



**News Release April 14, 2019**

## **NRPB responsible for the implementation of Trust Fund Projects**

**PHILIPSBURG** - Since March 2019 the National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB) has moved into its own office space located in the former Labor Affairs building at Walter J. Nisbeth Road #57. The NRPB carries the day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of all projects of the Government of Sint Maarten that are financed by the Government of the Netherlands through the Sint Maarten Trust Fund. The Trust Fund, set up by the Government of the Netherlands and the World Bank in April 2018, supports the recovery efforts of Sint Maarten for the next seven years.

The NRPB is responsible for making sure that the Trust Fund projects are implemented in an effective and accountable manner. This includes the preparation, coordination, execution and evaluation of projects. In addition, the NRPB can help the Government of Sint Maarten to identify and prepare projects that can be financed through other sources of funding, such as the national budget and European funding.

When the Trust Fund was established, it was evident that the Government of Sint Maarten does not have the capacity or expertise to fulfill all the requirements of the Trust Fund projects. The NRPB was created by Parliament to add the necessary support for the implementation of the different projects. With input from the ministries, the NRPB handles all technical, administrative, legal, financial, procurement and safeguards responsibilities to ensure effective implementation of the Trust Fund projects.

The NRPB is headed by Director Claret Connor and reports through the Minister of General Affairs to the Council of Ministers. The NRPB also serves as the single point of coordination for all stakeholders of the Trust Fund projects.

All proposals for Trust Fund projects come from the Council of Ministers based on the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, which was approved by Parliament in September 2018. As the Council of Ministers decides to submit a new project to the Trust Fund, the NRPB helps the ministries with the preparation of a project proposal, which is then submitted to the Steering Committee of the Trust Fund. The Steering Committee consists of one representative of the World Bank, one representative of the Government of the Netherlands and one representative of the Government of Sint Maarten, in the person of former Prime Minister Mr. Marcel Gumbs. The Steering Committee meets at least twice a year to discuss existing projects and proposals for new projects that could be financed by the Trust Fund.

Approved Trust Fund projects move through a number of stages that include identification, preparation, project appraisal, approval, implementation, completion and evaluation. The NRPB and the ministries are closely involved in all stages of the projects. From project conception to execution, Sint Maarten is always in the driver's seat.

The World Bank's role is to offer assistance in order to ensure that the implementation of projects takes place in an effective and accountable manner.

At present there are over fifty different Trust Fund activities, in various stages of implementation. This includes activities that serve to strengthen our emergency services, the repair of social and privately-owned homes, and the suppression of fires on the landfill.

NRPB Director Connor recognizes that the Government of Sint Maarten has faced challenges in the early implementation of the different Trust Fund projects. Ensuring that projects are strategically planned in ways that are sustainable and resilient to future disasters took more time than originally anticipated. Specific challenges remain due to the relative complexity of some of the projects, the lack of experience with the applicable social and environmental standards, as well the local market's limited capacity to respond to tender opportunities and the capacity constraints within the Government and the NRPB to manage the projects.

How does the NRPB intend to address these challenges? Over the past months, a number of strategies have been developed to counteract the different implementation challenges. These strategies include an increased amount of support from the World Bank in the form of hands-on technical assistance, the accelerated recruitment of NRPB staff and training and information sessions for local businesses so that they are better prepared for tender opportunities.

The NRPB is also intensifying its efforts to increase public awareness about the recovery process and the different Trust Fund projects. Community outreach activities for schools, businesses and the general public are being prepared in order to explain the tasks of the NRPB and to speak with the people of Sint Maarten about the next phase of our recovery process.

For more information, please visit our website, [www.nrpbsxm.org](http://www.nrpbsxm.org), or our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/sxmnationalrecovery](https://www.facebook.com/sxmnationalrecovery).