

# Building a Strong, Unified, and Multi-Pillar Nation

*A Place where EVERY DREAM CAN BE ACHIEVED*

## St. Maarten Governing Program 2020 – 2024

## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	4
<b>1.1. Economic Trend and Development</b>	7
<b>1.2. Challenges, Risks &amp; Policy Issues</b>	7
<b>2. VISION</b>	8
<b>3. THE APPROACH AND STRUCTURE</b>	9
<b>4. DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORTS AND CULTURE</b>	9
<b>4.1. Education</b>	10
<b>4.2. Culture</b>	10
<b>4.3. Youth</b>	11
<b>4.4. Sports</b>	11
<b>5. IMPROVE HEALTH, COMMUNITY &amp; SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR</b>	12
<b>5.1. Health System</b>	12
<b>5.2. Comprehensive Social Care</b>	14
<b>5.3. Labor</b>	15
<b>6. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESILIENCE</b>	16
b. Promote and stimulate Economic Diversification and Investment	16
<b>6.1. Product Development and Tourism Revitalization</b>	16
<b>6.2. Economic Diversification and Investment</b>	17
<b>6.3. An efficient and enabling environment for the businesses</b>	18
4. Stimulate local agribusinesses as a complement to the tourism sector	18
5. Entrepreneurship & Innovation Policy	18
Trade & Export Strategy	19
<b>7. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINACIAL SECTOR</b>	20
<b>8. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT</b>	22
<b>8.1. Public Roads, Sewage network &amp; water draining</b>	22
<b>8.2. Telecommunication Network, Enabling Framework &amp; Infrastructure</b>	23
To develop the information and telecommunication sector assure the complete vision and execution plan for the rollout of Internet by the Bureau Telecommunication & Post is implemented.	23
<b>8.3. Building an Advance Information &amp; Communication Technology Arena</b>	23
<b>8.4. Sustainable living – Alternative Energy</b>	24
<b>9. NATIONAL SECURITY &amp; GOOD GOVERNANCE</b>	24
<b>9.1. Environment and reduced Climate Change</b>	24

Environment.....	25
<b>9.2. Reduce Impacts of Climate Change .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>9.3. Strengthen Food and Nutrition Security .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>9.4. National Security Measures .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>9.5. Good Governance.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>10. PROJECTED OUTCOMES GOVERNING PROGRAM 2020 – 2024 .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>11. The St. Maarten Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Trust Fund.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>ANNEX 1: SECTOR- EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH, AND SPORT.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ANNEX 2: SECTOR- HEALTH, COMMUNITY &amp; SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>ANNEX 3: SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESILIENCE .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>ANNEX 4: DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINANCIAL SECTOR .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>ANNEX 5: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>ANNEX 6: NATIONAL SECURITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE .....</b>	<b>48</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

At a glance, it can be noted that in the past 10 years all Governing Programs tell a story by their titles and contents that reflect a cohesive approach as to where they wanted to take St. Maarten from the historic date of becoming a constituent state within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

This Government Coalition however sees it as their responsibility to shift the balance of existing institutions and structures away from the idea that goods and wealth are the most important things in life and, provide instead real opportunities for people to pursue the quality of life, based on fundamental goals of family, friendship and community. To that end, its focus is to find a realistic balance between people-centered and country-driven strategic interventions in their 4-year Governing program, supported by a range of broad policy recommendations geared towards, the **transition to a sustainable economy** that empowers the people of St. Maarten to realize their strengths and abilities to change their circumstances and positively influence the development of their communities.

This program comes at a defining moment in not just our country's history, but in a time when preventative measures being taken by Governments worldwide to curb the Corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic, have paralyzed the world's economy and simultaneously affected the prosperity of mankind in general. Nevertheless, we are confident that, in viewing the history of St. Maarten, its people after experiencing various catastrophes, have the will, resilience, and determination to recoup and build back a strong, unified and healthy nation that embraces "fairness, freedom, respect for the rule of law and equality".

The immediate task facing the Government will be to implement COVID-19 recovery interventions to ensure no further spread of this virus as well as ensuring a healthy St. Maarten moving forward. The Government sees adequate measures to absorb the economic and social impact of this new shock and to achieve rapid recovery of the economy. Businesses that are severely affected will need financial assistance and for those who risk losing their jobs, the creation of a social safety net is essential. A Relief and Economic Stimulus Plan (SSRP) was put together by the Government of St. Maarten, in which the request for support totals ANG. 254 Million for the first three months.

In the short-, to medium-term, the focus of this Coalition Government is sustainability, resilience, and prosperity by exercising adequate control over the government's policy and projects, as well as cooperating in the realization of new legislation and amending existing ordinances to the benefit of all citizens. This Government will also provide good governance through effective representation, greater transparency, and improved accountability and establish stronger fiscal discipline.

Long-term visions are usually established within a national development vision of a country. St Maarten's economy and general national development are based on several sectors. Most of these sectors generate wealth but they also compete for resources to be able to do so. The role of the Government is to realistically provide the capabilities for its citizens to flourish – *within the limited available resources, including financial, human, and ecological limits.*

The GOVERNING PROGRAM 2020 – 2024 in recognizing the aforementioned will focus on strengthening the foundations safeguarding the resilience, well-being, and prosperity for all, which is a strong economy including the diversification of the tourism sector and the exploration of the potential of other sectors to

drive economic growth, to create opportunities and improve quality of life for all at all levels, good governance, sustainable development planning, and social cohesion.

To achieve any of these objectives, one major and over-arching issue must be resolved, namely the full decolonization of Sint Maarten under international law. To some, this issue might appear to be a minor and strictly legal detail in the bigger scheme of things. However, the fact that Sint Maarten has not been granted a full measure of self-government based on absolute equality with the Netherlands under the UN Charter and relevant resolutions, has been by far the most important reason for the island not developing to its full potential since the inception of the UN and Kingdom Charters.

Based on knowledge and insights gathered from extensive legal and other research during the past three years, the coalition in Parliament of Sint Maarten, with the support of members of the opposition, has started the process of having the decolonization process of Sint Maarten finalized. The intention is to have a Round Table Conference between all the legitimate Governments within the Kingdom by July 2021 during which they will sign off on the commitment to bring the Kingdom Charter and all other laws within the Kingdom in compliance with international law, and article 73 a through d of the Un Charter in particular.

This compliance should include but is not limited to: eliminating all forms of unlawful and undue interference of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands with the decision-making process of the Government of Sint Maarten, and ensuring that the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands treats the interests of the people of Sint Maarten as paramount at all times.

Only then will the duly elected and appointed representatives of the people of Sint Maarten be able to work in the best interests of the people whom they represent and ensure the prosperous and sustainable development of the island nation in fulfillment of all objectives of the UN.

Finalizing the decolonization process will be reflected in many policy areas, as it will mean that Sint Maarten's culture and other local circumstances will be taken into account when setting and changing policies. This will require a paradigm shift in thinking, moving away from a Euro-centric dependency model to a self-reliant, regionally and global oriented Governing model and approach.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

Intrinsic to this Government Program, is the determination to reestablish St. Maarten as a globally competitive island propelled by the resourcefulness and commitment of its productive and resilient people. All effort will be exercised to maximize the existing developmental strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and threats.

The SWOT<sup>1</sup> analysis below presents the current strengths and weaknesses of St. Maarten and the opportunities and threats.

SWOT Analysis EDP	
Strengths	Weaknesses

<sup>1</sup> Source EDP of the Ministry of TEATT (a revamped version)

## Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong private sector</li> <li>• <i>Popular tourist destination</i></li> <li>• Island is strategically located, making it an ideal hub for regional/International travel</li> <li>• St. Maarten has duty-free status, a good enabler for investors</li> <li>• Good air and seaport infrastructure (current &amp; potential)</li> <li>• Multilingual society</li> <li>• Service-based economy</li> <li>• Highly open economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Maarten is heavily dependent on tourism as main industry; “all eggs in one basket”</li> <li>• High costs of doing business and living</li> <li>• Outdated fiscal legislation considering the standards in the global financial sector</li> <li>• High levels of bureaucracy</li> <li>• Fossil energy dependency</li> <li>• Poor telecommunications infrastructure</li> <li>• Outdated tax system</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of skilled labor and inadequate technical capacity and limited initiatives to train the working population and upgrade their skills</li> <li>• Limited access to finance by SME’S</li> <li>• Inefficient public transportation system</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Diversify the economy, stimulate tourism-based and tourism-friendly sectors</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Expand and develop the financial sector by keeping up with international standards and formulate new legislation to facilitate further development of the financial and non-financial services sector</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Improve service delivery to counter governmental bureaucracy</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Stimulate investment initiatives in alternative sectors</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ <b><i>Develop a trans-shipment Hub</i></b></li> <li>▸ <b><i>Stimulated agribusiness sector</i></b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b><i>Improve the telecommunication sector, cost as well as quality</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Strengthening of the SME sector to support growth and development</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Encourage research and exploration of renewable sources of energy</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Increase public awareness concerning climate change issues and build resilience to minimize damage</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Build capacity for our citizens for labor market trends</i></b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Aftermath of COVID-19 on the economy in general and on the Tourism industry in specific</li> <li>• Uncertainty for firms, consumers, and the public sector due to volatility in output, employment, and inflation</li> <li>• Vulnerable to natural disasters</li> <li>• Susceptible to money laundering</li> <li>• Food and nutrition security</li> <li>• Non-comprehensive disaster management</li> <li>• Susceptible to external shocks (financial and economic instability in other regions)</li> <li>• Unregulated gaming industry</li> <li>• Lack of an investment promotion agency</li> <li>• High corporation tax rates</li> <li>• Political instability</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

### **1.1. Economic Trend and Development**

St. Maarten as a small open economy is predominantly dependent on the tourism sector as its main economic pillar. Given this level of dependency and vulnerability to external shocks, the economy was only able to realize an annual average gross domestic product (GDP) of 1 percent in the years before 2017, followed by 2 years of consecutive economic contraction. In 2019, the economy rebounded with an estimated growth of 5.4 percent.

Coming off the heels of 2019, this growth trend was expected to continue into the year 2020, however, with the current global pandemic of the COVID-19 Virus, the economy of St. Maarten is expected to be impacted gravely, for the balance of 2020. If conditions do not normalize for the balance of the year 2020, the economy is projected to decrease to a negative 15.6 percent.

Further economic analysis and projections based on the current developments with the COVID-19 Virus include the following if conditions do not improve for 2020 and 2021:

- The unemployment rate is projected to increase to roughly 16.2 percent;
- Inflation will increase to approximately 3.1 percent ;
- Exports will decrease by approximately 31.6 percent; this includes tourism revenues in the sum of an estimated NAf 400 mil;
- Imports value projected to decrease by 16.9; this projection of exports decreasing at a faster rate than the level of imports will inevitably put pressure on the foreign reserves of the monetary union;
- Total Government revenues are projected to decrease by 27.2 percent, compared to the performance of 2019;
- Cruise passenger and stay over arrivals are projected to decrease considerable, which can have a rippling effect on the economy;
- The public debt to GDP ratio is expected to increase considerably above the accepted norm of 40%. This situation may even hamper St. Maarten's credibility within the Kingdom to secure needed financing. Can lead to increasing taxes or mass layoffs (Austerity measures).
  
- Other factors supporting the projected economic decline for 2020 include, but are not limited to;
- The expected decrease in public consumption and investments due to loss in revenue and other support financings;
- Decreasing Household consumption due to decreasing private, public spending and increase unemployment level;
- Decreasing external demand for goods and services;
- Decreasing business due to low demand;
- Loss in airlift and cruise calls;
- Projected decline in the economies in Europe and North American region.

### **1.2. Challenges, Risks & Policy Issues**

#### ***Challenges***

The Governing Program in its tenure will focus on overcoming challenges affecting economic growth and sustainable development currently characterized by:

- (i) an undiversified economy;
- (ii) Increasing unemployment rate;
- (iii) a significant population of undocumented immigrants;
- (iv) income inequality in the face of high GDP per capita;
- (v) budget deficits;
- (vi) Existing seasonality with our main contributor to GDP-tourism;
- (vii) low domestic revenue generation;
- (viii) prone to adverse weather conditions, and;
- (ix) Current Corona virus pandemic.

### **Risks**

A range of risk factors has been identified that could threaten the implementation of the Governing Program. These include:

- Impact of Climate change, hurricanes, and other natural disasters.
- On-going ramifications of the COVID-19 crisis, and the threat of a reoccurrence.
- The scale of resources required for the implementation of the plan.
- The potential economic contraction of St. Maarten main source markets e.g. US and Europe.

### **Policy Issues**

The main policy issues that must be addressed in the Governing Program are:

- Finalizing the decolonization
- Economic diversification
- Fiscal reforms and new sources of revenue
- Job creation especially for the youths
- Legislative Review
- Implementation of legal and policy frameworks
- Infrastructural development
- Labour and immigration reform

The aforementioned issues represent the key challenges, associated risks, and policy areas necessary to implement this Governing Program effectively.

## **2. VISION**

The ambition of this government is to mitigate both external and local developments that are negatively impacting the social, economic, and financial situation of Country St. Maarten.

The main focus of the Governing Program 2020 - 2024 is finding the right balance between economic recovery by restoring the livelihood of the people post COVID-19 virus and stimulating resilient and prosperous people going forward.

With the achievement of the aforementioned, the established vision within this Governing Program is the **“realization of a country with a strong multi-pillar economy - where opportunities exist which empowers**



***each citizen to realize their strength to progress at all levels - a place where EVERY DREAM CAN BE REALIZED”.***

In achieving the vision this Coalition Government will work towards insuring the following broad results:

1. Fostering a progressive social environment and rich cultural legacy
2. Enhance the quality of life for the people of St. Maarten
3. Stimulating sustained economic prosperity - Diversification
  - a. *Boosting economic growth through tourism diversification*
  - b. *Boosting economic growth through greater economic diversification and investment*
  - c. Enhance the Role and Performance of the Private Sector- SMEs
4. Protecting the Country’s ecosystems and physical infrastructure
5. Financial discipline and management & the execution of good governance

### **3. THE APPROACH AND STRUCTURE**

This Coalition Government is devoted to achieving the holistic and sustainable development of St. Maarten by directing the Country’s available resources towards the development of the following strategic areas:

1. Education, Youth, Sports, and Culture
2. Community, Health, Social Development, and Labor
3. Sustainable Economic Growth & Resilience
4. Development of Financial Sector
5. Infrastructure Development
6. National Security & Good Governance

The approach is to define the strategic direction per the aforementioned broad areas and outline the key objectives/steps to be taken.

The current financial reality of St. Maarten will be taken into consideration and the Government Program is sufficiently flexible to shift in priorities based on the social and economic consequences in the “aftermath” of COVID-19.

The Private sector of St. Maarten is an equal partner towards the development of St. Maarten. It is therefore this Government’s aim, to include the private sector through dialog and consultation towards the implementation of this Governing Program. The Governing Program’s approach demonstrates this Government’s commitment to long-term planning, serving as a solid foundation for the private sector to make decisions.

### **4. DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORTS AND CULTURE**

Nation-building, social cohesion, and identity development through education, culture, and sports, is the strategy adopted in the Governing Program 2020-2024, towards the fostering of ***a social environment and an appreciation for cultural legacy.***

This Coalition Government recognizes that the future of St. Maarten depends on the success of our educational system, the provisions we make for our youth development, the recognition and ownership of our culture, and the development and professionalization of sports.

#### 4.1. Education

Personal growth takes on a whole new meaning in light of global changes, especially the technology revolution as well as the rapid and unpredictable changes as experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic from “business as usual” as it is related to the traditional way of educational operations.

An immediate shift was made from instructing in a classroom setting to online teaching with the many foreseen as well as unforeseen challenges. The role of teachers needed to be adapted including them mastering virtual techniques, the students were required to become more independent learners, and the parents needed to develop some teaching skills to keep up with their children and be of support with their curriculum.

To better equip our citizens with future knowledge, tools, and skills, ***a transformation within the education curriculum and system is required***. Investing in education will be even more important as it creates a new supply of skilled citizens ready to meet society's demands.

BE PROGRESSIVE WITH EDUCATION: To be more prepared for the future and to become life-long learners who will develop the required knowledge and competencies to meet the demands of a changing community, the following ***objectives*** are defined:

1. Transform, monitor and evaluate the education system by implementing new policies, laws, and legislation in such a way that students leaving the formal education sector possess the required knowledge and skills for continued education, employment, or entrepreneurship.
2. Digital Education - Digitalize the education system under the changing technology in the world so that students can learn through social media and digital teaching methods (e-learning).
3. Ensure that teachers and staff have the competencies to teach and coach following innovative and digital teaching methods
4. Provide the required infrastructure, environment, and resources to support the educational process and students in their learning process.
5. Encourage and support the provision of requisite human resource development by both private and public sectors, and through opportunities for life-long learning provided by distance education.
6. Support efforts to train and develop employees for the telecommunication sector
7. Work closely with other Government departments in creating a program where all schools are provided with free Internet for education purposes
8. Promote best practices and increase training opportunities to enhance local productivity.
9. Develop programs to train the tourism sector to master multiple languages
10. Develop and expand continuous capacity building programs for workers
11. Fulfill labor needs through education: Provide beginner, intermediate, and advanced skills training to created long-term decent-paying jobs.

#### 4.2. Culture

St. Maarten’s relatively strong economy is attractive both regionally and internationally—leading to several significant changes over the last decades including large-scale immigration. With a large multicultural population, St. Maarten is challenged to find ways to maintain its cultural identity while being a global society. New cultural challenges arise, as St. Maarten learns to live together better with the

conviction that we belong to a single human family. Today, this solidarity must be shaped by new forms of global citizenship in an era of diversity.

It is imperative to recognize *and showcase the historical and cultural foundation of St. Maarten in the context of the country's development that all people can engage in the process of inclusion to support nation-building and social cohesion.*

**BE PROGRESSIVE WITH CULTURE:** By engaging individuals in the local culture and promoting the island's cultural and natural heritage, the cultural identity may be safeguarded. The education curriculum can be an important tool in promoting these aspects, as it offers a large platform, in which this information can be distributed and managed. Objectives to be achieved:

1. Promote a strong shared cultural identity through increased awareness and recognition of the freedom of expression, national symbols, national pride, cultural diversity, and tolerance;
2. Increase and improve the Country's Cultural Infrastructure;
3. *Ensure that St. Maarten's culture, creative arts, heritage, cultural rights, and cultural diversity are optimally integrated within the educational curriculum and system;*
4. Raise Awareness of and Inspire Pride in our Culture and Natural Heritage;
5. *Support cultural activities and creative industries to generate employment, further diversify the economy, and strengthen our sustainability as an island;*
6. Actively protect and promote the natural, tangible, and intangible cultural heritage of St. Maarten;

#### **4.3. Youth**

The skills and competencies of our youth are one of the most important and cherished assets. To make the most of their potential we will promote and reinvigorate a culture that rewards hard work and determination, provides opportunities, and helps everyone acquire the necessary skills to achieve their personal goals.

**BE PROGRESSIVE WITH THE YOUTH:** We will reinforce the ability of our economy to generate diverse job opportunities for our Youth. Objectives to be achieved:

1. Develop and implement an Integrated Youth Development Policy and relevant laws and legislation together with all stakeholders - Enhance Youth Policy and Involvement
2. Foster strong and closely aligned partnerships with NGO's and youth organizations with sufficient knowledge and capacity to provide the necessary support to the youth
3. Promote extracurricular activities for the Youth
4. Aid in the reduction of youth unemployment through better synchronization of the qualifications and skills of the youth of St. Maarten with the labor market.
5. Expand collaboration with other ministries to create policy aimed at the Protection of Children and Youth
6. Develop and maintain supportive communities which nurture the growth of the youth with a focus on youth with high-risk behavior.
7. Facilitate that more young persons are informed on the topics of reproductive health, healthy eating habits, and healthy lifestyles.

#### **4.4. Sports**

Physical inactivity is a primary risk factor driving the global increase in chronic diseases. As a result, hereof, the population of St. Maarten, especially the youth, have relatively unhealthy eating habits. Sport and recreation can play a critical role in slowing the spread of chronic diseases, reducing their social and economic burden, and saving lives.

While physical activity includes a broader range of activities than sport alone, direct participation in sport is one of the most enjoyable and powerful means of motivating and mobilizing people to become physically active and simultaneously ensures a healthier lifestyle.

Additionally, St. Maarten in the past has encouraged hosting regional sports events as well as preparing youngsters to participate in professional sports. It is the intention during this Governing tenure to create the linkages between sport and tourism

BE PROGRESSIVE WITH SPORT: Education is a common medium in which prevention programs can be structured to promote good nutrition and physical education that aims at creating a healthier society. Also, we recognize that sport can also be seen as a means of economic diversification and possibilities for sports tourism. Objectives to be achieved:

1. Establish as Government's position that sports development is essential as sports play an important role in the nation-building process by enriching lives and by further fostering civic pride and community identity - A structured and professional approach to nation-building in educational curriculum for first and secondary education and culture, youth and sports programs;
2. Develop and execute a comprehensive sports policy with the emphasis on access for all, focusing on making it possible for all citizens, regardless of their physical ability, financial status, or age to participate in sports activities, whether recreational or competitive;
3. Support sports and Recreation Development;
4. Diversification: increase awareness to promote sports tourism as a niche market of tourism
5. Networks of support for talented persons are established for promoting careers in sports and for ensuring quality representation, participation regionally and internationally of St. Maarten sportsmen and women;
6. Encourage cooperation between the public and private sectors by offering tax breaks for corporate sponsorships and support of school sports programs and national teams;
7. Ensure safe, adequate, and qualified sports facilities (according to international standards) are available for all residents of St. Maarten

## **5. IMPROVE HEALTH, COMMUNITY & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR**

Improving the quality of life is of paramount importance during this governing tenure. The focus will be primarily on the following areas in the broadest sense: Health system, Social Care services, Labor. The Governing Program outlines various policies proposed to be implemented over this governing term to improve the well-being of our citizens.

Affordable healthcare services, safe communities, and employment opportunities are some of the basic rights every citizen of St. Maarten is entitled to.

### **5.1. Health System**

As a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Government's immediate focus is on combatting any further spread of the pandemic. Given the medical limited capacity and resources on the islands,

assistance is requested from the Netherland ranging from funds to medical equipment consisting of Military ICU facility and ICU beds, to Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), COVID-19 testing kits, Intensive Care Unit (ICU) medicine, and COVID-19 medication to treat COVID-19 patient.

The main objective of this Government as it relates to Health is the transition of the St. Maarten Medical Center into a Medical City. This involves aggregation and integration of sectors that provide goods and auxiliary medical services to patients' e.g. therapeutic, rehabilitative, and comforting care. This type of **medical industry** (health economy) will allow the Medical Center to accommodate other medical institutions such as the SZV, a nursing school, and provide housing for the staff and students of the school. The main goal is to make the center self-sufficient by diversifying its services to generate revenue.

BE PROGRESSIVE WITH HEALTH CARE: In addition to the transition of the medical center to a Medical City there are many initiatives that this Government desires to achieve as a means of improving their basic general health care but also to better prepared in crises of which the following objectives are outlined:

### 1. Healthcare Reform

- a. Define the level of healthcare for St. Maarten;
- b. Draft the healthcare vision and legislation;
- c. Revise the Healthcare Advisory Council (Health Board);
- d. Improve the medical referrals process by establishing a Medical Bureau;
- e. Stimulate cooperation and partnerships within the Health sector;
- f. Support the upgrading of medical professionals and staff, and service delivery, through collaboration with the American University of the Caribbean and other local and regional institutions;
- g. Stimulate Healthy Living and Wellbeing for all Residents;
- h. Introduce Health Information System - Manage the "flow" of healthcare information
- i. Adherence to (international) rights and obligations to a healthy and safe society.

### 2. Infra structure

- a. Build an adequate Mental Health facility;
- b. Build a General Hospital;
- c. Institute a rehabilitation center as part of the Hospital;
- d. Establish a high-security psychiatric department (PAAS);

### 3. Health Care Package

1. Introduce a basic health care package for all citizens (universal health coverage)
2. Determine supplemental health care packages
3. Implement additional healthcare programs
4. Regulate the financing of healthcare
5. Lower prescriptions drug cost

### 4. Sustainable Quality Health Care

1. Amend the legislation and policy governing the qualification of healthcare workers (Admission requirements)
2. Implement a joint training program between the St. Maarten Medical Center and the American University of the Caribbean

3. Implement a healthcare certification program (St. Maarten's version of BIG)
4. Review the registration of healthcare workers
5. Attract healthcare professionals in line with the needs
6. Create the right environment and conditions to attract local medical professionals currently residing/working in other countries back home
7. Strengthen the Mother and Child program (maternity care)

## 5.2. Comprehensive Social Care

The main approach is to create programs that will place a greater emphasis on *community planning* to create a greater sense of community spirit and a positive healthy outlook. The focus will range from assisting young people to develop skills and make a difference in their communities, through a program designed for 16-20-year-olds that encourages personal and social development; to providing support services aimed at helping single parents, in particular young, single mothers who are economically vulnerable; to strengthening and expanding the home care program to upgrading the services for children with special needs, both physically and mentally; to assisting elderly to receive support at home.

BE PROGRESSIVE WITH SOCIAL CARE and CARING FOR THE ELDERLY & VULNERABLE: "The elderly and vulnerable are the foundation our community is built on. The elderly have worked hard for what we now take for granted. By taking care of our elders, we can pave the way for how we will be cared for as seniors. Taking care of those less privileged, the special needs groups and the low-income earners will allow us to live in a happier and healthier community. We should do all that we can to accommodate and make the lives of our residents as comfortable as possible." Objectives to be achieved:

### 1. Sustainable Living

- a. Implement legislation and policies in the Social Development sector
- b. Increase pension benefits, generally
- c. Increase Old Age Pensions for the elderly
- d. Conduct a study to determine a livable wage

### 2. Policies & Programs

- a. Work on government policies to provide better support to NGOs
- b. Promote Community volunteer and outreach programs
- c. Create volunteer programs where civil servants can allocate one day a month to their community, thereby encouraging residents of those communities to also play a role in their communities
- d. Funding for the training of community councils which play a major role in improving their communities

### 3. Incentives

- a. Encourage community action through recognition and awards, such as a "Community Volunteer Award"
- b. Create incentives to promote community volunteering and national service
- c. Appoint District Inspectors chosen from respected community leaders and charged with overseeing each district's general health needs.

### 5.3. Labor

The Ministry will advance opportunities to promote access to work, continue to encourage employment opportunities, and encourage decent wages and work hours. The focus is on aligning the workforce to areas in which economic diversification and job creation will be developed. Job Creation and Sustainable Development go hand in hand and the experience and changes over the last few years confirm the demand for more and better jobs. It is necessary to implement integrated policies such as the counterpart policy, employability through training and skill building for youth and adults, strengthening workplace compliance, and formalization of the informal economy that complements economic growth and reduces unemployment to create sustainable development. The focus will also be on stimulating careers. The improvement in the quality of education through a practical and policy approach will further equip our students for the job market. The counterpart policy will be a cornerstone in the further development and nurturing of our young professionals.

BE PROGRESSIVE WITH LABOR: Reliable data from the Labor market information system, labor force survey, impact study of migration on labor, finalization stage of the work permit policy to ensure the protection of our local workers as well as the input of tripartite consultation, are fundamental to be incorporated in proposals for the Labor market and immigration reform. Objectives to be achieved:

#### 1. Regulatory Environment

- a. Implement Labor Legislation and Policy
- b. Implement counterpart policy
- c. Finalize the National Ordinance to stop the abuse of short-term labor agreements
- d. Make the Labor Law more flexible
- e. Review the minimum wage
- f. Enforce Labor inspection policies
- g. Finalize legislation for the Youth Employment Fund, and execute the Youth Employment Fund Program

#### 2. Research & Collaboration

- a. Conduct periodic research. Promote collaboration between the labor, education, and immigration departments for a need's assessment of our labor market, and adjust our education and job training programs to meet our labor needs
- b. Foster collaboration between the Labor and Education departments to improve the facilitation of employment for educated persons
- c. Maintain a database that links our business community with professionals and students residing and/or studying locally and abroad

#### 3. Job opportunities

- a. Facilitate the Creation of Employment Opportunities
- b. Provide beginner, intermediate, and advanced skills training to create long-term decent
- c. Provide opportunities for continuing education to train and re-educate the labor market, and offer Second Chance education opportunities paying jobs
- d. Strengthen competencies and mentoring of staff to ensure the delivery of the services and products

- e. Provide tax incentives for businesses willing to hire and train the registered unemployed
- f. Fulfill Labor Needs through Education
- g. Adapt the education curriculum to meet labor market needs.

## 6. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESILIENCE

The economy of St. Maarten centers on leisure tourism with nearly 85% of the labor force engaged in that sector. Besides, tourism represents about 80% of St. Maarten's GDP. Although this focus on tourism has brought rewards, it also poses a significant risk. The sustainability of this form of tourism relies on factors that are beyond St. Maarten's control.

The COVID-19 Pandemic once again emphasizes the need to reduce our vulnerability to a one-pillar economy. The diversification of the economy is highly slated on this Governing Program due to the realization that an economy build on tourism only is too vulnerable is not sustainable.

The Governing Program seeks to formulate a strategic direction to stimulate ***a strong multi-pillar economy***. The Program envisions a comprehensive and sustainable economic development approach to strengthen key economic sectors and improve the technical and administrative capacity to deal with the Countries' threats and weaknesses while at the same time capitalizing on its strengths and opportunities.

The Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport, and Telecommunication envisages accelerating the economic growth and development of St. Maarten through diversification, empowerment, employment, business creation, and sustainable development.

The main strategic intervention in attaining the desired sustainable economic growth and resilience is centered on, but not limited to, the following objectives:

1. Privatization of the Maritime Department (Implementation of a Maritime Authority)
2. The implementation of a Civil Aviation Authority
3. The establishment of a Central Bureau of Statistics
4. The establishment of the St. Maarten Tourism Authority
5. The establishment of a National Training Program

The attaining of the above-desired results will involve the enactment of the following:

- a. Ensure Product Development and the Revitalization of the Tourism Industry
- b. Promote and stimulate Economic Diversification and Investment
- c. Ensure there is an efficient and enabling environment for the business sector.
- d. Create a new Tourism Master Plan
- e. Establish Community Based Tourism

### 6.1. Product Development and Tourism Revitalization

Fluctuating economic activities in major source markets, rising costs of fuel, increasing regional travel costs, stagnation in the level of tourism experiences and products compounded with the impact of the hurricane on the Island, topped off by the Coronavirus Pandemic have negatively affected the earnings from the tourism industry.



**BE PROGRESSIVE WITH TOURISM:** In identifying specific actions that are necessary for the success and *the revitalization of the tourism industry*, the following actions are defined:

1. Development of the Tourism and travel industry Master Plan to reflect the new norm within the industry
2. Encourage viable FDIs in the redeveloped tourism product – and capitalize on the membership in the *Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA)*
3. Create alternative traveler’s experience (possibly virtual) utilizing modern technology and formulate new marketing strategies. Establish the St. Maarten Tourism Authority
4. Expand the Tourism Footprint (carbon foot print): Encourage and promote tourism products that protect the environment
5. Increase the awareness of the value and the offering of the Industry through continuous promotion and engagement both locally and abroad
6. Conversion programs of cruise tourism to stay over-tourism
7. Facilitate the development of quality small hotels through tax incentives and government assistance
8. Legislation for protection and sustainability
9. Strengthen sectoral linkages with tourism e.g. Stimulate agriculture initiatives
10. Develop programs to train the tourism sector stakeholders to master multiple languages
11. Stimulate the Maritime sector as the initial sector to open up Tourism
12. Stimulate the Yachting industry to kick start the “cruise” industry
13. Discuss what travel protocol needs to be in place to receive the potential yachting passengers
14. Stimulate the growth of the marine industry - expansion of their services to promote other marine services e.g. boat repair to generate employment
15. Reestablish the funding of the training of local youths in the skills of boat repair, mechanics, electricians, electronic experts, fiber technicians.

## **6.2. Economic Diversification and Investment**

To stimulate and diversify the economy of St. Maarten this Governing program will seek the establishment of the prerequisite of such activities to be realized. These prerequisites include:

### Diversification:

1. Undertake a study to determine viable diversification sector e.g.:
  - a. Maritime services
  - b. Agribusiness
  - c. Financial services
  - d. Light manufacturing
2. Explore Medical Tourism possibilities & the Creating of a Medical City for St. Maarten
3. Improve, enhance and promote St. Maarten’s hub and distribution function in the region
4. Promote Local Agribusiness for self-sustenance, via food security, community employment, and new revenue stream
5. Examine the possibility of renewable energy businesses and Promote the use of renewable energy in the business sector
6. Improved the Telecom Infrastructure
7. Explore opportunities offered by developments in information technology and artificial and business intelligence

### Investment

1. Establishment of an Investment Promotion Agency<sup>2</sup> to support and guide Investors
2. Improve institutional capacity in investment and trade promotions
3. Strengthen investment climate and promote investment opportunities, resulting in a business climate that encourages competitive businesses to start and grow
4. Create a conducive investment climate for investors
5. Review of Investment Promotion Incentive Packages for Investors, Local and Foreign
6. Ensure efficient Investment Promotion Measures
7. Produce an investment guide and promotional Material
8. Improvement Data quality and collection
9. Strengthen public and private sector partnerships & Facilitate increased private sector representation in regional and global settings.
10. Optimize cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and other Business Associations

### **6.3. An efficient and enabling environment for the businesses**

Given the vulnerability of St. Maarten's economy, which has forever presented itself; the need to diversify the economy and encourage new and emerging businesses has become a very critical and gesture at this time. Through this Governing Program, the following measures have been envisioned:

#### Regulatory Framework

1. Enact legislation for the protection and sustainability of Small Businesses
2. Strengthen the institutional and regulatory capacity of public sector entities for promoting private sector - SME development.
3. Promote improved access to affordable financing
4. Provide efficient access to data for businesses
5. Stimulate the use of innovation and ICT in SMEs

#### Business enabling framework

1. Simplify procedures of doing business
2. Regulate and facilitate that Internet and broadcast is affordable for everybody
3. Create a conducive investment climate for foreign investors – FDI for outsourcing purposes
4. Stimulate local agribusinesses as a complement to the tourism sector
5. Entrepreneurship & Innovation Policy
  - a. Facilitate Entrepreneurship; tax incentives and government assistance to small local businesses and stimulate SME's productive interest in the creative industry
  - b. support initiatives with an emphasis on promoting and stimulating entrepreneurship and small business development
  - c. Promote improved access to affordable financing for SMEs
  - d. Enact the SME policy framework to aid the SME sector and its entities' survival.
  - e. Stimulate SME's productive interest in the creative industry e.g. tax incentives and government assistance.
  - f. Stimulate the use of innovation and ICT in SMEs.
  - g. Promote innovation and productivity at all levels within the private sector in general

---

<sup>2</sup> Capitalize on the membership with the Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA)

- h. Regulate and facilitate that Internet and broadcast is affordable for SMEs

#### Partnerships

1. Strengthen public and private sector partnerships
2. Facilitate increased private sector representation in regional and global settings.
3. Optimize cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce

#### Trade & Export Strategy

1. Further, develop the services sector for trade purposes
2. Establish Financing possibilities for businesses, with preferential treatment to businesses with export potential and new sector development

#### Maritime

1. Privatization of the Maritime Department (Creating a Maritime Authority (MA))  
The establishment of a MA will regulate the 'authority' for carrying out the shipping responsibilities. The MA is also tasked with administering local shipping and boating issues and laws within our territorial waters, and ships flagged in St. Maarten or those that fall under their jurisdiction.
2. The establishment of a Marine Traffic Policy, to determine how the MA will function. Please note that the MA will reduce government overhead/costs while increasing revenue from fees (such as anchorage and vessel registration) that have not been collected or utilized.

#### Aviation

1. The establishment of a Civil Aviation Authority, which differs from that of the Maritime Authority as this is to be a government statutory authority, which maintains an aircraft register and oversees the approval and regulation of civil aviation.
  - a. Due to the inherent dangers in the use of flight vehicles, civil aviation authorities typically regulate the following critical aspects of aircraft airworthiness and their operation.

#### Statistics

1. Establishing a Central Bureau of Statistics  
A country with a well-organized statistical system gives access to market sizing and global trends. The establishment of a Central Bureau of Statistics will:
  - Provide relevant, timely, and comparable business statistics,
  - Develop standards for better measurement of business issues and enhances international comparability, and
  - Help SMEs develop and improve their business statistics.

The IMF 2019 Article IV Consultation –Press Release and Staff Report recommends the strengthening of the data framework of St. Maarten and the establishment of an independent statistics entity. This results in total privatization of the Department of Statistics ensuring independent reporting.

#### Product Development

1. Establish the Philipsburg Bus Terminal

Central Bus terminal to mitigate traffic in Philipsburg and improve our public transportation services

2. Philipsburg Parking Garage
3. Philipsburg Market Place  
Modern marketplace for the vendors to safely, offer their products/ services. This per the social distancing guidelines
4. Revitalization of Philipsburg (Increase diversification of the products offered in the Philipsburg area)

### ***Government-Owned Companies***

#### PJIA

1. US Pre-Clearance  
Pre-Clearance is an excellent passenger facilitation program that complements the US' rigorous standards and strengthens global security through the development of key international partnerships. This program is a win-win allowing travelers to experience a streamlined approach that saves them time and frustration while reducing the burden on our domestic system.
2. Increasing Route Development
3. Returning PJIA to CAT1

#### Harbor Group

1. Establishing Policy on Anchorage (See Maritime Authority)  
Both internal and external waters
2. Simpson Bay Bridge widening/ upgrading  
The bridge has reached its end of life cycle and needs to be repaired. Widening is advised to accommodate larger vessels.
3. The implementation of a Lagoon Maintenance Policy  
To operate and maintain our lagoons for maximum efficiency and long life we must implement a Lagoon Maintenance Policy. Understanding that this is a multi-ministerial effort, this is of utmost importance to the Ministry of TEATT.

#### BTP

1. Establishing a Minimum Bandwidth (10MB)
2. Improve Internet Service Provider (ISP) services
3. Ensure Fiber to Home completion (TelEM)
4. Create a competitive market within the telecom field (open licensing)

## **7. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINANCIAL SECTOR**

Financial services are fundamental to economic growth and development. Banking, savings and investments, insurance, and debt and equity financing help private citizens save money, provide a buffer against shocks and build credit. A properly functioning financial services sector also facilitates the start-up of new businesses and promotes increased efficiency of existing businesses, thereby providing opportunities for them to compete in local and international markets. Additionally, given the increasing use of technology in today's financial market, St. Maarten must keep abreast with this phenomenon. In

this manner, there can be a guarantee of sustainable growth in the sector, given the ability to conduct transactions globally outside of the non-traditional format.

Given the importance of the financial sector towards the wellbeing and prosperity of the country and its citizens it has become rather imperative that the following actions be adhered to:

#### Financial literacy & legislation

1. Promote the development, regulating, and modernizing of the non-banking financial sector in the context of financial market efficiency.
2. Develop a 'doing business' strategy for St. Maarten
3. Regulate the gaming industry.
4. Expand the financial sector in keeping up with international standards.
5. Develop a financial literacy strategy.
6. Review legislative and institutional frameworks to facilitate the development of the international financial services sector.
7. Examine and expand the range of financial assets in which St. Maarteners at home and abroad can invest.
8. Encourage the growth of capital markets.
9. Increased revenue through fiscal reform

#### The Budget

1. Present a realistic and well-supported budget critical for the proper governance of St. Maarten, reflecting the needs for governing the island with evidence of the sources of support for the budget.
2. Present a budget that allows for both economic growth and the increased needs related to the overall well-being of the people of St. Maarten e.g. health and social services and stimulating of SMEs.

#### Tax Assessment and Collection

1. Restructure the present tax assessment and collection process to make it more manageable and efficient
2. Reduce the complexity of the present tax assessment and collection process thereby making it less complicated and less expensive while increasing compliance

#### Tax Structure

1. A simplification and restructuring of the tax system is a priority
2. Authorize a study aimed at revising and simplifying the tax laws as a matter of priority
3. Implement small business tax-breaks for small business in sectors of the economy, designated by the Government, for orderly growth in sectors that are lagging within the island Offer information sessions, regularly, on tax compliance and tax filing, to ensure that tax payers know their rights and obligations as far as taxes are concerned
4. Maintain assurances and guarantees to ensure ongoing social security obligations
5. Implement a study of Government-owned corporations to determine the level of efficiency under which they operate and to determine to what extent the profits of these corporations could be utilized within the adjusted tax structure

6. Ensure that the full impact of dollarization and its ramifications are understood and made known to the public in general

Central Bank of Curaçao and St. Maarten

1. Conduct a study on the durability of the Antillean guilder and provide possible recommendation
2. Improve the functioning of the bank
3. Transform the local office into a full-fledged branch per the Slotverklaring

## **8. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

### **8.1. Public Roads, Sewage network & water draining**

“Investing in a country’s *infrastructure* is not a luxury but a necessity to life. Proper *sewage, drainage, public roads, telecommunication network, enabling framework and infrastructure* are vital for a sustainable living but also for economic growth, jobs and access to services”. In keeping with the vision stipulated in this Governing Program in ensuring the economic and social wellbeing of its citizens the following infrastructural development measures will be embarked upon.

BE PROGRESSIVE WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURE - Update and Realize the Execution of the Comprehensive Road Network Plan

Public Roads

1. Implement the Comprehensive Road Network Plan to open-up and connect all districts and neighborhoods
2. Realize Dutch Quarter (co-financing), commitment 10th EDF, and upgrade of the A.T Illidge Road - D.Q. Phase One
3. Resurface all major roadways, instead of constant patching
4. Conduct structural maintenance on main roads
5. Continue with the hard surfacing of dirt roads
6. Resume execution of the road network and public infrastructure development plan
7. Ensure the completion of the underground utility cabling project

Expansion of the Sewage Network

1. Initiate drafting a Master Plan for sewage management
2. Construct additional sewage plants
3. Connect remaining neighborhoods to develop a public sewage system
4. Work together with property owners to clean up areas with sewage, running water, and garbage disposal challenges

Management of Water Drainage

1. Build water catchments to alleviate flooding in vulnerable areas
2. Secure proper drainage in hillside areas
3. Ensure hard surfacing of trenches
4. Pave additional dirt roads
5. Connect water waste from homes to central sewage systems

## **8.2. Telecommunication Network, Enabling Framework & Infrastructure**

To develop the information and telecommunication sector assure the complete vision and execution plan for the rollout of the Fiber Internet by the Bureau Telecommunication & Post is implemented.

1. Ensure the completion of the underground utility cabling project
2. Regulate the infrastructure network for utility companies
3. Review St. Maarten Telecommunication structure, infrastructure, and policies
4. Improve Telecom and the Internet accessibility, connectivity, variety, and cost in collaboration with Bureau Telecommunication and Post
5. Strengthen the regulatory framework of the information and telecommunications services sector
6. Stimulate Mobile network evolution 4G/Regulate the cost of connectivity
7. Incorporate emerging technologies and communications into St. Maarten's outlook and strategy towards development
8. Formulate and implement a focused national policy for information and communication technology interventions
9. Study and update, in conjunction with other Government departments, the necessary legislation
10. Establish the Liberalization of the Telecommunication Market

## **8.3. Building an Advance Information & Communication Technology Arena**

In today's emerging new businesses, services and activities require a much greater degree of system flexibility, performance, and scalability, as well as open standards. The following actions are therefore desired through this Governing Program:

### A "Knowledge-Based Society" for all citizens

1. Create Knowledge hub
2. Enhance inflows of technology into the economy through the establishment of knowledge parks and Centers of Excellence
3. Introduce a SMART IT market
4. Establish a comprehensive e-government system
5. Facilitate high-speed internet for medical institutions and schools

### Leverages of our Unique Position within the Caribbean

1. Strengthen St. Maarten as a regional logistic hub
2. Develop strong and mutually cooperative relations with French Saint Martin
3. Maximize the benefits from our strategic position to develop new strategic partnerships.
4. Improve Maritime and Airport Facilities, Services, and Safety to Strengthen the Hub Position of St. Maarten
5. Support the tourism function by encouraging promotional distribution through the Internet, e-commerce, and other emergent technologies and utilize monitoring technologies

#### **8.4. Sustainable living – Alternative Energy**

The main theme of this Governing Program is sustainable development and good quality of life for the citizens of St. Maarten. In reducing the dependency on fossil fuels and all its negative impact on the quality of life and cost of living of the citizens of St. Maarten, the following is the Strategic Intervention of this program. In the context of environmental concerns, the following objectives are outlined:

##### Alternative Energy

1. Promote Business model: Transform GEBE from energy provider to energy manager by using alternative energy such as solar, and waste-to-energy conversion
2. Pursue legislation for the Energy-Buy-Back Policy
3. Implement a revised Energy Policy Plan to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and stimulating Sustainable and Renewable Energy production
4. Encourage research and exploration of renewable sources of energy
5. Develop a legislative framework to promote energy efficiency
6. Encourage production and use of renewable forms of energy
7. Establish an energy conservation plan
8. Amend the electricity concession where necessary
9. Build a fuel farm
10. Incentivize businesses to adapt to the use of alternative sources of energy-reducing import bill

Additionally, in partnerships with Government: Promote the use of Green Energy Production of Electricity and Smart Water Consumption

1. Promote the use of Green Energy Production of Electricity and Smart Water Consumption
2. Implement the use of Green Energy at all government-owned buildings, schools, sport and art facilities, and all Government-owned companies
3. Place solar panels at parking locations to protect parked cars and provide power to the GEBE grid
4. Partnerships with Saint Martin and neighboring islands
5. Investigate the possibilities of partnering where generation and distribution of renewable energy is concerned
6. Investors and Environmental Protection Organizations

### **9. NATIONAL SECURITY & GOOD GOVERNANCE**

National security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the country through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection, and political power. The goal is to ensure the protection of our nation's **fundamental** and enduring needs: protect the lives and safety of the people of St. Maarten; and provide for the prosperity of the nation. In this context, the following is the focus of this Governing Program:

#### **9.1. Environment and reduced Climate Change**

“The environment of our island doesn’t only reflect how we live, but also contributes to our well-being, health and increases our life span. We all deserve to be able to live a healthy lifestyle in a clean



environment! The implementation, use, and access to renewable energy, and reduction of the waste hill in Philipsburg are issues at the forefront of the health of our island as well as our well-being.”

#### Environment

1. Develop appropriate legislative and regulatory framework, for proper environmental management, and institutional systems for responding to and mitigating effects of climate change
2. Build resilience to minimize damage to settlement and infrastructure.
3. Minimize damage to beach and shoreline integrity and marine ecosystems-wetlands area.
4. Minimize the negative impact of climate change on agriculture and human health.
5. Allocation of a Disaster/Business Recovery Fund
6. Increase public awareness concerning climate change issues.

#### **9.2. Reduce Impacts of Climate Change**

Many scientists have argued that there is a direct relationship between climate variability and global warming. The frequency and intensity of some natural disasters and hazards in various parts of the world are signs of this phenomenon and even more so- close to home with the passage of Hurricane Luis in 1995 and Irma as recent as 2017. The abstract of this phenomenon has negatively affected our environment and threatened economic development. These occurrences will continue and hence, the Government desires to endorse several measures to protect the natural environment, which will allow the country's productive sectors to mitigate its impact.

BE PROGRESSIVE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE: Public education and awareness of the potential negative effects of climate change would be at the forefront in addition to the following objectives that are embraced in this Governing Program:

1. Develop appropriate legislative and regulatory framework, for proper environmental management, and institutional systems for responding and mitigating effects of climate change
2. Establishment of a comprehensive disaster management plan
3. Increase public awareness concerning climate change issues
4. Build resilience to minimize damage to settlement and infrastructure
5. Minimize damage to beach and shoreline integrity and marine ecosystems-wetlands area
6. Increased use of technology to minimize the effects of climate change on key economic sectors
7. Minimize the negative impact of climate change on agriculture and human health

#### **9.3. Strengthen Food and Nutrition Security**

The absence of an agricultural sector presents one of the riskiest challenges to food and nutrition security. For St. Maarten, the absence of this sector is due to several factors, such as limited land, topography, ownership of land, weak institutions, and the absence of a regulatory framework. Nevertheless, this Government saw the need, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, to flag the promoting of agriculture and agri-business as a necessity to be included in this Governing Program. The following **objectives** will be embarked upon:

#### Regulatory Framework & Infrastructure

1. Develop a sustainable agricultural policy to maximize the potential of farming and fishing
2. Create a Department of agriculture and husbandry within the Government structure

## Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

3. Draft Policies to assist with locally grown produce, marketing, and distribution
4. Formulate and oversee the implementation of the food security policies
5. Allocate land for community gardens and exploitation of agriculture
6. Re-establish agriculture station to stimulate agriculture production
7. Create an effective policy formulation mechanism and improve the policy framework for a modernized agricultural development
  - a. Aqua and Hydroponics systems
  - b. Local and District Markets

### Research & Data collection

1. Undertake a study as to the technological form of agri-business that can be adopted in St. Maarten
2. Improve data collection by measuring various dimensions of food insecurity (quality of food, shortage of food, and nutritional status)
3. Encourage the sustainable use of land, forestry, and marine resources and examine the opportunities for the development of the livestock sector and fishery
4. Evaluate the policies and actions to assess their impact on Agri-business

### Marketing strategies

1. Strengthen sectoral linkages with tourism e.g. Stimulate agriculture initiatives
2. Promote agriculture awareness practices e.g. "back yard" gardening
3. Increase youth involvement in agriculture, especially through agricultural training at the school level
4. Provide tax incentives for businesses willing to hire and train the registered unemployed using innovative technology in the Agri-business industry
5. Diversify our economy via the promotion of Culture, Agriculture, and Nature related businesses

### Partnerships

1. Stimulate private sector investment in the agricultural sector and encourage public-private partnership
2. Leasing of property within the regions for agricultural purposes
3. Encourage the sustainable use of land, forestry, and marine resources and examine the opportunities for the development of the livestock sector

### **9.4. National Security Measures**

In the interest of ensuring that ***“Every citizen is entitled to live in a safe and secure environment functioning within an efficient and effective judicial system,”*** this Governing program adopts the approach of ensuring that the necessary national security measures are taken both from a domestic and international engagement. The following intervening measures will be implemented during this Governing Tenure:

### Legislation - Internal & Kingdom Relations & Regional Collaboration

1. Vetting and ratifying of the National Development Plan
2. Regional collaboration on various issues e.g. custodial/prison, medical/ health/

## Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

3. Establish an internal committee for the continuous review of existing legislation to update legislation where needed
4. Review all organic laws
5. Review the Kingdom Laws
6. Establish a partnership with the Legislative Academy in the Netherlands (Wetgevingsacademie)
7. Review the Electoral law and policies

### Records & Information Management - Human Resources (Personnel)

1. Revamping personnel
2. Upgrade the information management process to ensure that all documentation is synchronized, thereby guaranteeing a smooth flow of information.
3. Integrate information systems to provide better service to businesses and the community.
4. Further development of e-government.
5. Improve the public administration system by simplifying and streamlining the bureaucratic processes, making them more user-friendly and easier for the average person to understand.
6. Improve Government productivity by establishing standards and deadlines by which services and information provided to citizens must be met.

### Immigration-related

1. Improve the immigration information system to create facts for policy decisions
2. Investigate the possibility of offering a temporary, short-term work and residence permit system
3. Establish clear, unbiased immigration policies for permits, renewals, and amendments
4. Improve the time factor on procedures for application review and response by simplifying and reducing the level and detail of the bureaucratic process involved in the granting of work and residence permits
5. Together with PJIA, better facilitate and improve the facilities for passengers with challenges in immigration (holding area)
6. Re-instating the Simpson Bay Facilities as a holding center for undocumented individuals
7. Ensure that the immigration policy accommodates the employment of qualified locals first while providing foreign labor were not locally available
8. Implement an extensive and in-depth review of the immigration function based on a continuous review of the need for non-locally available labor

### Border Control related

1. Develop National security plan – border control & Immigration/ residency matters
2. Improve coordination with Saint Martin authorities to combat cross-border crime (falls under the Governor)
3. Work with Kingdom authorities in reviewing the Dutch language requirement for naturalization
4. Strengthening the Customs department with, among other things, training and increase of manpower
5. Strengthen cooperation between Customs and immigration & Border Control
6. Combat human trafficking
7. Implement joint border control at PJIA/ the Franco-Dutch treaty
8. Finalize demarcation of Sea borders
9. Introduce Police Cooperation Treaty

10. Higher police visibility in various districts. More police vehicles

Other relevant matters of high priority

1. Diplomat in Trinidad & Tobago ref. Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (**CFATF**)/ money laundering
2. Mitigating youth delinquency
3. Prison – building a new one

### 9.5. Good Governance

A macroeconomic framework designed to attain and maintain long-term stability is critical in allowing the economy to adjust smoothly to shocks, hurricanes as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. An efficient program roadmap and action plan should prioritize, sequence, and develop mechanisms for managing change while taking into consideration that the speed and methods of reform will vary depending on the conditions and priorities of governments. Hence, the proposed strategic interventions within this Governing Program are:

Macroeconomic Stability - Measures towards sustainable rate of economic growth

1. Regulate and enforce the Financial and Banking Regulations
2. Implementation of sound Fiscal and Financial Policies, to:
  - a. spur economic activities;
  - b. increase disposable income to the household;
  - c. Increase Government revenue
  - d. Incentivize Investors (Both local and foreign)
3. Strengthening tax administration capabilities
4. Improve the Public sector efficiency - Reduce the costs of doing business in St. Maarten through:
  - a. improved service delivery
  - b. simplified procedures of doing business
5. Establish a comprehensive e-Government System
6. Improve the level and quality of data collected for decision-making purposes.
7. Ensure that resources are channeled into the most productive activities.
8. Strengthen the institutional and regulatory capacity of public sector entities for promoting private sector activities

## 10. PROJECTED OUTCOMES GOVERNING PROGRAM 2020 – 2024

The overall objective of the Governing Program 2020-2024 is to achieve the holistic and sustainable development of St. Maarten by directing the Country's available resources towards achieving five **broad RESULTS/GOALS**. This to achieve the vision of this Governing Program; *“St. Maarten is a country with a strong multi-pillar economy - where opportunities exist which empower each citizen to realize their strength to progress at all levels - a place where EVERY DREAM CAN BE ACHIEVED!”*

The program is guided by five (5) broad Results, outlined in strategic directions that Government will manage to achieve. The outlined objectives are geared towards the desired outcomes of this Governing Program 2020-2024, but are not limited to:

1. Average annual GDP growth of 3 percent;
2. An annual reduction in the rate of unemployment above 2.5 percent;
3. The annual rate of inflation not over 2 percent Inflation;
4. Increased exports of goods and services;
5. Tourism Master Plan with new strategies post COVID-19;
6. Improved investment climate through taxing policy;
7. Increased number of businesses and business activity;
8. Revised institutional framework to facilitate business operations;
9. Increased revenues to Government;
10. Reduced public debt;
11. Establishment of an Investment Promotion Agency and Small Business Support Organization;
12. Policy direction and implementation on the use of alternative energy;
13. The reduced operating cost for businesses;
14. Increased disposable income for the households;
15. More engagement of our Agricultural stakeholders and practice of the science within our educational institutions;
16. Increased capacity building opportunities;

## **11. The St. Maarten Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Trust Fund**

### **Trust Fund**

The Trust Fund was established in April 2018 through an Administrative Arrangement between the Government of the Netherlands and the World Bank in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. All projects, approved by the Council of Ministers of St. Maarten, are proposed to the Steering Committee of the Trust Fund. Once the Steering Committee approves funds, which are allocated and financed by the St. Maarten Trust Fund.

### **The Steering Committee of the Trust Fund**

In the Steering Committee of the Trust Fund, St. Maarten is represented on behalf of the Prime Minister, by Mr. Marcel Gumbs, the World Bank is represented through the region for Latin America and the Caribbean by Ms. Tahseen Sayed, and the Netherlands is represented by Mr. Frans Weekers on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior Affairs.

All decisions of the Steering Committee, including decisions on the approval of new projects, require **full consensus** among the three members. No project is financed without the agreement of all three parties. The Steering Committee can receive project proposals through each Steering Committee member, so a proposal can come from the Government of Sint Maarten, the Netherlands, or the World Bank. The Steering Committee selects projects based on the Strategic Framework of the Trust Fund and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (further: NRRP) of the Government of Sint Maarten.

### **NRPB (National Recovery Program Bureau)**

The NRPB opened its doors in early 2019 based on a Temporary National Ordinance, which was unanimously approved by Parliament in September 2018. The NRPB falls under the responsibility of the Minister of General Affairs and acts as a project implementation unit for most of the Trust Fund projects on St. Maarten.

The NRRP, This roadmap for the recovery of St. Maarten identifies over 2.3 billion USD in recovery and resilience needs, of which less than 25% is financed by the Trust Fund. Other needs require financing through other resources, if available.

### Procedures Trust Fund

- Once the Steering Committee approves a project by allocating a certain amount of funding to a project proposal, the preparation of this project can begin.
  - The normal timeframe for project preparation is at least one year.
- Once a project is prepared, a grant agreement is signed between the Government of Sint Maarten and the World Bank.
  - The implementation of a project can only begin once the requirements of the grant agreement, the so-called effectiveness conditions, are fulfilled.
  - The normal timeline for the implementation of a project is 2 to 5 years, with limited spending of funds in the first year of implementation.

### World Bank

All projects require preparation under the standard World Bank Rules for Investment Projects. This to the extent that if these rules are not adhered to, a project can be halted, and the Government of Sint Maarten will be obliged to repay incurred project costs.

To date, the Government of Sint Maarten has seven (7) projects under implementation and the Steering Committee has approved funding for the preparation of eight additional projects.

The total amount of allocated funding by the Steering Committee is **465.22 million USD**, of which **USD 249.1 million**: allocated for projects under implementation and **USD 174 million**: allocated for projects under preparation.

In total, the Netherlands has committed a maximum amount of **470 million Euros** to the Trust Fund, of which **USD 305 million** has already been transferred to the World Bank.

Taking the exchange rates and account costs, into consideration, at the expense of the World Bank as well as the investment income that is being generated by the Trust Fund, a significant amount of funds of more than **USD 120 million** is still available for allocations by the Steering Committee to future projects.

For more detailed information on the financial side of the Trust Fund, I kindly refer readers to the Annual Report of the Trust Fund, which can be found on the website of the Trust Fund ([Sintmaartenrecovery.org](http://Sintmaartenrecovery.org)).

The following five projects are currently being implemented by the NRPB:

1. Emergency Recovery Project 1 (ERP1)
2. The Emergency Income Support and Training Project (EISTP)
3. The Emergency Debris Management Project (EDMP)
4. The Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project
5. The Enterprise Support Project

### Emergency Recovery Project 1

Emergency Recovery Project 1 has an envelope of USD 55.2 million for 5 years and started in July 2018. The main objective of this first project is to contribute to St. Maarten's immediate emergency recovery

needs and to strengthen institutional capacity to manage recovery and reconstruction through the establishment of the NRPB.

This project supports all Ministries, GEBE, and the Sint Maarten Housing Development Foundation. Priority activities under this project include support to emergency services (fire, police, and ambulance), repair of public buildings where repairs were not financed by insurance payouts to the Government, as well as a social and private home repair program.

Additional Financing of \$40M (with the possibility of an additional \$5M subject to funding availability) was approved by the Steering Committee on September 8, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, home repairs (phase 2) began in July 2020, all other works have resumed with the COVID-19 mitigation measures and guidelines in place. Implementation of some activities remains limited by persistent challenges due to immigration policies on external firms and consultants who provide capacity support.

To date, this project has completed repairs to over 300 social apartment units and private homes completed a large portion of the necessary repairs and upgrades to the police stations, concluded the repairs to the Meteorological Services Radiosonde Building, and provided emergency and communication equipment for the Fire Department to mention a few of the many activities under this project.

### **Emergency Income Support and Training Project (EISTP)**

The second project under implementation by the NRPB is the Emergency Income Support and Training Project, which is implemented together with the Sint Maarten Training Foundation (SMTF).

***This project has provided income support, job training, health insurance, and transportation allowances to more than 1800 beneficiaries over the past two years.***

Also, the project will finance the development of a social registry system within the Ministry of VSA. The available envelope for this project is **USD 22.5 million**, of which over 85% has been disbursed. A request for an extension of the training program with SMTF beyond the current closing date of September 2020 was submitted but was **unfortunately not** approved by the Steering Committee.

### **Emergency Debris Management Project**

The Emergency Debris Management Project has an envelope of **25 million USD** for an initial three years. This third project started in February 2019 to manage debris from hurricanes and reconstruction activities.

Priority activities under this project include the removal of car wrecks, the fire suppression on the landfill, the removal of shipwrecks from the Simpson Bay Lagoon, and improved vector control. Initial results include the procurement of Alternative Daily Cover material and supply equipment, which has helped to suppress surface fires on the landfill, as well as the delivery of heavy equipment for the daily management of the landfill by the Ministry VROMI, including a bulldozer and a front loader that is presently being shipped to St Maarten.

### **Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project**

The fourth project under implementation is the Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project, which is financed by insurance proceeds, a loan of the European Investment Bank of USD 50 million, and a grant from the Trust Fund of 72 million USD which is on-lend by the Government of Sint Maarten to the Airport.

The objective of this project is to restore the passenger capacity of PJIAE to pre-Irma levels with improved resilience towards hurricanes. This project will be implemented by PJIAE together with the NRPB.

### **Enterprise Support Project**

The fifth project is the Enterprise Support Project for which an envelope of **35 million USD** will be available for the next four years. The objective of this project is to support the recovery of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises through direct financial assistance.

This project became effective only a month ago and the project team has just started working on implementation. More information on this project will become available in the coming months.

### ***Hospital Resiliency & Preparedness Project***

The other two projects under implementation are the Hospital Resiliency & Preparedness Project and the Red Cross Roof Repair Project. **These projects are not implemented by the NRPB.**

The Trust Fund has provided a **grant of USD 25 million** to the Hospital for the strengthening of the existing building and the co-financing of the new hospital facility. **This grant is implemented by the Sint Maarten Medical Center** itself.

### ***Red Cross Roof Repair Project***

The final project under implementation is the Red Cross Roof Repair Project, which is implemented by Red Cross Netherlands.

This relatively small project of **USD 3.6 million** has started recently and serves to continue the existing Roof Repair Program of Red Cross Netherlands on Sint Maarten.

### **Projects under preparation**

In addition to the projects under implementation, there are five projects under preparation. These projects are currently being prepared, project preparation grants are signed before starting implementation.

The eight projects under preparation are:

1. The Digital Government Transformation Project,
2. The Solid Waste Management and Environmental Improvement Project,
3. The Fostering Resilient Learning Project,
4. The Civil Society Partnership Facility,
5. The Child Protection and Development Project

### **Digital Government Transformation Project**

The digital government transformation project is expected to have **an estimated budget of 15 million USD**, to enhance the access, efficiency, and resilience of selected administrative public services for citizens and businesses on St. Maarten. This project is prepared by the Ministry of General Affairs together with the NRPB.

### **The Solid Waste Management and Environmental Improvement Project**

The Solid Waste Management and Environmental Improvement Project are expected to have **an envelope of at least 35 million USD**. This project is closely linked to the Emergency Debris Management



Project and aims to contribute to the environmental improvement of Sint Maarten's solid waste management. This project is prepared by the NRPB and the Ministry of VROMI and VSA.

#### **Fostering Resilient Learning Project**

The Fostering Resilient Learning Project will have a **maximum budget of 30 million USD**. The project objectives are to reconstruct two schools and a new library building. Also, the project will implement a component that aims at strengthening the management and resilience of the education system. The project is prepared by the Ministry of ECYS with the support of the NRPB.

#### **Civil Society Partnership Facility**

The Civil Society Partnership Facility is prepared by VNGI International with the support of the NRPB. This project will have **an envelope of 7.2 million USD** to improve civil society organizations' capacity to support reconstruction and resilience activities. This project became official with the finalization of the Quick Win Rounds. A virtual awards ceremony for recipient grantees was conducted on November 18, 2020. Out of 33 grant proposals that were reviewed, 12 grants were approved and \$452,000 will be disbursed to the 12 winners of the Quick Win Rounds.

#### **Child Protection and Development Project**

The sixth project under preparation is the Child Protection and Development Project, which is prepared by UNICEF Nederland together with the Ministry of ECYS. The project has **an allocated budget of 5 million USD** and will focus on strengthening the capacity of school communities. This enabled them to respond to physical damages and emotional impacts, as well as addressing child protection needs caused by natural disasters. This project is a component of the **Fostering Resilient Learning Project**.

ANNEX 1: SECTOR- EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH, AND SPORT

<b>GOVERNING PROGRAM 2020-2024 MATRIX</b>	
SECTOR: EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH, AND SPORT	
Sector sub-Area	Strategic Interventions
<b>Education</b>	Transform, monitor, and evaluate the education system by implementing new policies
	Digitalize the education system
	Ensure that teachers and staff have the competencies to teach and coach following innovative and digital teaching methods
	Encourage and support the provision of requisite human resource development by both private and public sectors
	Support efforts to train and develop employees for the telecommunication sector
	Work closely with other Government departments in creating a program where all schools are provided with free Internet for education purposes
	Encourage and support the provision of requisite human resource development by both private and public sectors, and through opportunities for life-long learning provided by distance education
	Promote best practices and increase training opportunities to enhance productivity
	Develop programs to train the tourism sector to master multiple languages
	Develop and expand continuous capacity building programs for workers
	Fulfill labor needs through education: Provide beginner, intermediate, and advanced skills training to create long-term decent-paying jobs.
<b>Culture</b>	Promote a strong shared cultural identity through increased awareness and recognition of the freedom of expression, national symbols, national pride, cultural diversity, and tolerance
	Increase and improve the Country's Cultural Infrastructure
	Ensure that St. Maarten's culture, creative arts, heritage, cultural rights, and cultural diversity are optimally integrated within the educational curriculum and system
	Raise Awareness of and inspire pride in our Culture and Natural Heritage
	Support cultural activities and creative industries to generate employment, further diversify the economy, and strengthen our sustainability as an island
Actively protect and promote the natural, tangible, and intangible cultural heritage of St. Maarten	
<b>Youth</b>	Develop and implement an Integrated Youth Development Policy and relevant laws and legislation together with all stakeholders - Enhance Youth Policy and Involvement
	Close strong and aligned partnerships with NGO's and youth organizations with sufficient knowledge and capacity to provide the necessary support to the youth

Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

	Execute Extracurricular Activities for the Youth
	Aid in the reduction of youth unemployment through better synchronization of the qualifications and skills of the youth of St. Maarten with the labor market
	Expand Collaboration with other Ministries to create policy aimed at the Protection of Children and Youth
	Develop and maintain supportive communities that nurture the growth of the youth with a focus on youth with high-risk behavior
	Facilitate that more young persons are informed on the topics of reproductive health, healthy eating habits, and healthy lifestyles
<b>Sport</b>	Establish as Government’s position that sports development is essential as sports play an important role in the nation-building process by enriching lives and by further fostering civic pride and community identity. A structured and professional approach to nation-building in educational curriculum for first and secondary education and culture, youth, and sports programs
	Develop and execute a comprehensive sports policy with the emphasis on access for all, focusing on making it possible for all citizens, regardless of their physical ability, financial status, or age to participate in sports activities, whether recreational or competitive
	Support Sports and Recreation Development
	Diversification: An increased awareness to promote sports tourism as a niche market of Tourism
	Networks of support for talented persons are established for promoting careers in sports and for ensuring quality representation, participation regionally and internationally of St. Maarten
	Encourage cooperation between the public and private sectors by offering tax breaks for corporate sponsorships and support of school sports programs and national teams
	Safe, adequate, and qualified sports facilities (according to international standards) are available for all residents of St. Maarten
	c. Increase Old Age Pensions for the elderly
	d. Conduct a study to determine a liveable wage
	<b>Policy and Programs</b>
	a. Work on government policies to provide better support to NGOs
	b. Promote community volunteer and outreach programs
	c. Create volunteer programs where civil servants can allocate one day a month to their community, thereby encouraging residents of those communities to also play a role in their communities
	d. Funding for the training of community councils which play a major role in improving their communities
	<b>Incentives</b>
	a. Encourage community action through recognition and awards, such as a “Community Volunteer Award”

Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

b. Create incentives to promote community volunteering and national service
---

c. Appoint District Inspectors chosen from respected community leaders and charged with overseeing each district's general health needs
---

ANNEX 2: SECTOR- HEALTH, COMMUNITY & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR

<b>GOVERNING PROGRAM 2020-2024 MATRIX</b>	
SECTOR: HEALTH, COMMUNITY & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR	
Sector sub-Area	Strategic Interventions
<b>Health System</b>	<b><i>Health Care Reform</i></b>
	a. Define the level of healthcare for St. Maarten
	b. Draft the healthcare vision and legislation
	c. Revise the Healthcare Advisory Council (Health Board)
	d. Improve the medical referrals process by establishing a Medical Bureau
	e. Stimulate cooperation and partnerships within the Health sector
	f. Support the upgrading of medical professionals and staff, and service delivery, through collaboration with the American University of the Caribbean and other local and regional institutions
	g. Stimulate healthy living and wellbeing for all residents
	h. Introduce Health Information Systems - Manage the "flow" of healthcare information
	i. Adherence and (international) rights and obligations to a healthy and safe society.
	<b><i>Health Care Infrastructure</i></b>
	a. Build an adequate Mental Health facility
	b. Build a General Hospital
	c. Institute a rehabilitation center as part of the Hospital
	d. Establish a high-security psychiatric department (PAAS)
	<b><i>Health Care Package</i></b>
	1. Introduce a basic health care package for all citizens (universal health coverage)
	2. Determine supplemental health care packages
	3. Implement additional healthcare programs
	4. Regulate the financing of healthcare
	5. Lower prescriptions drug cost
	<b><i>Sustainable Quality Health Care</i></b>
	1. Amend the legislation and policy governing the qualification of healthcare workers (Admission requirements)
	2. Implement a joint training program between the St. Maarten Medical Center and the American University of the Caribbean
	3. Implement a healthcare certification program (St. Maarten version of BIG)
	4. Review the registration of healthcare workers

	5. Attract healthcare professionals in line with the needs
	6. Create the right environment and conditions to attract local medical professionals currently residing/working in other countries back home
	7. Strengthen the Mother and Child program (maternity care)
<b>Community and Comprehensive Social Care</b>	<b><i>Sustainable Living</i></b>
	a. Implement legislation and policies in the Social Development sector
	b. Increase pension benefits, generally
	c. Increase Old Age Pensions for the elderly
	d. Conduct a study to determine a liveable wage
	<b><i>Policy and Programs</i></b>
	a. Work on government policies to provide better support to NGOs
	b. Promote Community volunteer and outreach programs
	c. Create volunteer programs where civil servants can allocate one day a month to their community, thereby encouraging residents of those communities to also play a role in their communities
	d. Funding for the training of community councils which play a major role in improving their communities
	<b><i>Incentives</i></b>
	a. Encourage community action through recognition and awards, such as a “Community Volunteer Award”
	b. Create incentives to promote community volunteering and national service
	c. Appoint District Inspectors chosen from respected community leaders and charged with overseeing each district’s general health needs.
<b>Labour</b>	<b><i>Regulatory Environment</i></b>
	a. Implement Labour Legislation and Policy
	b. Implement counterpart policy
	c. Finalize the National Ordinance to stop the abuse of short-term labor agreements
	d. Make the Labour Law more flexible
	e. Review the minimum wage
	f. Enforce Labour inspection policies
	g. Finalize legislation for the Youth Employment Fund and execute the Youth Employment Fund Program
<b><i>Research and Collaboration</i></b>	

Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

<p>a. Conduct periodic research Promote collaboration between the labor, education, and immigration departments for a need’s assessment of our labor market, and adjust our education and job training programs to meet our labor needs</p>
<p>b. Foster collaboration between the Labour and Education departments to improve the facilitation of employment for educated persons</p>
<p>c. Maintain a database that links our business community with professionals and students residing and/or studying locally and abroad</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Job Opportunities</i></b></p>
<p>a. Facilitate the Creation of Employment Opportunities</p>
<p>b. Provide beginner, intermediate, and advanced skills training to create long-term decent</p>
<p>c. Provide opportunities for continuing education to train and re-educate the labor market, and offer Second Chance education opportunities paying jobs</p>
<p>d. Strengthen competencies and mentoring of staff to ensure the delivery of the services and products</p>
<p>e. Provide tax incentives for businesses willing to hire and train the registered unemployed</p>
<p>f. Fulfil Labour Needs through Education</p>
<p>g. Adapt the education curriculum to meet labor market needs.</p>

ANNEX 3: SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESILIENCE

GOVERNING PROGRAM 2020-2024 MATRIX	
SECTOR: SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESILIENCE	
Sector sub-Area	Strategic Interventions
<b>Product Development and Tourism Revitalization</b>	1. Development of the Tourism and travel industry Master Plan to reflect the new norm within the industry
	2. Encourage viable FDIs in the redeveloped tourism product – and capitalize on the membership in the <i>Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA)</i>
	3. Create alternative traveler’s experience (possibly virtual) utilizing modern technology and formulate new marketing strategies. Establish the St. Maarten Tourism Authority
	4. Expand the Tourism Footprint (carbon footprint): Encourage and promote tourism products that protect the environment
	5. Increase the awareness of the value and the offering of the Industry through continuous promotion and engagement both locally and abroad
	6. Conversion programs of cruise tourism to stay over-tourism
	7. Facilitate the development of quality small hotels
	8. tax incentives and government assistance
	9. legislation for protection and sustainability
	10. Strengthen sectoral linkages with tourism e.g. Stimulate agriculture initiatives
	11. Develop programs to train the tourism sector stakeholders to master multiple languages
	12. Stimulate the Maritime sector as the initial sector to open up Tourism
	13. Stimulate the Yachting industry to kick start the “cruise” industry
	14. Discuss what travel protocol needs to be in place to receive the potential yachting passengers
	15. Stimulate the growth of the marine industry - expansion of their services to promote other marine services e.g. boat repair to generate employment
	Re-establish the funding of the training of local youths in the skills of boat repair, mechanics, electricians, electronic experts, fiber technicians.
<b>Economic Diversification and Investment</b>	<b>Diversification</b>
	1. Undertake a study to determine viable diversification sector e.g.:
	a. Maritime services
	b. Agribusiness
	c. Financial services
	d. Light manufacturing
	2. Explore Medical Tourism possibilities & the Creating of a Medical City for St. Maarten
3. Improve, enhance and promote St. Maarten’s hub and distribution function in the region	



	4. Promote Local Agribusiness for self-sustenance, via food security, community employment, and new revenue stream
	5. Examine the possibility of renewable energy businesses and Promote the use of renewable energy in the business sector
	6. Improved the Telecom Infrastructure
	7. Explore opportunities offered by developments in information technology and artificial and business intelligence
	<b>Investment Stimulation</b>
	1. Establishment of an Investment Promotion Agency to support and guide Investors
	2. Improve institutional capacity in investment and trade promotions
	3. Strengthen investment climate and promote investment opportunities, resulting in a business climate that encourages competitive businesses to start and grow
	4. Create a conducive investment climate for investors
	5. Review of Investment Promotion Incentive Packages for Investors, Local and Foreign
	6. Ensure efficient Investment Promotion Measures
	7. Produce an investment guide and promotional Material
	8. Improvement Data quality and collection
	9. Strengthen public and private sector partnerships & Facilitate increased private sector representation in regional and global settings.
	10. Optimize cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and other Business Associations
<b>An efficient and enabling environment for the businesses</b>	<b>Regulatory Framework</b>
	1. Enact legislation for the protection and sustainability of Small Businesses
	2. Strengthen the institutional and regulatory capacity of public sector entities for promoting private sector - SME development.
	3. Promote improved access to affordable financing
	4. Provide efficient access to data for businesses
	5. Stimulate the use of innovation and ICT in SMEs
	<b>Business Enabling Framework</b>
	1. Simplify procedures of doing business
	2. Regulate and facilitate that Internet and broadcast is affordable for everybody
	3. Create a conducive investment climate for foreign investors – FDI for outsourcing purposes
	4. Stimulate local agribusinesses as a complement to the tourism sector
	5. Entrepreneurship & Innovation Policy
	a. Facilitate Entrepreneurship; tax incentives and government assistance to small local businesses and stimulate SME’s productive interest in the <u>creative industry</u>

b. support initiatives with an emphasis on promoting and stimulating entrepreneurship and small business development
c. Promote improved access to affordable financing for SMEs
d. Enact the SME policy framework to aid the SME sector and its entities' survival.
e. Stimulate SME's productive interest in the creative industry e.g. tax incentives and government assistance.
f. Stimulate the use of innovation and ICT in SMEs.
g. Promote innovation and productivity at all levels within the private sector in general
h. Regulate and facilitate that Internet and broadcast is affordable for SMEs
<b>Partnership</b>
1. Strengthen public and private sector partnerships
2. Facilitate increased private sector representation in regional and global settings.
3. Optimize cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce
<b>Trade &amp; Export Strategy</b>
1. Further develop the services sector for trade purposes
2. Establish Financing possibilities for businesses, with preferential treatment to business with export potential and new sector development

ANNEX 4: DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINANCIAL SECTOR

GOVERNING PROGRAM 2020-2024 MATRIX	
SECTOR: DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINANCIAL SECTOR	
Sector sub-Area	Strategic Interventions
<b>Financial literacy &amp; legislation</b>	1. Promote the development, regulating, and modernizing of the non-banking financial sector in the context of financial market efficiency.
	2. Develop a ‘doing business’ strategy for St. Maarten
	3. Regulate the gaming industry.
	4. Expand the financial sector in keeping up with international standards.
	5. Develop a financial literacy strategy.
	6. Review legislative and institutional frameworks to facilitate the development of the international financial services sector.
	7. Examine and expand the range of financial assets in which St. Maartener’s at home and abroad can invest.
	8. Encourage the growth of capital markets.
	9. Increased revenue through fiscal reform
<b>Budget</b>	1. Present a realistic and well-supported budget critical for the proper governance of St. Maarten, reflecting the needs for governing the island with evidence of the sources of support for the budget.
	2. Present a budget that allows for both economic growth and the increased needs related to the overall well-being of the people of St. Maarten e.g. health and social services and stimulating of SMEs.
<b>Tax Assessment and Collection</b>	1. Restructure the present tax assessment and collection process to make it more manageable and efficient
	2. Reduce the complexity of the present tax assessment and collection process thereby making it less complicated and less expensive while increasing compliance
<b>Tax Structure</b>	1. A simplification and restructuring of the tax system is a priority
	2. Authorize a study aimed at revising and simplifying the tax laws as a matter of priority
	3. Implement small business tax-breaks for small business in sectors of the economy, designated by the Government, for orderly growth in sectors that are lagging within the island Offer information sessions, regularly, on tax compliance and tax filing, to ensure that taxpayers know their rights and obligations as far as taxes are concerned
	4. Maintain assurances and guarantees to ensure ongoing social security obligations
	5. Implement a study of Government-owned corporations to determine the level of efficiency under which they operate and to determine to what extent the profits of these corporations could be utilized within the adjusted tax structure

Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

	6. Ensure that the full impact of dollarization and its ramifications are understood and made known to the public in general
<b>Central Bank of Curaçao and St. Maarten</b>	1. Conduct a study on the durability of the Antillean guilder and provide possible recommendation
	2. Improve the functioning of the bank
	3. Transform the local office into a full-fledged branch per the Slotverklaring

ANNEX 5: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNING PROGRAM 2020-2024 MATRIX	
SECTOR: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT	
Sector sub-Area	Strategic Interventions
<b>Public Roads, Sewage network &amp; water draining</b>	<b>Public Roads</b>
	1. Implement the Comprehensive Road Network Plan to open-up and connect all districts and neighborhoods
	2. Realize Dutch Quarter (co-financing), commitment 10th EDF and upgrade of the A. Th. Illidge Road - D.Q. Phase One
	3. Resurface all major roadways, instead of constant patching
	4. Conduct structural maintenance on main roads
	5. Continue with the hard surfacing of dirt roads
	6. Resume execution of the road network and public infrastructure development plan
	7. Ensure the completion of the underground utility cabling project
	<b>Expansion of the Sewage Network</b>
	1. Initiate drafting a Master Plan for sewage management
	2. Construct additional sewage plants
	3. Connect remaining neighborhoods to develop a public sewage system
	4. Work together with property owners to clean up areas with sewage, running water, and garbage disposal challenges
	<b>Management of Water Drainage</b>
	1. Build water catchments to alleviate flooding in vulnerable areas
	2. Secure proper drainage in hillside areas
	3. Ensure hard surfacing of trenches
4. Pave additional dirt roads	
5. Connect water waste from homes to central sewage systems	
<b>Telecommunication Network, Enabling Framework &amp; Infrastructure</b>	1. Ensure the completion of the underground utility cabling project
	2. Regulate the infrastructure network for utility companies
	3. Review St. Maarten Telecommunication structure, infrastructure, and policies
	4. Improve Telecom and the Internet accessibility, connectivity, variety, and cost in collaboration with Bureau Telecommunication and Post
	5. Strengthen the regulatory framework of the information and telecommunications services sector
	6. Stimulate Mobile network evolution 4G/Regulate the cost of connectivity
	7. Incorporate emerging technologies and communications into St. Maarten's outlook and strategy towards development

	8. Formulate and implement a focused national policy for information and communication technology interventions
	9. Study and update, in conjunction with other Government departments, the necessary legislation
	10. Establish the Liberalization of the Telecommunication Market
	<b><i>A “Knowledge-Based Society” for all citizens</i></b>
	1. Create a Knowledge hub
	2. Enhance inflows of technology into the economy through the establishment of knowledge parks and Centres of Excellence
	3. Introduce a SMART IT market
	4. Establish a comprehensive e-government system
	5. Facilitate high-speed internet for medical institutions and schools
	<b><i>Leverages our Unique Position within the Caribbean</i></b>
	1. Strengthen St. Maarten as a regional logistic hub
	2. Develop strong and mutually cooperative relations with French Saint Martin
	3. Maximize the benefits from our strategic position to develop new strategic partnerships.
	4. Improve Maritime and Airport Facilities, Services, and Safety to Strengthen the Hub Position of St. Maarten
	5. Support the tourism function by encouraging promotional distribution through the Internet, e-commerce, and other emergent technologies and utilize monitoring technologies
<b>Alternative Energy</b>	1. Promote Business model: Transform GEBE from energy provider to energy manager by using alternative energy such as solar, and waste-to-energy conversion
	2. Pursue legislation for the Energy-Buy-Back Policy
	3. Implement a revised Energy Policy Plan to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and stimulating Sustainable and Renewable Energy production.
	4. Encourage research and exploration of renewable sources of energy.
	5. Develop a legislative framework to promote energy efficiency.
	6. Encourage production and use of renewable forms of energy.
	7. Establish an energy conservation plan.
	8. Amend the electricity concession where necessary
	9. Build a fuel farm
	10. Incentivize businesses to adapt to the use of an alternative source of energy-reducing import bill
	11. Promote the use of Green Energy Production of Electricity and Smart Water Consumption
	12. Implement the use of Green Energy at all government-owned buildings, schools, sport and art facilities, and all Government-owned companies

## Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

13. Place solar panels at parking locations to protect parked cars and provide power to the GEBE grid
14. Partnerships with Saint Martin and neighboring islands
15. Investigate the possibilities of partnering where generation and distribution of renewable energy.
16. Investors and Environmental Protection Organizations

ANNEX 6: NATIONAL SECURITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

<b>GOVERNING PROGRAM 2020-2024 MATRIX</b>	
<b>SECTOR: NATIONAL SECURITY &amp; GOOD GOVERNANCE</b>	
<b>Sector sub-Area</b>	<b>Strategic Interventions</b>
<b>Environment and reduced Climate Change</b>	<b><i>Environment</i></b>
	1. Develop appropriate legislative and regulatory framework, for proper environmental management, and institutional systems for responding and mitigating effects of climate change
	2. Build resilience to minimize damage to settlement and infrastructure.
	3. Minimize damage to beach and shoreline integrity and marine ecosystems-wetlands area.
	4. Minimize the negative impact of climate change on agriculture and human health.
	5. Allocation of a Disaster/Business Recovery Fund
	6. Increase public awareness concerning climate change issues.
	<b><i>Climate Change</i></b>
	1. Develop appropriate legislative and regulatory framework, for proper environmental management, and institutional systems for responding to and mitigating effects of climate change.
	2. Establishment of a comprehensive disaster management plan
	3. Increase public awareness concerning climate change issues.
	4. Build resilience to minimize damage to settlement and infrastructure.
	5. Minimize damage to beach and shoreline integrity and marine ecosystems-wetlands area.
	6. Increased use of technology to minimize the effects of climate change on key economic sectors.
7. Minimize the negative impact of climate change on agriculture and human health.	
<b>Strengthen Food and Nutrition Security</b>	<b><i>Regulatory Framework &amp; Infrastructure</i></b>
	1. Develop a sustainable agricultural policy to maximize the potential of farming and fishing
	2. Create a Department of agriculture, husbandry and within the Government structure
	3. Draft Policies to assist with locally grown produce, marketing, and distribution
	4. Formulate and Oversee the implementation of the food security policies
	5. Allocate land for community gardens and exploitation of agriculture
	6. Re-establish agriculture station to Stimulate agriculture production
	7. Create an effective policy formulation mechanism and improve the policy framework for a modernized agricultural development



	a. Aqua and Hydroponics systems
	b. Local and District Markets
	<b>Research &amp; Data collection</b>
	1. Undertake a study as to the technological form of agribusiness that can be adopted in St. Maarten
	2. Improve data collection by measuring various dimensions of food insecurity (quality of food, shortage of food, and nutritional status)
	3. Encourage the sustainable use of land, forestry, and marine resources and examine the opportunities for the development of the livestock sector and fishery
	4. Evaluate the policies and actions to assess their impact on Agribusiness
	<b>Marketing strategies</b>
	1. Strengthen sectoral linkages with tourism e.g. Stimulate agriculture initiatives
	2. Promote agriculture awareness practices e.g. "back yard" gardening
	3. Increase youth involvement in agriculture, especially through agricultural training at the school level
	4. Provide tax incentives for businesses willing to hire and train the registered unemployed using innovative technology in the Agri-business industry
	5. Diversify our Economy via the promotion of Culture, Agriculture, and Nature related businesses
	<b>Partnerships</b>
	1. Stimulate private sector investment in the agricultural sector and encourage public-private partnership
	2. Leasing of property within the regions for agricultural purposes
	3. Encourage the sustainable use of land, forestry, and marine resources and examine the opportunities for the development of the livestock sector
<b>National Security</b>	<b>Legislation - Internal &amp; Kingdom Relations &amp; Regional Collaboration</b>
	1. Vetting and ratifying of the National Development Plan
	2. Regional collaboration on various issues e.g. custodial/prison, medical/ health/
	3. Establish an internal committee for the continuous review of existing legislation to update legislation where needed
	4. Review all organic laws
	5. Review the Kingdom Laws
	6. Establish a partnership with the Legislative Academy in the Netherlands (Wetgevingsacademie)
	7. Review the Electoral law and policies
	<b>Records &amp; Information Management - Human resources (Personnel)</b>
	1. Revamping personnel
	2. Upgrade the information management process to ensure that all documentation is synchronized, thereby guaranteeing a smooth flow of information.
	3. Integrate information systems to provide better service to businesses and the community.
	4. Further development of e-government.

Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

	5. Improve the public administration system by simplifying and streamlining the bureaucratic processes, making them more user-friendly and easier for the average person to understand.
	6. Improve Government productivity by establishing standards and deadlines by which services and information provided to citizens must be met.
	<b><i>Immigration-related</i></b>
	1. Improve the immigration information system to create facts for policy decisions
	2. Investigate the possibility of offering a temporary, short-term work and residence permit system Establish clear, unbiased immigration policies for permits, renewals, and amendments
	3. Improve the time factor on procedures for application review and response by simplifying and reducing the level and detail of the bureaucratic process involved in the granting of work and residence permits
	4. Together with PJIA better facilitate and improve the facilities for passengers with challenges in immigration (holding area)
	5. Reinstating the Simpson Bay Facilities as a holding-center for undocumented individuals
	6. Ensure that the immigration policy accommodates the employment of qualified locals first while providing foreign labor were not locally available
	7. Implement an extensive and in-depth review of the immigration function based on a continuous review of the need for non-locally available labor
	<b><i>Border Control related</i></b>
	1. Develop National security plan – border control & Immigration/ residency matters
	2. Improve coordination with Saint Martin authorities to combat cross-border crime (falls under the Governor)
	3. Work with Kingdom authorities in reviewing the Dutch language requirement for naturalization
	4. Strengthening the Customs department with, among other things, training and increase of manpower
	5. Strengthen cooperation between Customs and immigration & Border Control
	6. Combat human trafficking
	7. Implement joint border control at PJIA/ the French-Dutch treaty
	8. Finalize demarcation of Sea borders
	9. Introduce Police Cooperation Treaty
	10. Higher police visibility in various districts. More police vehicles
	<b><i>Other relevant matters of high priority</i></b>
	1. Diplomat in Trinidad & Tobago ref. Caribbean Financial Action Task Force ( <b>CFATF</b> )/ money laundering
	2. Mitigating youth delinquency
	3. Prison – building a new one
<b>Good Governance</b>	<b><i>Macroeconomic Stability</i></b>
	1. Regulate and enforce the Financial and Banking Regulations
	2. Implementation of sound Fiscal and Financial Policies, to:

## Stimulating Sustainable Economic Development & Prosperity

a. <i>spur economic activities;</i>
b. <i>increase disposable income to the Household;</i>
c. <i>Increase Government revenue</i>
d. <i>Incentivize Investors (Both local and foreign)</i>
3. Strengthening tax administration capabilities
4. Improve the Public sector efficiency - Reduce the costs of doing business in St. Maarten through:
a. improved service delivery
b. simplified procedures of doing business
5. Establish a comprehensive e-Government System
6. Improve the level and quality of data collected for decision-making purposes.
7. Ensure that resources are channeled into the most productive activities.
8. Strengthen the institutional and regulatory capacity of public sector entities for promoting private sector activities