmental Impact Fund will ensure continuity and resilience and help to depoliticize future interventions.

Dienst Inspection

Inspection Services is responsible for the reviewing of interventions into the built and natural environment and enforcement of laws in all areas concerning spatial planning and development, such as control of domain lands, building, (public) properties, environment and work safety to maintain an environmentally safe, structured and safe living and work environment for the public.

During this mandate, Inspection will strengthen its enforcement capacity by recruiting and training additional staff, ensuring effective oversight and compliance. In addition, the introduction of the National Ordinance on Administrative Enforcement will support Inspection Service's in the execution of its mandate. This is critical in the maintenance of our laws and good public order. A structured fine system will be implemented to combat and deter violations and improve adherence to regulations. Additionally, it prioritizes better coordination among ministries to streamline compliance and accountability efforts. To support its operational efficiency, the department plans to replenish its fleet of vehicles, ensuring inspectors have the necessary resources to conduct fieldwork effectively.