



# Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 18-Jan-2022 | Report No: PIDA30586



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Country St Maarten	Project ID P172753	Project Name FOSTERING RESILIENT LEARNING PROJECT	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Estimated Appraisal Date 19-Jan-2022	Estimated Board Date 22-Mar-2022	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Sint Maarten	Implementing Agency National Recovery Program Bureau	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project Development Objectives are to (i) restore access to an adequate and inclusive learning environment and to re-establish library services and (ii) Improve the availability of quality data for decision’s making

Components

- Rebuilding Inclusive Schools
- Restoring Library Services
- Strengthening the Ministry’s Management Information System
- Project Management
- Contingent Emergency Response

**PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Total Project Cost</b>	28.20
<b>Total Financing</b>	28.20
<b>of which IBRD/IDA</b>	0.00
<b>Financing Gap</b>	0.00

**DETAILS**

**Non-World Bank Group Financing**

Trust Funds	28.20
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Free-standing Single Purpose Trust Fund	28.20
Environmental and Social Risk Classification	
Substantial	
Decision	
The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate	

Other Decision (as needed)

## B. Introduction and Context

### Country Context

- Sint Maarten is a high-income constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Caribbean, along with Aruba and Curacao.** It occupies the southern half of an island shared with the French overseas collectivity of Saint Martin and is the most densely populated country in the Caribbean, with a population of over 40,000 in an area of 34 square kilometers. Sint Maarten’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US\$29,189<sup>1</sup> was among the highest in the region prior to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Sint Maarten is particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, which periodically cause extreme disruption of the country’s economic activities and living conditions and have a catastrophic impact on the country’s tourism-driven economy.
- On September 6, 2017, Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 hurricane, caused significant destruction in Sint Maarten.** Damages were compounded by smaller-scale Hurricane Maria two weeks later. Although loss of life was limited, Sint Maarten incurred damages and losses estimated at 129 percent of GDP, or US\$2.7 billion. Ninety percent of all infrastructure was affected and much still requires repairs.
- Climate projections indicate a rise in mean annual temperature of 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2050, changes in precipitation patterns, and sea level rise.** As a small island located in the Caribbean it is also vulnerable to other expected impacts of climate change, such as increased frequency and intensity of hurricanes, hillside erosion and heat waves. Increased intensity of extreme events, for instance, can lead to increased destruction of schools and other infrastructure and service facilities, sometimes disabling them completely.
- In April 2018, to support rapid and sustainable recovery from Hurricane Irma, the Government of the Netherlands established the Sint Maarten Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Trust Fund**

<sup>1</sup> Sint Maarten Public Expenditure Review, The World Bank, 2020. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34750>



**(SXM TF) for up to EUR470 million to be managed by the World Bank.**<sup>2</sup> The SXM TF is governed by a Steering Committee composed of representatives from the Government of Sint Maarten, the Netherlands and the World Bank and allocates resources in support of recovery, reconstruction, to activities implemented (chiefly) by the National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB). The proposed Fostering Quality Learning Project (FRLP) aims to contribute to the SXM TF's overall objective of resilient reconstruction.

5. **The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impacts on Sint Maarten's economic prospects and pace of recovery**<sup>3</sup>. The Government of Sint Maarten instituted a country-wide lockdown from mid-March to mid-May 2020, closing all schools, non-essential businesses, and borders in an effort to stem infections on the island. Most restrictions are now lifted as infection and hospitalization rates drastically decreased, as 41 percent of the population is now fully vaccinated. However, tourism recovery, particularly from the Americas (a key market for Sint Maarten), and as well as reconstruction rates remain hampered by the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic caused an estimated 24 percent contraction of GDP in 2020 due to the high dependence on tourism, which is expected to reach pre-pandemic levels only in 2024.<sup>4</sup>

#### Sectoral and Institutional Context

6. **Relative to its size, Sint Maarten's education system is highly fragmented in terms of governance and language of instruction.** The Ministry of Education, Culture and Youth (MECYS) records 22 primary schools in Sint Maarten,<sup>5</sup> including seven public schools, eleven schools subsidized by the Government and managed by four religious-based school boards,<sup>6</sup> and four unsubsidized private schools. The seven public schools include a Special Education Elementary School (Prins Willem Alexander School), which welcomes students with disabilities.

7. **As in other sectors, Hurricane Irma significantly affected the education sector's infrastructure and thus the quality of learning environments.** The direct physical damages to the education, culture, youth, and sport facilities were estimated at about US\$60.2 million and losses at about US\$1.7 million. All schools were affected by hurricane Irma and public schools were closed for four to six weeks. Seventeen percent of daycare centers were destroyed, 37 percent required repairs, and 46 percent sustained minor damages. As an illustration of the deterioration of the learning environment, the private and subsidized school Sister Marie Laurence (SML) and the public-school Charles Leopold Bell (CLB) had to vacate their buildings given that they had been damaged beyond repair. Students from both schools were relocated to other schools, which are now overcrowded and do not offer an adequate learning environment for all students. Total needs to return to a pre-Irma state in education infrastructure were thus estimated at about US\$120 million.

8. **Irreparable damage to Sint Maarten's Philipsburg Jubilee Library (PJJ) has also constrained**

<sup>2</sup> Sint Maarten is not a self-standing member country of the World Bank. The SXM TF is the first engagement between The World Bank and Sint Maarten.

<sup>3</sup> At the end-June 30, 2021, Sint Maarten had reported 2,632 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

<sup>4</sup> IMF, Kingdom of the Netherlands – Curaçao and Sint Maarten: 2021 Article IV Consultation Discussions; Press Release and Staff Report, August 25, 2021. Country Report No. 2021/186.

<sup>5</sup> Comprehensive Education Report, MECYS 2017-2018

<sup>6</sup> Methodist Agognic Center (MAC - 2 schools); Foundation for Protestant Christian Education (SPCOBE – 2 schools); Foundation for 7th Day Adventist (SDA - 1school); Stichting Katholiek Onderwijs St. Maarten (SKOS -6 schools)



**cultural activities, learning, and community-building dynamics.** Over the last decades, PJJ transformed itself into a critical center for Sint Maarten’s community – a place for development of literacy, of cultural heritage and artistic expression. The PJJ, with about 40,000 visitors annually, was also used as a learning center for students and adults, with free access to the internet, local archives, print, audio and digital media and books, making it an institution for the education community. Temporarily relocated, the Library now offers limited reading services, continues to attract visitors (23,500 in 2018) but does not play its expected role as a vehicle to provide an equitable access to culture and education to the communities of Sint Maarten.

9. **Children and youth with emotional and/or behavioral disorders and physical disabilities were particularly impacted by the damages to educational structures.** Two schools among the most damaged by the hurricane were implementing (or planning to implement) inclusive education programs targeting students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders and physical disabilities. In addition, these schools and the Library were offering after school and extra-curricular programs targeting at-risk children. Before the hurricanes, these mechanisms played a key role in mitigating risky behaviors and promoting inclusive education. Some of these programs were discontinued because of the lack of adapted facilities. As a result, access to inclusive education programs has decreased in the post-hurricane and COVID-19 context where incidences of risky behavior and violence among youth might have increased.

10. **MECY’s current Management Information System (MMIS) does not facilitate the use of data for timely and evidence-based decision-making.** MECYS does not possess an integrated data collection and analysis system. The lack of an integrated MMIS prevents timely reporting on students and learning, as well as financial and administrative monitoring, hampering efficiency of decision-making processes in the education system. This also prevents MECYS to assess how efficiently, effectively, and equitably it is spending its resources.

### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

The Project Development Objectives are to (i) restore access to an adequate and inclusive learning environment and to re-establish library services and (ii) Improve the availability of quality data for decision’s making.

#### Key Results

11. The above results will be measured through the following proposed PDO level indicators:
- Students with restored access to an adequate learning environment<sup>7</sup> through the

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<sup>7</sup> Adequate learning environment refers to school buildings that meet the following criteria: schools are built to withstand natural disasters; schools have access to basic services; schools should be accessible for all; schools have opportunities for outside play; schools are maintained in good physical condition; classrooms offer good natural conditions and age-appropriate and flexible



- reconstruction of Sister Marie Laurence School (disaggregated by gender) (Number)
- Students with restored access to an adequate learning environment through the reconstruction of Charles Leopold Bell primary school (disaggregated by gender) (Number)
- Library open and operating at full capacity for Sint Maarten's population and visitors (Yes/No)
- Children with emotional and/or behavioral disorders and physical disabilities benefitting from an adequate learning environment. (Number)
- Availability and use of an integrated database at MECYS for evidence-based decision-making in education

#### D. Project Description

##### Component 1: Rebuilding Inclusive Schools

12. Component 1 aims to restore access to adequate and inclusive learning environments by rebuilding two primary schools damaged beyond repair by Hurricane Irma in the Middle Region and Cole Bay district. The Component will finance the costs related to the demolition of the two old schools, the designs and supervision of the civil works, the civil works and the provision of furniture for both schools (including ICT equipment) and more generally goods. The component will also finance capacity building activities at the school level.

##### Component 2: Restoring Library Services

13. This component aims to restore access to library services through the reconstruction of the Philipsburg Jubilee Library (PJL). The Component will finance the costs related to demolition of the old Library building, the design and supervision of the civil works, the civil works, the provision of furniture for the library (including ICT equipment) and more generally goods. The component will also finance consulting services to support board and library staff's capacity building (including on maintenance, GBV awareness, climate change awareness, emergency preparedness and other topics to be defined in the PJL staff development plan).

##### Component 3: Strengthening the Ministry's Management Information System

14. The main objective of this component is to build an MMIS for better management of the sector. The component will finance the costs related to technical assistance for the preparation of the diagnostic, the MMIS strategy and the preparation of the SOP. The component will also finance key stakeholder's training in the use of the new MMIS. Technical assistance will also be provided on the design, the implementation and results dissemination of the learning assessment pilot. Finally, the component will finance ICT equipment and MMIS related communication and dissemination campaigns.

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learning spaces; school design and use are made in collaboration with community stakeholders. Adapted from Barrett, Peter, Alberto Treves, Tigran Shmis, Diego Ambasz, and Maria Ustinova. 2019. The Impact of School Infrastructure on Learning: A Synthesis of the Evidence. International Development in Focus. Washington, DC: World Bank.



**Component 4: Project Management**

15. This Component will support project management and coordination, including monitoring and evaluation, procurement, financial management, ESF risk management, and citizen engagement, and other technical assistance.

**Component 5: Contingent Emergency Response – CERC**

16. This component can be triggered following a natural disaster or emergency. This component would not have any initial funding allocation, but in the event of an emergency, uncommitted funds could be reallocated from other components in accordance with an Emergency Action Plan.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts



The Environmental and Social Risk Category (ESRC) of the proposed project is considered Moderate. Project activities will have essentially positive social impacts by guaranteeing an expedited access of a large number of people to public services and increased community safety and disaster preparedness. The potential adverse risks and impacts on the environment and social are likely to be moderate, highly localized, temporary in nature and manageable through environmental and social risk management instruments that NRBP will develop and apply through the implementation of the project.

The main environmental risks and impacts of the project are related to the construction of school and library facilities under components 1 and 2 where in situ temporary impacts might occur associated with construction and demolition works and waste, release of contaminants to the air, soil, and water during the construction or accidental circumstances during the works. The main social risks and impacts are related to the limited interacting with various stakeholders during the consultation process. management of cultural heritage, as well as managing construction labor. The ESMF for the project, including for the CERC Component will provide guidance on how to assess the environmental risks and impacts of subprojects, the measures and plans to reduce, mitigate and/or offset potential adverse risks and impacts, provisions for estimative and budgeting the costs of proposed mitigation measures, and their implementation arrangements.

## E. Implementation

### Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

17. **The NRPB will be the Recipient and implementing agency of the Grant.** The NRPB, has an autonomous administrative authority and legal personality. It will also be the Project Implementation Agency, in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement and the “Temporary National Ordinance on the NRPB.” The Government of Sint Maarten will act as guarantor, meaning that in case of expenses being determined ineligible by the World Bank, the Government of Sint Maarten warrants that it will pay back such expenses into the Project account.

18. **The NRPB is already the Implementing Agency of six projects supported by the SXM TF.** As such, it is responsible for Project Management and Coordination. This includes monitoring and evaluation and reporting, procurement, financial management, contract management, environmental and social risk management, citizen engagement, and the management of project grievances. The NRPB will work in close coordination with the MECYS, Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure (ECYS, VROMI), and General Affairs. The NRPB will be staffed with a Project Manager and experts in number and qualifications to meet these requirements. The Project can therefore provide financing for a dedicated Procurement Specialist and an Environmental Specialist. The ES will coordinate with the Occupational Health and Safety Specialist from the Supervision firms and contractors and ensure implementation of the Project’s Environmental and Social risk management instruments. Short-term technical support may also be financed, as needed. During Project preparation, and to mitigate the NRPB’s implementation capacity challenges, other avenues will be assessed to reduce the burden of an overloaded NRPB. This includes reinforcing MECYS’ project management and technical capacity by placing a Technical Assistant in the Ministry and bringing in the leadership skills and engagement of the proponents of the Project in MECYS.

19. **Daily project management and coordination will be the responsibility of a Project Manager who**



**will report to one of the NRPB's Program Managers.**<sup>8</sup> The Project Manager will ensure that s/he receives timely contributions from the fiduciary and environmental and social management teams. In addition, the Project Manager will assist, facilitate, coordinate, and consolidate technical inputs from MECYS, the Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment, and Infrastructure (VROMI, and other Project stakeholders such as the SML, CLB, and Library boards. The Project Manager will also ensure adequate budgeting and administration, including the timely delivery of reporting obligations under the Grant Agreement.

20. **MECYS will provide the technical support in the implementation of the Project.** MECYS will be responsible for making policy decisions and providing support and technical input during project design and implementation to facilitate its successful implementation. The Project Manager will work with the MECYS staff and, more specifically, with a Project coordinator in the Ministry to ensure that all terms of reference (TORs), technical specifications, and selected technical consultants meet MECYS's needs, where applicable.

## CONTACT POINT

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### Borrower/Client/Recipient

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### Implementing Agencies

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<sup>8</sup> The Program Manager then reports to NRPB's Director.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

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**APPROVAL**

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