

ST MAARTEN TRUST FUND
BUILDING RESILIENCE



Sint Maarten Tourism Recovery: 2020-2022 Priority Action Plan

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Executive Summary

The tourism sector drives Sint Maarten's economy. In a region heavily dependent on tourism, Sint Maarten is known for its beautiful beaches, duty-free shopping and friendly people. Recovery efforts across Sint Maarten since Hurricane Irma in September 2017 are notable and encouraging. Yet, even with substantial improvements, there are still many reminders of Irma's wrath in Sint Maarten. Recovery has progressed but there remain significant, unmet needs for enabling the tourism sector and reinforcing the island's physical, social and economic resilience. The goal is not to just build back, but 'build-back-better'. For the country's tourism to be a resilient economic force in the future, much still needs to be done now.

Given the region's dynamic marketplace and changing demand, what does Sint Maarten need in order to have a resilient and competitive tourism sector? In today's highly competitive tourism world, business as usual---or getting back to previous visitation pinnacles---is not good enough. The sector globally is experiencing great change as disruptive technologies enable expanded access to data, diverse products and new sharing economy business models. Disintermediation of travel accommodation, attractions and services gives new power to consumers in their travel decisions and purchasing. This is most recently demonstrated by the demise of the major tour operations corporation Thomas Cook. With this context, this is not time for Sint Maarten to be satisfied with simply building back and a return to pre-Irma activity volume. These times require a commitment to supporting the sector to achieve key goals with renewed focus and targeted actions.

This review enables determination of next steps through assessment of the sector and identification of impactful opportunities to advance. Recognizing the importance of the sector and the unfinished business of building back better, a World Bank team reviewed background data and analyses as a baseline. Extensive consultation with diverse public and private sector stakeholders in Sint Maarten in 2019 enabled the team to identify actionable priorities for going forward over the next 24 months. This analysis first considers the challenges of recovery in the Caribbean and beyond with a focus on building back better through analysis of experiences in the Caribbean and Sint Maarten. Next, the situation in Sint Maarten is presented as a context for considering recovery priorities. The final section presents actionable priorities for achieving targeted and impactful change over the next 24 months reflecting stakeholders' inputs.

Moving the sector forward requires clarity of vision, adequate resources and a comprehensive effort by all stakeholders. There continues to be a pressing need for comprehensive, inclusive planning and systematic implementation to achieve a higher level of competitiveness and resiliency. This analysis synthesizes the experiences and insights of the people of Sint Maarten with that of other destinations facing similar adversity. It provides a basis for stakeholders to come together, consider specific options to cut through and focus renewed efforts to achieve change. Actionable items are presented for the immediate, short and medium term in the context of a vision for Sint Maarten's tourism. The report provides short-term actions for improvements in anticipation of a more thorough planning process being followed soon.

24-MONTH PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS FOR BUILDING BACK BETTER SINT MAARTEN'S TOURISM

Action	Why	Who
1. Increase the variety and quality of the tourism products for the stayover market		
a. Identify the gaps between current tourism product offerings and the demand of the main target markets and define the priority activities	Product development for niche markets should be based on firm market demand.	TEATT/STB
b. Heritage and Cultural Strategy – identify monuments that could be of interest to visitors, improve those that need upkeep, and promote them to visitors. Train local community in culture and heritage	Improving the culture and heritage products can help grow the number of tours and other experiences that highlight Sint Maarten's culture and history. These can expand the current limited tourism offerings and improve the attractiveness of the destination.	TEATT/MECYS ¹ /STB Private Sector and Communities
c. Expand community-based tourism - work with local agricultural sites to develop tourism products. Provide specific training to stakeholders.	This will stimulate the offerings of authentic local experiences and excursions. These can expand the current limited tourism offerings and improve the attractiveness of the destination as well provide opportunities for income diversification.	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities
d. New product development that is geared towards learning and experiencing and leverages local knowhow	This will expand the current offerings of tourism products and improve the attractiveness of the destination.	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities
e. Stimulate local handcraft production through training and merchandising programs for local entrepreneurs	The current offer of locally produced souvenirs is limited. Increase in the demand of local handcrafts can protect and nurture local skills. Increased offer can increase tourist expenditures and increase tourist satisfaction ratings.	TEATT/MECYS/STB Private Sector and Communities
f. Targeted cultural heritage improvement for cultural heritage sites such as the Courthouse, Bell Lookout Tower and Fort Amsterdam	Protection of cultural heritage sites can improve the visitor experience and can expand the offerings.	TEATT/MECYS/STB Private Sector and Communities
g. Inventory and create awareness of different tourism products through STB website development. Support improved communication with sector stakeholders and destination website for visitors featuring new products and services	Increase awareness of the variety of tourism offerings. Improve communication and information exchange between the different tourism sector stakeholders.	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities
h. Establish/improve and promote nature-based sites and parks	Expand the tourism offerings and create a safe and enjoyable environment for visitors and locals	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities
i. Provide directions to main sites, hiking paths and walking routes	Improve the accessibility of tourism experiences and thereby expand the offering and increase visitor satisfaction rates	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities
j. Provide interpretation of monuments and other sites (especially cultural/heritage sites)	Expand and improve the experience of visitors and attract new markets.	TEATT/MECYS/STB Private Sector and Communities

¹ Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports (MECYS)

k. Keep the island clean campaign with enforcement program to increase environmental awareness and pride in SXM's physical environment	Improve the quality of the natural environment and improve visitor satisfaction ratings	TEATT/STB, Ministry of Environment, Private Sector and Communities
2. Improve tourism data analysis statistical system		
a. Expand the frequency of the current stay-over tourism exit surveys to six times per year	Improve the accuracy of the survey findings	STAT with support from STB
b. Develop and conduct periodic exit surveys at the ferries	Provide insights on the number of inter-island visitor flows, behaviors and spending patterns	STAT with support from STB and SHTA
c. Establish a tourism data dashboard for wide and open distribution and awareness of enhanced data	Enable widely available and transparent information on the status of the sector	STB with support from STAT
d. Establish a taskforce consisting of key public and private sector tourism stakeholders to monitor and support implementation of improvements to tourism statistics	To improve sharing of data and the collection of dissemination of tourism statistics in general, and to assist with the implementation of actions recommended	Prime Minister and TEATT with engagement of key stakeholders
3. Establishing Tourism Promotion Entity		
Through public and private sector partnering, establish a tourism promotion entity which incorporates best practice in funding sector marketing, promotion and development	A public-private institution structure can enable multi-year planning, cooperative funding and ensures timely and innovative market development and promotion for high return on marketing activities	Office of the Prime Minister in cooperation with TEATT/STB Private Sector stakeholders
4. Review 2005 TourMap and develop new Strategic Tourism Plan		
Systematically review 2005 TourMap and develop an updated national strategy for tourism and related implementation plan	The strategic plan can guide and prioritize the activities required to achieve the goals for the sector	TEATT/STB in conjunction with public & private sector tourism stakeholders
5. Improve the licensing and permitting processes		
Review and streamline licensing and permitting processes related to tourism businesses	Convoluting licensing and permitting processes deter entrepreneurs and new business development. This hampers innovation and new product development key to achieving stronger market share	TEATT
6.a Beautification of Philipsburg commercial district		
a. Relocation and beautification of vendor market booths	To improve the accessibility and the attractiveness of the vendor market	TEATT/VROMI ² with support from STB
b. Improve lighting and overall security for tourists and locals in areas at night or during slow times	To improve the safety of the area and create an environment that attracts more visitors and addresses the security concerns of the local business owners	TEATT/VROMI with support from STB
c. Additional garbage and recycle bins (and collection) - in main tourist areas	To increase the attractiveness of the area and protect the natural environment	TEATT/VROMI with support from STB
d. Enforce parking regulation on Front Street	Increase the attractiveness and the safety of the area	TEATT/VROMI with support from STB

² Ministry of Public Housing, Environment, Spatial Development and Infrastructure (VROMI)

e. Expand mural project for the alleys in Phillipsburg	Increase the attractiveness of the area	TEATT/MECYS/STB
f. Expand weekly 'Koopavond' initiative	Expand opportunities for visitors and locals to shop and for business owners to increase their income	TEATT with support from STB and SHTA
g. Greening - adding plants and trees creating attractive landscaping	Increase the attractiveness of the area	TEATT/VROMI
h. Incentive program for property owners to beautify their properties	Increase the attractiveness of the area	TEATT/VROMI
6.b. Beautification of Simpson Bay		
a. Improvement and beautification of vendor market	To improve the attractiveness of the vendor market	TEATT/VROMI with support from STB
b. Improve overall road and sidewalk infrastructure	Increase the attractiveness and the safety of the area	TEATT/VROMI
c. Improve traffic safety and signage	Increase the safety of the area	TEATT/VROMI
d. Improve drainage to handle seasonal weather events	Improve the safety and attractiveness of the area	TEATT/VROMI
e. Greening - adding plants and trees	Increase the attractiveness of the area	TEATT/VROMI
f. Expand and improve sidewalks	Improve the safety and attractiveness of the area that enables ease of access to businesses	TEATT/VROMI
7. Increase the technological and technical expertise of tourism workforce.		
a. Training on the latest available tools for tourism sector data collection and analysis tools	Improved tourism sector data will inform policy making and strategic development decisions	STB with support from STAT
b. Skills training for yachting sector staff	Key to assuring attraction and servicing this niche market to an expected standard	MECYS
c. Skills training for adventure tourism staff	Adventure tourism experiences are increasing in popularity and can give Sint Maarten a competitive advantage to other destinations in the region	STB and the private sector
8. Improve and enforce protection of the natural environment		
a. Environmental education for school children	Instilling respect for the environment at an early age will contribute to longer term sustainability	STB and MECYS
b. Incentivize and support private sector greening initiatives	Decreased plastic usage and adoption of recycling programs will be appreciated by locals and visitors—and can also be good for businesses' bottom-line	STB and VROMI
c. Update and enforce environmental policies and regulations	Further degradation of the environment limits Sint Maarten's future	VROMI

I. Introduction

Hurricane Irma devastated the economy of Sint Maarten in September 2017, including significant damage and losses to the tourism sector. Tourism drives Sint Maarten's economy: in 2016 it directly accounted for 45% of GDP and 73% of its foreign exchange earnings. Hurricane damage to the airport, hotels, and firms engaged in the tourism sector has had a significant negative economic impact. There were a total of 3,976 hotel and timeshare rooms on the Dutch side prior to the hurricane, most of which were damaged by the hurricane. These are steadily coming back, but as of August 2019, 37% were still not operational. Annual stay-over arrivals dropped from 528,000 in 2016 to 178,000 in 2018, driven by limited accommodation and airport capacity. These arrivals are also picking up, reaching 70 percent of monthly pre-hurricane levels by July 2019---although some portion of these arrivals reflect post-hurricane business and relief---not tourism travel. The remaining gap still reflects a significant decrease in revenue generation potential for firms and the Sint Maarten government. Yearly cruise ship arrivals rebounded more quickly after the hurricane. After dropping from 1.7 million in 2016 and to 1.2 million in 2017, arrivals increased to 1.6 million in 2018. However, this segment generates lower per-visitor spending and linkages to the rest of the economy relative to stay-over visitors.

Figure 1: Map of Sint Maarten and St Martin



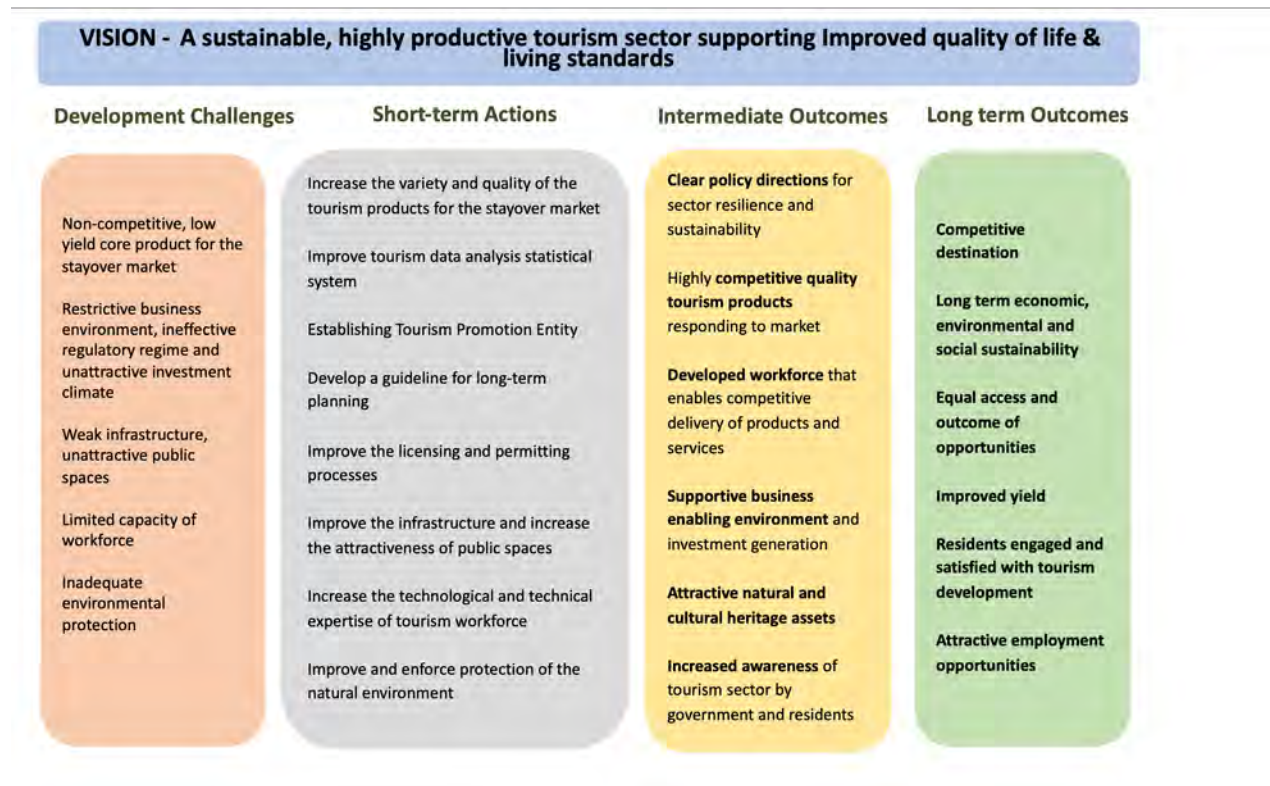
Source: St Maarten Tourism Master Plan – *TourMap* 2005

Economic recovery efforts are underway, but the tourism sector still faces significant constraints to its recovery and development. Initial support for hospitality skills training has provided critical income support to protect jobs and avoid major layoffs. There is a focus on rebuilding the airport, where arrivals and departure capacity is steadily increasing. This is key to

the return of a full complement of revenue-generating stay-over visitors. The tourism sector is steadily, picking up as arrivals and accommodation capacity increase, but firms in the sector have limited capacity to respond due to still-damaged tourism products, financial constraints from post-hurricane physical recovery needs, and insufficient coordination of the sector recovery process. There is also a critical opportunity to lay the groundwork for a more diversified tourism sector and resilient economy going forward.

This plan provides priorities for a two-year tourism recovery approach for Sint Maarten’s hospitality and tourism activity. It builds on and supplements previous tourism plans and strategies, including *TourMap*, the ten-year Sint Maarten Tourism Master Plan prepared in 2005. While that comprehensive plan is still largely relevant for the overall direction of tourism development in the country, Hurricane Irma severely disrupted tourism sector activity in the country. This disruption, as well as recent political developments and increased competition in the tourism sector regionally and globally, requires that previous sector plans be revisited to identify key short-term priority actions needed for tourism sector recovery within the context of long-term development vision and goals. Therefore, this plan identifies specific priorities in the current environment that can be addressed to enable Sint Maarten’s tourism sector to fully recover and ‘build back better’ to be more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable. The challenges, interventions and desired outcomes that are required to achieve these goals, are summarized below.

Figure 2: Vision, challenges, interventions and desired outcomes for tourism in Sint Maarten



In addition to research and fieldwork, this Priority Action Plan is informed by two studies prepared under the World Bank *Sint Maarten Tourism Sector Recovery Strategy Support Activity*:

- *Sint Maarten Tourism Sector Recovery – Compendium of Tourism Statistics*
- *Sint Maarten Tourism Sector Recovery – Tourism Statistics Diagnostic*

II. Learning from Experience: Hurricane Resilience and Recovery in the Caribbean

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)³, travel and tourism contributes 15.2% of the Caribbean’s GDP and 13.8% of employment. However, in more than half of the region’s countries, tourism contributes to 25% or more of GDP. WTTC does not provide specific data for Sint Maarten but groups it with the Former Netherlands Antilles⁴. For 2018, the direct contribution of tourism for the Former Netherlands Antilles was estimated at 23.2%. This high level underlines the importance of sector recovery following natural disasters, such as hurricanes, as quickly as possible.

The 2017 hurricane season, including Irma and Maria, caused some of the greatest damage in recent history to key Caribbean islands. Hurricane Irma directly hit Barbuda, St. Barth’s, Anguilla, the US and British Virgin Islands, St Martin and St Maarten. The WTTC estimates the 2017 hurricane season to cause a total of US\$3.1 billion in losses for the tourism sector in the Caribbean during the four years following the hurricanes. Research by Tourism Economics⁵ shows that compared to other crises such as health, political turmoil and terrorism, natural disasters have shown to have some of the longest disruption periods. A 23-month recovery after a hurricane is not uncommon. Research—and experience— has also shown that such crises can set a destination back from its original growth path for long after clean-up has concluded.

When benchmarking Sint Maarten’s recovery compared to other islands, several factors are important. The amount of loss and the time it takes for full recovery in the different countries is partly correlated with the level of loss of supply. According to data by STR, as published by WTTC, Sint Maarten lost 32% of its hotel rooms, Puerto Rico lost 16% of its inventory and Anguilla 51% during the 2017 hurricane season.

³ WTTC (2018). Caribbean Resilience and Recovery: Minimizing the impact of the 2017 hurricane season on the Caribbean’s tourism sector. World Travel & Tourism Council.

⁴ Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St. Eustatius and Sint Maarten

⁵ As published in: WTTC (2018). Caribbean Resilience and Recovery: Minimizing the impact of the 2017 hurricane season on the Caribbean’s tourism sector. World Travel & Tourism Council.

Table 1: Number of operating hotel rooms before and after the 2017 hurricane season in Caribbean destinations

Total Caribbean	Operating hotel rooms		Number lost	Percent lost
	Aug 2017	Dec 2017*		
Anguilla	793	391	402	51%
British Virgin Islands	985	500	485	49%
Dominica	646	509	137	21%
Puerto Rico	16,265	13,709	2,556	16%
St. Maarten	3,526	2,396	1,130	32%
US Virgin Islands	4,473	2,809	1,664	37%

Source: STR

*Indicates those which are still in the hotel licensing pool, but not necessarily open.

Overnight arrivals in Sint Maarten during the first quarter of 2019, stood at 53% of Q1 in 2017. Anguilla which lost 51% of its hotel rooms after Hurricane Irma according to STR, experienced a 123% growth in tourist arrivals between Q1 2017 and Q1 2019.

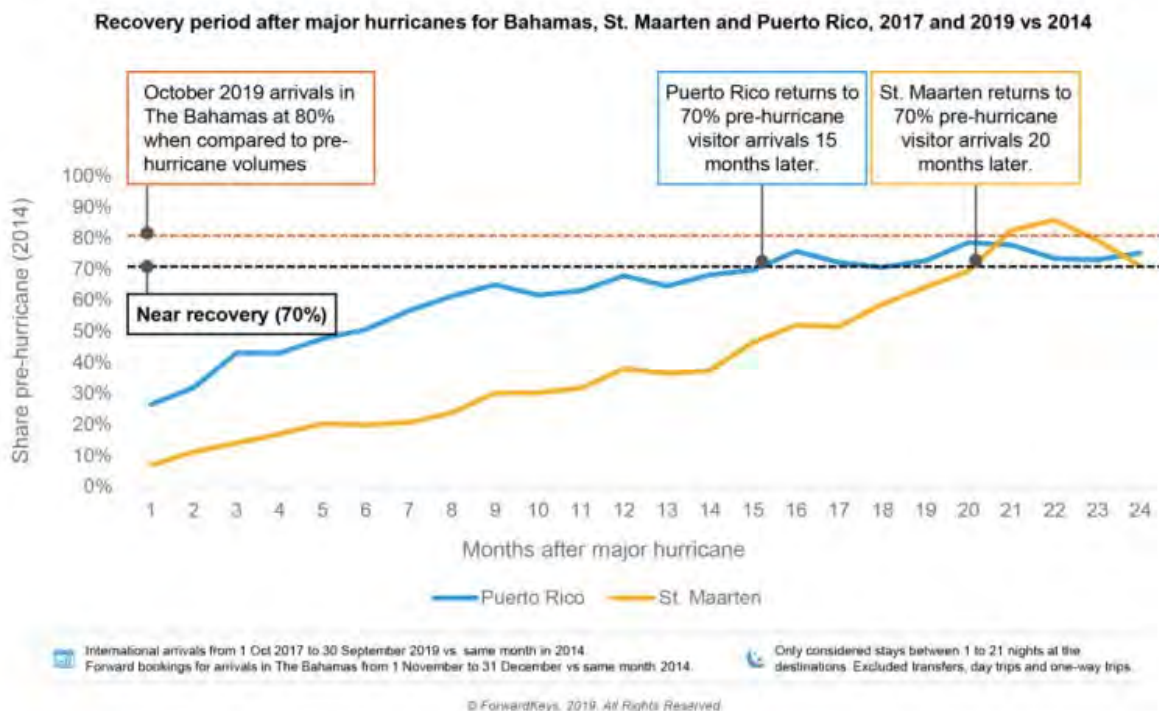
Table 2: Lost rooms and change in overnight arrivals, 2017 and 2019

	Percentage lost rooms ⁶	Number of overnight arrivals Q1 2017	Number of overnight arrivals Q1 2019	Q1 2019 as percent of Q1 2017
Anguilla	51%	24,445	30,135	123%
BVI	49%	n/a	n/a	-
Dominica	21%	n/a	n/a	-
Puerto Rico	16%	488,816	435,578	89%
Sint Maarten	32%	161,387	85,936	53%
USVI	37%	238,975	193,454	81%

Source: Various

⁶ As per STR in WTTC (2018). Caribbean Resilience and Recovery: Minimizing the impact of the 2017 hurricane season on the Caribbean's tourism sector. World Travel & Tourism Council.

Figure 3: Recovery period after major hurricanes for Bahamas, Sint Maarten and Puerto Rico



Source: ForwardKeys

According to data from ForwardKeys, while it took 15 months for Puerto Rico to return to 70% of pre-hurricane visitor arrival levels, it took Sint Maarten 20 months.

In addition to numerous sector-specific factors, the scale of the impact after a crisis and length of recovery also depends on a number of broader factors. The WTTC recommends a mix of specific temporary and longer-term policy measures that can enable faster tourism sector recovery:

- **Incentivize and ease recovery and redevelopment.** Governments should support private sector efforts in the redevelopment of damaged infrastructure and assets. Examples of policies include: tax and duty exemptions for building materials and temporarily easing entry and work permit restrictions to allow easy access for specialized services such as insurance claim adjusters, architects and engineers
- **Increase access to capital.** Ensuring access to subsidized and guaranteed loans to small locally-owned businesses
- **Increase the competitive position of the tourism industry.** Reducing the duties on common goods can stimulate travel and traveler spending
- **Remove minor taxes.** Temporary stoppage of taxes such as hotel and departure tax can make the destination more competitive.
- **Encourage more local purchases.** Reducing the duty on locally-produced household goods can make these more attractive compared to imported goods.

- **Increase investments in training and education.** Support in helping residents further develop skills needed by the industry.
- **Improve the traveler arrival and departure experience.** Create regional standards for border crossings and customs including visa and passport producers. Improve customer service and enhance technology at airports.
- **Establish a long-term messaging strategy for the destination.** Relaying a message of resilience and recovery including sharing the ‘business as usual’ message is a key part of marketing a tourism destination after a disaster.

These policies can expedite recovery and have the added benefit of making the destination more resilient to a future crisis. Puerto Rico, for example supported the ease of recovery by allowing businesses in the tourism sector to receive a tax credit on the investment needed to rebuild or renovate their facilities, even if the funding was a result of an insurance payment. In Sint Maarten, a group of hotels created the Sint Maarten Training Foundation (SMTF) in December 2017. Shortly thereafter, with a government subsidy, SMTF started a pilot program that provided a stipend of between 40 and 50 percent of pre-hurricane wages to idle workers and required, in return, a commitment from those workers to use the idle time to participate in training activities while the hotels are re-built. The first phase of the program (February -July 2018) covered about 700 under-employed beneficiaries – 60 percent of which were women – and the attendance rate was around 80 percent⁷. The program has not only been relevant to addressing the post-disaster employment impacts caused by Hurricane Irma, but also addressed the low levels of skilled labor among Sint Maarten’s labor force.

III. The Tourism Sector in Sint Maarten

Since Hurricane Irma, tremendous efforts have been made in Sint Maarten to build back the sector, but there is still significant recovery work to be done. At the same time, the tourism sector in Sint Maarten is facing an increasingly competitive marketplace. Both the recovery, as well as longer term competitiveness can be analyzed through the following summary of sector performance. A more detailed sector performance overview, presented through compilation of available tourism statistics from public and private sector sources, can be found in the report “Sint Maarten Tourism Sector REcovery: Compendium of Tourism Statistics”.

Hurricane Irma has disrupted the collection of data and increased the need for timely, high quality and detailed data. Even before the hurricane, there were gaps in tourism statistics in Sint Maarten⁸, including: (i) limited access to tourism sector performance data; (ii) very limited data on the stay-over tourism market; (iii) no consistent data on yachting activity; (iv) only anecdotal data on sharing economy (villas and apartments) activity; and (vi) very limited readily available data on public expenditures related to tourism. For example, the information presented on the

⁷https://nrpbxm.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/EISTP_Project-Information-Integrated-Safeguards-Data-Sheet.pdf

⁸ As identified in the 2019 report “Sint Maarten Tourism Sector Recovery - Tourism Statistics Diagnostic”

number of hotel rooms and hotel occupancy is gathered from the Sint Maarten Hospitality & Trade Association (SHTA) and only includes data from that hotels that voluntarily submit data. This is a significant limitation. As such, the data can illustrate trends, but likely cannot be seen as representative of sector wide occupancy rates. To be resilient and grow stronger in its competitive position, Sint Maarten’s tourism sector data needs to be comprehensive, timely and widely available for all to make well-informed investment, promotion and operational decisions.

A. Supply

Accommodation

Full recovery in Sint Maarten’s tourism sector requires the right balance of supply and demand. In order to achieve an optimized level of activity---and economic productivity---lodging supply returning to the market as well as new additions, must be managed in tandem with increasing levels of tourist arrivals.

Table 3: Number of operational rooms, 2013-18 (SHTA members only)

Year	Beginning of year	End of year	% change from previous year
2013	3,581	3,845	-
2014	3,845	3,797	-1.2
2015	3,797	3,898	2.7
2016	3,898	3,956	1.5
2017	3,956	786	-80.1
2018	786	1,784	127.0

Source: SHTA

The devastation of the hurricane meant many of the hotels in Sint Maarten were closed during the fall of 2017 and in early 2018. By August 2019 through the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, the number of hotel and timeshare units available reached 2,521. Yet, this is only 63% of the pre-Irma count. SHTA members estimate the projected number of units available between August 2019 and March 2020 to increase from 63% to 81% of pre-Irma inventory. The expectation by SHTA is that after all rooms that are currently planned or in the pipeline are operational, the rooms inventory will be greater than pre-Irma.

Table 4: Projected number of units, 2019-2020 (SHTA members only)

Date	Projected supply (units)	% of pre-Irma 2018 supply
August 15, 2019	2,521	63
Ending Q3 2019	2,583	65
Ending Q4 2019	2,862	72
Ending Q1 2020	3,219	81

Source: SHTA

Just before Hurricane Irma, hotels reporting their occupancy figures to SHTA, achieved some of the highest occupancy rates in years. In the six months following Hurricane Irma, hotels that were open for business reported low occupancy rates. However, since April 2018 the shortage of supply has enabled higher than average occupancy rates for those hotels that are open for business and report to SHTA.

The accommodation numbers above do not include rooms of non-SHTA members including those in private accommodation and villas, widely believed to be an active part of the market. The devastation of the hurricane meant many of the larger hotels in Sint Maarten were closed for a significant period of time and the smaller providers and private accommodation are believed to play an important role in filling the gap between supply and demand. An April 2019 survey among local commercial rental agencies offering villas and condos identified 361 properties. It is believed that the total inventory of private accommodation, including those offered using platforms such as Airbnb, is considerably larger.

Air Access

Princess Juliana International Airport (SXM) was severely damaged by Hurricane Irma and reopened one month after the hurricane using temporary tents. Arrival and departure operations returned to the renovated terminal in December 2018. All airport repairs are expected to be completed by 2021. Pre-Irma, SXM had flights to 36 destinations. By the beginning of 2019, SXM was servicing 34 destinations. Weekly seat capacity during winter 2016-2017 was approximately 24,229. By the beginning of 2019, this stood at 13,712 or only 57% of pre-Irma capacity. While most previous carriers have returned and some new routes and carriers have been added, the number of flights and seat capacity have not reached pre-Irma levels and fluctuate seasonally. The signing of the agreement for the development of the new airport is an encouraging step forward for the strengthening of this vital link in the tourism value chain.

Attractions

On the island, and in many other Caribbean destinations, attractions and activities are important to day visitors---and especially important to stay-over visitors. Adequate diverse attraction is key

Airbnb in Jamaica

A 2018 World Bank study in Jamaica found that 2.5% of all international arrivals in 2017 used Airbnb to book their accommodation. The study also found that 71% of the listings are for entire home or apartments indicating that the for majority of these are non-primary residences and host-present rentals and that there is trend towards commercialization of the sharing economy. The rise of accommodation offered on digital platforms is providing governments, in Jamaica but also elsewhere in the Caribbean, with the challenge to adapt their regulation systems and taxation regimes to this new reality.



Source: World Bank (2018) Tourism and the Sharing Economy: Policy and Potential of Sustainable Peer-to-Peer Accommodation.

to building the stayover segment. Presently, in Sint Maarten, the main activity is dining, visiting beaches and (duty-free) shopping. Other attractions in Sint Maarten are the casinos, watersports, the annual sailing regatta, and Carnival. However, compared to 15 years ago, activities and interests have changed. While in 2003, 34% of stay-over visitors visited a casino, in 2018 that was just 15%. Interest in boat trips and watersports also declined during these years. Interest in other activities including zip lining, hiking and visiting historical sites increased slightly. Such shifts in visitors interests and activities are important trends integral to Sint Maarten building back better and can guide the development of new attractions and experiences.

Table 5: Stay-over visitors’ activities participation, 2018

Type of activity	Participation rate	Type of activity	Participation rate
Dining	58%	Visited casinos/nightlife	15%
Visited beaches	52%	Visited historical sites	13%
Shopping	48%	Visited Marigot	13%
Visited Philipsburg	47%	Sailing	11%
Visited Grand Case	24%	Hiking	10%
Visited Orient Bay	22%	Sightseeing	10%
Island hopping	22%	Ziplining	4%
Boat trip	20%	Fishing	3%
Plane spotting	19%	Cycling and tours	1%
Water sports	18%	Other	12%

Source: Department of Statistics, Stay-over visitor exit survey

Note: Total more than 100% to reflect multiple activities undertaken by respondents

Hiking trails as an additional---and unexpected---tourism attraction in Hong Kong

Hong Kong has started to promote green tourism including hiking trails to broaden its tourism appeal and cater to different visitor segments. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) launched the “Great Outdoors Hong Kong!” and published a guidebook so that visitors could plan hiking trips at their own pace. The HKTB also organized free guided hiking tours and carried out promotional activities including inviting media from target markets.

But, before the promotion, there was much preparation involving multiple stakeholder groups. The Tourism Commission installed directional signs and map boards, and improved seating facilities, lighting, toilets and other tourism facilities. It also facilitated the participation of private and voluntary organizations, including the Hong Kong Electric Company and the Conservancy Association, in providing information boards along the trails. Training courses on nature guided tours were provided for tourist guides and staff members of travel agencies. The Home Affairs Department improved the infrastructure including footpaths and parking. Public transportation provides easy access from downtown Hong Kong.

Nature-based walking trails amidst a metropolitan city state is not usual, yet this is an example of a primarily urban destination with a well-developed tourism offering, demonstrating that new products can

be achieved through tapping existing assets. Hiking is considered beneficial for both tourists and residents. With trail development and promotions carried out through the efforts of various stakeholder groups and public organizations, effective cooperation was key to establishing this new offering benefitting all.



Sources: UNWTO (2019) Walking Tourism: Promoting regional development/HKTB

Rental cars

In Sint Maarten, there are an estimated 30,000 vehicles registered. This number includes about 3,200 rental cars⁹. Traffic congestion is considered a critical issue by residents and visitors alike. Already, activity plans are guided—or truncated—by anticipated bottlenecks. This contributes to rental cars being less desirable for visitors to use for exploring new areas and, further, hampers the development of new products.

Taxis

The Dutch Sint Maarten Taxi Association (DSTA) is the main taxi organization and manages and dispatches about 200 taxi drivers. Their drivers use fixed trip rates. Taxi licensing and regulation falls under TEATT and in 2014 a moratorium was installed to keep the taxi fleet from expanding. This was a response to increase of licenses from 321 in 2012 to 476 in 2014. This moratorium was later eased to accommodate expansion for existing taxi license holders and people who have a guide license. Only persons with Dutch nationality can come into consideration for a taxi license. The cruise segment represents an important part of the business for taxis. The current fleet supports both leisure visitors to the island and business travelers enabling movement of individuals and small groups.

B. Demand: Stayover, cruise and yachting segments

Arrivals

There are three main market segments in Sint Maarten: i) stayover, ii) cruise and iii) yachting. In general, stay-over tourists spend at least one night and stay in paid-accommodation (hotel, timeshare or rental house or apartment) or non-paid accommodation (friends and family or their own (second) home). In contrast, cruise visitors typically do not stay overnight and usually spend

⁹ <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/175021568015482155/text/Concept-Project-Information-Documents-PID-Sint-Maarten-Road-Connectivity-and-Resilience-Improvement-Project-P171283.txt>

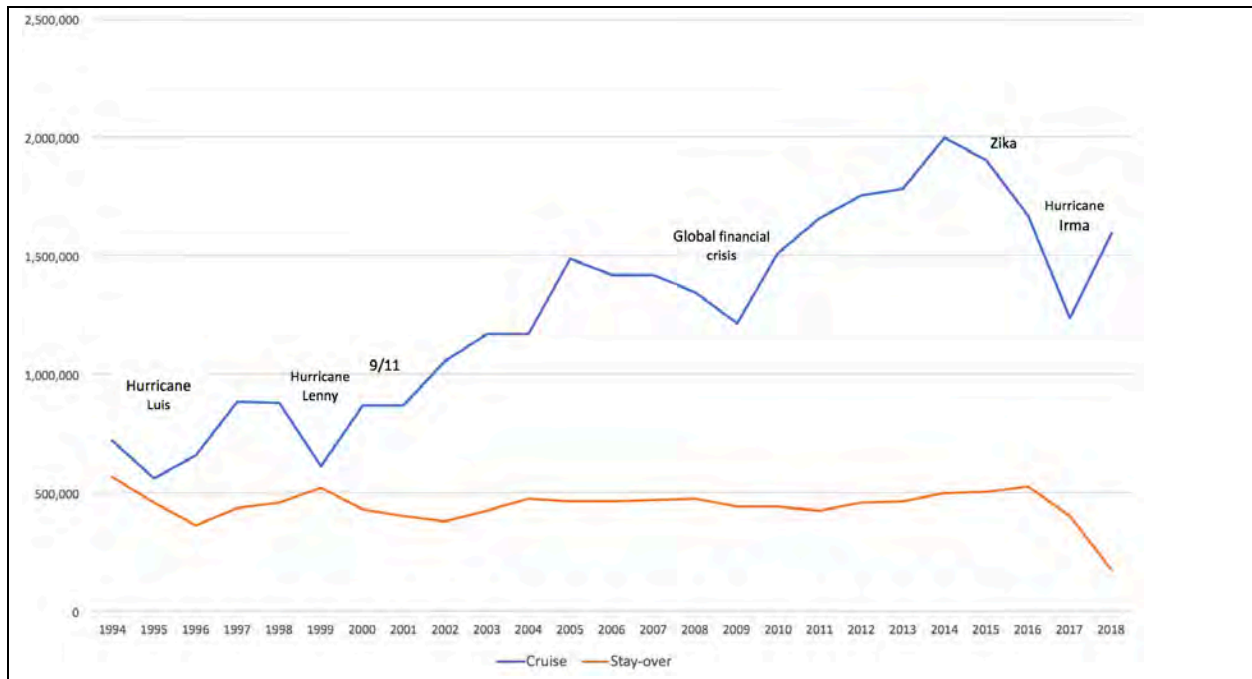
just a few hours on shore. According to the limited data that is available on the yachting segment, this market segment is relatively small compared to the other two.

Stayover segment

In 2016, the last full year of operation before Hurricane Irma hit Sint Maarten, the country received 528,153 overnight or stayover visitors. This was the seventh consecutive year of growth and the highest number of arrivals since 1994. Between 2000 and 2016, the average annual growth for overnight stay visitors was 1.2% which is relatively low in comparison to the Caribbean’s average growth rate of 3.7% during the same period. Hurricane Luis in 1995, Hurricanes Jose and Lenny in 1999, and the aftermath of terrorist attacks in 2001, all contributed to Sint Maarten experiencing declines in overnight arrivals. In between these events, the tourism sector was able to recover but, to date, has never been able to return to the level of pre-Hurricane Luis arrivals (see Figure 4). The tourism sector is now working hard to recover from the impact of Hurricane Irma and even expand stayover segment volume.

While visitors from North America represented 63% of the total stayover market in 2016, the smaller European stayover market experienced faster growth rates over the previous decade. Arrivals from Europe increased by 47% between 2006 and 2016 while the North American market grew by 20%, 276,710 to 332,322. European markets were also more resilient following Hurricane Irma. Their market share increased from 27% in 2016 to 42% in 2018 whereas the market share of North American travelers dropped from 63% to 43% during the same period.

Figure 4: Number of stay-over and cruise arrivals, 1994-2018



Source: Department of Statistics

Cruise segment

Cruise ship arrivals have shown a different growth pattern. Cruise arrivals in Sint Maarten almost quadrupled since 1995 and reached just over 2 million in 2014. The average annual growth for cruise passengers was 3.9% between 2000 and 2016. Cruise markets tend to recover quicker after natural disasters than stay-over markets, due in part to cruise ships being mostly self-sufficient. Concerns over the presence of the Zika virus in Sint Maarten between 2015 and 2017 contributed to a decline in the number of cruise arrivals. When Hurricane Irma hit in September 2017, cruise market arrivals halted for a short period of time. By September 2018, cruise ship arrivals were back to 2016 pre-Hurricane Irma numbers (see Figure 4 below). Sint Maarten received 1,631,537 passengers from 565 cruise ship calls in 2019, an increase of 2.2% – or 34,436 passengers – compared to 2018 when Sint. Maarten received 1,597,101 passengers from 490 cruise ship calls.

Yachting segment

While the yachting sector plays an important role in Sint Maarten's economy, the lack of consistent data collection prevents systematically measuring the growth and impact of this market segment. The yachting market was identified in Sint Maarten's 2005 tourism strategic plan as one of the key growth markets. However, this segment suffers from rare measurement with the last comprehensive survey on this segment conducted in 2012. Yachting crew and passengers tend to value privacy making data collection difficult. The crew and the passengers of these vessels use the island as their transportation hub and a large number of vessels use Simpson and Cole Bay as their homeport for provisions, fuel and for maintenance and repairs. This sub-sector then also contributes to significant job opportunities and earnings. A 2011 economic impact study of the Sint Maarten marine sector indicated that in 2011 the total contribution of the yachting sector to GDP was estimated at US\$31 million and generated approximately 900 jobs¹⁰.

Seasonality

Sint Maarten's high season typically extends from November through April when both North American and European travellers are motivated to escape cold winters at home. There is also a peak in arrivals during the summer months, which coincides with school holidays in North America and Europe. As the island is in the hurricane belt, the months of September and October are considered low season. While there are clear patterns of seasonality, these are similar to comparable destinations in the region (see table 4 in Annex).

Length of stay

In conjunction with expenditures, average length of stay is a crucial indicator for the sector's overall productivity. The current average length of stay is 7.2 nights for all of Sint Maarten¹¹. The average length of stay on the French side is slightly longer than the Dutch side. This is widely attributed to the longer stays of Canadians and Europeans in Sint Martin. In comparison to other

¹⁰ KPMG (2012) Economic Impact Study of the St. Maarten Marine sector for the year 2011

¹¹ Based on respondents to the Stayover Exit Survey for August 2018

destinations in the Caribbean, Sint Maarten’s average length of stay is of concern. While recent annual data is not available, the declining trend of 2013-2015 demands close monitoring and vigilance.

Table 6: Average length of stay in nights for Caribbean destinations, 2013-17

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
St Maarten	9.4	8.2	7.7	n/a	n/a
Anguilla	7.5	7.5	7.3	7.1	8.1
Aruba	6.9	6.9	7.0	7.0	7.0
Cayman Islands	6.1	6.1	6.3	6.2	6.2
Curacao	8.5	8.8	8.2	8.2	9.0
Jamaica	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.1	6.7
St. Lucia	8.9	8.8	8.7	8.5	8.4

Source: UNWTO

Note: Sint Maarten data on this indicator is not available via UNWTO and is collected from Sint Maarten’s Stayover Exit Surveys collected 2-3 times a year.

Expenditures

One of the key indicators to measure the contribution of tourism to the economy is average daily expenditures for stay-over visitors. These have shown a general decline over the last years, despite the share of visitors with an average income of US\$100,000 or more remaining the same. Average daily expenditures for the years of 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018 show an uneven pattern. For example, there was a significant drop in daily expenditures in 2015. It is not clear what contributed to this drop. The drop in 2018 can be attributed to the impact of Irma. Overnight visitors from Latin America and the Caribbean made the highest daily expenditures in 2018, with much of their spend on shopping. The fluctuations of visitor expenditures are significant and require continued monitoring through consistently collecting, processing and analyzing detailed expenditure data.

Table 7: Stay-over visitors, average daily expenditure, 2014-2018

Year	Average daily expenditures (in US\$)	% change
2014	129.44	-
2015	75.87	-41.4
2016	119.95	58.1
2018	83.20	-30.6

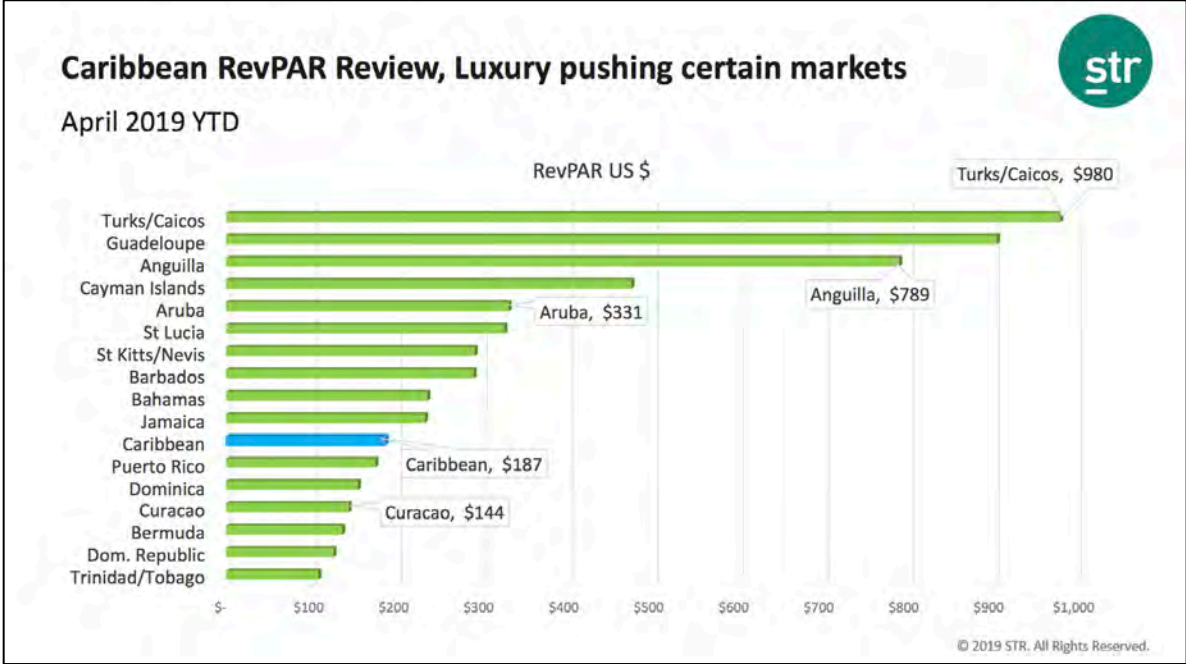
Source: Department of Statistics, Stay-over visitor exit surveys

Note: Data for 2017 is not available due to Hurricane Irma

In April 2019, the average revenue per available room (RevPAR) for the Caribbean was US\$187. The average daily rate (ADR) for the Caribbean is expected to be lower than that. Even when based on double occupancy, Sint Maarten is expected to compete in the lower-level markets with

an anticipated average total daily expenditure rate of US\$83.20 per person as estimated by the Sint Maarten Department of Statistics.

Figure 5: Overview of RevPar for Carribbean destinations, April 2019 YTD



Source: STR

Cruise passenger exit surveys in Sint Maarten for the past five years similarly show inconsistent results of daily expenditures and this requires further analysis. For example, average daily expenditures by US cruise passengers dropped by almost 50% between 2015 and 2016 from US\$202.99 to US\$105.74 and then bounced up to US\$260.54 in 2018, an increase of 28% compared to 2015. Expenditures by Canadian, Caribbean and European cruise passengers in 2016 also dropped significantly, but did not recover much in 2018.

C. Economic impact

Tourism receipts

The economy of Sint Maarten is mostly tourism-based with the sector contributing an estimated 73% to the country’s total foreign exchange income in 2016¹². Most other industries in the country also rely heavily on the tourism sector. Based on data from the Sint Maarten Department of Statistics, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimated the total tourism receipts in 2016 at US\$871 million. This was 74.8% of total exports of goods and services for that year.

¹² St Maarten National Recovery and Resilience Plan: A Roadmap to Building Back Better

Table 8: International tourism receipts, 2013-17

Indicator	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Tourism receipts (in US\$ Mn)	871	922	913	871	646
Tourism receipts as a percentage of all exports of goods and services (%)	71	73.9	75.1	74.8	69.6

Source: UNWTO

Based on Cruise Exit Surveys, the Department of Statistics calculates the total expenditures of cruise passengers. Their research found that concern about the presence of the Zika virus on the island reduced the number of vessels and cruise passengers in 2015 and 2016 and thereby reduced total expenditures for this segment. After another significant drop in 2017 due to Hurricane Irma, in 2018 total expenditures by cruise passengers returned to 2014 levels.

Table 9: Cruise passengers and total expenditures (US\$), 2014-2018

	Total expenditures (in US\$)	% change from previous year
2014	342,039,267	-
2015	291,466,876	-14.8
2016	240,785,327	-17.4
2018	346,970,501	44.1

Source: Department of Statistics, Cruise passenger exit surveys

Note: Data for 2017 is not available due to Hurricane Irma

Employment

The results of the 2018 Economic Census showed that prior to Hurricane Irma in 2017, 2,971 people were employed in the accommodation or food service industry. In 2018, this number decreased slightly to 2,752 people. The drop is mostly explained by a decline in full-time jobs in the accommodation sector and part-time jobs that are recorded on the payroll. In 2018, this industry represented 15.3% of the total workforce and is the second largest employer after the wholesale and retail trade industry (22.3%).

Table 10: Number of people employed in accommodation and food service activities, pre Hurricane Irma and in 2018

	FT on payroll		PT on payroll		FT not on payroll		PT not on payroll		Total	
	Pre-Irma	2018	Pre-Irma	2018	Pre-Irma	2018	Pre-Irma	2018	Pre-Irma	2018
Accommodation	1,197	878	73	91	5	62	31	6	1,306	1,037
Food service activities	1,366	1,335	220	264	53	86	26	30	1,665	1,715
Total	2,563	2,213	293	355	58	148	57	36	2,971	2,752

Source: Department of Statistics, Economic Census 2018

Note: FT is full-time and PT is part-time

Government Income

In 2018, sector related tax revenues collected by the government totalled only 25% of 2014 revenue levels from room tax, time share fees and car rental taxes due to the impact of Hurricane Irma and the depressed number of arrivals.

Table 11: Government income from tourism related taxes (in USD), 2013-18

	2013*	2014*	2017	2018
Room tax	3,728,814	3,785,311	3,639,635	1,109,365
Time share fee	2,259,887	2,655,367	1,307,681	454,786
Car rental tax	564,972	847,458	859,659	253,978
Total	6,553,673	7,288,136	5,806,975	1,818,129

Source: TEATT

Note: * Estimates

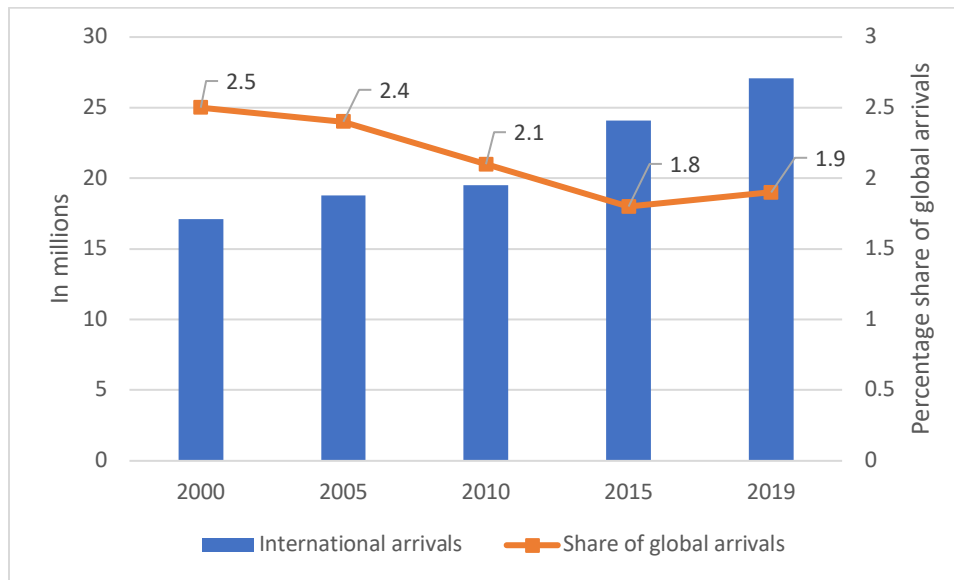
Original figures in Nafl – exchange rate used USD 1= Nafl 1.77

D. Caribbean tourism trends

The Caribbean is losing global market share and the overall growth rate in the region is slowing. While global international arrivals increased by 47% between 2010 and 2018, arrivals to the Caribbean increased by just 31% during this same period. According to UNWTO's forecast for 2030, this slowed rate of growth will remain the trend.

Growth of arrivals in the Caribbean is forecasted to slow from an annual average of 2.4% between 2005 and 2010 to 1.7% between 2020 and 2030. The market share of the Caribbean region in 2030 is hereby expected to drop from 2.1% in 2010 to 1.7%. New destinations have opened, and travel patterns have changed. This means that Sint Maarten will be facing further serious competition in the region—and even beyond—as travelers empowered by internet disintermediation, expand their possible itinerary destinations. While a considerable part of the room inventory has, and will come back better, Sint Maarten as a destination cannot be complacent. Tourists have become more demanding and the market has become more dynamic. The message is clear: Sint Maarten will need to keep up with other destinations in the region--- and beyond.

Figure 6: International arrivals in the Caribbean, 2000-19



Source: UNWTO

While fundamentals of the Caribbean tourism offering remain the same, continually acknowledging demand nuances from year to year is critical to achieving destination competitiveness. The sun, sand and sea offering across the Caribbean brings visitors year after year. Yet these visitors---and their expectations---change as new technologies, experiences and emerging destinations shape visitors' purchase decisions. Business in Sint Maarten, and the Caribbean region overall, is presently being steered by key market trends such as:

- The pursuit of healthy options - active, wellness and sports tourism
- Local and authentic experiences - especially experiences around food and lifestyle
- Interactive cultural experiences - connecting with local culture and people
- Active and adventure travel –soft adventure such as hiking in areas of natural beauty
- Increased emphasis by travelers to support destination sustainability

To compete with other destinations in the region, Sint Maarten will need to broaden its tourism offer and be pro-active in anticipating changes in market demand. Consistent protection and celebration of its environmental and cultural assets is integral to improving and sustaining its competitive position in a fiercely competitive region. Recently, the growing awareness of the importance of the environment to destinations across the Caribbean—as well as increased emphasis placed on this by travelers—has contributed to strong environmental policies and actions.

Tourism and the Blue Economy initiatives in the Caribbean

There is a growing concern by coastal communities, and particularly those in small island developing states (SIDS), about the health of the ocean and the sustainability of its use. For example, over 320,000 tons of plastic waste remains uncollected each year in the Caribbean, much of which then ends up in the oceans and seas. This concern has led to a focus on the Blue Economy. The World Bank (2016) defines it as “the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, while preserving the health of marine and coastal ecosystems.” The tourism sector not only relies on the ocean as part of their tourism offer. The sector also puts significant pressure on the oceans such as the increasing demand for fresh water for swimming pools, hotel gardens, golf courses, and growing water use in hotels. Further, garbage and other waste connected to the tourism sector lands in oceans and seas. This had led to initiatives such as The Global Tourism Plastics initiative, led by the UN Environment and UNWTO, which aims to articulate, support and scale-up action by tourism stakeholders and is building a global alliance to fight plastic pollution.



Several destinations in the Caribbean are undertaking initiatives connected to the Blue Economy. Antigua and Barbuda banned single-use plastic bags in 2016 followed by a ban of plastic utensils and styrofoam products at the end of 2018 and was the first country in the region to do so. In 2019, the government introduced a bill that includes steep fines for residents caught importing the banned items. Following this example, Jamaica, Belize, Barbados, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas committed to ban the import and use of single-use plastics and polystyrene starting January 1st, 2020.

On World Ocean Day, June 8, 2018, Bonaire presented itself as the first “Blue Destination” in the world. The Blue Destination program is led by the Chamber of Commerce, the tourism bureau (TCB), the hotel association (BONHATA) and the nature park foundation (STINAPA). Examples of actions that are planned dive operators and hotels selling only reef-safe products, and hotels replacing complimentary plastic single use water bottles with reusable water bottles that can be filled at public water fountains to be installed around the island.

Sources: World Bank

According to a study by Sustainable Travel International in partnership with Mandala Research, 60% of all leisure travelers in United States (105.3 million Americans) have taken a “sustainable” trip in the last three years. These travellers spend more, stay longer, and believe they have a great deal of responsibility for making sure their trips do not harm a destination’s people, environment, or economy. Increased awareness and demand among consumers of ethical travel can bring benefits to a wider range of stakeholders across communities and help preserve the environment. Ethical travel that is environmentally sensible will continue to contribute to traveler purchasing across all segments.

IV. Recovery: Getting Back to Better

Sint Maarten's Long Term Vision

In spite of the disruption caused by Hurricane Irma, long-term tourism development in the country today is still broadly guided by the *2005 St Maarten Tourism Master Plan – TourMap*. This systematic and wide-ranging effort which deeply engaged public and private sector stakeholders and CSOs for nearly two years, synthesized the positioning and forward focus of Sint Maarten's tourism in 2005. The key goals and metrics defined in the 2005 *TourMap* are:

- **Growth in yield of tourism**
 - An increase in the daily average expenditures by all categories of visitors
 - Growth in the on-shore yield from the marine sector
 - An increase in the proportion of expenditure by tourists which is retained in the economy
 - Increase in the real term level of revenue to the Government from tourism

- **Increased employment**
 - An increase in the number of jobs
 - An upgrade in the quality of the jobs
 - Broadening the sector's career opportunities
 - Optimizing the employment of residents in the sector

- **A high standard of living combined with good quality of life** - to maintain the standard of living on the island and seek improvement in quality of life

Figure 7: Vision for tourism in Sint Maarten as per TourMap (2005)

Sint Maarten...

A dynamic, safe, healthy and disciplined society that delivers an acceptable quality of life and is a source of national pride for all, with tourism as the primary conscious choice for managed growth and social development in a fair, balanced and transparent manner.

The people of St Maarten will consistently exceed the expectations of our guests and will nurture and maintain the natural and cultural heritage of the island.

Source: TourMap, 2005

While the vision and long term strategy laid out in *TourMap* is still relevant, the projections for market supply and demand are based on 2004 data. Also, the regional stayover marketplace has become increasingly competitive with many other destinations now offering similar or more attractive tourism offerings. Recent market developments, such as the increasing role of disruptive technologies, digital platforms, innovative data-driven market research and marketing approaches, are also not considered in *TourMap*.

Converging priorities

Today, many of Sint Maarten's tourism sector stakeholders speak of a vision for a more well-balanced, sustainable, diversified, and high-yield tourism sector and their frustration that the island has not fully harnessed its natural and cultural capital to enable sustainable and inclusive growth. While frustration is frequently shared about 'missed opportunities', all of these are connected to a common theme of wanting to 'do better'. Workshops and discussions with key stakeholders during this review highlighted consistent concerns and a variety of paths forward.

Combining analysis of *TourMap* findings with the present situation and stakeholders' input, there are now **five key priorities** to advance the tourism sector that are widely specified:

- (i) **growing the stayover tourism segment**
- (ii) **increasing yield from the cruise segment**
- (iii) **diversifying the tourism product and experiences**
- (iv) **generating wider community involvement and benefit**
- (v) **ensuring environmental sustainability**

While there may not be consensus on how to specifically achieve these priorities, there is widespread recognition of the pressing need to take action in order for Sint Maarten's tourism to be sustainable, resilient and a market leader.

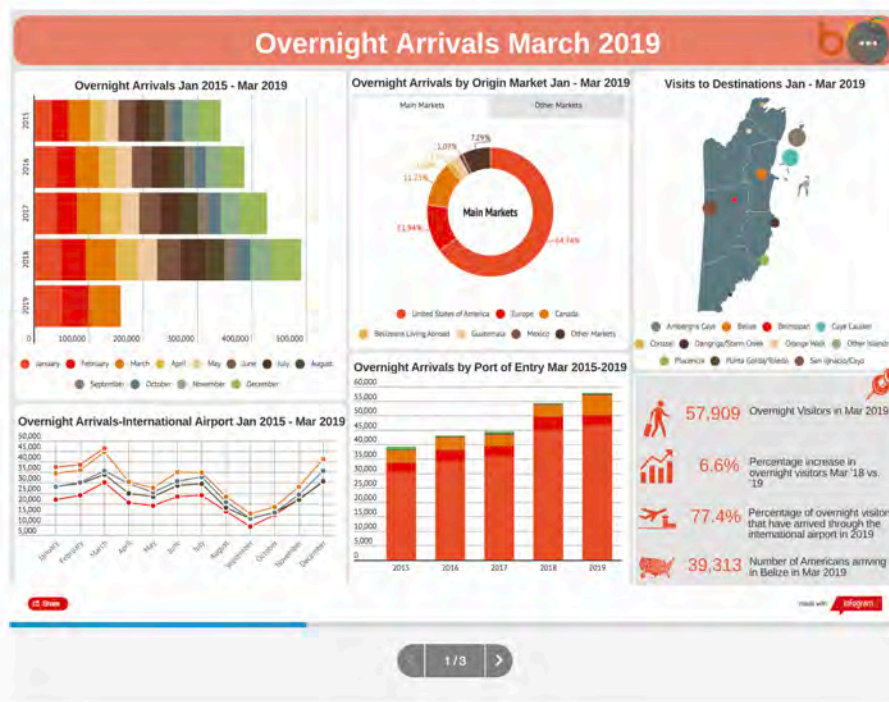
Translating Priorities into Competitiveness and Resilience

Competitive, resilient destinations continuously monitor supply and demand in an evolving and increasingly competitive marketplace. Tourism is dynamic---changing from season to season as travellers expectations, needs and demands change. Island destinations, in particular, cannot be complacent. Sint Maarten's efforts to monitor market demand, behaviors and purchasing patterns through expanded and emerging data sources, such as TripAdvisor and Expedia, has enabled better informed marketing and promotion efforts. However, this is just a start. In today's and tomorrow's complex marketplace, Sint Maarten must be proactive to address current on-going and new challenges informed by data and strategic decisions.

Tourism dashboards

In a highly competitive marketplace, such as the Caribbean, destinations use timely and comprehensive data to enable all stakeholders to have similar information and contribute to enhanced collaboration. A monthly update of the main KPIs can support public as well as private sector stakeholders by strengthening their evidence-based decision making. Many destinations are effective in not only collecting data, but also in disseminating this data in user-friendly dashboard formats.

Sint Maarten would benefit from establishing a tourism data dashboard that would enable wide and open distribution of key performance indicators (KPIs). This action would improve access to a broader group of stakeholders and the greater Sint Maarten community like other competitive island countries. Development of a Sint Maarten tourism dashboard through the collaboration of STAT and STB would enable all stakeholders to have similar information and contribute to enhanced collaboration. A best practice example is the Belize Tourism Dashboard, available online on the Belize Tourism Board website (<http://belizetourismboard.org/belize-tourism/statistics/>).



While in-depth analysis can provide greater insights and details to the way forward, the top challenges are readily apparent. Today, Sint Maarten's tourism sector suffers from five clear challenges that handicap its competitive position:

1. **Non-competitive, low-yield core product for the stayover market**
2. **Restrictive business environment, ineffective regulatory regime and unattractive investment climate**
3. **Weak infrastructure, unattractive public spaces**
4. **Limited capacity of workforce**
5. **Inadequate environmental protection**

Addressing these can yield improved productivity, greater resiliency and the wider sharing of benefits for all stakeholders. How does the general vision stated in *TourMap 2005* and stakeholder feedback from the current analysis translate into a thriving Sint Maarten---for tourists and residents? The following table synthesizes five key challenges and priorities for long-term competitiveness and resiliency. This also provides the context for the selection and prioritization of high-impact actions for the next 24 months presented in the next section.

Table 12: Five Key Challenges and Paths to Tourism Competitiveness and Resiliency

Challenge	St Maarten's Opportunity	Actions for Resilient and Competitive Tourism
1. Non-competitive, low-yield core product for segments---especially the stayover segment		
<p>Due to increased competition in the region, use of new technologies, and the changing needs and wants of segments, there is a need to offer a more compelling product that can increase the yield per visitor.</p> <p>The current offer of tourism activities and attractions does not fully meet the changing expectations of the stayover market and is not competitive with other offers in the region. The stayover visitor survey has identified this as a significant drawback.</p>	<p>In 5 years Sint Maarten is a sustainable and competitive destination---environmentally, socially and economically with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - optimized supply and demand - market and product agility - effective and consistently funded marketing and promotion - an increased number of target market driven activities that enhance the current offering of cultural and recreational tourism products. - a place that is attractive for residents and visitors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve tourism data and statistics to increase the understanding of target markets' demand through improved tourism research 2. Attract high spending markets by offering a higher quality, improved price/value tourism product 3. Support the development of attractions and activities that meet target market demand and exceed expectations 4. Enable community involvement and the sharing of the benefits of new activities and attractions 5. Create more spending opportunities with local crafts and new experiences 6. Selective growth of accommodation supply 7. Limited growth of the cruise market with a focus on yield per visitor 8. Strategic marketing and promotion that strongly positions St Maarten's competitive offering in key markets
2. Restrictive business environment, ineffective regulatory regime and unattractive investment climate		
<p>There is a critical need to streamline and enable the business operational environments and simplify the</p>	<p>In 5 years, Sint Maarten is an encouraging entrepreneurial ecosystem with an investment climate that supports renovation, innovation and expansion of market-driven tourism</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simplification of licensing and permitting requirements and processes (e.g. use of online

licensing and permit process to encourage domestic as well as foreign private investments.	products fundamental to a productive tourism sector	information portals for regulatory processes) 2. Implementation of up-to-date regulations and policies that enable a sustainable and competitive destination 3. Zoning plan enforcement 4. Streamlining investment climate to make Sint Maarten attractive to investors
3. Weak infrastructure, unattractive public spaces		
Hurricane Irma destroyed significant infrastructure around the island. Parts of the country which are heavily frequented by visitors are in need of improvements to ensure safety and increase the attractiveness	In 5 years, Sint Maarten is a place where visitors as well as residents can be safe, have access to proper infrastructure and that is attractive to businesses.	1. Beautification of public spaces in areas such as Philipsburg and Simpson's Bay to be attractive for locals and visitors 2. Upgrading of public market spaces in a manner that retains local character and enables improved sales 3. Sidewalks and signage that provide safe passage and information
4. Limited capacity of workforce		
The changing environment in which the tourism sector functions requires a workforce that has the skills and the understanding integral to meeting the changing demands of the market as well as working with modern technology.	In 5 years, Sint Maarten has a market-oriented workforce with knowledge and practical skills capable of delivering competitive tourism products and experiences. The workforce has the technological and technical expertise for modernizing the tourism sector.	1. A continuous <i>Sint Maarten Host</i> program 2. Education curriculum that promotes tourism as a viable and attractive sector for jobs 3. Training for progressive career paths, not just jobs 4. Life-long learning for all levels including skills training and destination management credentials 5. Enacting labor regulation that balances local workforce protection with business needs 6. Primary and secondary school tourism education programs to promote tourism awareness and significance
5. Inadequate environmental protection		
Visitors consider the lack of cleanliness of the island as one of their main points of dissatisfaction. There is an	In 5 years, Sint Maarten is a destination that is committed to and enabling sustainability as a way of life and doing business. Natural assets are protected strictly.	1. Updating and enforcement of environmental policies and regulations

<p>urgent need to clean up the island, protect green spaces and enhance the natural environment.</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Incentivizing private sector greening initiatives in hotels, restaurants and tourism operations 3. Island wide recycling program targetted toward tourists and residents 4. Environmental education for school children 5. Tourism growth that is aligned with the 2005 Carrying Capacity guidelines
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V. The Next 24-Months

Targeted short-term recovery actions

Two years after Hurricane Irma, the tourism sector of Sint Maarten is still ‘building back better’. This is understandable given the extent of devastation and the many challenges for the people of Sint Maarten. The tourism sector, which fuels much of the country’s economic productivity is a particularly critical sector to push forward. To continue recovery, there are a number of key steps. These must be taken to optimize supply and demand in a manner that benefits all those committed to Sint Maarten’s beauty and economic advancement. These also form a critical opportunity to lay the groundwork for a more diversified, competitive tourism sector and resilient economy going forward.

Addressing the five key challenges as described in the previous section will be key to long-term competitiveness and resilience. Any short-term recovery activities should link to longer term development as presented below.

Table 13: Short-Term Actions to Address Longer Term Challenges

LONG-TERM CHALLENGE	SHORT-TERM ACTIONS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGE
<p>Non-competitive, low-yield core product for segments---especially the stayover segment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the variety and quality of the tourism products for the stayover market 2. Improve tourism data collection and analysis statistical system monitoring sector performance 3. Establish a public private partnership to operate an agile Tourism Promotion Agency 4. Develop a Strategic Tourism Plan buliding upon---and going beyond---the <i>TourMap 2005</i> tourism plan
<p>Restrictive business environment, ineffective regulatory regime and unattractive investment climate</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Improve the licensing and permitting processes with transparent, online platforms and consistent processes

	6. Provide incentives for businesses which adopt best practices in environmental management
Weak infrastructure, unattractive public spaces that deter visitors and residents	7. Get the lights on along Front Street and the boardwalk! 8. Upgrade street infrastructure, signage and lighting to assure easy traffic flow in Philipsburg and Simpson Bay areas 9. Develop parking areas and bus stops to ease traffic and encourage island exploration beyond commercial areas
Limited capacity of workforce that makes working in tourism an unattractive choice	10. Expand training programs and provide incentives to businesses to improve workforce capacity aligned with meeting the demands of visitors and new products 11. Support programs that enable progression through established credentials and standards of service 12. Increase the technological and technical expertise of the tourism workforce through targeted programs that support business goals and community values—and provide credentials for graduates
Inadequate environmental protection	13. Launch island wide recycling through hotels, restaurants and tourism attractions 14. Support competitions for entrepreneurial start-ups that address cultural and natural environment asset protection at the community level.

1. **Increase the variety and quality of the tourism products for the stayover market.** To diversify the current ‘sun, sea and sand’ product, there is a need to offer additional attractions and sites that highlight the unique culture of the country. There is increased demand worldwide for more experiential and authentic travel. There is also growing interest to be more active and spend time in nature, Several cultural heritage sites that highlight the the culture of the country are currently in need of repair and require improved visitor infrastructure. There is also a need to develop and improve tourism products that can meet the growing visitor demand for more activities that involve active engagement.

2. **Improve tourism data analysis statistical system .** Even before the hurricane, there were gaps in tourism statistics in Sint Maarten, including: (i) limited access to tourism sector performance data; (ii) very limited data on the stay-over tourism market; (iii) no consistent data on yachting activity; (iv) only anecdotal data on sharing economy (villas and apartments) activity, and (v) a lack of readily available data on public expenditures related to tourism. Hurricane Irma has exacerbated these issues. Since the hurricane, there has been inconsistency in the completion of arrival cards by visitors arriving via air transport, preventing formal tracking of post-hurricane visitor trends. Previous efforts to install an automated arrivals and departure tracking system, which would contribute to statistical tracking and profiling of visitors, were postponed until the airport is back in full operation. Sint Maarten requires tourism data that informs 1) effective and efficient planning of public actions and economic, social and environmental impact evaluations; 2) market segmentation, evaluation, and marketing strategies; and 3) strategic planning. See the report “Sint Maarten Tourism Sector Recovery - Tourism Statistics Diagnostic and Recommended Action Plan” for the more detailed short and long action plan to address this constraint.
3. **Establishing Tourism Promotion Entity.** There is a need for an institutional structure that enables multi-year planning, cooperative funding and ensures timely and innovative market development and promotion for high return on marketing activities. The Aruba Tourism Authority provides a relevant model.
4. **Develop a masterplan and strategy for long-term planning.** While the overall vision for Sint Maarten as a destination has not changed much since *TourMap* was developed in 2005, the strategic plan needs to be updated to reflect the current internal as well as external environment and identify and prioritize the revised long-term actions required for a more resilient and sustainable destination.
5. **Improve the licensing and permitting processes.** Businesses lose precious time and money chasing approvals, licenses and permits. This is a problem for all businesses on the island—not just tourism related businesses. Transparent and streamlined processes administered by the government would foster new business start-ups and innovation.
6. **Provide incentives for businesses which adopt best practices in environmental management.** The tourism sector is in a unique position to not only help visitors but also

Aruba Tourism Authority

The Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA), established in 1986, replaced the Aruba Tourism Board. ATA was privatized at January 1, 2011 to allow greater autonomy and speed in the decision-making process as well as access to independent marketing funds. To finance the privatization process, ATA received a Afl 3 million one-time contribution from the government to set up the renewed organizational structure. ATA then transitioned from a Destination Marketing Organization into a Destination Marketing and Management Organization (DMMO) in 2014. ATA is directly funded through the hotel room tax; the timeshare environmental levy; and the airline passenger tax (destination fee or travel promotion levy).

To guide their tourism strategy, ATA formulated *Cu Mira Pa Futuro*, the destination development plan for Aruba for 2017-2021. In addition to this, ATA prepares an annual business plan.



Source: ATA

support the values and priorities of locals through improved environmental management. Hotels, restaurants and attractions can raise awareness of the importance of stewardship through programs which encourage recycling, cleanliness and site protections---and should be rewarded for their efforts.

7. **Get the lights on along Front Street and the boardwalk!** The scenic walk area of Front Street along the beach is dark at night and a disgrace during the day when broken and deteriorating lamp posts are apparent. Repairing these would assure a more beautiful beachfront and improve evening activity for visitors and locals.
8. **Improve the infrastructure and increase the attractiveness of public spaces.** To improve the competitiveness of the destination, it is needed to improve the aesthetics of public places. Improvements are especially needed in and around Philipsburg and Simpson Bay. The country wants to strive for an infrastructure system that is reliable and can handle current and future demand. Improved sense of place with attractive public spaces benefits tourists and residents alike.

Kaya Kaya Street Party in Otrabanda, Curacao

In August 2018, the social enterprise Kaya Kaya in close cooperation with the Seri'l Otrabanda Foundation, organized the first Kaya Kaya street festival in the neighbor Otrabanda located in Willemstad, Curacao. The Street Culture Festival whose motto is *Leave it Better Behind* celebrated their fourth edition in December 2019. For each edition, the organization selects a few streets within the larger neighborhood and works to improve the image and awareness of the area by 1) cleaning the area; 2) actively involving residents and property owners in beautifying their neighborhood; 3) involving the residents as organizers, vendors or helpers of the street festival; and 4) organizing the street festival to celebrate the clean-up and beautification of the neighborhood with the residents and visitors



The murals and other street art created during the transformation have become an attraction and has created awareness of the area among citizens and tourists.

The first edition of Kaya Kaya one-day street festival attracted 5, 000 people and the fourth edition attracted an estimated 15,000 visitors. The social enterprise cooperates with Fundashon Seri'l Otrabanda for community engagement and attracted sponsors, partners (including the Curacao Tourist Board and the public housing foundation) and donors to support cleaning and infrastructure activities.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Kayakayaparty/>

9. **Ease traffic flow with additional parking lots and establishing (and enforcing) bus stops.** Congestion contributes to pollution of air and hampers movement of visitors to new sites and to participate in new activities. While the flow of traffic throughout the island and opportunities for expanded bus service requires systematic study and masterplanning, key congestion points in Simpson Bay and Phillipsburg can be mitigated with improved guidelines and enforceable regulations.
10. **Widespreads, cutting edge training programs help to improve standards of service, and management practices that are integral to meeting visitor expectations.** Factors influencing the current situation include: outdated tourism training curricula, inadequately trained teaching staff, limited accreditation processes, insufficient funding

to support tourism skills training institutions and student fees, and poor perception of the tourism and hospitality sector as a career and profession.

11. **Reward meaningful career paths in hospitality and tourism for improved livelihoods.** For hospitality and tourism to be viewed as a favorable professional career path, opportunities to earn internationally recognized credentials are integral to the sector becoming---and staying---more competitive. Establishment of career paths fueled through training on and off of the island benefits employees and operators.
12. **Increase the technological and technical expertise of tourism workforce.** There is an immediate need to increase the technological and technical expertise of the tourism workforce. This includes capacity building on tourism sector data collection and analysis tools, skills and knowledge required for specific niche markets (e.g. yachting and adventure tourism).
13. **Improve and enforce protection of the natural environment.** The issues around traffic congestion and waste management are detrimental across economic sectors and to residents, but are also negatively impacting the tourism sector in the country. Sint Maarten’s environment is precious and integral to the island’s tourism offering. Failure to not protect this assures the demise of tourism and a certain decline in quality of life. Protection of the natural environment has to become a priority for every person in their daily actions.
14. **Competitions to encourage entrepreneurship in tourism expand benefits to a broader group of locals.** Competitions and accelerators are used globally to encourage entrepreneurship in ICT in particular. Recent efforts, such as in Jordan have specifically focused on encouraging tourism related startups. This combined with small business training will assure greater innovation of the tourism offering.

Travel without Plastic

The company *Travel without Plastic* is focused on supporting the tourism accommodation industry and destinations in reducing the use of single use plastics in their supply chain. Besides offering onsite- workshops, the company also published “Let's Reduce Single-Use - The Plastics Guide and Tool Kit for Hotels”. It is a step-by-step resource for accommodation providers that want to reduce their plastics waste while saving financial resources in the process. It outlines strategies for eliminating plastics in the following areas: food and beverage, housekeeping, guest rooms, gardening/maintenance, spa/wellness, purchasing, and shopping outlets, taking into consideration all parts of the supply chain. They have successfully worked with companies such as TUI and IHG to reduce plastics in their supply chain.

Source: www.travelwithoutplastic.com



Translating challenges into specific actions is the urgent agenda for Sint Maarten’s residents, private sector and government entities. All solutions require the trust and collaboration of these stakeholders. A determined and unrelenting commitment to acting on these priorities is integral

to their implementation. These short-term actions are in line with the long-term vision for Sint Maarten.

Table 14: 24-Month Priorities and Actions for Building Back Better Sint Maarten’s Tourism

Action	Why	Who
1. Increase the variety and quality of the tourism products for the stayover market		
a. Identify the gaps between current tourism product offerings and the demand of the main target markets and define the priority activities	Product development for niche markets should be based on firm market demand.	TEATT/STB
b. Heritage and Cultural Strategy – identify monuments that could be of interest to visitors, improve those that need upkeep, and promote them to visitors. Train local community in culture and heritage	Improving the culture and heritage products can help grow the number of tours and other experiences that highlight Sint Maarten’s culture and history. These can expand the current limited tourism offerings and improve the attractiveness of the destination.	TEATT/MECYS ¹³ /STB Private Sector and Communities
c. Expand community-based tourism - work with local agricultural sites to develop tourism products. Provide specific training to stakeholders.	This will stimulate the offerings of authentic local experiences and excursions. These can expand the current limited tourism offerings and improve the attractiveness of the destination as well provide opportunities for income diversification.	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities
d. New product development that is geared towards learning and experiencing and leverages local knowhow	This will expand the current offerings of tourism products and improve the attractiveness of the destination.	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities
e. Stimulate local handcraft production through training and merchandising programs for local entrepreneurs	The current offer of locally produced souvenirs is limited. Increase in the demand of local handcrafts can protect and nurture local skills. Increased offer can increase tourist expenditures and increase tourist satisfaction ratings.	TEATT/MECYS/STB Private Sector and Communities
f. Targeted cultural heritage improvement for cultural heritage sites such as the Courthouse, Bell Lookout Tower and Fort Amsterdam	Protection of cultural heritage sites can improve the visitor experience and can expand the offerings.	TEATT/MECYS/STB Private Sector and Communities
g. Inventory and create awareness of different tourism products through STB website development. Support improved communication with sector	Increase awareness of the variety of tourism offerings. Improve communication and information exchange between the different tourism sector stakeholders.	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities

¹³ Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports (MECYS)

stakeholders and destination website for visitors featuring new products and services		
h. Establish/improve and promote nature-based sites and parks	Expand the tourism offerings and create a safe and enjoyable environment for visitors and locals	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities
i. Provide directions to main sites, hiking paths and walking routes	Improve the accessibility of tourism experiences and thereby expand the offering and increase visitor satisfaction rates	TEATT/STB Private Sector and Communities
j. Provide interpretation of monuments and other sites (especially cultural/heritage sites)	Expand and improve the experience of visitors and attract new markets.	TEATT/MECYS/STB Private Sector and Communities
k. Keep the island clean campaign with enforcement program to increase environmental awareness and pride in SXM's physical environment	Improve the quality of the natural environment and improve visitor satisfaction ratings	TEATT/STB, Ministry of Environment, Private Sector and Communities
2. Improve tourism data analysis statistical system		
a. Expand the frequency of the current stay-over tourism exit surveys to six times per year	Improve the accuracy of the survey findings	STAT with support from STB
b. Develop and conduct periodic exit surveys at the ferries	Provide insights on the number of inter-island visitor flows, behaviors and spending patterns	STAT with support from STB and SHTA
c. Establish a tourism data dashboard for wide and open distribution and awareness of enhanced data	Enable widely available and transparent information on the status of the sector	STB with support from STAT
d. Establish a taskforce consisting of key public and private sector tourism stakeholders to monitor and support implementation of improvements to tourism statistics	To improve sharing of data and the collection of dissemination of tourism statistics in general, and to assist with the implementation of actions recommended	Prime Minister and TEATT with engagement of key stakeholders
3. Establishing Tourism Promotion Entity		
Through public and private sector partnering, establish a tourism promotion entity which incorporates best practice in funding sector marketing, promotion and development	A public-private institution structure can enable multi-year planning, cooperative funding and ensures timely and innovative market development and promotion for high return on marketing activities	Office of the Prime Minister in cooperation with TEATT/STB Private Sector stakeholders
4. Review 2005 TourMap and develop new Strategic Tourism Plan		
Systematically review 2005 <i>TourMap</i> and develop an updated national strategy for tourism and related implementation plan	The strategic plan can guide and prioritize the activities required to achieve the goals for the sector	TEATT/STB in conjunction with public & private sector tourism stakeholders

5. Improve the licensing and permitting processes		
Review and streamline licensing and permitting processes related to tourism businesses	Convoluting licensing and permitting processes deter entrepreneurs and new business development. This hampers innovation and new product development key to achieving stronger market share	TEATT
6.a Beautification of Philipsburg commercial district		
a. Relocation and beautification of vendor market booths	To improve the accessibility and the attractiveness of the vendor market	TEATT/VROMI ¹⁴ with support from STB
b. Improve lighting and overall security for tourists and locals in areas at night or during slow times	To improve the safety of the area and create an environment that attracts more visitors and addresses the security concerns of the local business owners	TEATT/VROMI with support from STB
c. Additional garbage and recycle bins (and collection) - in main tourist areas	To increase the attractiveness of the area and protect the natural environment	TEATT/VROMI with support from STB
d. Enforce parking regulation on Front Street	Increase the attractiveness and the safety of the area	TEATT/VROMI with support from STB
e. Expand mural project for the alleys in Phillipsburg	Increase the attractiveness of the area	TEATT/MECYS/STB
f. Expand weekly 'Koopavond' initiative	Expand opportunities for visitors and locals to shop and for business owners to increase their income	TEATT with support from STB and SHTA
g. Greening - adding plants and trees creating attractive landscaping	Increase the attractiveness of the area	TEATT/VROMI
h. Incentive program for property owners to beautify their properties	Increase the attractiveness of the area	TEATT/VROMI
6.b. Beautification of Simpson Bay		
a. Improvement and beautification of vendor market	To improve the attractiveness of the vendor market	TEATT/VROMI with support from STB
b. Improve overall road and sidewalk infrastructure	Increase the attractiveness and the safety of the area	TEATT/VROMI
c. Improve traffic safety and signage	Increase the safety of the area	TEATT/VROMI
d. Improve drainage to handle seasonal weather events	Improve the safety and attractiveness of the area	TEATT/VROMI
e. Greening - adding plants and trees	Increase the attractiveness of the area	TEATT/VROMI
f. Expand and improve sidewalks	Improve the safety and attractiveness of the area that enables ease of access to businesses	TEATT/VROMI

¹⁴ Ministry of Public Housing, Environment, Spatial Development and Infrastructure (VROMI)

7. Increase the technological and technical expertise of tourism workforce.		
a. Training on the latest available tools for tourism sector data collection and analysis tools	Improved tourism sector data will inform policy making and strategic development decisions	STB with support from STAT
b. Skills training for yachting sector staff	Key to assuring attraction and servicing this niche market to an expected standard	MECYS
c. Skills training for adventure tourism staff	Adventure tourism experiences are increasing in popularity and can give Sint Maarten a competitive advantage to other destinations in the region	STB and the private sector
8. Improve and enforce protection of the natural environment		
a. Environmental education for school children	Instilling respect for the environment at an early age will contribute to longer term sustainability	STB and MECYS
b. Incentivize and support private sector greening initiatives	Decreased plastic usage and adoption of recycling programs will be appreciated by locals and visitors—and can also be good for businesses' bottom-line	STB and VROMI
c. Update and enforce environmental policies and regulations	Further degradation of the environment limits Sint Maarten's future	VROMI

Figure 8: Examples of unattractive spaces in Philipsburg and Simpson Bay



Conclusion: Building Back Better

Sint Maarten's recovery from the devastating effects of Hurricane Irma are notable and commended. Yet, there is more to do to build back better—particularly in the tourism sector.

In an increasingly competitive marketplace, Sint Maarten's challenge—and opportunity—is developing tourism products that meet and even exceed the expectations of visitors and benefit locals in a sustainable manner. This is achieved through delivering experiences and sites that are valued by travelers every step along the tourism value chain. As the tourism sector continues to recover with arrivals and accommodation capacity increasing, there is a compelling urgency to improve key sites and infrastructure, develop new products and enable improved standards of service.

There is also a compelling need to establish common goals for the sector going forward. For example, is it more desirable to continue to strive for higher numbers of cruise visitors or look to develop new markets at the risk of lowering cruise market activity? To achieve higher productivity and resiliency, defining common goals and consensus on key actions is a pressing step.

Integral to improved infrastructure and developing new product is having a better and shared understanding of the sector's performance. Expanded and targeted collection of data that is shared through online tourism dashboards profiling sector activity will enable more informed policy design and implementation while also serving to inform an updated national strategy and masterplan. Open and timely sharing of this data through a widely connected and integrated website can immediately support this sector's productivity and overall contribution to Sint Maarten's economy. This is also a fundamental step in building greater trust between all stakeholders integral to a vibrant and competitive sector.

In today's and tomorrow's global tourism marketplace, creating and maintaining a competitive position requires smart marketing and promotion that combines traditional proven methods with new technologies and channels. To harness this and benefit fully, Sint Maarten must have—in addition to a strong tourism value chain—the ability to promote its offering to key markets. Establishing a best practice tourism marketing and promotion organization can be achieved through a public-private institution structure that can enable multi-year planning, cooperative funding and timely market development for a high return on marketing activities.

These priorities and more can be achieved through taking the actions presented in this report. Now is the time to build on recovery efforts to date. Over the next 24 months, there is a critical opportunity to build back better along the path for a more diversified tourism sector and resilient economy going forward. Next steps will require preparing a detailed implementation framework for the actions presented in this plan.

Annex 1: Selected Sint Maarten Tourism Sector Performance Statistics

Table 1: Number of stay-over visitors, 1994-2018

	Overnight-stay visitors
1994	565,386
1995	460,087
1996	364,706
1997	439,234
1998	458,486
1999	522,897
2000	432,292
2001	402,649
2002	380,801
2003	427,587
2004	475,032
2005	467,861
2006	467,804
2007	469,407
2008	475,590
2009	440,185
2010	443,206
2011	424,340
2012	457,720
2013	466,955
2014	499,911
2015	505,374
2016	528,153
2017	402,220
2018	177,589

Source: Department of Statistics
(data collected by Ministry of Justice)

Table 2: Number of cruise passengers and cruise vessels, 1995-2018

	Cruise passengers	Cruise vessels
1995	564,251	473
1996	657,351	473
1997	885,956	533
1998	881,448	536
1999	615,607	358
2000	868,318	492
2001	867,752	507
2002	1,055,040	531
2003	1,171,734	642
2004	1,171,734	666
2005	1,488,461	640
2006	1,421,645	609
2007	1,421,906	614
2008	1,345,812	518
2009	1,215,146	500
2010	1,512,618	551
2011	1,656,159	596
2012	1,753,215	622
2013	1,785,670	631
2014	2,001,996	692
2015	1,901,617	683
2016	1,668,863	602
2017	1,237,760	426
2018	1,597,101	230

Source: Department of Statistics

Table 3: Number of stay-over visitors by region, 2019 versus 2016 performance

	Q1	Q2
United States	-51.8%	-39.7%
Europe	-43.4%	-28.1%
Caribbean	-41.9%	-21.5%
South America	-48.4%	-40.3%
Canada	-58.9%	-46.2%
Total	-49.7%	-30.5%

Source: Department of Statistics (data collected by Ministry of Justice)

Table 4: Number of stay-over visitors, by month, 2016-2019

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Jan	58,844	52,718	12,028	26,257
Feb	53,885	51,655	11,160	27,572
Mar	58,158	57,014	12,308	32,107
Apr	50,443	55,068	12,902	31,547
May	36,209	38,793	12,375	25,905
Jun	36,435	40,322	13,701	28,154
Jul	45,910	43,366	15,859	30,190
Aug	37,566	37 365	15,181	
Sep	23,878	4,662	11,238	
Oct	31,232	4,055	14,648	
Nov	41,254	7,618	20,214	
Dec	54,340	9,585	25,946	

Source: Department of Statistics (Ministry of Justice)

Table 5: Stay-over visitors, satisfaction ratings, 2018

	Satisfaction rating
Tours and excursions	2.7
Telephone and internet	3.2
Taxis	3.9
Sightseeing/attractions	3.8
Rentals (cars, ATV, motorcycle)	3.8
Island's cleanliness	3.4
Clubs and casinos	3.9
Immigration services	4.0
Airline connections	3.7

Source: Department of Statistics, Stay-over visitor exit survey

Table 6: Cruise passengers, tourism product rating, 2014-2018

	2018	2016	2015	2014	Average
Immigration	4.5	4.4	3.4	3.5	3.9
Clubs and Casinos	3.7	3.2	2.7	2.9	3.1
Island cleanliness	4.4	4.5	3.4	3.5	3.9
rentals	3.9	4.0			3.9
Taxi	4.3	4.4	3.2	3.4	3.8
Communication services	4.4	3.4	2.5	2.7	3.3
Tours	4.3	4.3	3.2	3.5	3.8
Sightseeing	4.4	4.5	3.3	3.5	3.9

	Dutch Side				
Beaches	4.6	4.6	3.5	3.7	4.1
Customer service	4.5	4.5			4.5
Dining	4.4	4.3	3.3	3.4	3.9
Goods and Prices	4.1	4.3	3.3	3.2	3.7
Safety and security	4.5	4.6	3.4	3.6	4.0
Residents friendliness	4.6	4.7			4.6
Roads and signage	4.1	3.9	2.9	2.8	3.4
	French Side				
Beaches	4.2	4.5	3.4	3.6	3.9
Customer service	4.0	4.4			4.2
Dining	4.2	4.5	3.2	3.3	3.8
Goods and Prices	4.4	4.1	3.1	2.8	3.6
Safety and security	4.3	4.4	3.4	3.6	3.9
Residents friendliness	3.9	4.6	0.0	0.0	4.2
Roads and signage	4.2	4.0	2.9	2.8	3.5
Overall Score	4.4	4.3	3.2	3.3	3.8

Source: Department of Statistics, Cruise passenger exit surveys

Table 7: Occupancy rates of available rooms, 2013-2019

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	78.1	85.1	79.3	71.1	60.0	55.4	60.2	57.8	48.8	53.7	69.3	75.9
2014	81.6	84.3	78.1	71.4	63.1	53.8	58.0	58.4	51.2	58.4	75.0	75.5
2015	81.7	85.9	78.9	75.4	63	56.4	59.5	61.3	49.7	56.8	67.7	72.6
2016	83.1	84.6	76.3	74.4	61.9	56.7	63.5	62.3	49	62.1	74.9	80.9
2017	78.5	84.9	83.5	79.2	65	65.7	63.5	73.8	22.3	24.9	32.1	30.2
2018	42.9	47.7	60.2	71.2	63.5	65.6	64.3	66.5	51.4	69.6	84.4	80.3
2019	81.2											

Source: SHTA

Note: The amount of available rooms reflects the hotels that reported their occupancy rates to SHTA. These occupancy rates are generated on a voluntary basis by SHTA. Therefore, they may not be fully representative of accommodation supply and demand.

Table 8: Stay-over visitors, average daily expenditure, by market, 2018

	Average daily expenditures (in US\$)
Latin America	112.56
Caribbean	108.19
United States	86.25
Europe	40.87
Other	100.83

Source: Department of Statistics, Stay-over visitor exit survey

Table 9: International tourism receipts, 2013-17

Indicator	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Tourism receipts (in US\$ Mn)	871	922	913	871	646
Tourism receipts as a percentage of all exports of goods and services (%)	71	73.9	75.1	74.8	69.6

Source: UNWTO

Table 10: Cruise passengers, average daily expenditures by market (in US\$), 2014-2018

	2014	2015	2016	2018
US	160.95	202.99	105.74	260.54
Canada	171.50	210.16	115.94	115.46
Caribbean	162.06	293.47	141.45	161.61
Europe	215.01	251.39	82.94	55.67
Latin America	247.26	232.72	87.16	80.21
Other	234.72	373.50	171.53	76.46
Total	170.85	205.86	144.28	217.25

Source: Department of Statistics, Cruise passenger exit surveys

Note: Data for 2017 is not available due to Hurricane Irma

Table 11: Cruise passengers, expenditures by category, Average 2014-2018

Categories	% of total
Shopping	47
Food and beverages	17
Taxi	10
Scooter/ATV/bicycle rentals	10
Entertainment	8
Other services	3
Car rental	3
Public bus	2

Source: Department of Statistics, Cruise passenger exit surveys

Note: Average expenditures by cruise passengers was US\$184.56 (2014-2018); Data for 2017 is not available due to Hurricane Irma

Table 12: Cruise passengers, total expenditures (in US\$), 2014-2018

	Total expenditures (in US\$)
2014	342,039,267
2015	291,466,876
2016	240,785,327
2018	346,970,501

Source: Department of Statistics, Cruise passenger exit surveys

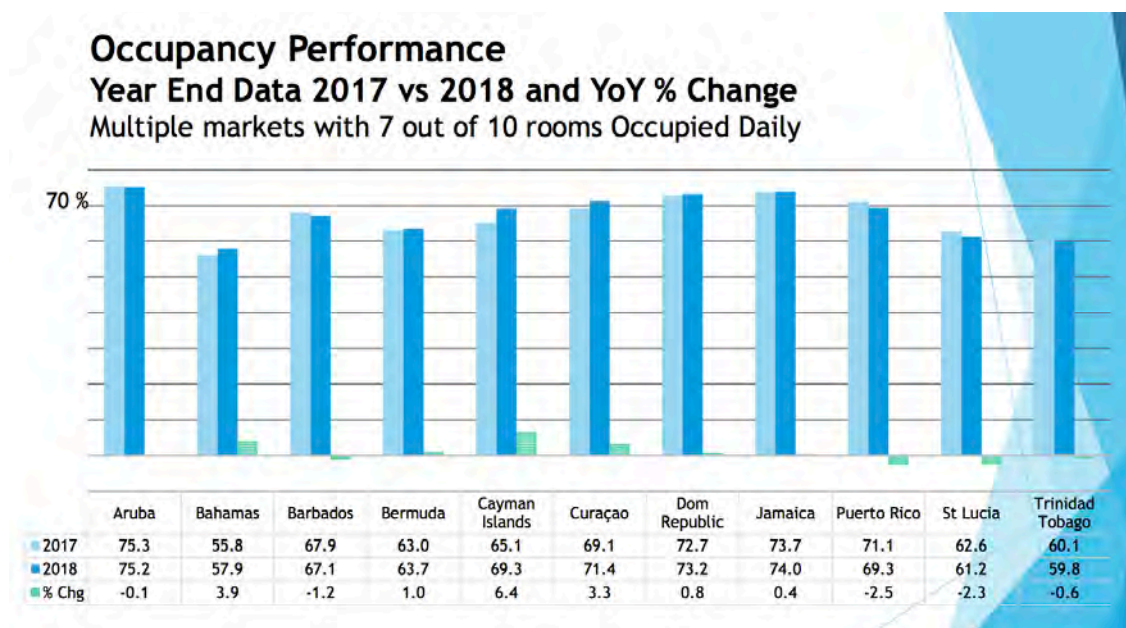
Note: Data for 2017 is not available due to Hurricane Irma

Table 13: Hotel occupancy rates for Sint Maarten, Jamaica and Curacao, 2016

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
St. Maarten	83.1	84.6	76.3	74.4	61.9	56.7	63.5	62.3	49	62.1	74.9	80.9
Jamaica	68.3	74.8	71.4	65.4	61.9	63.8	69.5	57.1	49.3	53.7	64.8	69.1
Curacao	76.1	80.4	72.8	70.5	54.1	51.6	63.7	62.6	72.4	69.5	72.8	69.1

Source: SHTA and Tourism Board websites

Table 14: Occupancy performance select Caribbean countries, 2017 and 2018



Source: STR

