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SINT MAARTEN
Reconstruction, Recovery, and Resilience Trust Fund



SintMaarten TRUST FUND

Government of the Netherlands

WORLD BANK GROUP

SINT MAARTEN

Reconstruction, Recovery, and Resilience Trust Fund

ANNUAL REPORT

January 1–December 31, 2024

Prepared by

Sint Maarten Trust Fund Secretariat
Caribbean Country Management Unit
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World Bank

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Acronyms

AF	Additional Financing
ATRP	Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project
BE	Bank-Executed
CG	Clinical Guidelines
CLB	Charles Leopold Bell
CoG	Court of Guardianship
COM	Council of Ministers
CPG	Clinical Practice Guideline
CRPP	Child Resilience and Protection Project
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSPFRP	Civil Society Partnership Facility for Resilience Project
CMU	Country Management Unit
DLT	Digital Leadership Team
DRF	Disaster Reserve Fund
EA	Enterprise Architecture
EDMP	Emergency Debris Management Project
EDP	Emergency Disaster Preparedness Plan
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EP	Equipment Package
ERP I	Emergency Recovery Project I
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESP	Enterprise Support Project
FM	Financial Management
FRLP	Fostering Resilient Learning Project
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEBE	Sint Maarten Utility Company
GoSXM	Government of Sint Maarten
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
GWAN	Government-Wide Area Network
HRPP	Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness Project
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMHSP	Improving Mental Health Services Project
IT	Information Technology
L&D	Learning and Development
LRP	Livelihood Restoration Plan
MECYS	Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports
MHF	Mental Health Foundation
MMIS	Ministry Management Information System
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
MSWDS	Municipal Solid Waste Disposal Site
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NCPP	National Child Protection Program
NRPB	National Recovery Program Bureau
NRRP	National Recovery and Resilience Plan
PAP	Project Affected Population
PJIA	Princess Juliana International Airport
PJIAE	Princess Juliana International Airport Operating Company N.V.
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PDO	Project Development Objectives
POC	Project Oversight Committee
PMA	Programme Management and Administration
PPSP	Positive Parenting Support Program
PSC	Public Service Center
RAI	Resettlement Area of Impact
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
RE	Recipient-Executed
SEA/SH	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment
SML	Sister Marie Laurance
SMMC	Sint Maarten Medical Centre
SMWMP	Sint Maarten Wastewater Management Project
SPEAR	Sustaining Program Effectiveness and Advancing Resilient Government Capacity
STEP	Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement
SWM	Solid Waste Management
SSSD	Student Support Services Division
SXM TF	Sint Maarten Trust Fund
TEATT	Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunications
UNICEF NL	UNICEF The Netherlands
VNGI	VNG International (International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities)
VROMI	Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure
VSA	Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant

Acknowledgement

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Foreword

As we reflect on the year 2024, the Sint Maarten Reconstruction, Recovery, and Resilience Trust Fund continues meeting milestones which underscore the country's reconstruction and resilience efforts.

The approval of the Wastewater Management Project marked a crucial development for the island's infrastructure and environmental sustainability. Alongside this, the completion of the Disaster Reserve Fund option paper provided the Government of Sint Maarten with a vital tool to consider its options for disaster financing, offering both security and strategic foresight for future challenges.

The year also witnessed the opening of the Princess Juliana International Airport, a momentous occasion that not only celebrated resilience in the face of adversity but also set the stage for economic revitalization and enhanced tourism. Further, the inaugural Results Fair hosted in March 2024, offered an invaluable platform for knowledge exchange, drawing over 200 participants, and showcasing the substantial impact of the Trust Fund's projects on the community.

As we continue this important journey, the progress made in 2024 serves as a foundation for even greater accomplishments, and we remain committed to building a more resilient and sustainable future for Sint Maarten.

Lilia Burunciuc
Country Director, World Bank
Chair, Sint Maarten Trust Fund Steering Committee



Executive Summary

The 2024 Annual Report highlights the results, activities, and unaudited financial data of the Sint Maarten Reconstruction, Recovery, and Resilience Trust Fund (SXM TF) from January 1 to December 31, 2024. The Trust Fund Program supports Sint Maarten's reconstruction, recovery, and longer-term development priorities to strengthen its resilience to disasters based on building back better and sustainability principles. Since 2018 when the World Bank established the SXM TF, it has received €445.15 million (US$519.42 million) from the Government of the Netherlands. The SXM TF has supported 13 projects, with 10 active and 3 closed. The TF has committed US$452.7 million in total, with 69 percent disbursed since inception and US$47.7 million disbursed in 2024.

The SXM TF Program achieved notable milestones in 2024.

On November 14, 2024, the Princess Juliana International Airport reopened to great fanfare, with various upgrades to improve resilience against future storms and the passenger experience. The Sint Maarten Wastewater Management Project, an essential part of improving the island's infrastructure, public health, and environmental sustainability, was approved in August 2024. The Improving Mental Health Services Project secured crucial financial support for strengthening the mental health sector and building a new mental health facility. The World Bank completed critical Advisory Services and Analytics (ASA) to determine options for the Disaster Reserve Fund (DRF). This ASA gives the Government of Sint Maarten (GoSXM) a meaningful starting point for establishing a solid financial strategy against future disasters. The Child Resilience and Preparedness Project implemented by UNICEF the Netherlands (UNICEF-NL) successfully closed in December 2024 with the Government adopting its sustainability plan. The project successfully piloted the Violence Prevention Program in four schools and developed a strategic plan and multi annual work plan to support the establishment of the National Child Protection Program.

In 2024, Trust Fund projects continued to have tangible impact on Sint Maarteners.

The Enterprise Support Project partnered with the newly established Sint Maarten Entrepreneurship Center to deliver training programs for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and signed a cooperation agreement to ensure the sustainability of these efforts. Many new businesses benefited from the business coaching program, especially those needing more hands-on support post-disbursement. Similarly, the Civil Society Partnership Facility for Resilience Project provided crucial capacity-building support to local civil society organizations (CSOs), with many more of them reporting increased capacity for fiduciary management of grants compared to 2023. The project also expanded its training to include governance and social media use in response to local CSOs' needs. Moreover, the Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness Project made strides in completing the new hospital's final design, including the main building's basement, ground floor, and the Technical Building 1 structure. Additionally, the operational wastewater treatment plant now serves the existing hospital.

Implementation challenges during the year caused some projects to experience unanticipated delays.

The Municipal Solid Waste Disposal Site feasibility study under the Emergency Debris Management Project, essential for developing an optimal design and operational plan, was delayed due to contract negotiation difficulties, consultant's challenges in collecting data from the landfill site, and ongoing issues with the government's constrained technical and human resource capacity in implementing the waste sector institutional reform. The Digital Government Transformation and Fostering Resilient Learning Projects also experienced implementation delays related to procurement processes, difficulties obtaining contractors' working permits, and government transitions.

The Trust Fund Steering Committee provided extensive support as part of its governance role.

The Steering Committee monitored the progress of projects, advised implementing entities on unraveling implementation challenges that materialized, and endorsed new activities in the Trust Fund work plan. In 2024, the Steering Committee held four meetings, comprising two standing sessions in April and November and two extraordinary sessions, a technical session in June with the first administration of Prime Minister Luc Mercelina, and an extraordinary meeting in July to address the energy crisis.

Results, knowledge sharing, and capacity building were key areas of focus.

The March 2024 Country Portfolio Performance Review evaluated project performance and included a Results Fair, attracting over 200 participants and generating interest for future knowledge-sharing events. The World Bank facilitated a best practice exchange with Caribbean partners in collaboration with the Temporary Working Organization (TWO) in Curaçao on June 13, 2024, and hosted University of Aruba students at its Washington, D.C. headquarters on June 26, 2024. Efforts were made to advance the recommendations of the previous year's Sustainability and Resilience Initiative assessment, leading to the development of the pipeline Sustaining Program Effectiveness and Advancing Resilient Government Capacity Project (SPEAR) project. The project will address the structural issues in public sector capacity and procedures that would be gamechangers for sustaining Trust Fund investments. In addition, the project will provide the financing to establish the DRF and enhance National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB)'s operational effectiveness for the remaining program time frame.

The Trust Fund deepened its focus on results by empowering the Project Implementation Units (PIUs) in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) techniques.

The World Bank introduced the Geo-Enabling Initiative for Monitoring and Supervision (GEMS) to support PIUs in implementing remote monitoring and data collection tools. In June 2024, the World Bank trained PIUs in integrating GEMS into M&E processes, and in December 2024, the World Bank organized a virtual knowledge event, featuring case studies on GEMS use in several countries.

With three and a half years remaining, the program will prioritize the timely and effective completion of active projects.

Two ongoing projects, led by Princess Juliana International Airport Operating Company N.V. (PJIAE) and VNG International (VNGI), will complete activities and close. This period also offers the opportunity to ensure that GoSXM is well-positioned to sustain the Trust Fund's investments and outcomes beyond 2028. Strengthening the public sector's technical capacity, particularly through the SPEAR project, will empower several ministries to take the lead on Trust Fund projects.

In 2025, the SXM TF program will strengthen its portfolio with key priorities, including:

1.



Accelerating Implementation

Key projects like the mental health facility and wastewater management will proceed to full implementation, while the SPEAR project awaits World Bank approval, and two other projects will finalize and close.

2.



Enhancing Public Sector Capacity

The SPEAR project will improve public sector skills for sustained investment management and establish a Disaster Reserve Fund for future needs.

3.



Knowledge Sharing

Trust Fund partners will engage project beneficiaries and stakeholders to share their stories of impact and showcase successes.

4.



Improving Efficiency

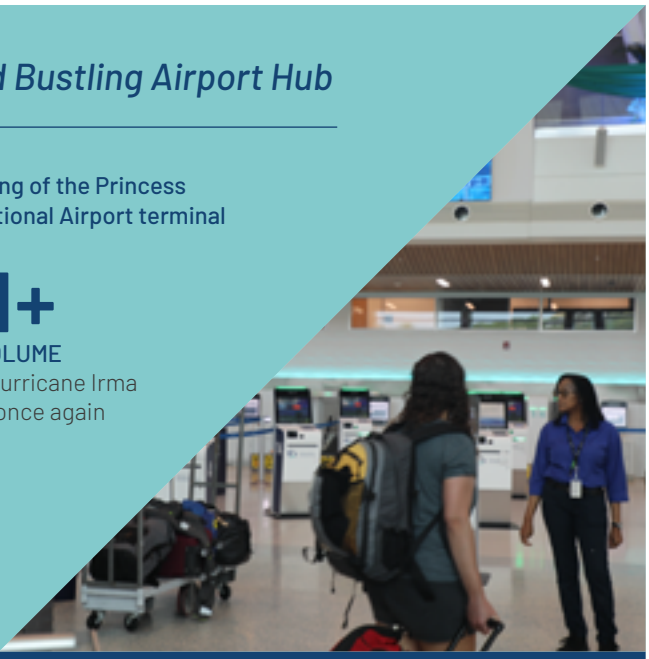
The World Bank will update the SXM TF Strategic Framework based on emerging priorities, enhancing outcome orientation.

Results at a Glance

Better and Bustling Airport Hub

Official reopening of the Princess Juliana International Airport terminal

2.5M+
PASSENGER VOLUME
matching pre-Hurricane Irma capacity levels once again





Empowered Small Businesses

289
MSMEs accessed
$19M
in affordable financing to fuel economic growth

119
women-owned or -operated MSMEs received
$6.8M
in loan packages

Lasting Community Impact

58
CSOs provided grants for 92 sub-projects
to support community, social, and arts initiatives

Sint Maarteners benefited from the CSO sub-projects
204%
of the 10,000 target

91% OF CSOs
improved their grant management capabilities, **compared to 62% in 2023**

67
training sessions
held to develop CSO staff skills, **exceeding the 16 target**

Revitalized Communities and Services

511
TOTAL HOMES REPAIRED, with 89% of beneficiaries satisfied with the quality

19
TOTAL SCHOOLS REPAIRED AND RENOVATED and handed over to their school boards

89.5%
OF HOUSEHOLDS NOW HAVE ELECTRICAL SERVICES RESILIENT TO HURRICANES

10
OPERATIONAL VEHICLES delivered to Sint Maarten's Fire and Ambulance Departments

139
METAL WRECKS COLLECTED AND PROCESSED for a cleaner, safer, and sustainable environment



Quality Health Care Advances

410
SMMC WORKERS RECEIVED TRAINING as part of learning and development plan

52
CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES in the SMMC database to ensure high-quality care



Strengthened Schools and Safety

Results of first country learning outcome assessment shared with stakeholders

23
EMERGENCY DRILL EXERCISES held in schools to strengthen disaster resilience

4 **SCHOOLS PILOTED THE POSITIVE SCHOOL CONNECTIONS PROGRAMME CURRICULUM** to improve school safety



1

Introduction and Context

Country Context

Sint Maarten is a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Caribbean. The country occupies the southern half of an island shared with the French overseas collectivity of Saint Martin. Spurred by economic development, the country's population has steadily grown over the past 30 years—an increase of 33 percent to an estimated 42,749 in 2023—making Sint Maarten one of the most densely populated countries in the Caribbean.

Sint Maarten is highly vulnerable to natural disasters and adverse climatic events due to its location within the hurricane belt. In addition to high winds, rainfall, and flooding as the principal risk factors, the country is also vulnerable to earthquakes. Coastal areas are exposed to flood risk from the rising sea level, storm surges, and potential tsunamis. Increased urbanization, climate change, and limited capacity in the country to build resilience add to its vulnerability to natural hazards.

For the past six decades, strong winds and hurricanes have repeatedly hit Sint Maarten. Due to the small size of the country, a single storm could impact the entire population directly. The World Bank estimated damages and losses related to Hurricane Irma in 2017 at US$1.38 billion and US$1.35 billion, respectively—about 129 percent and 126 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP)—and affecting 90 percent of all infrastructure and large parts of the natural environment.[1]

Sint Maarten is economically dependent on tourism. Restaurants, hotels, and other tourism-related sectors account for about 45 percent of the country's GDP. Tourism accounts for 73 percent of foreign exchange income, creating employment for approximately one-third of the employed population.[2] Sint Maarten primarily caters to cruise tourists, with the island's only deep-water port in Philipsburg, and about 80 percent of visitors to the island are short-stay cruise tourists.



1 St. Maarten: Development news, research, data | World Bank.
2 Sint Maarten Tourism Sector Recovery: Tourism Statistics Diagnostic 2020.

Macroeconomic Developments in 2024[3]

Sint Maarten's economy is interconnected with external factors, including shifting global trade dynamics, geopolitical tension, regional challenges, and severe climate events. Given the economy's small scale and high degree of openness, these factors may present challenges but also opportunities for the monetary union.

According to preliminary figures, Sint Maarten's real GDP grew by 3.1 percent in 2024. This is a downward revision of 0.4 percentage points due to the adverse effects of electricity disruptions throughout 2024 on productivity and overall economic growth. The completion of reconstruction works at the airport in November 2024, opening of an additional hotel in the first quarter of the year, and increase in exports that surpassed the higher import bill contributed to Sint Maarten's real GDP expansion in 2024.

The inflation rate for Sint Maarten was 3.1 percent in 2024. This estimate was raised by 0.3 percentage points compared to 2.8 percent in 2023. The higher than initially expected inflation slowed down consumer spending.

On the fiscal front, interest expenditures related to COVID-19 liquidity loans, which carried zero interest until October 2023, affected Sint Maarten's public finances in the monetary union during 2024. However, the Dutch State decided to lower the interest rate on these loans following the agreement in October 2024, between the GoSXM and the Centrale Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten on the resolution of the insurance company ENNIA. This adjustment will provide Sint Maarten with some budgetary relief in 2025 compared to 2024.

The GoSXM ran a deficit of 0.4 percent of GDP on its current budget in 2024 following a surplus of 0.5 percent of GDP in 2023 because the increase in expenditures outweighed the gain in revenues. The rise in expenditures stemmed primarily from higher spending on goods and services and the increase in interest expenses. Meanwhile, the higher revenues reflected an increase in tax revenues sustained by the growth in economic activity and implementation of measures to improve tax collection as outlined in the Country Package of Sint Maarten. The current budget deficit in 2024 is expected to shift to a surplus of 0.9 percent of GDP in 2025, which will gradually rise to 1.6 percent of GDP by 2028.

The public debt-to-GDP ratio is set to continue its downward trend across the monetary union over the forecast horizon. This is sustained by an increase in the nominal GDP level, moderated by a higher projected public debt stock. The latter primarily reflects borrowing for capital investments. Hence, the public debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to reach 37.7 percent in Sint Maarten by 2028.

3 The Centrale Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten publishes an Economic Bulletin that provides the bank's macroeconomic projections on economic growth, inflation, public finances, and the balance of payments. The cut-off date for statistical information published was October 31, 2024. See https://cdn.centralbank.cw/media/economic_bulletins_2024/20241218_economic_bulletin_december_2024.pdf



2

Program at a Glance

Trust Fund Establishment

Following Hurricane Irma in 2017, the Kingdom of the Netherlands requested the World Bank's assistance to administer the SXM TF to support the GoSXM. The Trust Fund would provide up to €470 million to help the country rebuild stronger and more sustainably, supporting longer-term development priorities. On April 16, 2018, a partnership was formed between the Government of Sint Maarten, the Government of the Netherlands, and the World Bank, acting as Fund Trustee, with the signing of the Trust Fund's Administration Arrangement for the Reconstruction, Recovery, and Resilience Program.

The Administration Arrangement outlines the Trust Fund management: modalities, instruments for implementing activities, fund governance and responsibilities of stakeholders, program monitoring, reporting and communication expectations, eligible uses of the funds, and the program's closing date. Due to delays in the initiation of some projects and the global impacts of COVID-19, the Trust Fund program was extended from December 31, 2025, to December 31, 2028.

National Recovery and Resilience Plan and Strategic Framework

In 2018, the GoSXM collaborated with the World Bank to prepare the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), the Government's strategic foundation for the Trust Fund's program's priorities. Its overarching goal is to restore, secure, and strengthen the well-being of Sint Maarten's people. The NRRP identifies three priorities: (1) supporting the basic needs of the community; (2) restarting and revitalizing the economy; and (3) preparing the country and government for future hurricane seasons (Figure 1.1).

Figure 2.1: NRRP Priorities

Community Recovery and Resilience	Economic Recovery and Resilience	Government Recovery and Resilience
Housing	Macroeconomic Outlook	Disaster Risk Management
Health	Tourism and Commerce	Governance and Public Financial Management
Employment, Livelihoods and Social Protection	Finance	Justice, Public Safety and Security
Solid Waste	Airport	Additional Public Buildings
Education	Ports and Marinas	
Environment	Roads and Drainage	
	Water	
	Electricity	
	Information and Communication Technology	

In August 2019, the Steering Committee endorsed the SXM TF Strategic Framework 2019–2025 prepared by the Program Secretariat. The framework focuses on three priority areas: (1) promote sustainable economic recovery; (2) invest in citizens and resilient communities; and (3) build the foundations to improve long-term resilience and good governance. The principles of engagement include modalities to strengthen local capacity and partnerships, including leveraging additional financing from other partners to fill sector gaps and complement current and planned activities, where appropriate. To further reflect the changes occurred during implementation for Sint Maarten's sustainable resilience and prosperity, the Program Secretariat is undertaking consultations to update the strategic framework (Figure 1.2):

Figure 2.2: NRRP Objectives and Strategic Framework Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA 1

Promote Sustainable Economic Recovery

Objective 1: Sustainably restore air access and improve connectivity.

Objective 2: Support tourism recovery through access to finance and resilient utility services.

Objective 3: Establish a sustainable solid waste management system with improved sanitation services.

FOCUS AREA 2

Invest in Citizens and Resilient Communities

Objective 4: Repair and increase access to housing, especially for the vulnerable.

Objective 5: Increase access to quality health, education, and sports services.

Objective 6: Strengthen social safety nets and promote employment, particularly for vulnerable youth and households headed by women.

FOCUS AREA 3

Build the Foundation and Capacity to Improve Long-Term Resilience and Good Governance

Objective 7: Improve capacity for disaster response.

Objective 8: Strengthen fiscal resilience and modernize the public sector.



The NRRP's guiding principles align with the principles set out by the Netherlands regarding the execution of the Trust Fund (Figure 1.3). It provides a framework for emergency projects prioritized by the GoSXM and Government of the Netherlands, with technical guidance from the World Bank.

Figure 2.3: Alignment of Strategic Framework 2019–2025 Focus Areas and Trust Fund Projects

FOCUS AREA 1 **Promote Sustainable Economic Recovery**	FOCUS AREA 2 **Invest in Citizens and Resilient Communities**	FOCUS AREA 3 **Build the Foundation and Capacity to Improve Long-Term Resilience and Good Governance**
Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project	Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness Project	Emergency Recovery Project I
Emergency Debris Management Project	Emergency Income Support and Training Project (closed)	Digital Government Transformation Project
Enterprise Support Project	Red Cross Roof Repair Project (closed)	
Wastewater Management Project	Civil Society Partnership Facility for Resilience Project	
	Fostering Resilient Learning Project	
	Child Resilience and Protection Project (closed)	
	Sustaining Program Effectiveness and Advancing Resilient Government Capacity Project (pipeline)	
	Improving Mental Health Services Project	



Implementation Structure

The Trust Fund's governance is composed of the Steering Committee and Program Secretariat. The Steering Committee is a tripartite leadership and accountability mechanism comprising a representative of the GoSXM, a representative of the Government of the Netherlands, and a representative of the World Bank, who also chairs the committee. The Steering Committee allocates Trust Fund resources to activities, decides by consensus, and meets at least twice a year. The Program Secretariat implements the World Bank's trustee, coordination, and management role. The Secretariat team is part of the CMU within the World Bank's Latin America and Caribbean regional vice-presidential unit. The World Bank's program manager heads the secretariat of the Trust Fund on behalf of the World Bank.

Additionally, a Technical Working Group supports and reviews resources and information for the Steering Committee meetings. It regularly convenes to discuss the program's results and challenges, resolve pending issues, and clarify information. The Program Secretariat coordinates the Technical Working Group, involving selected Netherlands Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations staff, National Recovery Program Bureau directors and program managers, and the World Bank CMU.

The Trust Fund is implemented through Recipient-Executed (RE) and World Bank-Executed (BE) activities. The GoSXM, through its designated implementation agencies, implements RE projects. The five PIUs are:

- **National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB).** NRPB, created by law in Sint Maarten, is an independent administrative agency overseeing the implementation and coordination of most RE activities mandated by the GoSXM. Its staff consists of employees and consultants, supported as appropriate by technical advisors from the Netherlands and the World Bank. It currently manages six active projects and one closed project.
- **Princess Juliana International Airport Operating Company N.V. (PJIAE).** PJIAE implements the Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project.
- **Sint Maarten Medical Centre (SMMC).** SMMC, established in March 1991, is a nonprofit organization that manages and carries out hospital functions serving the community of Dutch St Maarten in the Northeastern Caribbean. SMMC implements the Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness Project.
- **UNICEF Netherlands (UNICEF-NL).** The Netherlands Committee UNICEF Foundation, an independent foundation affiliated with UNICEF, implements the Child Resilience and Protection Project.
- **VNG International (VNGI).** VNGI, the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, implements the Civil Society Partnership Facility for Resilience Project, locally known as Resources for Community Resilience (R4CR).

The World Bank provides additional technical assistance or advisory activities to support the GoSXM. These are BE activities, comprising hands-on implementation support, analytical and knowledge work, and project preparation and implementation advice. In addition, where appropriate and feasible, the Government of the Netherlands and the World Bank jointly provide further complementary technical assistance and expertise to the Trust Fund program.

Guiding Principles for Trust Fund Use

The SXM TF support aims to boost resilience by improving crisis management and disaster preparedness, promoting economic diversification, enhancing good governance, and strengthening civil society. A preference is expressed for projects "with a long-term vision that respects both people and the environment."[4]

The Netherlands' guiding principles annexed to the SXM TF Administration Arrangement state that activities are to address the damage caused by Hurricane Irma, make significant improvements to the pre-hurricane preparation of the island, and restore vital infrastructure whose breakdown would threaten social peace or national security. According to these principles, projects are assessed on six criteria:

- **Necessity** (no other sources of funding available).
- **Additionality** (bring in private or other public international financing where possible).
- **Suitability** (appropriateness in scale considering capacity).
- **Effectiveness** (ability to attain the objective and consistency with Sint Maarten's long-term policy).
- **Efficiency and Legitimacy** (safeguards are in place to ensure both).
- **Good Governance** (central to all activities undertaken by the SXM TF, particularly their outcomes and methods of implementation).

The latter concept is further supported by the strict application of World Bank processes and procedures for financial management, procurement, and safeguards and environment and social (E&S) standards.



4 World Bank 2018.



3

Project Results and Implementation Progress

2024 Portfolio Status

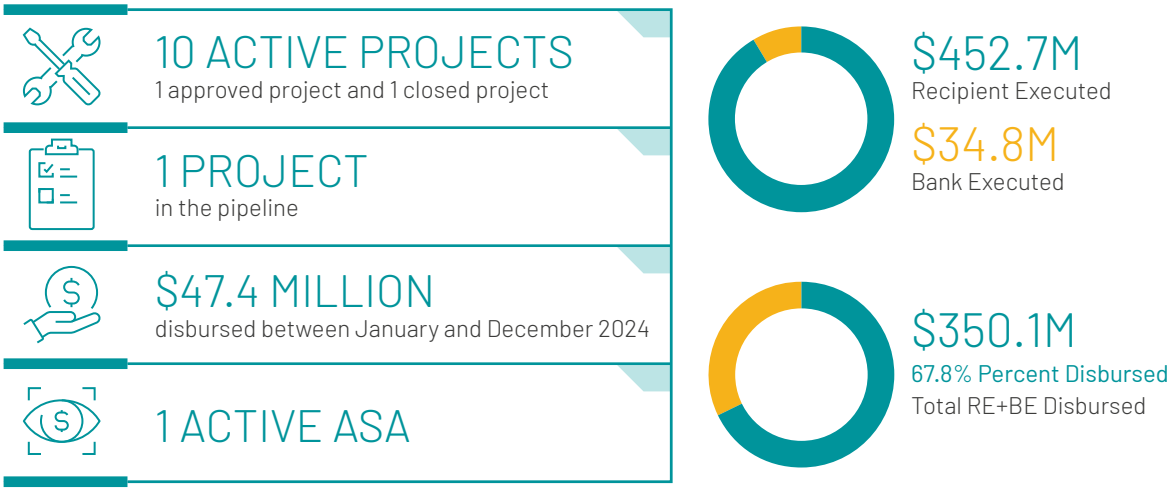
In 2024, the Trust Fund's portfolio stayed largely the same. The World Bank did not receive additional funding from the Netherlands. However, a robust cumulative investment income of US$44.64 million raised the total Trust Fund envelope to US$564.06 million as of December 31, 2024.

In 2024, US$312.3 million (69 percent) of the total program commitments was cumulatively disbursed. Moreover, the World Bank approved a new project, Sint Maarten Wastewater Management Project, and an additional financing for the Improving Mental Health Services Project. The Child Resilience and Protection Project closed in December 2024, while the Sustaining Program Effectiveness and Advancing Resilient Government Capacity Project (SPEAR) project's preparation started. As of December 31, 2024, the World Bank has disbursed US$37.08 million (89 percent) of the US$41.4 million allocated for Bank-Executed activities, which include implementation support, preparation processes, and program administration.

Recipient-Executed Activity: As of December 31, 2024, the SXM TF has implemented 13 projects in total, with 10 active and 3 closed. Grant commitment increased from US$443.3 million in 2023 (which included a closed project) to US$452.7 million in 2024 because of the following: (1) US$10 million from the Sint Maarten Wastewater Management Project, which became effective in September 2024; (2) the return of US$0.6 million from the Emergency Income Support and Training Project, which closed in August 2023; and (3) US$2 million in additional financing for the Improving Mental Health Services Project, approved in December 2024 (pending effectiveness).

Disbursement in 2024 was slightly over half of the 2023 level. By year-end, the Trust Fund program disbursed US$47.7 million compared to US$79.4 million in 2023. The previous year's disbursement was unusually high because the Emergency Recovery Project-1 and the Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project made large disbursements to infrastructure activities.

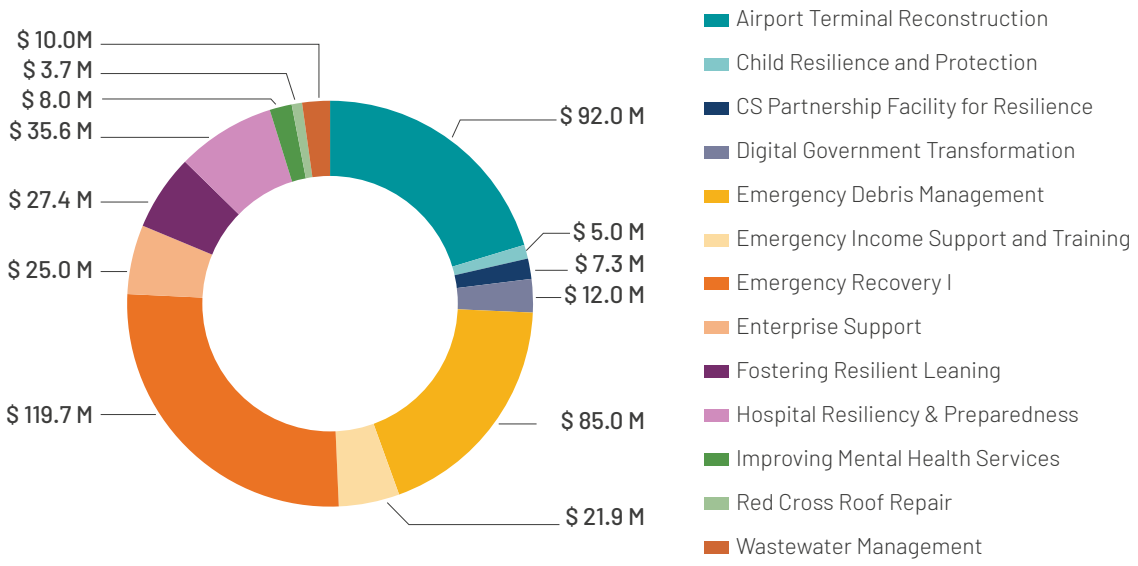
Figure 3.1 summarizes the portfolio status as of the end of 2024. Figure 2.2 illustrates the RE allocation distribution.



Bank-Executed Activity: As of December 2024, US$37.08 million of the $41.4 million allocated for BE activities has been disbursed for project implementation support, preparation processes, and program administration.

This summary reflects the portfolio progress made up to the end of 2024, showing continued development and adjustments in funding allocations to meet evolving Trust Fund program needs.

Figure 3.2: Allocation to Recipient-Executed Activities by Projects ($, million) [5]





5 13 projects; 10 active and 3 closed totalling US$452.7 million (including preparation grants).

Projects Under Implementation

FOCUS AREA 1: Promote Sustainable Economic Recovery

Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$92 million TF0B0760: US$72 million TF0B7571: US$20 million	September 18, 2019 December 17, 2021	December 31, 2023 June 30, 2025	**US$16.47 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project (ATRP) is part of a broader PJIAE reconstruction program, which includes the reconstruction (Package 2 or P2) and reequipment (Equipment Packages or EPs) of the passenger terminal. The project aims to enhance resilience against natural disasters, capacity building, and project management. It also supports the operational expenditure of PJIAE in the event of major external shocks during the reconstruction period. The project leveraged an additional US$50 million from the European Investment Bank and US$7 million from the airport operating company to reconstruct the terminal.

In addition, with financial support from the Dutch Government, PJIAE received emergency liquidity and technical assistance from the Royal Schiphol Group from January 2020 until project completion. This support was crucial in stabilizing PJIAE's operations and finances during challenging periods and ensuring that technical expertise was available throughout the reconstruction process.

At the start of 2024, PJIAE successfully commissioned the Check-In Hall (Phase 2) and transitioned its construction efforts to the third and final phase. By the end of 2024, PJIAE completed the remaining portion of the terminal—the Arrival Hall (Phase 3)—culminating in the official reopening of the entire terminal on November 14, 2024. At the same time, the project met its target of reaching 2.5 million passengers, matching pre-Hurricane Irma passenger capacity levels in Q4 2024. Passenger volumes not only returned to pre-hurricane levels but also exceeded them, marking considerable progress toward a more resilient terminal.





DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: To restore the passenger capacity of Princess Juliana International Airport to pre-Hurricane Irma levels with improved resilience towards hurricanes

Indicators	Baseline (2019)	Target (2025)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Restore to pre-Irma levels the passenger capacity of Princess Juliana International Airport	1 million	2.5 million	1 million	1 million	1 million	2.5 million
Improve resilience of the terminal against hurricanes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Component 1 – Reconstruction of the PJIA terminal facilities (US$70.00 million, including US$57 million co-financing[6])

The terminal building reconstruction (Component 1) began on October 4, 2021, with the latest takeover on November 9, 2024, and a planned completion by June 30, 2025, under the Trust Fund grant. The works include restoring terminal facilities and reinstalling equipment, such as passenger boarding bridges, entrance doors, drywall, counters, electrical and IT systems, baggage handling, security systems, and firefighting facilities. Boarding bridges and doors will be replaced for greater hurricane resilience.

Completion Progress as of December 31, 2024		
	P2	99.99%
	EPs	100%
	Overall	100%

Snag List

Total issued:	2,163
Closed:	2,042
Open:	121

Mobilization and preparatory dismantling works are complete, with the installation of permanent works and equipment finished. All seven EPs are now completed. PJIAE completed the installation of all the remaining EPs, including the integrated baggage handling system and security screening equipment (January and September 2024, respectively), digital signage equipment, and furniture, fixtures, and appliances. The Business Class Lounge was commissioned on July 1, 2024, and the new Arrival Hall was handed over on October 7, 2024. The Terminal grand re-opening ceremony was held on November 14, 2024.

Component 2 – Capacity Building of and Project Management by PJIAE (US$1.50 million)

The financing of project audits and selected staff positions within the Project Management Unit by this component is still on track.

6 US$50 million from the European Investment Bank and US$7 million from PJIA.

Component 3 – Capacity Building of and Project Management by the GoSXM (US$0.50 million)

Activities under this component are managed by NRPB and commenced in Q1 2024, with more than 150 participants in over 10 trainings completed by December 31, 2024. This exceeds the Intermediate Results Indicator target of 50 individuals benefiting from the training. The thematic areas of the trainings completed so far are Safety and Civil Aviation; Security and IT; Airport Operations and Planning; Communications and Public Relations; Leadership, Development and People Planning; Finance and Corporate Governance; Employee Well-being; and Sustainability and Environment.

Component 4 – Support of PJIAE Operations (US$21.00 million)

PJIAE informed the World Bank that no further liquidity support will be submitted beyond the previously submitted Operational Expenditure support received in 2020 and 2021,[7] with an assumption that the current recovery of passenger traffic continues, and no natural hazards or a new COVID-19 wave will materialize.

COMPONENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS[8]

Components	Status
Component 1: Reconstruction of the PJIA terminal facilities	Moderately Satisfactory
Component 2: Capacity building of and project management by PJIAE	Satisfactory
Component 3: Capacity building of and project management by the GoSXM	Moderately Satisfactory
Component 4: Support of PJIAE Operations	Satisfactory

DISBURSEMENTS

To date, US$81.61 million of the allocated US$92 million has been disbursed (89 percent), compared to US$65.14 million in 2023.

ISSUES AND PLANS

- Critical snag list items are still open, and the main works contractor is in the process of demobilizing and has significantly downsized the workforce. To ensure items are completed, weekly progress meetings are still ongoing, coupled with final inspections and acceptance of the snag list items, including hurricane shutters for the vestibules inter alia that are linked to final payments and performance bonds.
- In 2025, PJIAE will focus on wrapping up the project and meeting World Bank's project closing requirements.

7 Operational Expenditure support was verified and approved for Q2 2020 for US$3.19 million, Q3 2020 for US$2.74 million, Q4 2020 for US$1.49 million, and Q1 2021 for US$3.50 million (for a total of US$10.90 million on a reimbursement basis).

8 Ratings as per August 2024.





Scan to watch the grand reopening of the airport



Building a Dream, One Healthy Meal at a Time

Born in Romania nearly 45 years ago, Catalina Ahlip grew up on a farm where her connection to nature, soil, and fresh produce became a part of her DNA. "It's in me," she says, smiling. "The love for the earth, the seasons, the simplicity of good food. I've always been around it." Though she didn't study to become a chef, her early experiences on the farm laid the foundation for a lifelong love of nourishing others.

As she ventured through life, moving from Eastern Europe to Sint Maarten, she wore many hats. But something was missing. "I wanted to do something more with my life, something that would touch people's hearts." That desire led her to a life-changing decision: opening a bistro called Fit Foods that focuses on nutrition. She started small, with just US$300 in her pocket. "I wasn't going to invest all my money upfront. I knew I had to start small and grow organically," she explains.

Enterprise Support Project Fuels Expansion

Catalina began her bistro by offering fresh juices, simple bakery items, and daily specials. Her customers quickly took notice. "I created a demand," she says. "When people taste good food, they come back." So, the business grew. Within three years, she had expanded her team from just herself and one other employee to 13.

As the demand grew, so did the need for more space. "I knew I had to expand. The little place I started in wasn't enough anymore," she explains. "I wanted the staff to dance Bachata in the kitchen, to feel inspired and connected to the food they were preparing."

Catalina applied to the Enterprise Support Project, implemented by NRPB and funded by the SXM TF, which aims to support the recovery and resilience of MSMEs in Sint Maarten. The US$80,000 grant she received helped Catalina take the next step, along with additional support from a European trust fund that helps businesses in need.

Deeply Rooted in Community and Purpose

Catalina credits much of her success to her philosophy of multi-tasking and creating long-term relationships with her employees. "When you teach people how to do multiple things, they feel valued. And when they feel valued, they stay." She focuses on working with local employees: "There's a perception that locals can't do this kind of work," she says, "but I knew that with the right training, I could turn this into something sustainable. I wanted to change the narrative."



Fit Foods isn't just about the food—it's about creating a community. As Catalina says, "Everyone who comes in here, they know each other. It's like a family. It's more than just a restaurant; it's a gathering place." And that's exactly what she envisioned when she opened the bistro. By empowering entrepreneurs like Catalina, the Enterprise Support Project is contributing to job creation, community spirit, and the long-term economic growth and stability of Sint Maarten.

"Success doesn't come overnight," Catalina says. "But when you do it from the heart, everything falls into place."



Emergency Debris Management Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$85 million TF0A9261: US$25 million TF0B9747: US$60 million	December 20, 2018 January 26, 2023	December 31, 2023 December 31, 2026	**US$1.77 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Emergency Debris Management Project (EDMP) aims to manage debris from Hurricane Irma and enhance Sint Maarten's resilience by improving solid waste management capacity. Early interventions cleared shoreline debris and shipwrecks and significantly reduced open fires at the current disposal site, mitigating health, safety, and environmental risks to surrounding communities. The project is now focused on improving waste compaction and daily landfill operations, strengthening institutional capacity, and supporting long-term sector reforms and investments, most notably aiming to improve the current disposal site and construct a sanitary landfill.

EDMP has cleared up over 10 kilometers of Sint Maarten's shoreline and transported 139 shipwrecks from Simpson Bay Lagoon and Mullet Pond off the Island.

While the long-term reforms and investments in the waste sector are still in progress, several necessary initial steps have been completed. To mitigate health and safety risks from current landfill operations and to allow for future improvements to the current disposal site and construction of a sanitary to landfill, Project Affected People (PAPs) living in the Municipal Solid Waste Disposal Site (MSWDS) area, defined as the Resettlement Area of Impact (RAI), have been resettled. As per the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), all PAPs were compensated last year and vacated the RAI by February 2024. GEBE, Sint Maarten's electric utility company, has ceased operations in the RAI and fully vacated in December 2024.

In parallel, technical assistance to support solid waste management reforms and investments have progressed but are yet to be completed. Examples of studies that have been initiated include the development of a long-term financial framework for the sector, including the concept of a tipping fee as an ongoing funding source, analyzing the gaps in the waste ordinance, and a feasibility study to understand potential investments to improve the current disposal site and construct a sanitary landfill.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: To manage debris from the hurricane and reconstruction activities to facilitate recovery and reduce risks.

Indicators	Baseline (2019)	Target (2025)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of metal wrecks collected and processed (Number)	0	100	0	0	0	0
Simpson Bay area cleared from shipwrecks and shoreline debris (Hectare)	0	200	200	200	200	200
Debris and waste processing facility established (Yes/No)	No	Yes	No	No	No	No



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Component 1 – Debris Clearance and Management (US$75.20 million)

The GoSXM has reprioritized activities under the temporary debris storage and reduction site and will determine remaining activities after making investment decisions related to the disposal site. Two key priorities are the installation of a weighbridge, which is under initial stages of implementation, and the tire removal, for which procurement will start in January 2025.

- **Weighbridge Installation:** The procured weighbridge is scheduled for installation in early 2025. The installation has been delayed due to challenges in securing letters of credit in Sint Maarten. These financial issues have affected the timely execution of the installation, but efforts are ongoing to resolve them and proceed with the setup as soon as possible.
- **Tire removal:** The bidding process for tire removal relaunched in December 2024, after the previous attempt failed. Based on feedback from a market engagement session in July and further discussions with the Government, the scope was adjusted to focus solely on tire removal, which is expected to attract more suitable bids and support successful execution.
- **Car and metal wreck handling and artificial reefing:** In 2023, NRPB informed that World Bank that these activities would not continue under the project but rather would be implemented directly by VROMI.
- **No-work-zone restriction:** In 2024, the Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure (VROMI) requested the lifting of this restriction within the MSWDS to provide alternative access to the landfill top and facilitate the retrieval of cover materials needed for landfill cover operations. A Method Statement was drafted to outline the activities to be undertaken, define responsibilities, and describe the methods and documentation involved. The World Bank subsequently lifted the restrictions on the No Work Zone; however, this area is not currently being used.

Resettlement activities: The resettlement process is a key preparatory activity to support future interventions at the disposal site. All 141 PAPs have signed legally binding compensation agreements and received their compensation packages. Individual PAPs vacated all structures within the RAI by February 13, 2024, including GEBE in December 2024. To prevent unauthorized re-entry into the area, NRPB has implemented various security measures and initiated the procurement process for demolishing the structures within the RAI. The demolition contract was awarded in November 2024, with work scheduled to begin in January 2025. To ensure the demolition is conducted in line with the project's requirements and standards, the supervision contract will cover the full duration of the demolition phase.

NRPB is reviewing feasible options in the housing market for in-kind compensation for the 7 PAPs who have been temporarily relocated. One PAP received the title deed for a home in December 2024. NRPB has updated the Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP) for each RAP implementation phase. The final LRP training and the "Readiness for a Job" program are underway. In addition, a Mid-Term Audit to review and assess the implementation of the temporary resettlement process was commissioned in 2024.

Component 2 – Technical Assistance (US$6.00 million)

The MSWDS feasibility study, for which a tender was launched in August 2023, aims to develop a detailed optimal design, building, and operation plan for the MSWDS. Following the commencement of activity in June 2024, the Inception Report and Field Studies were delivered by the consulting company in September 2024 and November 2024, respectively. Discussions regarding future scenarios for the MSWDS took place in December 2024 with the participation of VROMI. These discussions evaluated options for the landfill's recontouring—considering environmental, technical, and operational factors—to ensure the long-term sustainability and safety of the site. The final deliverables have been delayed due to data availability and contractual challenges. The activities are expected to be delivered in May and June 2025, respectively.

assistance to support the broader waste management sector, including a National Vision, which link with the project's disbursement conditions. In 2024, this support included some outputs directly support this project, including (1) a preliminary tipping fee design and implementation plan; (2) an enforcement 360 degrees assessment[9] report emphasis on illegal dumping, which contained a phased implementation report; (3) costs to be incurred and to be budgeted over 2025-2027; and (4) a report on the introduction of an environmental fee. The Government of the Netherlands has made additional financial assistance to the Ministry of VROMI, which may be used to build on these deliverables for further support related to sector strategy and reforms.

The Council of Ministers (COM) approved the Waste Authority Report in 2023, and the Strategic Multiyear Communications framework in July 2024. These will be developed in more detail in 2025 to support development of relevant legislation and implementation. The Government of the Netherlands provided financial support for NRPB to update the VROMI ordinance, which includes a chapter on waste management. However, GoSXM has decided that updating the Waste Ordinance would be more suitable. This will be carried out in 2025, alongside drafting of an ordinance to establish the Waste Authority.

Component 3 – Project Management and Implementation Support (US$3.80 million)

The former Strategic Wastewater Management Program Coordinator and the Contract Manager were reassigned to provide technical advisory and support RAP (including LRP) implementation, respectively. A new EDMP Project Manager joined NRPB in January 2024. The RAP implementation Officer was reassigned in line with the needs of the project to support the RAP implementation Coordinator.

COMPONENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS[10]

Components	Status
Component 1: Debris clearance and management	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**
Component 2: Technical assistance	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**
Component 3: Project management and implementation support	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**

9 A comprehensive performance review method where an employee receives feedback from multiple sources, including peers, subordinates, supervisors, and sometimes external stakeholders like customers or clients.

10 See Appendix A for definitions.

DISBURSEMENTS

In 2024, the project disbursed US$1.77 million, compared to US$5.63 million in 2023. To date, the project has disbursed all the original US$25 million grant financing (100 percent) and US$5.9 million of the US$60 million additional financing (9.83 percent).

ISSUES AND PLANS

- **Implementation delays:** Procurement for key activities, such as the MSWDS feasibility study, tire removal, and weighbridge installation, are delayed due to supply factors and challenges in negotiation . In addition, the consulting firm for the feasibility study faced delays due to data collection challenges on the landfill and requested a contract extension to June 2024. This subsequently will delay the tendering process for interventions at the disposal site.
- **Institutional reforms:** Though steps have been taken to support the disbursement conditions for the US$40 million Additional Financing, the GoSXM needs to provide further technical assistance and additional support. Key updates include the following:
  - **Interministerial Waste Cooperation Committee:** Established in November 2022, this committee has been instrumental to guide sector decision making and support the delivery of parallel TA deliverables.
  - **Institutional Structure for Integrated Solid Waste Management:** Basic elements of a proposed waste authority were approved by the COM; however, the details, including the budgetary, administrative, and organizational aspects, need to be developed. A permanent waste authority cannot be established within the time frame of the Trust Fund given the time required for government procedures. VROMI is to propose a new interim structure in alignment with the Grant Agreement.
  - **VROMI ordinance update:** The ordinance, which includes a chapter on waste management, was updated. However, the Council of Advice's review resulted in corrections that fall outside the scope and resources of the EDMP. Updating the current waste ordinance for Sint Maarten is now being pursued.
  - **Financial framework:** A draft financial framework has been approved by the Interministerial Waste Cooperation Committee but not aligned with the World Bank's technical and legal guidance on the disbursement conditions. This is anticipated to be developed in 2025.
  - **Tipping fee implementation:** The "start of works" condition for the tipping fee has been designed in the parallel TA, along with a basic implementation design that requires further detailing. The Interministerial Waste Cooperation Committee reviewed the initial plan and the final deliverable has been delivered to the GoSXM. A detailed implementation plan will be developed in 2025.





Enterprise Support Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$25 million TF0A9223: US$25 million	April 4, 2019	June 30, 2028	**US$3.39 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Enterprise Support Project (ESP) contributes to improving access to finance for MSMEs in Sint Maarten for economic recovery and business restoration. NRPB implements the project in collaboration with four participating financial institutions[11] in the private sector and is supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication (TEATT) and Ministry of Finance.

As of December 31, 2024, ESP demonstrates satisfactory progress toward achieving its development objective and has supported 289 MSMEs—92 percent of 315 targeted beneficiaries—equivalent to 305 approved applications since the project's approval. Nineteen MSMEs received financing packages for assets, repairs, or working capital in the last six months of 2024.

The project adjusted its implementation approach in line with the extension to June 2028, which will allow more beneficiaries to benefit from longer loan tenures, lower monthly repayments, and more affordable loans. This extension was particularly advantageous for new businesses, which comprise over 36 percent of the ESP portfolio.

Of the MSMEs that benefited from the project in 2024, 26 are women-owned or managed, compared to 31 in 2023. Of all MSMEs supported since the project started, 119 are owned or operated by women, representing 41 percent of the portfolio.

Cumulatively, in 2024 the MSMEs have received about US$19 million of the US$21 million planned, with women-led MSMEs receiving US$6.8 million (81 percent of the earmarked amount for this category), compared to US$5.5 million (65 percent) in 2023.



11 Windward Islands Bank (WIB), Qredits, Banco de Caribe (BDC), and Ontwikkelingsbank van de Nederlandse Antillen N.V. (OBNA).

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE INDICATORS

PDO: To support the recovery of MSMEs through direct financial assistance to contribute to the restoration of economic activity.

Indicators	Baseline (2019)	Target (2025)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cumulative number of MSMEs receiving packages for assets, repairs, or working capital (Number)	0	315	108	165	226	289
Cumulative number of women-owned or -managed MSMEs receiving packages for assets, repairs, or working capital (Number)	0	120	42	62	93	119
Volume of grants and loans supported through the project over its lifetime (Amount, US$ million)	0	21	7.5	11.7	15.7	18.9
Volume of grants and loans supported through the project to women-owned or -managed MSMEs over its lifetime (Amount, US$ million)	0	8.4	1.5	3.8	5.5	6.7

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Component 1 – Direct financial support to MSMEs for investment and working capital (US$21 million)

SMEs with approved grant loan packages continued rising. In 2024, ESP delivered 24 percent of micro loan facilities to enterprises above its 15 percent target. As of December 31, 2024, 59 applications contained asset, repair, and working capital packages. Between January and December 2024, 289 MSMEs received support, compared to 226 MSMEs in 2023. The PIU team remains strong, works efficiently with the participating financial institutions, and communicates effectively to process loan requests, using the streamlined application process. The project restructuring completed in August 2023 has allowed for better targeting of new micro and small enterprises and a stronger focus on capacity-building programs for MSMEs.

The proportion of non-performing loans with at least 90-day overdue repayments stands at 6.5 percent in 2024, within the acceptable limit.

Component 2 – Training, project implementation, audit, and monitoring and evaluation (US$4 million):

In 2024, the project supported beneficiary MSMEs after the disbursement of ESP funding by developing and implementing a business coaching program. Thirty-six percent of the portfolio are new businesses, and they are the most likely to need more hands-on and post-disbursement support. The business coaching program, launched in August, engaged 40 MSMEs in personalized coaching sessions. These participants included new businesses, micro businesses, and non-performing businesses needing more assistance.

As a key pillar of the institutional framework for MSME support, the Sint Maarten Entrepreneurship Center (SEDC) plays a vital role in fostering long-term growth and development for small businesses in Sint Maarten. The SEDC was established in February 2023, to support the Ministry of TEATT's MSME Policy Framework. The ESP has committed to supporting the SEDC by partnering with it to deliver training programs for MSMEs. In June 2024, a cooperation agreement was signed to help ensure some sustainability of the gains achieved through the ESP. In August 2024, the first training cohort launched, with 28 participants completing the four-week training program. In November 2024, two training cohorts featured 26 and 24 participants each, who completed the program.

Since 2021, the ESP has funded the Small Business Academy by Qredits, enabling new businesses to create strong business plans and access favorable ESP grants and loans. The approach later shifted to supporting SEDC as a key MSME support entity in Sint Maarten. Through the ESP's support, the Small Business Academy has trained over 236 participants, with 178 completing the program, significantly boosting MSME capacity. The Small Business Academy will continue beyond ESP funding, ensuring long-term impact.

The project is collecting data on jobs supported and created through the ESP and the impact of the project on MSMEs' resilience. The findings will be completed in 2025.

COMPONENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS[12]

Components	Status
Component 1: Direct financial support to MSMEs for investment and working capital	Satisfactory
Component 2: Lender training, project implementation, audit, and M&E	Satisfactory

DISBURSEMENTS

In 2024, the project disbursed US$3.39 million of grant financing (14 percent), compared to US$4.2 million in December 2023. About US$18.9 million had been disbursed to MSMEs under Component 1 by the end of 2024. To date, the project has disbursed US$21.9 million of the original US$25 million.

ISSUES AND PLANS

- In Q2 2024, the project announced a June 2025 cutoff date for accepting applications from the public, as Component 1 approaches closure and funding availability diminishes. However, this cutoff was later advanced to March 2025 due to limited funds. In November 2024, the project entered a "go-slow" phase until January 31, 2025, temporarily halting new applications to focus on processing the backlog. Once the existing applications have been processed, the cutoff date will be revisited. As the project winds down, effective management of the shutdown process remains a top priority.
- As the ESP transitions out of direct financial support for MSMEs, the project is focusing on ensuring long-term sustainability by aligning interventions with government plans and priorities. This includes discussing priorities and scoping activities with the Ministry of TEATT, which can be supported through the ESP and a new project being developed to support institutional strengthening, SPEAR.
- In 2025, future initiatives will be pursued to support the GoSXM in developing MSME policies and training programs and foster public-private dialogue to strengthen MSME policies and support systems. These efforts aim to build on the ESP's successes and ensure sustainable impact through close collaboration with the Ministry of TEATT.
- A cooperation agreement with the SEDC was signed to provide training and other entrepreneurial support, with more support possible for developing their strategic plan.

12 See Appendix A for definitions.



Sustainable Mushrooms "Rooted in SXM"

Stephane Ferron had a clear vision: to create a sustainable, locally sourced mushroom business that minimizes waste while maximizing environmental benefits. At the core of this business, called Rooted in SXM, was a commitment to organic farming, sourcing key ingredients from the United States, and reducing reliance on imports over time. But what began as a mission to grow mushrooms has evolved into something much bigger—a process that combines waste management, renewable energy, and cutting-edge cultivation techniques.

Support for a Faster, Smarter, Greener Business

Initially, Stephane worked with minimal risk, perfecting the mushroom-growing process using sterilized wood sourced from local suppliers. A significant breakthrough came with the introduction of waste products, such as spent grain from a nearby brewery and organic coffee grounds donated by local coffee roasters. These were transformed into rich, nutrient-packed substrates for growing mushrooms, reducing waste while improving the nutritional value of the crop.

But the real game changer was the introduction of a pressure cooker, a key piece of equipment funded through an Enterprise Support Project grant, designed to strengthen the recovery and increase the resilience of MSMEs in Sint Maarten. Stephane says, "Before the cooker, sterilizing the wood and substrate required 12 hours of laborious work. Now, with the new autoclave, the process is complete in just three hours."

The time saved has been invaluable, especially during busy periods when power outages used to halt production. With the new setup, the team also invested in backup power to ensure that operations continue smoothly even when the grid is down. In the future, they hope to add solar power to further reduce their environmental footprint.

Breakthroughs in Sustainable and Efficient Farming

The next step? Cultivating the mushrooms themselves. Stephane and her team thoroughly sterilize the mushroom substrates before introducing the mycelium (thread-like fungal strands). By doing so, they eliminate the risks of contamination and ensure a 100 percent success rate—far above the natural success rate of wild mushrooms. This attention to detail has paid off, resulting in high-quality mushrooms that are grown in a controlled environment, tailored to the local climate.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the business is its focus on sustainability and self-reliance. While Stephane initially imported mushroom cultures, she has since created her own mycelium cultures, using the best-performing mushrooms grown locally. These cultures are genetically adapted to thrive in the specific conditions of the farm, making them perfectly suited to the local environment.

This innovative approach isn't just about mushrooms—it's about creating a fully integrated, sustainable system that minimizes waste, conserves resources, and maximizes the potential of local agriculture. It's also a direct benefit of the Enterprise Support Project, because with grant support, small businesses can afford to experiment, innovate, and expand their operations.

With plans to continue scaling up and incorporating even more locally sourced materials, Rooted in SXM is poised for long-term success. Every step it takes toward sustainability is a step toward healthier eating for Sint Maarteners—and that is a mission worth supporting.









FOCUS AREA 2: Invest in Citizens and Resilient Communities

Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$35.61 million			
TF0A8176: US$25 million	August 16, 2018	May 31, 2025	**US$2.10 million**
TF0B3788: US$3.61 million	August 26, 2020	July 31, 2024	
TF0C2387: US$7 million	August 22, 2023	May 31, 2025	

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness Project (HRPP), implemented by the Sint Maarten Medical Center (SMMC), aims to improve the preparedness and capacity of hospital services in Sint Maarten. Project implementation has remained on track toward the achievement of all three PDO indicators, sustaining the likelihood of achieving the PDO satisfactorily. Implementation progress also remains moderately satisfactory, with the 11 intermediate outcome indicators reporting substantial results.

The first PDO indicator on reducing overseas medical referrals surpassed the 45 percent target in 2022, and it maintained a 91 percent rate until 2023. A slight increase in medical referrals occurred in 2024, due to an increased number of SZV Social and Health Insurance insured persons related to the adjusted income threshold.

The second PDO indicator focuses on implementing the Emergency Disaster Preparedness Plan and Evacuation Plan according to procedures and has increased slightly since 2023–from 91.8 percent to 92.3 percent. In 2024, SMMC did not receive an invitation to participate in the island-wide Hurricane Exercise (HURREX). However, 50 SMMC staff members participated in a tabletop fire safety training in 2024, and continued fire drills are expected in 2025.

Regarding the third PDO indicator for implementation of technical audits, SMMC finalized the technical audit tool to assess implementation of its clinical guidelines (CGs) and quality control mechanisms in 2022. In 2024, SMMC refined the CG lifecycle document and added 13 new CGs, bringing the total to 52. Of these, an additional 7 CGs were audited during a pilot review in May 2024, and following refinements to the audit methodology, will undergo a full audit review in Q1 2025. This will bring the total number of audited CGs to 12, exceeding the target of 10. SMMC will continue working with the external auditor to produce a quality report with actionable recommendations for the 2025 audit.





DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: Improve preparedness and capacity of hospital services in Sint Maarten

Indicators	Baseline (2018)	Target (2025)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Overseas medical referrals reduced (Percentage)	0	45	93	91	91	88
Emergency Disaster Preparedness Plan and Evacuation Plan implemented according to procedures (Percentage)	60	90	75	81	92	92
Technical audits to evaluate quality and preparedness of service delivery rated satisfactory (Percentage)	0	90	0	0	40	40

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Component 1 – Building and launching of the new hospital (US$24 million)

In 2024, key milestones were achieved for the new Sint Maarten General Hospital (SMGH): (1) completion of the final design (in July); (2) completion of the main building's basement, including water tanks, seismic isolators, and ground floor; (3) structural completion of technical building 1; (4) installation of underground diesel tanks (8x) for generators and heating facilities; (5) completion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is operational for the current hospital as of mid-December 2024; (6) completion of retaining walls, except for one small section of about 40 meters under the fire department, which will be completed in 2025; and (7) an advanced stage of the procurement for the main medical equipment. The construction of the first floor of the main building is ongoing.

The Contractor reported a delay for the construction of the main building (about 7 months), however, mitigation measures were planned, such as provision of additional workers, a third construction crane, and advanced formwork system and logistic improvements for construction work and the warehouse site. The Contractor is updating the plan to be ready at the start of 2025, after which the completion date for the new hospital will be evaluated.

Component 2 – Transition and contingency plan for SMMC (US$11.085 million)

With the completion of all essential upgrades to the existing facility last year, SMMC now has four operating rooms, positioning it to expand its medical services, provide quality care close to home, and further reduce medical referrals overseas. The HRPP continues to significantly impact learning and development. As of December 2024, HRPP-supported training programs benefited 410 participants, an increase of 109 participants since 2023. SMMC continues to migrate all online and in-person training programs to its employee portal in the Talent Learning Management System to better disaggregate training participants.

In 2024, SMMC developed a detailed transition plan for the new hospital building, organized around six readiness categories: organizational, operational, technology, people, facility, and regulatory readiness. The plan spans documentation of workflows, IT upgrades, facility assessments, staff training, patient transfer logistics, and mock drills. A design company was also hired to support SMMC in ensuring successful patient and visitor navigation in the new facility.

Component Performance Ratings[13]

Components	Status
Component 1: Building and launching of the new hospital	Satisfactory
Component 2: Transition and contingency plan for SMMC	Satisfactory
Component 3: Project management	Satisfactory

DISBURSEMENTS

As of December 2024, US$23.69 million of the original US$25 million grant financing (95 percent) has been disbursed (3 percent higher than end-2023), and all US$3.61 million from the second grant (dedicated to essential upgrades under Component 2) has been used. The first draw down for US$1.07 million on the project's third grant of US$7 million took place in December 2024.

ISSUES AND PLANS

- A CGs Auditor (financed by the grant) to support the technical audit process will continue to support SMMC in 2025 with funds from the grant. SMMC expects to conduct another round of technical audits in Q1 2025.
- SMMC continued its multi-pronged approach to support their Joint Commission International accreditation of quality and patient care and safety by 2027. In 2024, SMMC's roadmap includes implementing a Learning and Development Master Plan and developing the training calendar, including CGs, and establishing key performance indicators to monitor progress. In addition, SMMC will roll out a plan for future positions and functions in the new hospital and will source and schedule training to ensure effective learning and development deliverables.
- SMMC requested that the GoSXM extend the turnover tax exemption for the SMGH construction project by using the hardship clause to address the financial pressures faced by SMMC. The COM issued negative advice in response. However, the Minister of Finance expressed willingness to explore alternative compensation methods to address the added costs. SMMC remains committed to finding a solution that minimizes financial strain and ensures continued progress in collaboration with government stakeholders[14].
- Unforeseen delays in the construction and completion of SMGH have affected the timeline for critical training programs. As a result, SMMC has officially requested an extension of the project timeline to July 31, 2027. This extension will allow for the full utilization of available funds, ensure the achievement of project goals, and align with SMGH's transition.

13 See Appendix B for definitions.
14 The tax exemption was granted in March 2025, before this report is published.





Top-Tier Health Care in Your Own Backyard

Since the launch of the Sint Maarten General Hospital (SMGH) development project in September 2022, the Sint Maarten Medical Center (SMMC) has made impressive strides in reshaping healthcare on the island. Supported by the Hospital Resilience and Preparedness Project, the initiative focuses on strengthening the hospital's capacity, enhancing emergency preparedness, and ensuring high-quality care for the people of Sint Maarten. By mid-2024, SMMC has seen notable progress in the hospital's infrastructure, clinical practices, and staff development.

Ensuring Quality and Readiness at Every Level

One of the most remarkable accomplishments has been the hospital's ability to reduce the need for overseas medical referrals, allowing more patients to receive care locally instead of having to travel abroad. The first key indicator aimed at lowering these referrals has already surpassed expectations, reaching 91 percent in 2023—well above the target of 45 percent.

Another highlight is the implementation of the Emergency Disaster Preparedness and Evacuation Plan, which has seen significant progress. In April 2023, SMMC's Facilities Department conducted its first fire drill since the pandemic, followed by participation in the island-wide Hurricane Exercise (HURREX) drill. These exercises are crucial in building the hospital's readiness to handle emergencies, ensuring the hospital can continue to provide care during crises. Plans to resume annual fire drills are already in place to maintain this state of preparedness.



The hospital's commitment to improving clinical care is also evident in its updated clinical guidelines (CGs) to diagnose and treat medical conditions. In partnership with the World Bank, SMMC revised the CG lifecycle process, ensuring more time is dedicated to staff training and familiarization with new CGs. In 2024, SMMC expanded its CG portfolio with eight new specialties, reflecting the growing range of services available. SMMC is also working on defining key performance indicators to monitor implementation of these guidelines.

SMMC has also focused on evaluating the quality and readiness of its services. In May 2024, the hospital completed a pilot phase of a technical audit, a step that will refine the evaluation of CGs and guide the development of strategies for improving service delivery.

Infrastructure improvements have been another major area of progress, expanding the hospital's surgical capacity. By the end of 2023, over 90 percent of the hospital's essential upgrades were completed, including four new fully equipped operating rooms, following the renovation of the Operating Room in June 2023. These upgrades will further reduce reliance on overseas referrals and provide local patients with top-notch care.

Prioritizing Patient Satisfaction and Staff Development

SMMC expanded its patient satisfaction survey in 2024 to include more departments, such as radiology and maternity. The survey tracks the patient experience from intake to discharge, with the hospital's outpatient satisfaction score reaching an impressive 8.49 out of 10 in the third quarter of 2024. Though waiting times remain a challenge, efforts to streamline registration processes and reduce waiting times are already underway, including exploring pre-registration systems.

To further enhance patient feedback, SMMC is working on closing the feedback loop by better communicating the results of surveys to patients and staff. The hospital has seen a significant increase in survey participation, especially in radiology, where responses surged from 18 in 2023 to 265 in the first three quarters of 2024. Lessons learned from this success will be applied to other departments, helping to improve patient engagement across the board.

Another significant focus area has been staff development, to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement. SMMC has onboarded a new Learning and Development Project Manager to oversee the gap analysis for training programs. Over 300 participants have completed HRPP-supported training programs. In the future, the hospital plans to implement a Talent Learning Management System to better track training progress and introduce recognition programs to motivate staff toward professional growth.

Through strategic investments in state-of-the-art infrastructure, staff development, and patient-centered care, SMMC is transforming healthcare on the island. With ongoing innovation and collaboration, the hospital is on track to become a regional leader in healthcare!

Civil Society Partnership Facility for Resilience Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$7.20 million TF0B3014: US$7.2 million	June 26, 2020	March 31, 2025	**US$1.46 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Civil Society Partnership Facility for Resilience Project (CSPFRP) helped strengthen the capacity of Sint Maarten's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and funded community-level reconstruction and resilience projects. The project, known locally as Resources for Community Resilience (R4CR), is implemented by VNGI. VNGI ensures the project follows World Bank policies and coordinates with other relevant PIUs, government institutions, CSOs, and other key stakeholders in Sint Maarten. VNGI's hands-on approach and on-the-ground presence in Sint Maarten have project management and coordination to function well and stable.

US$3.96 million in grant finance has been awarded to 58 CSOs, which implemented 92 community reconstruction and resilience subprojects benefiting more than 20,360 Sint Maarteners, of which over half were female.

The project made significant progress in 2024 and awarded US$3.96 million in grant finance to 58 CSOs implementing 92 community reconstruction and resilience subprojects. This amount is 84.9 percent of the total US$4.66 million allocated to Component 1 and 99 percent of US$4 million allocated for grants. In addition, CSPFRP built the capacity of prospective grant implementing CSOs through training and skills development activities. By December 31, 2024, 97.8 percent of the 91 subprojects were completed, and 91.4 percent of CSOs reported improved capacity for management and implementation. In its four years of implementation, CSPFRP benefited 20,365 Sint Maarteners, of which 11,200 were female, exceeding the end targets for all project indicators.



DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: To improve the capacity of CSOs and support implementation of reconstruction and resilience sub-projects at the community level.

Indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target (2025)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Percentage of subprojects approved which are fully implemented and functional to users	0	75	65	72.97	61.9	88
Percentage of CSOs participating in the project with improved capacity for grant management and implementation	60	70	10.27	72.97	88.09	91.38
Percentage of beneficiaries expressing satisfaction that sub-projects reflected their needs	0	75	100	-	100	100
Number of beneficiaries of subprojects	0	10,000	2,228	2,453	8,507	20,369

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Component 1 – Small grants to CSOs for reconstruction and resilience (US$4.66 million: small grants – US$4.00 million; grant management and administration – US$0.66 million)

By December 31, 2024, the project has launched seven calls for proposals. 92 subprojects were awarded to 58 CSOs, an increase from 77 subprojects and 52 CSOs in 2023; 97.8 percent of the subprojects were completed; and 91.4 percent of CSOs reported improved capacity for management and implementation. These subprojects benefited 20,365 Sint Maarteners, of which more than half were female. The total of beneficiaries reached represents 204 percent of the 10,000 end-target.

The CSPFRP ensures its investments through additional training, coaching, and mentoring are sustainable beyond the project closing and capacity-constrained CSOs are competitive for grants. The 92 subprojects are grouped into two broad categories: approximately 61 percent were awarded to help repair or rehabilitate vital community programs, such as daycare centers and after-school programs, while the remaining 39 percent were awarded to support Sint Maarten's arts, culture and heritage, social care activities, and skills development.

Component 2 – Technical assistance and capacity building to CSOs (US$1.08 million)

The updated Capacity Building and Technical Assistance Plan led to the highest uptake of subprojects in rounds 6 and 7, with 14 and 15 grantees respectively, the largest numbers since the project's inception. As of December 31, 2024, 91.4 percent of CSOs reported increased capacity for fiduciary management of grants, compared to 61.9 percent in 2023. Cumulatively, the project has conducted 67 training sessions for CSO staff in primary areas of the subproject cycle, but also in CSO governance and social media use.

Component 3 – Project management and coordination (US$1.46 million)

As of December 31, 2024, 82.6 percent of CSOs received grants within one month of the PIU receiving their request, and 83.6 percent of grievances were resolved.

COMPONENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS[15]

Components	Status
Component 1: Small grants to CSOs for reconstruction and resilience	Satisfactory
Component 2: Capacity building and technical assistance for CSOs	Satisfactory
Component 3: Project management and coordination	Satisfactory

DISBURSEMENTS

By December 31, 2024, 96.7 percent of the total grant had been disbursed, compared to 76.3 percent in 2023. The project disbursed US$1.46 million in 2024, compared to US$2.24 million in 2023.

ISSUES AND PLANS

No issues.

- Project will conduct its last mission in March 2025 to prepare for closure. The Implementation Completion Report, which is due six months after closing, will include recommendations for sustainability strategies.



15 See Appendix A for definitions.





R4CR's Four-Year Journey: Strengthening Sint Maarten's Social and Cultural Fabric

Over the past four years, the Resources for Community Resilience (R4CR) program has played a pivotal role in helping Sint Maarten recover from the devastation of Hurricane Irma and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. By empowering local CSOs through R4CR, or the Civil Society Partnership Facility for Resilience Project, has spearheaded community-driven resilience efforts, with 58 CSOs executing 92 funded projects benefiting over 15,000 residents.

The program, implemented by VNGI, had a simple yet powerful approach: strengthen the capacity of CSOs by offering both financial support for community and social initiatives and essential training in reconstruction and resilience activities. Through seven rounds of funding, R4CR equipped local organizations with the tools to make a real difference. Efforts ranged from workshops to hands-on implementation of projects, with local CSOs delivering activities in education, health, arts, community development, and more.

Celebrating Milestones at the Final Conference

In October 2024, at Simpson Bay Resort, over 150 participants—government officials, community leaders, donors, and grant recipients—gathered to reflect on the program's success. During the event, R4CR leaders Rolf Hunink and Steve Duzanson proudly shared the program's results, which exceeded all targets: 91 subprojects had been funded, well beyond the target 80, and 58 CSOs had benefited, surpassing the revised goal of 50. Even more impressive, every beneficiary expressed satisfaction with the program.

One of R4CR's standout achievements is the capacity development of local CSOs. Through a partnership with Foresee Foundation/NPOwer, the program delivered 60 tailored workshops on project management, sustainability, and community outreach. These efforts will help ensure that civil society is better equipped to tackle future challenges on the island.

Prime Minister Dr. Luc Mercelina expressed his gratitude for the crucial role R4CR played in Sint Maarten's recovery, particularly through the difficult periods following Hurricane Irma and the pandemic. Key figures echoed his words, including Wilfred Muller from the Netherlands Representation, and World Bank representatives Trust Fund Program Manager, Toyin Jagha and Project Task Team Leader, Alex Kamurase, who emphasized the importance of international collaboration in advancing Sint Maarten's social agenda.

Spotlight on Community Impact

At the conference, many grant recipients highlighted their work: the Home Away From Home Foundation's activities improved the quality of life for over 100 seniors; the Dow Musical Foundation reached over 100 young minds through educational outreach; the National Sports Institute renovated the Raoul Illidge Sports Complex; the National Institute of Arts worked on a theater project with 165 children; and the Community Outreach Mentorship and Empowerment (COME) Center taught sewing skills to youth who shared their delightful designs.

To document the program's history and these incredible projects, R4CR published "The 4-Year Journey of St. Maarten's Social Reconstruction," a book and e-book now available online. At the conference, Ms. Jose Sommers, R4CR Training and Capacity Building Manager, presented the first copy of the book to the Governor of St. Maarten, His Excellency Ajamu Bailey, who expressed his appreciation for the contributions made by local CSOs and the R4CR team in strengthening the island's social resilience.

Though R4CR has officially concluded, its legacy lives on through the ongoing work of local CSOs leading the charge toward a brighter future. The R4CR demonstrates the resilience of Sint Maarten's civil society and truly shows the impact even the smallest CSO can make on the island.

Fostering Resilient Learning Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$26.78 million TF0B8048: $US26.78 million	June 9, 2022	April 30, 2027	**US$1.08 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Fostering Resilient Learning Project (FRLP) aims to restore access to an adequate and inclusive learning environment, re-establish library services, and improve the availability of quality data for decision-making. NRPB implements the FRLP in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports (MECYS).

An MTR in October 2024 confirmed that while the project objective and activities are still relevant, the project has incurred implementation delays. Progress toward the development objective and implementation performance was assessed as moderately satisfactory at the end of 2024. Moving forward, it will be key to closely monitor timelines and budget.

In September 2024, the learning assessment was finalized and presented to various stakeholders, including teachers, school boards, and ministry staff. All stakeholders considered the learning assessment a valuable exercise and look forward to continuing these assessments to gain insight into the state of education. MECYS is preparing a concept for a follow-up assessment.

The project witnessed the country's first learning outcome assessment being adopted, with results shared with stakeholders in September 2024. The design process for the Charles Leopold Bell (CLB) school and the Sint Maarten Library has started, including the necessary stakeholder consultations.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: To restore access to an adequate and inclusive learning environment and to re-establish library services and improve the availability of quality data for decision-making.

Indicators	Baseline (2012)	Target (2025)	2022	2023	2024
Students with restored access to an adequate learning environment through the reconstruction of SML school (Number)	0	200	0	0	0
Students benefitting from a package of interventions at CLB school to address chronic behavior challenges (Number)	0	120	0	0	0
Library open and operating at full capacity for Sint Maarten's population and visitors (Yes/No)	No	Yes	No	No	No
Availability and use of an integrated database at MECYS for evidence-based decision making in education, culture, and sport sectors (Text)	Current system does not facilitate use of data for decision-making	New system is operational and rolled out	No change from baseline	No change from baseline	No change from baseline

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Components 1 and 2 – Rebuilding Inclusive Schools (US$14.27 million) and Restoring Library Services (US$9.50 million)

In October 2024, a contractor was selected to perform the demolition of the remnants of the SML and CLB schools and the Sint Maarten Library. The contract includes the reconstruction of the new SML building as well. This contractor is working on mobilization and is expected to start the demolition phase in March 2025. An independent firm representing the PIU will supervise the work.

The design process for CLB and the library kicked off with stakeholder consultations in October 2024, and it has already delivered the first concepts out of which preferences have been selected by the beneficiaries. To assist MECYS, the project is also financing technical assistance to develop an updated policy for the Educational Care Center housed at CLB. At the end of 2024, a contract was being finalized to start in early January 2025.

Lastly, the PIU successfully relocated and aided an individual who was squatting at the old library building, paving the way for properly securing the building to ensure safety and prevent access. Similarly, the premises of CLB were more adequately secured to avoid unauthorized entry.

Component 3 – Strengthening Management Information System of MECYS (US$1.2 million)

The tender for the Ministry Management Information System (MMIS) implementation was launched in May 2024, with the assignment expected to begin in early 2025. The MECYS has recruited the necessary capacity to ensure adequate integration of the MMIS in the ministry. The project continued to support the ministry with expertise to prepare the necessary processes for the MMIS. In September 2024, results from the learning outcome assessment of 2023 were shared with stakeholders and positively received. The project is assessing support for the next phase.

Component 4 – Project Management (US$1.60 million)

A new project engineer was hired in March 2024 and mobilized to Sint Maarten in August 2024. The recruitment process for the new project manager, who left in October, was completed by end-2024. The new project manager will start in February 2025. In the interim, project management tasks are divided among the existing team members under the supervision of the program manager.

COMPONENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS[16]

Components	Status
Component1: Rebuilding inclusive schools	**Moderately Satisfactory**
Component 2: Restoring library services	**Moderately Satisfactory**
Component 3: Strengthening management information system of MECYS	**Satisfactory**
Component 4: Project management	**Moderately Satisfactory**

16 See Appendix A for definitions

DISBURSEMENTS

In 2024, the project disbursed US$1.08 million under the grant agreement financing, compared to US$0.61 in 2023.

ISSUES AND PLANS

- The contractor for the CLB and Library is a new player on the Sint Maarten market, with no prior experience working with NRPB. Mobilization timelines are lengthy due to immigration requirements, potentially delaying the project's start. Delays in the design phase, caused by contract delays for the CLB and Library, are putting pressure on the project schedule. A detailed work plan has been developed and will be closely monitored.
- The MECYS function book still lacks two key positions needed for effective management of the MMIS. This gap is being temporarily addressed by contracting external consultants for these roles. However, it is crucial that the ministry finds sustainable solutions to ensure the MMIS is managed effectively in the long term.
- The legal and policy framework required for efficient MMIS implementation, with input from relevant stakeholders, remains a risk. To address this, MECYS is seeking support from the Netherlands to hire a legal or policy expert to help amend the necessary policies and procedures.



Child Resilience and Protection Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$5 million	October 22, 2020	December 31, 2024	**US$0.83 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Child Resilience and Protection Project (CRPP) contributes to strengthening the child protection system capacity in Sint Maarten, nurturing children's and adolescents' well-being, and equipping schools to better respond to future disasters. UNICEF NL manages the project in collaboration with MECYS, which is responsible for policy decisions. By the end of 2024 (project closing), progress toward achieving the CRPP development objective and implementation performance were assessed as moderately satisfactory.

In 2024, critical outputs were produced: the Distress Tools Manual for online distribution to school care teams; the Violence Prevention in Schools Program was piloted in four schools; and establishment of the National Child Protection Program progressed, with a strategic plan and multi-annual workplan developed.

The project focused on improving education and child protection systems to better address the needs of children and adolescents after natural disasters and other crises. In 2024, key milestones were achieved, including the release of a Distress Tools Manual for school care teams; the development of other support tools like FAQs, a Referral Pathway Flowchart, and Teacher Queries; and training on psychosocial support and wellbeing for care teams and teachers. The Violence Prevention in Schools Program made progress with the Positive School Connections Program Curriculum, which was piloted in four schools and lessons learned documented. The establishment of the National Child Protection Program has moved forward, and a strategic plan and multi-annual workplan developed. The Court of Guardianship (CoG) was supported to develop the referral pathway, standard operating procedures for child protection were integrated in its protocols, new referral forms were developed and used, and CoG staff received training on safety planning and risk analysis. Additionally, checklists for signs of abuse and child safety were developed; the Inter-Island Protocol Operational Plan was developed and approved by all heads of the Dutch Caribbean CoGs; 23 school drill exercises were held to test emergency responses; and efforts were made to strengthen school emergency teams through risk assessment and the development of standard operating procedures.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: To strengthen the capacity of the education and child protection systems to address and respond to the needs of children and adolescents resulting from natural disasters and external shocks.

Indicators	Baseline (2020)	Target (2025)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Project beneficiaries suffering from post-hurricane distress symptoms referred to adequate services	0%	100% of identified cases are referred in a timely manner	Content of the screening tool was developed	Screening tools and manuals were developed	Screening tools and manuals were piloted	*Data from SSSD pending – requested by the World Bank*
Implementation of the integrated child protection case management system	No system in place	90% of cases are processed according to standard operating procedures	Assessment report and roadmap were completed	Child protection specialist recruited. Implementation of these tools was prepared for next year	Child protection system stakeholder consultation finalized and reviewed by CoG to determine integration within CoG procedures.	*Target met. At least 90% of cases received by CoG are processed according to* standard operating procedures, *to be confirmed by CoG as requested by the World Bank.*
Implementation of a contingency strategy for the sector	Preliminary national contingency plan available	95% of the contingency implementation tests evaluated are satisfactory	Contingency plan draft adjusted based on feedback	Contingency plan finalized and submitted to MECYS for approval	Contingency plan finalized and submitted to MECYS for approval	*Target likely to be met. SSSD to provide final numbers of tests rated as satisfactory.*

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)[17]

Several tools were created to support ongoing use of the distress tool, including a video tutorial, manual, and flowcharts. Continued support and training were provided to schools joining the Diagnostic Toolkit Program. The teacher burnout assessment was completed, with individual reports and meetings provided to participants with high burnout levels. The teacher wellbeing handbook was also finalized. The PSCP was designed to integrate social-emotional learning to assist educators in teaching middle and upper school students aged 13–15, focusing on conflict resolution skills. A curriculum was developed and piloted in four schools. To further strengthen the PSCP, a branding kit was developed, and specialized working groups were established for communication, minimum standards, implementation plans, and M&E.

Component 2 – Strengthening Child Protection Systems

The CoG was assisted in developing a referral pathway, with new standard operating procedures for handling suspected child abuse cases now integrated into CoG protocols. Institutions referring cases to the Court are now using updated referral forms. The child safety code was tailored for the education and health sectors, with professionals trained on its use. A new online toolkit was created to inspire and support professionals, and the 11th edition of *Growing Up Safe Magazine* was produced and distributed. The strategic plan and multi-annual work plan for the National Child Protection Platform were completed. The Inter-Island Protocol Operational Plan was developed along with a comprehensive communication plan that includes an animated video.

17 Component ratings are not considered in small grants (below US$5.0 million commitment value).

Component 3 – Strengthening schools and MECYS' resilience to disasters

Twenty-three earthquake awareness school drills were conducted, a school safety monitoring tool was developed, and Drill Guidelines for Schools were distributed. The school safety training packages were reviewed and revised.

COMPONENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Given the size of the grant (US$5 million), the project does not have official ratings.

DISBURSEMENTS

As of December 2024, the CRPP disbursed US$5 million cumulatively, or 100 percent of the total project amount (US$5 million). The disbursement performance of US$1 million in 2024 went according to year plan 2024, while the disbursement in 2023 was US$1.6 million.

ISSUES AND PLANS

- The project closed at the end of 2024.
- UNICEF-NL has prepared the borrower's report and the ICR will be delivered on June 30, 2025.




PLEASE USE THESE STAIRS FOR GOING UP ONLY
MY IDEAS MATTER!
EMPOWERING YOUTH LEADERS
I am the NOW
I am the FUTURE



Paving the Way for a New Generation of Leaders, Thinkers, and Changemakers

"Investing in meaningful youth participation means preventing stagnation in our development as a nation and globally," said the late Dr. Henry Charles, Senior Programme Specialist within the Child Resilience and Protection Project.

"The Child Resilience and Protection Project (CRPP) is about more than just recovery; it's about empowering youth to shape a safer, more resilient future," says Sacha Bökkerink, Programmes and Public Affairs Director of the PIU, UNICEF the Netherlands. "However, this project is only successful due to the groundwork laid and continued work by our government partners, such as the Department of Youth."

"The Department of Youth recognizes that youth have unique perspectives that can inform and improve initiatives addressing their needs and challenges. Our goal is to increase youth voices in policy and program development within Government and beyond," shares Soraya Agard-Lake, the Government's focal point for the CRPP and Head of the Department of Youth.

The CRPP closed in December 2024. Its aim was to strengthen the capacity of the education and child protection systems so the needs of children and adolescents resulting from natural disasters and external shocks could be better met. A key highlight of the project was its strong focus on boosting youth participation, giving young people a seat at the table and empowering them to drive change.

The **Youth Roundtable Conference,** organized by the Department of Youth, gave young people a platform to share their views on societal issues. The 2022 edition, "MY Participation Matters," featured an all-youth lineup and live-streamed discussions and interactive segments wherein participants raised concerns about mental health, education, youth crime, and the need for more youth-focused events. Their astute insights influenced future CRPP activities, highlighting the importance of youth in decision-making.

One such activity organized to amplify young voices was a live-streamed panel discussion, **"Finding the Mental Balance in Active Youth Participation."** The Sint Maarten Youth Parliament hosted the event, in which youth openly discussed mental health challenges and the need for supportive environments. At another initiative, **"Empowering Youth Leaders,"** spearheaded by the St. Maarten South Leo Club, young people led workshops, presentations, and demonstrations. Peer-to-peer sessions showcased youth talents, in dance, makeup artistry, and visual arts.





Another priority identified during the Youth Roundtable Conference was the need for more creative outlets for young people. **"What If I Told You,"** a short film written by a local teacher and performed by students aged 6–14, explores how childhood experiences shape behaviour and the importance of supportive adults in a child's development. The CRPP supported the film's production, providing students with a hands-on learning experience as they took part in scriptwriting, acting, and editing. At the film's premiere, held on Caribbean Youth Day, dignitaries, teachers, and families watched the movie in theatres, which ended with applause and even sparked a dialogue about mental health and social justice.

Another critical aspect of the CRPP's work is educating young people about their rights. In the lead-up to World Children's Day, the Department of Youth, in collaboration with UNICEF the Netherlands, hosted **children's rights presentations** for 500 fifth and sixth grade students across Sint Maarten. These sessions raised awareness about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Cultural performances and youth-led discussions were incorporated into the presentations. Also, the film "What If I Told You" ran, prompting participants to talk about the importance of children's rights and participation.

Throughout the CRPP, youth consultations played a key role in shaping the **Positive Parenting Support Programme (PPSP) and Positive School Connections Programme (PSCP).** The PSCP, which aims to create safer schools through social-emotional learning and conflict resolution, launched a pilot in four schools. Students selected as Youth Peace Leaders promoted non-violent communication and peer support within their schools. A public youth forum, "It Starts with Me," provided further feedback, which will help refine the program before it is expanded.

Sint Maarten's youth have incredible potential to create positive social, environmental, and cultural change across the island, and giving them the tools and opportunities to make a difference is essential. "As the CRPP ends, the Department of Youth remain committed to continue engaging youth in ongoing dialogues, creative projects, and consultations, ensuring youth voices are heard and valued."



Improving Mental Health Services Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$8 million TF0C1500: $US8 million	July 28, 2023	June 30, 2027	**US$0.7 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

Within its first year of implementation, IMHSP has secured US$8 million in counterpart funding and US$2 million additional Trust Fund funding to finance the construction of the new mental health facility.

2024 marked the first year of implementation for the Improving Mental Health Services Project (IMHSP), which aims to enhance mental health service delivery in Sint Maarten. The year's primary focus was securing adequate funding for the project. Counterpart funding of US$8 million was obtained through a capital investment loan requested by the GoSXM and approved by the Netherlands Parliament. Combined with an additional US$2 million in Trust Fund funding approved on December 23, 2024, this financing will support the construction of the new Mental Health Foundation (MHF) facility under Component 2. In addition, major procurement processes advanced, including the technical assistance contract for sector reforms and the design contract for the new facility. With sufficient funds now in place, the project is on track to complete Component 2 and achieve all the project development objectives.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: Improve the capacity of mental health service delivery in Sint Maarten

Indicators	Baseline (2023)	Target (2027)	2023	2024
New mental health patients identified by applying standardized screening tools (Percent)	0	30	0	0
Cases in the mental health care chain managed by healthcare providers according to standardizing protocols (Percent)	0	20	0	0
New MHF facility constructed (Percent)	0	100	0	0

Note: Specific data collection for indicators 1 and 2 will start in year 3 of the project.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Component 1 – Supporting the strengthening of the national mental health system ($3 million)

Component 1 is being supported by the prestigious Trimbos Institute, a leading organization in the field of mental health, to enhance mental health governance and drive sector reforms. By the end of 2024, the contract with the institute was in its final stages of revision, with the expectation of being signed in early January 2025. Work is set to commence thereafter. While the contract faced some delays due to adjustments

in the scope, content, and contract type requirements, the services are still anticipated to be completed within the project's established timeline. This technical assistance directly contributes to the achievement of five out of seven intermediate results indicators for the project. The PIU and Ministry of Public Health, Social Development, and Labor (VSA) and other sector partners are working closely together and at the end of 2024, collaborative planning sessions were held to ensure alignment between the different partners' scheduled activities.

The project launch successfully took place in June 2024. The Project Launch Workshop convened technical government staff and key partners involved in carrying out project activities with key outside experts and World Bank staff. Participants discussed how to successfully implement the project over its four-year implementation period. Participants left the event with an understanding of the Project Development Objective, project component content and priorities, and the roles and responsibilities for successful project completion by its closing date of June 30, 2027.

The National Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Working Group was established and held two meetings since project effectiveness. This reflects progress in one of the four main activities under Component 1, that is, the establishment of institutional arrangements to support VSA in implementing the national mental health promotion and prevention program. The Trimbos Institute is expected to support the development of sustainable institutional arrangements for this working group to ensure the national program advances during and beyond the project life.

Legislative reform under Component 1 is on track and being financed by VSA through direct support from The Netherlands. A legislative expert hired in August 2023 is updating the legislation relevant to mental health. Sint Maarten is taking the lead within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and chairing a working group to implement legislative reform on mental health in all four countries of the Kingdom. NRPB is facilitating this process and is providing stakeholder support and technical advice. As part of the reform, a multidisciplinary team with representatives from relevant government entities (VSA, Justice, Court) and key stakeholders (MHF, Turning Point, White and Yellow Cross) will discuss complex cases and develop protocols and policy directives to strengthen patient rights and formalize collaboration. With this team, activities are being introduced to address ambulatory crisis care.

VSA's capacity on aspects pertaining to legislation and reforms on mental health is expected to be further strengthened by the hiring of a project manager to be financed by the Dutch Government under the country packages, to support the implementation of project activities under Component 1. A plan of action for mental health was presented to the Ministry of Internal and Kingdom Affairs, to ensure the Government can sustain the outputs under Component 1. The plan is expected to be approved in early 2025, hence ensuring the capacity for the Ministry of VSA to implement the project.

Component 2 – Construction of a new MHF facility (US$14.2 million)

Services for the design of the new MHF facility have been tendered and out of 14 initial expressions of interest, 8 firms were shortlisted, of which 3 proposals made it to the final round of evaluation. This is expected to be completed in January 2025, with contract signing scheduled for February 2025.

Component 3 – Project management, monitoring, and evaluation (US$0.8 million)

All NRPB staff designated for project management are onboard. In November 2024, a full-time project officer was recruited to support administrative and contract management tasks.

COMPONENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Components	Status
Component 1: Supporting the strengthening of the national mental health system	Moderately Satisfactory
Component 2: Construction of a new MHF facility	Moderately Satisfactory
Component 3: Capacity building of and project management by the GoSXM	Satisfactory

DISBURSEMENTS

Minimal disbursement of US$0.7 million in 2024, but it is expected to increase throughout 2025.

ISSUES AND PLANS

- Saturation of the local construction market is a cross-cutting challenge of the portfolio. NRPB will mitigate the risks in the design phase wherein specific budget requirements will be communicated with the designer.
- A lingering issue is the lack of available human resources in the public sector to implement policy recommendations from the technical assistance (Component 1). This will be mitigated by support from the Temporary Working Organization's work through the country packages.



FOCUS AREA 3: Build the Foundation and Capacity to Improve Long Term Resilience and Good Governance

Emergency Recovery Project I

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$119.7 million TF0A8079: $US55.2 million TF0B5199: $US45 million TF0C0966: $US19.5 million	July 10, 2018	December 31, 2025	**US$11.74 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The project's development objective remains feasible by the current closing date, and implementation progress is moderately satisfactory. Additionally, the project is improving institutional capacity to manage resilient recovery and reconstruction, given Sint Maarten's Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility coverage and NRPB's rising implementation capacity.

About 3,736 more citizens directly benefited from project activities (9,603 in total as of December 2024), with 89 percent of beneficiaries surveyed satisfied with the quality of the housing repair.

The renovation and repairs of 19 schools was completed by September 2024. Contracts for the final set of works on school gyms and sports facilities were awarded. A contract for the fire and ambulance department expansion was awarded.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: To contribute to Sint Maarten's immediate emergency recovery needs and strengthen institutional capacity to manage resilient recovery and reconstruction

Indicators	Baseline (2019)	Target (2025)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Share of households with electrical services resilient to hurricanes (Percentage)	80	89.5	86	87	89.5	89.5
Water storage capacity of Sint Maarten utilities (average daily demand) (Days)	0.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70
Number of citizens benefiting from the investments in emergency response system strengthening (Number (Thousand)	0.0	40.0	40.0	40.0	40.0	40.0
Percentage of beneficiaries that are satisfied with the quality of housing repairs (Gender disaggregated) (Percentage)	0	80	0	0	89.00	89.00
NRPB is established and fully operational (Yes/No)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of citizens directly benefitting from the project investments (Number)	0	10,000	N/A[18]	N/A	5,867	9,603

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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Component 1 – Emergency measures for the recovery of disaster first responders and preparedness facilities *(US$16.45 million)*

This component covers improvements to the national emergency response and disaster preparedness system, through (i) repairs and improvements to critical disaster preparedness and response infrastructure that include the repair of critical public facilities and repairs at four national agencies (namely the police, the fire service, the ambulance service, and the meteorological service), and repairs of designated emergency shelters; (ii) procurement of emergency equipment for first responders; and (iii) training and institutional strengthening. The tender for the expansion of the Fire and Ambulance, including the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was launched in December 2023, and was awarded to an international contractor on September 2, 2024. Good progress has been made on the establishment of the cell broadcast system with ongoing dialogues among all stakeholders, including NRPB, the Telecom regulator (BTP), and the providers to agree on the implementation arrangements. Further, 10 operational vehicles for the fire services and ambulance services were delivered at Sint Maarten on April 18, 2024.

Component 2 – Restore Utility Services after Hurricane Irma (US$11.60 million)

The procurement package for the second/final package for up to 6 km of low-voltage electric cables, potable water distribution pipes, telecom cable conduits, and 3 km of high-tension electrical cables failed as all three bids were considered technically unresponsive to must-meet criteria. Moreover, excellent progress has been made in implementing the GEBE business plan, with the execution process for phase 1 of the business plan being finalized in September 2024. This assignment also addressed some acute needs and priorities of GEBE, because the company experienced serious capacity issues from April to September 2024 due to unplanned reduced generating capacity.

Component 3 – Housing Repair and Public Buildings Repair and Reconstruction (US$51.65 million)

In 2024, a total of 19 schools have been repaired and renovated. In addition, the works for the school gyms renovation was awarded to an international contractor on August 9, 2024. Lastly, the works for the sports facilities were awarded to an international contractor on October 15, 2024. Discussions regarding the work plan for the commencement of the project are still underway.

Component 4 – Institutional Support for Reconstruction (US$40 million)

Part of Component 4 included funding toward institutional support and NRPB operating costs. This amount has been depleted and is currently financed through reflows from the ESP. The Trust Fund Program Secretariat is working with NRPB, and the Government on putting a new mechanism in place by June 2025 to ensure sufficient budget for NRPB operating costs until the Trust Fund's closing date. This Component has further continued to finance the project and contract management contracts for a firm supervising the works activities (including activities under the FRLP).







COMPONENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS[19]

Components	Status
Component 1: Emergency measures for the recovery of disaster first responders and preparedness facilities	Moderately Satisfactory
Component 2: Restore utilities services after Hurricane Irma	Moderately Satisfactory
Component 3: Housing repair and public buildings repair and Reconstruction	Moderately Satisfactory
Component 4: Institutional support for reconstruction	Satisfactory

DISBURSEMENTS

In 2024, the project disbursed US$11.74 million of the US$119.7 million grant financing (9.81 percent), compared to US$26.75 million in 2023. Cumulative disbursements since project effectiveness amount to US$103.89 million.

ISSUES AND PLANS

- A building permit for the EOC was obtained by June 28, 2024. The works contract was awarded to an international contractor on September 2. At end-2024, the contract had not been signed, and thus, construction had not started yet, as the contractor was unable to get the required visas, permits, and licenses in a timely manner. The consequence is that the construction time for the Fire and Ambulance and EOC is 15 months, which exceeds the lifespan of the ERP-I, which closes on December 31, 2025. A variety of options are currently being explored to assess the feasibility of the Fire and Ambulance and EOC project. Funding for works delivered beyond the ERP-1 are being sought, and this activity is pending the Government's decision before the contract can be signed.
- The international contractor is facing challenges that are also affecting the timeline of the gyms and sports facilities. The contract is for 12-month construction time; thus, it also becomes more and more difficult to realize. NRPB extends help where and when it can to guide the contractor in its endeavors to fulfill all requirements, but this help is by necessity limited as different autonomous ministries are involved in the different processes, specifically those that affect the contractor's mobilization capacity.
- A budget deficit in Component 4 was experienced in 2024, specifically on the NRPB operational budget under Component 4.2. Ensuring sufficient budget for NRPB operating costs until the SXM TF's closing date is expected to be achieved through the foreseen SPEAR Project. In the interim, reflows from the ESP are used to bridge the gap.

19 See Appendix A for definitions.


Optimizing IT for Business

Digital Government Transformation Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$12 million TF0B4218: US$12 million	March 18, 2021	November 30, 2026	**US$ US$0.92 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Digital Government Transformation Project (DGTP) is enabling Sint Maarten to improve the access, efficiency, and resilience of selected administrative public services for citizens and businesses by reinforcing the country's digital infrastructure. NRPB implements the DGTP in close coordination with a Digital Leadership Team (DLT) established by the Ministry of General Affairs and TWO. The work under this project is in synergy with the TWO's country packages. The DLT aims to provide technical oversight, coordination, and implementation support government-wide and reports to a high-level government Project Oversight Committee (POC) and acts as the secretariat. The POC is chaired by the Prime Minister and formed by the Government to monitor implementation progress and provide strategic guidance.

The Digital Transformation Strategy, championed by Prime Minister Jacobs in 2022, is a robust seven-year roadmap to guide the country's digital transformation. The strategy aims to create an environment that is conducive to a whole-of-government approach. The COM also approved Sint Maarten's first-ever Data Interoperability Policy in 2022. Building on the Government's successes, in 2023, the DGTP financed legislative reviews for electronic transactions, data protection, digital signatures, and data sharing and submitted its recommendations to the Department of Legal Affairs and Legislation for further action.

The DGTP's progress toward its development objective and implementation performance remains moderately satisfactory, unchanged from the 2023 assessment. While the project's implementation in 2024 slowed due to procurement challenges, snap elections, the country's energy crisis, and technical capacity constraints, it still made notable progress in several areas.

Effective project implementation also relies on ministries, departments, and other agencies mobilizing the necessary personnel and resources. The DLT conducted workshops in October 2024 to raise awareness about the project and foster partnerships for better project engagement and coordination. Currently, the DLT is finalizing designated focal points within each stakeholder entity.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: To enhance the access, efficiency, and resilience of selected administrative public services for citizens and businesses.

Indicators	Baseline (2021)	Target (2026)	2023	2024
Share of selected services processed digitally (Percentage)	0	45	0	0
Registries connected with the interoperability platform (Number)	0	5	0	0
Increase in the availability (uptime) to the public of the selected public services (Percentage)	15	99	15	15

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Component 1 – Strengthening the legal, regulatory, and institutional environment (Revised cost US$5.11 million)

In 2024, the ICT Department enhanced its capacity with the onboarding of three new full-time employes, increasing their capacity for project implementation. The project has also prioritized stakeholder engagement, conducting awareness-raising workshops with key ministries and agencies to foster collaboration. Two stakeholder engagement workshops were held with key stakeholders from the core registries supported by the DGTP.

The first stakeholder engagement workshop, conducted in June 2024, secured commitments from public and private sector stakeholders, including the Chamber of Commerce. The second workshop, a weeklong engagement in October 2024, presented detailed plans for the implementation, governance, and M&E of project components. This workshop successfully garnered renewed commitment and support from all stakeholders. A dedicated session was held for the COM and the Prime Minister to re-introduce the DGTP to the new government, highlight the digital strategy developed under the DGTP, and secure government commitment to updating the roadmap for this strategy. This roadmap is integral to Sint Maarten's digital transformation journey, which the DGTP supports. The October workshop demonstrated strong gender diversity, with approximately a 50/50 gender split among participants.

Building upon the legal work on legislative reviews for electronic transactions, data protection, digital signatures, and data sharing in 2023, the project will initiate the drafting of critical legislative in early 2025. These reforms will focus on establishing a national digital identity and a regulatory framework for interoperability and enterprise architecture (EA).

Component 2 – Building digital platforms to enable service delivery (revised cost US$3.84 million)

This component focuses on establishing the technical foundation for citizen-oriented services by strengthening ICT infrastructure, developing ICT solutions, and enhancing cybersecurity. Key achievements include:

- **Cybersecurity Awareness Training:** The DGTP successfully trained 15 percent of government personnel (156 civil servants out of 1,056 total) in cybersecurity awareness. The DLT continues to work with the Personnel and Organization Department to institutionalize training in the GoSXM.
- **Digitization of Records:** The Department of Records and Information Management, with the support of the DLT, is currently digitizing 500,000 records. The first step has been completed, a piloting of 5,000 records from Civil Registry; Department of Information Technology; Ministry of Public Housing, Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure; and Ministry of TEATT. The vendor will now transition to full production.
- **Interoperability Platform Pilot:** With support from the Country Package *(landspakket)*, the ICT Department and the DLT agreed to use Azure Integration Services for the interoperability platform. A pilot implementation is currently functioning and exchanging information between the Integrated Social Registry System and Civil Registry. The GoSXM is gradually adopting only those features of Azure Integration Services essential for future base registries integration in the project.
- **Enterprise Architecture (EA):** This activity provides a crucial blueprint for future ICT developments across the GoSXM, including outside the project. The implementation of the EA is a critical path activity. After a lengthy procurement process, the hiring of a firm to implement EA has failed. The project team explored alternatives and selected the one with the best chance of successful and timely implementation. To this end, the management firm's EA consultant, who has already collaborated with the ICT Department to deepen the initial EA work, will be engaged to complete the work.
- **Government-Wide Area Network (GWAN):** Successful implementation of the GWAN will significantly enhance the resilience and availability of selected public services by providing fiber-optic connectivity. Procurement for this activity is in the award stage, with contract negotiations underway with the selected service provider. Implementation is expected to occur within eight weeks of award and contract signing.

Component 3 – User-centered public services (revised cost US$3.05 million)

The DLT has identified key activities to modernize Sint Maarten's Public Service Centers (PSCs), with the interior design of the PSC physical space being a priority. While negotiations are still ongoing, there is some concern that this tender may face challenges, which could potentially impact the timely procurement of furniture, furnishings, and IT equipment required for the PSC upgrades.

COMPONENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS[20]

Components	Status
Component1: Strengthening the legal, regulatory, and institutional environment	Satisfactory
Component 2: Building digital platforms to enable service delivery	Satisfactory
Component 3: User-centered public services	Satisfactory

20 See Appendix A for definitions.

DISBURSEMENTS

The project has disbursed US$3.80 million cumulatively, representing 31.7 percent of the total budget. In 2024, disbursements amounted to US$0.92 million, falling below the disbursement of 2023, which was US$2.03 million. Disbursements are expected to accelerate in 2025 due to the numerous contract awards anticipated.

ISSUES AND PLANS

- Additional resources are required to build public awareness of the Government's efforts and to monitor and evaluate service-level improvements. Digital transformation also requires top-down political support. The DGTP is also anticipating another follow-up meeting with the COM in early 2025 to continue building political support. It has committed to updating the digital strategy roadmap, initially proposed in the approved Digital Strategy (2022), and presenting it to COM to help engage the political establishment and garner further support. It is also looking for a political champion to spearhead Sint Maarten's digital transformation. Finding the proper channels to engage with the relevant ministers is essential to complement official POC meetings.
- Based on the project's procurement experience during Q4 2024 and the delays in starting activities, there is a risk that the project development objective may not be achieved. However, this risk will be validated during the Mid-Term Review (MTR), planned for April 2025.
- The DGTP portfolio currently faces challenges due to a high volume of concurrent procurement deliverables, exceeding the overall team's capacity and leading to delays. NRPB has taken steps to enhance procurement capacity, improve coordination, and strengthen monitoring mechanisms to manage the increased workload.
- The unexpected passing of the DLT project manager in early 2024 has had a negative effect on the coordination of project activities. To address this, the ICT head assumed the interim role of project manager. In Q4 2024, the department onboarded three new personnel to support government initiatives, and the DGTP is a top priority. The recruitment process for a permanent DLT manager is underway, with an anticipated start date in February 2025.
- With over 25 activities planned for contract awards in 2025, the project team anticipates significant implementation challenges due to the high volume of concurrent activities. A project governance framework has been developed. This framework streamlines implementation and improves oversight of the many contracts soon to be awarded, building a sustainable foundation for future DLT project management.
- The GoSXM faces limitations in legislation capacity, both internally and within the available pool of Dutch-based legal experts. To address the critical need for legal expertise to support digital government transformation, the project plans to onboard a dedicated legislative consultant.



Sint Maarten Wastewater Management Project

Financing	Approval Date	Closing Date	2024 Disbursement
US$10 million TF0C5700: US$10 million	August 8, 2024	June 30, 2028	**US$0.54 million**

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The Steering Committee approved the project preparation for the Sint Maarten Wastewater Management Project (SWMP) in March 2022. The World Bank approved on August 8, 2024, with the signing of the Grant Agreement on August 16, 2024. The project became effective a month later, on September 11, 2024. The total project commitment is US$25 million, with the SXM TF contributing US$10 million and the GoSXM providing US$15 million in counterpart funds from their budget. The first implementation support mission was conducted in November 2024. The rating for progress toward achieving the PDO at this stage was Satisfactory, indicating that the objectives are attainable by the closing date, provided that the project activities are implemented on schedule.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS

PDO: To increase access to safely managed sanitation services and improve sustainability and resilience of wastewater management.

Indicators	Baseline (2024)	Target (2026)	2024
People provided with access to safely managed sanitation services (Number)	0	6,300	0
Volume of BOD removed by wastewater treatment before discharge (Tones/year)	290	400	290
Institutional and financial model for wastewater management has been prepared and submitted to appropriate authority for its implementation (Yes/No)	No	Yes	No
Wastewater system operator has prepared water safety crisis and management program for extreme weather events (Yes/No)	No	Yes	No

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (BY PROJECT COMPONENT)

Component 1 – Wastewater infrastructure investment (US$20 million)

The component will finance all stages of infrastructure development, including identification, design, supervision, and construction of new, upgraded, or rehabilitated existing wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal infrastructure. The component would include the preparation of feasibility studies, environmental impact assessments, and other project documentation that are necessary to secure required permits, detailed designs, bidding documents, supervision, and contracting of construction works.

Subcomponent 1.1: The tender process for the design and supervision of the wastewater network and the *AT Illidge Road Wastewater Treatment Plant* (WWTP) is congoing, and the technical evaluation stage has been completed. After reviewing all expression of interest submissions for compliance with the technical requirements specified in the tender documents, six bids were shortlisted to make the technical evaluation. The next steps in the process will proceed as per the outlined tendering schedule, which may include financial evaluation, clarifications, or negotiations before a final decision is made. These activities are planned for Q1 2025.

The evaluation committee for this bidding process consisted of five members. Among them, one was an individual expert specifically hired in October 2024 to provide specialized support for this activity. This expert brought valuable technical insights to the process, complementing the expertise of the other committee members.

An external consulting company will be engaged in Q1 2025 for the design of the WWTP upgrade and sewer network expansion under Component 1 and Environmental and Social Assessment for Component 1.2. In parallel, an independent expert will be engaged in Q1 2025 to prepare an independent assessment and ex-post review on the sludge management aspects of the Environmental and Social Assessment and Environmental and Social Management Plan for Subcomponent 1.2. The contracting process for the evaluation of sludge management is currently underway.

Component 2 – Technical assistance for sustainable and resilient wastewater management (US$3 million)

Component 2 aims to create the framework for providing sustainable and resilient wastewater services in Sint Maarten.

Subcomponent 2.1: The terms of reference for the consultation to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of VROMI in planning, regulation, and supervision have been shared with the ministry. Discussions regarding the scope, objectives, and implementation details were ongoing until the end of this reporting period to ensure alignment with the ministry's priorities and strategic goals. The recruitment process for a senior wastewater consultant was initiated to support VROMI on developing and managing the sector. Updates on the recruitment process will follow in subsequent reports.

Subcomponent 2.5: The assignment to develop a baseline for water quality in water bodies directly connected to the treatment plant was initiated. By the end of this reporting period, the contract was successfully awarded to the selected company, a significant step toward implementing this critical assessment that will measure the project's impact.

Component 3 – Project management (US$2 million)

The project will support the project management and coordination capacity of NRPB as the PIU, including support on (i) project operating cost and M&E activities; (ii) E&S risk mitigation measures; (iii) training of PIU and government staff; (iv) annual audits for the project and providers; and (v) establishment of citizen engagement measures and grievance redress mechanisms for the project activities.

The hiring process for both the hydraulic engineer and community engagement specialist began in September as planned. It is anticipated that both professionals will be onboarded early next year. The community engagement specialist will be recruited through a direct selection process. The specialist will contribute expertise to this project on a part-time basis for three months, focusing on fostering effective community involvement and ensuring stakeholder engagement aligns with the project's goals.

The project officer has been hired and will contribute to this project on a half-time basis. This role will involve providing support in coordination, monitoring, and ensuring the smooth implementation of project activities.

DISBURSEMENTS

In 2024, the project disbursed US$0.54 million of the grant financing (5.4 percent).

ISSUES AND PLANS

- Key challenges within the project have been identified, such as private house connections, complex topography, and intervention locations. These challenges will be addressed in the coming year to keep the project on track and ensure obstacles are addressed efficiently.
- A major challenge is the limited time for construction of the civil works due to the Trust Fund closing date. Since the funds will expire at a specific date, the project must meet a strict time frame. This constraint impacts the construction schedule, potentially limiting the thorough execution of all necessary works or requiring accelerated planning and execution to meet the funding deadline.
- Sustainability remains the top priority on top of all planned interventions. Establishing a framework to ensure the sustainability of investments is crucial for the project's long-term success and effectiveness. Such a framework would include strategies for ongoing maintenance, capacity building, financial sustainability, and effective management.







4

Advisory Services and Analytics

Analysis for Establishing the Sint Maarten Disaster Reserve Fund

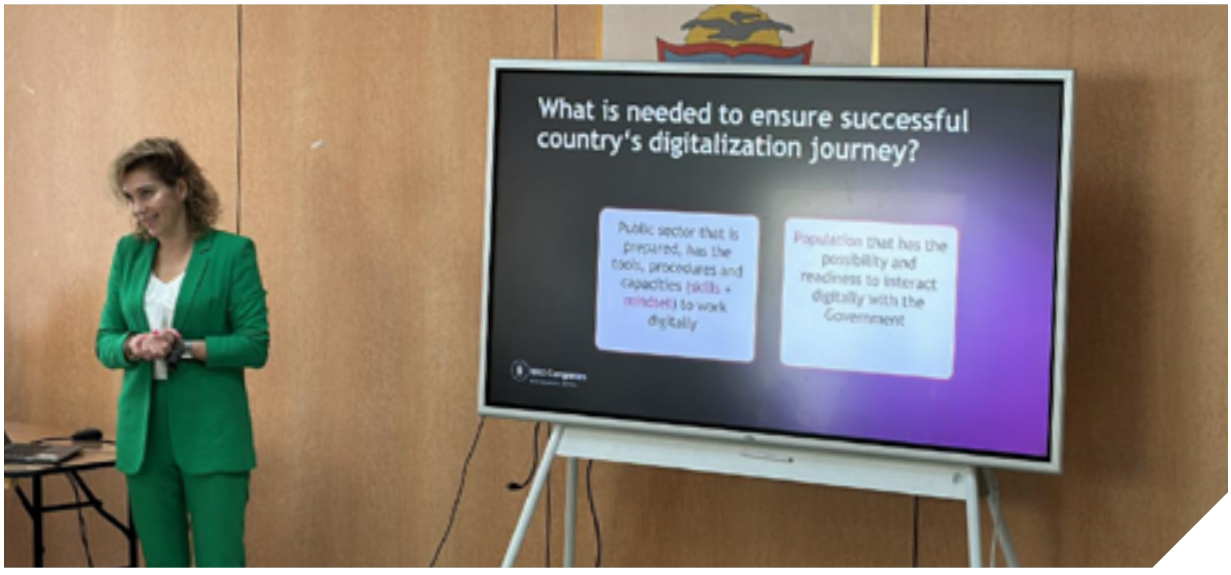
In July 2021, the SXM TF Steering Committee requested the World Bank's assistance in designing a DRF and associated financing tools. The fund would leverage PJIAE's significant loan repayment to the GoSXM to improve access to post-disaster rapid response finance for Sint Maarten and strengthen the disaster risk finance framework.

After completing a thorough internal peer review process, the Options Paper was completed in March 2024, and presented to the Steering Committee in April 2024, and the GoSXM in June 2024. The Sint Maarten COM approved Option 3, to establish the DRF as an independent entity and endorsed the use of the airport reflows to capitalize the DRF. The report was made publicly available on June 30, 2024, including through the Sint Maarten Trust Fund website. Following this, the Prime Minister of Sint Maarten formally requested continued technical assistance from the World Bank to establish the DRF. In response, the SPEAR project being prepared will be used to channel further technical support.

Digital Government Transformation Project

The DGTP technical support complements the recipient-executed DGTP, which aims to enhance the access, efficiency, and resilience of selected administrative public services for citizens and businesses. It provides hands-on support in areas where the Government and the co-implementing agency, NRPB, require additional technical capacity. These areas include communication and technical aspects of information technology, including the GWAN, Address Registry, Interoperability Platform, and Cybersecurity. Following the restructuring of DGTP in 2023, this ASA provides technical support in answering technical questions, developing specifications, exploring options for future actions, fast-tracking procurement, and serving as a sounding board for ideas and feedback.

In 2024, key deliverables were completed, including inputs to technical specification that helped speed up implementation of the DGTP. The activity also helped complete the communications strategy for implementation support and a digital government legislative gap analysis on data protection and sharing.





5

Program Management Updates

Program Secretariat

In 2024, the World Bank made significant strides in strengthening its presence in Sint Maarten. After opening the country office in 2023, two international staff successfully relocated to Sint Maarten in the first half of 2024. A senior program assistant from Jamaica spent six months on developmental assignment in Sint Maarten to support operations, and the World Bank hired a local staff from Sint Maarten to support the Program Secretariat's daily business and operations on the ground. The Secretariat received additional support from two staff based in Washington, D.C. on 12–18 month developmental assignment as senior operations officers. The new office is equipped with several workstations and a World Bank standard meeting room for visiting project teams to work with implementing partners and stakeholders.

In March 2024, the World Bank and the PIUs collaborated on the annual Country Portfolio Performance Review, which included a Results Fair attended by over 200 participants and a Technical Review to evaluate project performance. The Fair highlighted the positive impact of the Trust Fund program, generating significant interest in further knowledge-sharing events. Additionally, the World Bank hosted a best practice exchange with TWO and other partners in Curaçao and welcomed University of Aruba students to its Washington, D.C. headquarters.

The Program Secretariat led consultations with key stakeholders, particularly the COM, TWO, and NRPB, to advance the findings from the last year's Sustainability and Resilience Initiative assessment report, aiming to develop a capacity-building plan to ensure the sustainability of Trust Fund outcomes. This work laid the foundation for the pipeline SPEAR project, which looks to ensure the GoSXM can sustain Trust Fund investments and improve NRPB's operational effectiveness.

A stock take was conducted to evaluate the Strategic Framework 2019–2025, considering fiscal constraints, climate vulnerabilities, and supply chain disruptions. The findings will guide the development of an updated Strategic Framework for 2025–2028, highlighting program performance, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future actions. The stock take included a desk review of key documents and consultations with World Bank task teams and PIUs.



Implementation Support and Preparation Activities

In 2024, the World Bank provided strengthened technical support to Sint Maarten's PIUs, conducting 46 project-related missions. Many of these missions focused on pre-appraisal, preparation, or negotiations for new projects or additional financing. Most missions were held in-person in Sint Maarten to maintain close collaboration with PIUs on project implementation. To improve coordination, the Program Secretariat continued to use a shared calendar for task teams and PIUs to plan missions.

Reporting and Monitoring

In March and October 2024, the World Bank released the Trust Fund's 2023 Annual Report and the 2024 Semi-Annual Report. Task teams supported PIUs' implementation activities through mission visits and technical briefings. The PIUs provided timely progress reports, while World Bank task teams produced Implementation Status and Results reports twice during the year to inform management on key project issues and shared Aide Memoires after each mission with the Government and relevant counterparts.

The GEMS was also introduced to support PIUs with remote monitoring systems and customized data collection tools. In June 2024, the team conducted knowledge-sharing and training sessions to help PIUs integrate GEMS into their M&E processes.

Additionally, a virtual session, "Maximizing GEMS: Sharing Lessons and M&E Best Practices," was held on December 10 with 54 participants. The session discussed how GEMS enhances data collection, monitoring, and evaluation, particularly in the Caribbean. Case studies from Jamaica, Maldives, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sint Maarten, and Sri Lanka demonstrated GEMS' role in improving oversight, decision-making, and accountability in fragile and remote regions.



Shared Services

Environmental & Social

The Trust Fund Program remains committed to mitigate any potential negative environmental and social (E&S) impacts that can result from project implementation and enhance environmental sustainability and social inclusion. As of December 31, 2024, 4 out of 12 active projects are under the World Bank's Safeguards Policies, while the remaining are under the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). The E&S risks of 10 projects are rated as either Low or Moderate Risk, whereas one project is rated as High Risk (Safeguards Category A project) and one as Substantial Risk. The E&S performance of all the projects under implementation are Satisfactory or Moderately Satisfactory. One project under preparation has a Low E&S risk classification. Table 1 details the risk levels and E&S Performance of the project portfolio.

Table 1: Environmental and Social Profile of Trust Fund Projects (as of December 31, 2024)

Active Projects	
Safeguards Policies – E&S Assessment Category	1 Category A, 2 Category B, 1 Category F (Financial Intermediary Assessment)
ESF – E&S Risk Classification	1 Substantial Risk, 4 Moderate Risk, 2 Low Risk
E&S Performance	8 Satisfactory, 2 Moderately Satisfactory
Pipeline Projects	
ESF – E&S Risk Classification	1 Low Risk

E&S portfolio review. The World Bank and NRPB's E&S teams met in November 2024 to review the E&S aspects of the projects in the NRPB portfolio. The teams jointly reviewed the projects' key milestones, E&S implications, staffing requirements, and capacity-building needs; discussed E&S-related implementation challenges, opportunities, and recommendations; and assessed E&S strategic needs and plans in 2025 for effective implementation. The World Bank also shared its updated internal E&S accountability and review process for projects applying the ESF. Additionally, the teams held a session with procurement specialists of both organizations to discuss E&S requirements of bidding documents, challenges during procurement, and E&S aspects of contract management.



Development and public disclosure of stakeholder engagement of the ATRP. The World Bank and the PJIAE co-developed a case study on the stakeholder engagement experience of the ATRP, offering an overview of effective practices that can be useful for projects in other small islands or the transport sector. The case study underscores that proactive and strategic stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone of successful project implementation, enabling stakeholders to be informed, heard, and involved throughout the project lifecycle.

Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM). All projects continue to have a GRM in place. NRPB has an institutional GRM that covers all projects they are implementing and includes provisions for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) grievances and anonymous complaints. No SEA/SH grievances were received in 2024.

SEA/SH training for new NRPB staff. On December 12, 2024, the World Bank provided a training on SEA/SH to new NRPB staff that will enhance their capacity to respond with a survivor-centered approach to SEA/SH grievances if they arise.

Procurement

In 2024, procurement implementation made moderate progress, completing 361 out of 444 activities, with 80 percent of procurement tasks across the portfolio now finished. Works contracts continue to dominate, accounting for 70 percent of the total procurement value. While procurement teams are adequately staffed, indicating satisfactory capacity overall, significant challenges remain. Delays persist throughout the procurement process—from initial stages (advertisement, award, signing) to contract completion. Over half of the procurement activities in the portfolio are delayed, with an average delay of more than 200 days.

Several factors contribute to these delays, including slow progress in obtaining technical specifications and completing evaluations, protests from local bidders in projects like FRLP and ERP-1, delays in securing residence and work permits for foreign workers, and poor contract management practices, such as delays in the completion of the landfill feasibility study under EDMP.



To address these challenges, better coordination is needed among PIUs, procurement teams, technical teams, and evaluation committees, particularly in using the e-procurement system for evaluations. Additionally, a systematic business outreach effort should be established to ensure both local and international markets are aware of procurement opportunities under the Trust Fund Program. Closer collaboration between PIUs and the government is also essential to help contractors obtain necessary permits promptly and assist foreign contractors with navigating local requirements.

Another key issue is the delay in updating the Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) system. PIUs refrained from updating the contract management module for contracts entered before the module's inception in 2022. The World Bank has provided STEP training and hands-on support to all PIUs facing procurement challenges. In 2025, all PIUs will have access to online training on the World Bank procurement framework, contract management, STEP, and more.

Finally, adopting a holistic approach to optimizing the procurement portfolio will help align it with market capabilities and interests, fostering improvements in procurement implementation.

Financial Management

All Trust Fund projects are compliant with financial management (FM) covenants and have Satisfactory FM performance ratings and Moderate FM risks. FM arrangements are robust, with adequate and effective systems, procedures, and controls. Financial statements (Interim Financial Reports and Annual Audited Financial Statements) are submitted on time to the World Bank. Additionally, external auditors consistently issue unqualified opinions with no material internal control issues reported in recent management letters.

However, as identified during the recent FM assessment conducted by the World Bank (October 2024), the portfolio faces several challenges that limit GoSXM oversight on its finances and may expose the projects to risks. These challenges include the following:

- **The SXM TF is not included in the national budget.** Despite efforts to improve GoSXM control over public finances, the national budget still excludes the Trust Fund funds, which represent an average of over 20 percent of the national budget. This omission affects the transparency and completeness of fiscal reporting. Additionally, there is a risk that projects may not sufficiently align with national priorities. Therefore, measures should be taken to ensure that SXM TF funds are clearly represented in the national budget to enhance its comprehensiveness, transparency, and accuracy.

  Targeted technical assistance could help smoothly integrate SXM TF funds into the national budget. Such measures would help strengthen the country's FM systems and provide incentives to build national capacity and improve performance. This would ensure that both donors and the government remain focused on enhancing the country's fiscal systems.

- **Lack of uniform internal audit arrangements.** Internal audit systems vary across projects, and in some cases, are not present, potentially limiting effective oversight and increasing the risk of fund misuse. To standardize and strengthen internal audit functions across projects, the Government and the World Bank will explore the possibility of leveraging the Stichting Overheids Accountants Bureau (SOAB), which already serves as the statutory internal auditor for the governments of Curaçao and Sint Maarten.



6

Implementation Challenges and Mitigating Actions

Addressing Ownership and Institutional Capacity for Outcome Sustainability

In earlier years, Trust Fund projects experienced delays due to limited government capacity and ownership, particularly as they were implemented outside the public sector structure. To address this situation, the CMU and PIUs have been working closely with the new administration to strengthen ownership of individual projects. Government's increased buy-in, along with targeted capacity-building support for selected ministries through the SPEAR project, will ensure the long-term impact of the Trust Fund's results.

With three projects closed and two expected to close in 2025, ensuring the sustainability of investments will be essential in supporting the Trust Fund's resilience objective. In some cases, projects such as ATRP - through airport operations managed by PJIAE, and CRPP - through handover plans with MECYS for policy and guidance implementation, have integrated sustainability. However, for other projects like CSPFRP, sustaining project outcomes is uncertain, particularly regarding grants and capacity building for CSOs, because funding sources for continuing civil society efforts are scarce. These challenges highlight the need for engaging closely with the government to develop sustainability plans well before projects close.

To integrate the lesson on strengthening investment sustainability, recently approved projects have incorporated clear plans during the preparation stage. Additionally, the World Bank is building the capacity of PIUs and government ministries through knowledge sharing and access to expert advice. In 2024, this approach included hands-on procurement support and collaboration with PIUs to glean and share targeted lessons learned from SXM TF projects, with similar opportunities planned for 2025.

Mitigating Project Implementation Delays

Project implementation delays remain a significant issue. Despite surpassing its midpoint, 10 Trust Fund projects are still ongoing, and delays could have significant consequences if not managed properly. To mitigate this, project teams have established clear timelines, milestones, and regular progress monitoring, while also providing technical assistance to ensure the timely preparation of E&S/safeguard instruments and other necessary requirements. Additionally, regular consultations and coordination with stakeholders have been facilitated to quickly resolve any issues. To further support the process, additional World Bank staff and consultants have been deployed to provide hands-on assistance to PIUs in critical areas such as procurement, safeguards, and fiduciary management, ensuring compliance with World Bank standards.



Navigating the Energy Crisis

Since early June 2024 until recently, Sint Maarten experienced an energy crisis, characterized by frequent power outages and load shedding. This crisis was caused by years of underinvestment and inadequate maintenance in the energy sector which undermined the reliability and efficiency of the power infrastructure.

Although there is no direct evidence that the crisis impacted project implementation, the widespread disruptions and unreliable electricity supply may have had a broader sectoral effect. For example, PIU staff and project beneficiaries, particularly MSMEs and CSOs, reportedly faced significant slowdown in their day-to-day operations, which could have indirectly affected the overall efficiency and effectiveness of implementation.

The GoSXM has actively explored various options to resolve the crisis. In support of this effort, the World Bank energy team outlined both short-term and medium-term strategies to assist Sint Maarten stabilize its energy sector.

Adapting to Elections and Political Transition

Snap elections were held in Sint Maarten on August 19, 2024, following the early dissolution of the parliament elected in January 2024. The fall of the first political coalition necessitated the elections, which led the Prime Minister's decision to dissolve the council of ministers and parliament and call for new elections.

The extraordinary changes in government and political uncertainty during this period had multifaceted effects on project implementation. A few decisions that the Government had to make on certain projects were delayed until the new Council of Ministers was established and onboarded.

Resolving Local Construction Market Constraints

Some PIUs cited capacity constraints within Sint Maarten's local construction market as a challenge for the Trust Fund portfolio, which led to expanding procurement to the international market. Consequently, additional delays arose because contracted international construction firms were unfamiliar with the local context and unable to begin work as scheduled.

Nonresident firms struggled with the cumbersome administrative processes for obtaining immigration documents. These firms found it challenging to recruit staff and skilled local labor because of the Island's limited population and constrained workforce. Meanwhile, bringing in international workers took more time and effort than anticipated because of the country's immigration processes.

Discussions are ongoing with the GoSXM to address these issues for staff and contractors working on the projects. An innovative approach discussed is informing personnel on some Trust Fund projects closing soon of new opportunities available with contractors on current construction activities looking to hire locally.



7

Outreach and Communications

In 2024, the SXM TF consistently enhanced communication about Trust Fund activities through news articles, press releases, and social media platforms. Following the SXM TF's website enhancement, its popularity increased (409 percent), with 2,160 unique visitors in 2024, up from 424 in 2023. The Trust Fund's five implementing partners enhanced their online presence, showcasing their work and engaging with the public to ensure that the local community and stakeholders were kept informed. Additionally, the World Bank supported these efforts by amplifying beneficiary stories and updates on project results across its digital channels, with the GoSXM and Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations also sharing updates through their official communication channels.

In 2024, the Trust Fund provided opportunities for knowledge exchange among stakeholders, university students, and local communities, enabling valuable insights into its planning, execution, and impact. In March 2024, the Sint Maarten Results Fair held at Sonesta Maho brought together over 200 participants, including beneficiaries and representatives from PIUs, who shared success stories about the positive impact of Trust Fund projects. In June 2024, a knowledge event in Curaçao, organized with the Netherlands Ministry for the Interior and Kingdom Relations, focused on lessons learned from the Trust Fund, highlighting best practices in project management and disaster resilience. Later in the month, students and faculty from the Aruba Institute of Good Governance and Leadership visited the World Bank offices in Washington, D.C., where they explored career opportunities and gained insights into the Trust Fund's work in Sint Maarten. Additionally, PIU participants at two knowledge sessions, one on maximizing GEMS for data collection and another on disaster response and reconstruction from the airport terminal project, shared valuable lessons and strategies for effective recovery and reconstruction.

In 2024, communication efforts across PIUs significantly increased the visibility of the Trust Fund's recovery and reconstruction efforts. ***NRPB,*** in collaboration with local media, kept the public informed through press releases, social media, information campaigns, and government channels, covering key projects like infrastructure restoration and emergency vehicle deliveries. NRPB also focused on disaster preparedness, distributing safety materials and developing crisis protocols, fostering public trust and collaboration with the community and government. ***UNICEF NL*** supported child protection in Sint Maarten with various communication products, including a Five-Year Strategic Plan, a Youth Sounding Board, and a Youth Roundtable Conference addressing mental health, education, and social issues. Other resources included the short film, "What If I Told You," an animation for the Child Safety Code, a hurricane preparedness game, and materials for the Inter-Island Protocol on child relocation during disasters. The Growing Up Safe – Sint Maarten Magazine is now available online.

VNGI through the R4CR program successfully implemented 92 community-driven projects and built local capacity, celebrating its achievements with a conference and the book The 4-Year Journey of Sint Maarten's Social Reconstruction. With the Princess Juliana International Airport reopening in November 2024, ***PJIAE*** showcased its reconstruction efforts through the YouTube series "Restoring a Princess" and shared updates on social media, highlighting milestones like the reopening of the food court and executive office restorations, engaging the local community and travelers. ***SMMC*** also boosted its visibility by sharing updates on healthcare improvements, new services, and medical advancements, including Basic Life Support training for staff and the opening of the island's first breastfeeding lounge at the Pediatric In-Patient Ward. Communications also highlighted collaborations to improve patient care and strengthen healthcare services on the island.

In 2025, the Trust Fund will focus on maintaining momentum in engagement and visibility, emphasizing the progress of ongoing projects and continued collaboration with local and international partners. This will ensure that communication remains a central tool for promoting the Trust Fund's long-term vision for a stronger, more resilient Sint Maarten. Key areas of focus in 2025 will include:

- **Highlighting Achievements**: Regularly displaying the outcomes of Trust Fund-supported projects, with a focus on tangible results in community resilience, disaster preparedness, and social development.
- **Increased Stakeholder Engagement**: Expanding outreach efforts through digital and in-person channels to foster deeper engagement with stakeholders, including local communities, government entities, and international organizations.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns**: Continuing to promote the impact of the Trust Fund on social media, through news articles, press releases, and project updates. Special emphasis will be placed on success stories and lessons learned from projects.
- **Building Local Capacity**: Showcasing the capacity-building efforts of the Trust Fund, particularly in strengthening local organizations and empowering communities, while also engaging youth in shaping future initiatives.
- **Strategic Partnerships**: Strengthening visibility through partnerships with key players like the World Bank, GoSXM, and Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to amplify the collective impact of the Trust Fund's work on the island.





8

Looking Ahead – 2025 Priorities

In its seventh year of implementation in 2025, the SXM TF program will strengthen its portfolio by developing action plans to ensure the GoSXM has the necessary capacity to sustain the Trust Fund's investments and outcomes. The following are key priorities for 2025.

Accelerating Portfolio Implementation and Preparing for Timely Closure

With the IMHSP's success in securing additional financing within its first year and the approval of the SWMP in 2024, these two projects can focus on full-scale implementation in 2025. The SPEAR project in the pipeline is set for World Bank approval in 2025. Meanwhile, two projects—implemented by PJIAE and VNGI—will focus on completing all their activities and closing in 2025.

Strengthening the Technical Capacity of the Public Sector

Program investments' long-term sustainability and resilience hinge on strengthening the public sector's technical capacity, including essential human resources and skills. The World Bank's SPEAR project aims to bolster this capacity, at a minimum, to manage follow-up work from the Trust Fund projects. The second component of SPEAR will foster organic knowledge transfer, facilitated by ongoing technical support. This project will also support a government-led multisector working group in establishing a DRF to manage the increasing financial impact of climate and disaster risk and future response and recovery needs in Sint Maarten.



Amplifying Trust Fund Results Through Knowledge Sharing and Stakeholder Engagement

In 2025, the Program Secretariat will build on the success of last year's SXM TF Results Fair and other knowledge-sharing events. These events are not just platforms for sharing information—they are also crucial in further engaging stakeholders and creating more learning opportunities for all involved. They will highlight the achievements of SXM TF projects and provide a platform for project beneficiaries to share their stories and lessons learned. Additionally, they will offer opportunities for the World Bank and Program Secretariat to gain deeper insights into the needs and perspectives of Sint Maarten stakeholders, including the public.

Improving Project Efficiency Through Evidence-Based Decision Making and Streamlined Reporting

The World Bank is updating the SXM TF Strategic Framework to reflect evolving priorities through June 2028, with the Steering Committee's endorsement expected in 2025. The framework's structured approach relies on recent data, updated performance indicators, and measurable outcomes to guide decisions. By incorporating evidence and real-time feedback into its priorities and actions, the framework ensures that decisions are informed by facts and results, improving the Trust Fund program's effectiveness and accountability. To enhance project oversight and transparency, the data collection and visualization process through GEMS will also culminate in June 2025. This process will result in a centralized dashboard that provides stakeholders with a clear, accessible view of project activities.





Appendices

Appendix A

Development Objectives (DO), Implementation Progress (IP), and Risk Ratings *(as of January 29, 2025)*[21]

Project	Approval Date	Closing Date	DO	IP
Emergency Recovery Project I	10-Jul-2018	31-Dec-2025	MS	MS
Emergency Debris Management Project	20-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2026	MU	MU
Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness Project	16-Aug-2018	31-May-2025	MS	S
Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project	18-Sep-2019	30-Jun-2025	S	S
Enterprise Support Project	04-Apr-2019	30-Jun-2028	S	S
Civil Society Partnership Facility for Resilience Project	26-Jun-2020	31-Mar-2025	S	S
Child Resilience and Protection Project	22-Oct-2020	31-Dec-2024	MS	MS
Digital Government Transformation Project	18-Mar-2021	30-Nov-2026	MS	MS
Fostering Resilient Learning Project	09-Jun-2022	30-Apr-2027	MS	MU
Improving Mental Health Services Project	28-July-2023	30-Jun-2027	S	MS
Wastewater Management Project	08-Aug-2024	30-Jun-2028	S	S

DO progress rating – is the likelihood of achieving the Development Objective by the end of the Project given implementation progress and outcomes indicators.
S = Satisfactory
MS = Moderately Satisfactory
MU = Moderately Unsatisfactory

IP progress rating – considers implementation progress level in all project management categories components, FM, procurement, E&S, disbursement, project management, and legal covenant.
S = Satisfactory
MS = Moderately Satisfactory
MU = Moderately Unsatisfactory

21 Data available on the SXM TF Dashboard.

Appendix B

Financial Details as of December 2024

Total funds contributions from the Netherlands to the SXM TF from April 2018 to December 2024 amounted to US$519.42 million, paid in five tranches: (1) April 2018; (2) November 2018; (3) December 2020; (4) December 2021; and (5) December 2022. After adjusting with the investment income of US$44.64 million and the US$13.94 million administration fee, the total funds amount to US$550.12 million (Table B1).

Table B1 – Flow and Use of Funds* (US$ million)

A	Received from the Netherlands	$519.42
B	Investment Income (cumulative)	44.64
C	Administration Fee	13.94
D	Total Funds Available for Allocation (A+B=C)	**$550.12**
E	Grants (E.1 + E.2)	**$494.15**
	E.1 Disbursements	350.06
	E.2 Undisbursed	144.09
F	Projects Under Preparation	21.50
G	Administrative Fee - **	.65
H	Funds Remaining (D-E-F-G)	**$33.82**

* *Totals may vary due to rounding.*
** *Administrative fee on projects under preparation.*

Commitment: Commitment: Considering the amount received from the Netherlands and cumulative investment income, the Trust Fund's total envelope at the end of 2024 was US$564.06 million. Considering the World Bank's three percent administration fee applied to new projects, the programmed net amount was US$550.12 million. Funds totaling US$494.15[22] million were allocated directly to operations, analytical work, and client support (RE activities, ASA, preparation, and implementation support activities). US$452.7 million was committed to 13 RE projects in 22 grants, of which three are completed and closed. US$41.4 million was committed to BE implementation and supervision activities, hands-on support to NRPB, analytical work, and technical assistance to the GoSXM.

Use of Funds[23]

US$350.06 million (71 percent) of the total RE+BE US$494.15 million commitment was cumulatively disbursed as of December 31, 2024, with an actual disbursement of US$47.7 million between January 1 and December 31, 2024. Cumulative disbursements by activities are US$312.3 million for RE activities and US$37.08 million for BE (US$20.7 million for implementation and completion support, US$4.9 million for analytical work, and US$12.1 million for program management).

22 Exclude Programme Management and Administration (PMA).
23 RETF + BETF + PMA.

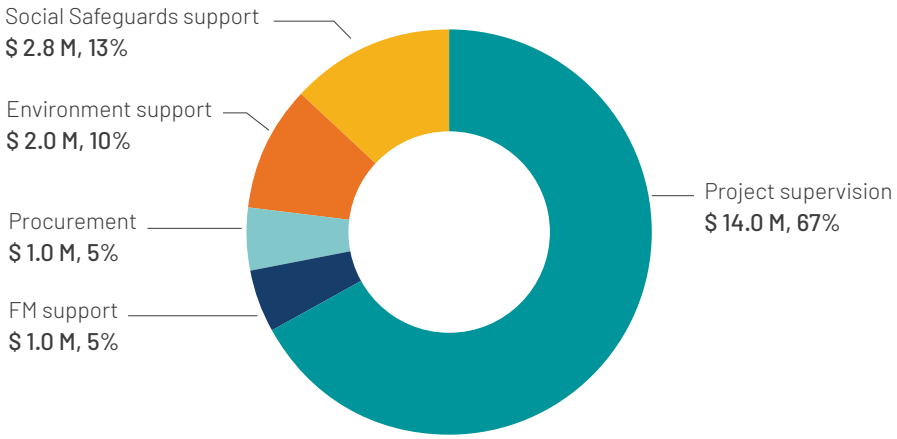
Figure B1. Allocation of Recipient-Executed and Bank-Executed Funds ($, million)



Disbursement of Bank-Executed Preparation and Implementation Support Activities

Twenty-five tasks received resources for World Bank supervision of preparation and implementation. Total disbursements to date are US$20.7 million (Figure C.2), of which US$3 million was spent between January and December 2024. About 67 percent of funds were disbursed for project supervision, including 6 percent for hands-on support. Support to safeguards (environmental, social, procurement, and financial management oversight) amounted to 33 percent of the total expenditures for preparation and supervision.

Figure B2. Disbursement of Bank-Executed Activities by Category ($, million)



Further allocations in 2025

RETF: Projects (SPEAR and IMHSP AF) for US$21.5 million are being prepared for appraisal and approval by the World Bank.

BETF: US$19.7 million is allocated to prepare and supervise RETF projects. Procurement, safeguards, and fiduciary support will receive approximately 35 percent. Six percent will go to NRPB for direct, hands-on support to complement limited on-island and in-house capacity.

Disbursement by Activities Summary (Recipient-Executed + Bank-Executed)

	Activities	Budget allocated	Disbursements April 2018 – December 2024	Undisbursed funds, end of December 2024
	SXM TF Total	**494,154,995**	**350,064,080**	**144,090,915**
	Recipient-executed activities	**452,718,765**	**312,287,752**	**140,431,014**
TF0A8079	Emergency Recovery I Project	55,200,000	103,894,651	15,805,349
TF0B5199	1st Additional Financing	45,000,000		
TF0C0966	2nd Additional Financing	19,500,000		
TF0C0966	Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness Project	25,000,000	28,374,191	7,235,809
TF0B3788	1st Additional Financing	3,610,000		
TF0C2387	2nd Additional Financing	7,000,000		
TF0A8265	Emergency Income Support and Training Project	21,914,674	21,914,674	0
TF0A9223	Enterprise Support Project	25,000,000	21,953,385	3,046,615
TF0A9261	Emergency Debris Management Project	25,000,000	30,897,824	54,102,176
TF0B9747	Additional Financing	60,000,000		
TF0B0760	Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project	72,000,000	81,609,230	10,390,770
TF0B7571	Additional Financing	20,000,000		
TF0B2442	Red Cross Roof Repair Project	3,745,130	3,745,130	0
TF0B3014	Civil Society Partnership Facility for Resilience Project	7,200,000	7,103,956	243,837
TF0B2229	Project Preparation Grant	147,793		
TF0B4140	Child Resilience and Protection Project	4,488,000	4,994,328	5,672
TF0B2513	Project Preparation Grant	512,000		
TF0B8048	Fostering Resilient Learning Project	26,780,000	2,759,631	24,641,537
TF0B4914	Project Preparation Grant	621,168		
TF0B4218	Digital Government Transformation Project	12,000,000	3,797,820	8,202,180
TF0C1500	Improving Mental Health Project	8,000,000	700,118	7,299,882
TF0C5700	Wastewater Management Project	10,000,000	542,811	9,457,189
	Bank-executed activities	**41,436,230**	**37,776,328**	**3,659,902**
	Preparation and implementation support	23,056,869	20,718,642	2,338,227
	Advisory services and analytics	5,739,361	4,940,930	798,431
	Program management and administration	12,640,000	12,116,756	523,244

**Totals may differ due to rounding.*

