



WORKING TOGETHER TO TRANSFORM SOUFRIERE!

INFRASTRUCTURE | SOCIAL
HUMAN RESOURCES
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
LIVELIHOODS | FOOD SECURITY

**WORKING TOGETHER
TO TRANSFORM
SOUFRIERE**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AP	Access Points
BCS	Bouton Combined School
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualifications
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
EU	European Union
FSJCS	Fond St. Jacques Combined School
GOSL	Government of St. Lucia
LECS	Les Etangs Combined School
NELU	National Enrichment and Learning Unit
NIC	National Insurance Corporation
NSDC	National Skills Development Corporation
SCSS	Soufriere Comprehensive Secondary School
SFSJCC	Soufriere Fond St. Jacques Constituency Council
SFSJCO	Soufriere Fond St. Jacques Constituency Office
SFCSL	Soufriere Fishermen’s Cooperative Society Limited
SPS	Soufriere Primary School
SRDF	Soufriere Regional Development Foundation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following people for their invaluable contributions to this Working Together to Transform Soufriere Forum

Parliamentary Representative, Honorable Emma Hippolyte

Mayor, Your Worship Joan Hippolyte

Chairman, Soufriere Regional Development Foundation, Ernest Augier

Master of Ceremony, Ms. Candy Nicholas

Speakers:

- Prime Minister, Hon. Philip J. Pierre
- Mrs. Mauricia Thomas-Francis

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Prepared by: Brightlight Consulting



The beautiful west coast Town of **Soufrière**, serves as the crowning jewel, of our Fair Helen of the West. A district with significant history, and one that the World has recognized for its greatness. Its iconic pitons, hot mineral bath, lush rainforest, waterfalls and botanical gardens, are but a few of the incredible attractions that the town offers. Soufriere serves as a reference point not just for the millions of tourists who visit Saint Lucia each year but also for locals from across the island, our paradise within paradise.

A town which was colonized by the French and was the original capital of the island has blossomed into a gem giving birth to thriving coco plantations, fishing sectors, world renowned hotels and restaurants. The town therefore serves as not just an emblem to the beauty of Saint Lucia but also as a contributor to this island's economic development and

one which can provide opportunities for the advancement of all its residents.

As with any cherished artifact, this gem must be meticulously maintained to retain its prosperity. Moreover, in order to realize the true economic potential that our wondrous Soufriere offers, new investment is required. Given the challenges that we face, I firmly believe that a well-developed plan and our sustained passion and determination can transform this gem which we call Soufriere to become the envy of the Caribbean.

In this transformation we must place equal emphasis on the economic and social development of the town and remain cognizant of our brand "*Working together to transform Soufriere*" Our priority is on optimizing the use of the sites and attractions, developing the tourism product, marketing the community to the outside world, increasing agricultural production while establishing more financially rewarding linkages with the tourism sector and developing the full potential of the service sector to cater to the needs of the people of Soufriere and Fond St Jacques.

I would like to thank the Honorable Emma Hippolyte and her team for their strategic vision which will bring transformation to Soufriere. Also I would like to urge the people of Soufriere to embrace this plan for change and sustainable development.

Philip J. Pierre
Prime Minister
Minister of Finance, Development and the Youth Economy



Soufrière is best known for its scenic beauty, lush greenery and iconic landmarks. Its rich history, from Amerindian settlement to Estate ownership and becoming the first Capital of Saint Lucia, serves not only as a testament to the community's endearing warmth and wonder, but also as a call to action – warranting our best efforts to build on this proud legacy. Within these few pages are laid out the vision for the next step in Soufrière's evolution, one that will take us from a small town with notable touristic appeal to becoming once again a center of commercial activity and a vibrant community providing the ideal conditions for both residents and visitors to thrive.

This vision is not just my own, as the parliamentary representative for Soufrière/Fond St. Jacques, but rather it is the culmination of the combined efforts of a number of community stakeholders. It is a vision that contemplates all aspects of sustainable development, with projects

taking into consideration the need for Social development, Environmental preservation, and Economic growth; an approach that can best be summarized as People, Planet and Prosperity in keeping with the United Nations charter.

To accomplish our mission we must join hearts and hands, collaborating across all stakeholders, including community residents, Government Ministries, private sector agencies, and our international partners. Our guiding theme - *“Working together to transform Soufrière”* therefore becomes more than just a catch phrase but a call for solidarity, each doing his or her part, to turn this vision into our reality.

I look forward to further engagement on these projects and more so to their implementation and completion as Soufrière confirms its place as a symbol of pride to all Saint Lucians, a significant contributor to this country's Gross Domestic Product and a majestic wonder that the entire world must work together to protect, preserve and sustain for generations to come.

Emma Hippolyte

Parliamentary Representative for Soufrière/Fond St.
Jacques

Minister for Commerce, Manufacturing, Business
Development, Cooperatives and Consumer Affairs

THE BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR A TRANSFORMED SOUFRIERE

Soufriere is a district of outstanding natural beauty, spectacular geological features and stunning scenery located on the south west coast of St. Lucia and home to natural attractions such as the Pitons and Sulphur Springs, both of which are symbols of national pride and identity.

A number of artifacts and petroglyphs have been discovered in a number of Soufriere communities such as Jalousie, Stonefield and Belfond leading to the belief the area was once settled by the Amerindians before the arrival of the Europeans. Historians have gone further and surmise that the area's volcanic spires, Gros and Petite Piton, were held in awe by the Amerindians and celebrated as spirit gods, Yokahu and Atebyra.

The French were most probably the first Europeans to settle Soufriere. They arrived in the late 1600s and gave the district's regions and hills their names, including the name Soufriere, which literally translates to mean, '*Sulphur in the air*'. By the early 1700s the district had sprung to prominence as the island's main agricultural district. The district with its many estates, some of which still exist today, produced coffee, cotton, sugar and cocoa and accounted for almost all its employment.

In the 1950s and 1960s some of the plantations switched to banana production. As agriculture did well, so did Soufriere. With the European Union's (EU) accession into the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the United States legal challenge and the latter's subsequent ruling that the EU's preferential trading relations with its former African, Caribbean and Pacific colonies were a breach of WTO Most Favored Nation Clause of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, banana export took a downward turn and so did Soufriere's economic fortunes as an agricultural district.

Today, economic activity and employment in Soufriere are driven by the tourism, agricultural and fisheries sectors. Tourism is however the biggest driver and accounts for the largest share of the jobs. With a number of tourist attractions and world award-winning resorts, it is the dream of almost every Soufrierian to gain a job in the industry after graduating from school. However, the hotels in the region are generally small and their rate of absorption of local employment is slow.

In agriculture, crop and vegetable production predominates but most if not all of the produce are for the local market. On the other hand, fishing, though still a driver of economic activity, continues to wane in its contribution to the local economy and is practiced predominantly by persons over 50 years old. High operational cost and lower yields have forced many young fishers into the non-farm market which itself provides

little scope for employment. Thus unsurprisingly, unemployment in Soufriere, though lower than the national average, is persistently high.

According to the 2010 St. Lucia Census, Soufriere has a population of 8,472 persons of whom 4,192 are females. Though there are no known official statistics, Soufriere appears to have a relatively high number of vagrants, elderly persons, drug addicts and mentally challenged living on the streets. They represent an unspoken and unaddressed social dilemma in the community.

With regards to sporting facilities, the town centre has one mini-stadium which is limited to football and athletics use only and a basketball court and the communities of Fond St. Jacques, Belfond and Bouton each have a mid-sized playing area averaging around 4,000 square feet.

Soufriere has a total of four (4) primary schools and one secondary school. The former are spread within the district and are generally within walking distance of the students. The latter enrolls students from between Canaries and Choiseul. All of the schools within the district are covered under the Ministry of Education's social assistance, School Feeding Programme. Students are required to make an EC\$1.00 contribution to the daily cost of their meals. The nutritional content of the programme is supplemented by vegetables from each school's garden. However, all of these school gardens have fallen into disuse and need urgent rehabilitation.

Generally, internet access and telephony services are widely available in the district, however, accessibility becomes increasingly challenging as one moves away from the urban area. Although the services exist, their costs and that of internet connecting capable devices are prohibitively high thus making accessibility and connectivity for the poor and indigent an everyday challenge.

THE CASE FOR A TRANSFORMED SOUFRIERE

For Soufriere to begin reaching its fullest potential a transformation must begin now. This transformation must be underpinned by the thinking of the district's administrators from one of waiting and relying on central government policy direction, programme development and financing to one of adopting a community-led approach to driving the development process.

Some views from the constituents:

"Soufriere's organisations must rally together and mobilize their own resources while at the same time soliciting technical and funding support from the key government agencies, private sector, philanthropic organisations and foreign missions on the island."

"In conjunction with the people, a new vision plan with sustainability as a core principle, whose content captures the aspirations of the people and envision a better quality of life for its residents, is developed for the district."

“New channels must be explored to empower residents and allow them to democratically participate in the social, economic and political life of the district.”

“A transformation of Soufriere must be driven by economic, social, human resource, infrastructure and environmental imperatives.”

HUMAN RESOURCES - LIVELIHOODS, SKILLS TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Unfortunately, tourism, agriculture and fishing have not been able to provide the requisite number of jobs to reduce unemployment in Soufriere. Therefore, stimulating new areas of economic activity is a development priority. Additionally, investing in skills training to enhance the assets and capabilities of our human capital and consequently their employability and promoting self-employment are keys to addressing the unemployment issue within the community.

Our women must be provided with more opportunities for income generation and financial independence. When women are able to generate their own income they ultimately reduce their financial dependence on men. This strengthens their self-confidence and willingness to participate in the decision making spaces and potentially reduces the incidence of gender violence in the household.

In agriculture, low prices and a small market are the bane of the industry. Investing in value-added agro-processing instead of selling food crops only as a primary commodity is a useful area of exploration.

Notwithstanding, it also provides opportunities for development of cottage industries and employment of our women.

In order to stop the decline in the fishing industry, it must be made attractive to young people. The opening up of job and investment opportunities in fish processing, deep sea fishing and the provision of social protection services for ageing fishermen has the potential to make the industry more attractive.

Lastly, the destruction of the district's netball and cricket facilities at the Soufriere Mini-stadium without providing an alternative for practice or matches was a travesty that should never have happened. This untenable situation needs urgent addressing and the youth provided with the relevant facilities where they can play netball and cricket, even if initially at the practice level.

SOCIAL

Development must be socially inclusive. In that regard, close attention must be paid to our elderly, less fortunate and women. It is an abomination to have the less fortunate live off the streets of Soufriere. The time has come to provide them with a home where they can rest and meet their basic needs with dignity and respect.

The low rate of access of the poor and indigent to the internet and broadband services is another issue which must be addressed. The difference in accessibility between those of low economic means and others perpetuates social, educational and economic inequalities and maintains the

digital divide. Thus our government must intervene and make efficient and equitable provision of internet services a public policy goal.

As the future leaders of our community our youth must always be at the centre of the development agenda. At present, there is a need to provide quality after school care programmes to positively engage our youth after normal school hours. In the absence of such programmes and in a community where a high percentage of household heads work unsociable hours in the tourism industry thus leaving the young without adequate adult supervision, the environment becomes conducive for breeding social delinquents.

FOOD SECURITY

Food security is a national problem and Soufriere must contribute in the country's quest to greater self-reliance in food production. To this end, residents must be encouraged and facilitated in backyard gardening as an everyday part of their lives. Besides ensuring greater food security, backyard gardening will generate additional income for households, improve livelihoods and nutrition, and provide a form of mental relaxation for residence.

The food security and health and wellness of our young population should not be overlooked. Thus, while the school feeding programme is a useful social assistance programme, the schools themselves must do more to strengthen its food nutritional content and provide the youth with an opportunity to be exposed to agriculture while learning to care for their environment. School gardens provide the best opportunity

to meet all three objectives. To this end, every school should have a garden.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

As a society we cannot turn our backs away from our retiring fishers who once risk their lives to place fish on our tables. In this regard the district must identify mechanisms for providing social assistance to retiring fishers, thus allowing them to retire with some assurance that they could at least meet their basic needs.

INFRASTRUCTURE

A key part of the district's transformation lies in the rehabilitation and expansion of its infrastructure. When people see noticeable change they begin to have faith. At present, the economic and social infrastructure in Soufriere does not complement either the town's status as a premier tourist destination or meet the community's economic or social needs. Thus as part of the transformation, emphasis must be placed on revitalizing the urban centre and modernising the waterfront and the port to allow Soufriere to maximize on the benefits that the country's continued growth in tourism can bring. However, the infrastructure development must go beyond meeting economic needs, it must also provide safe and secure places for residents to recreate, relax and socialize, that create a positive visual impact, strengthen the environmental character of the area and generally improve the quality of their lives.

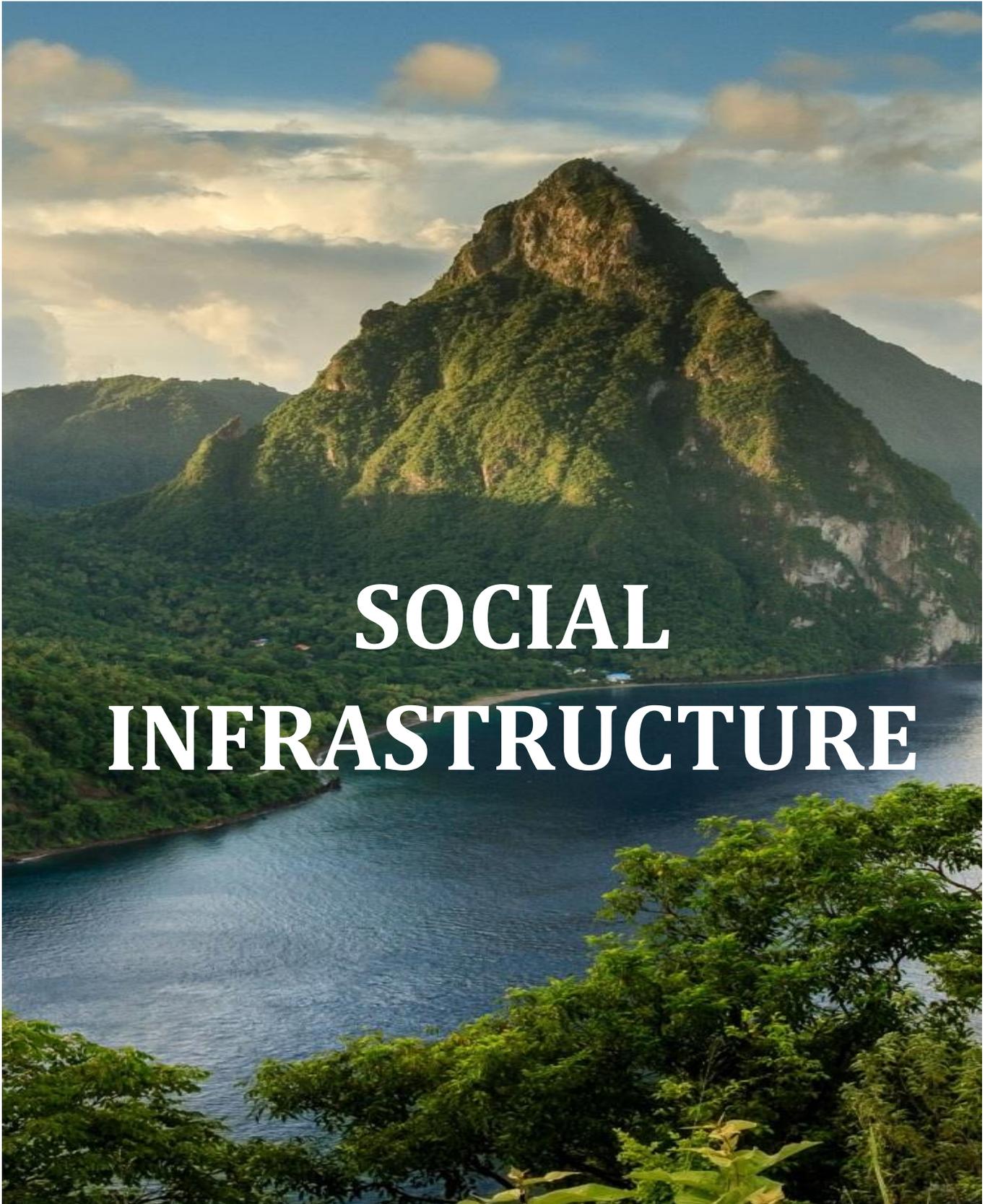
ENVIRONMENT

Despite Soufriere's low net contribution to carbon emissions, the opportunities for switching to renewable energy sources and the concomitant savings and possible redirection of these savings to improve the lives of our poor cannot be overlooked. The district must be willing to craft and implement innovative arrangements that allow it to produce solar photovoltaic energy on the rooftops of public, commercial and residential buildings and the output traded with the St. Lucia Electricity Services as a rebate to targeted low income households.

In sum, while the district forges ahead to prepare a detailed sustainable vision for Soufriere, it requires the support and assistance of all to commence the transformation of the town. The district of Soufriere has the will but not the finances to move the transformation and thus needs the help of ALL to begin the transition.

PROJECT MAP





NEW DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PARK

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$1,081,050.00 million to develop a community park in New Development, Soufriere.

Project Rationale and Scope

Despite the presence of two parcels of open space/reserved lands in the New Development Area, the spaces are not utilized for their intended purposes and are instead used as a vehicle holding area, grazing area for cattle, storage site for road building materials and sometimes a garbage dump for non-residents.

This project seeks to enhance the visual and environmental character of the area; create a sustainable urban ecosystem; create a place for social engagement to strengthen community ties, inspire a sense of identity and community pride and overall, improve the quality of lives of the residents of the area by constructing a community park on 22,819 square feet situated on Lot 0231C Parcel 62 in New Development, Soufriere.

The proposed park will have a children's play area, band stand, toilet, deco shading, seating, solar lighting and flag pole.

Beneficiaries

The residents and visitors to the area

Estimated Costs

EC\$1,081,050.00

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

SITE PICTURES



NEW DEVELOPMENT HEALTH & WELLNESS PARK

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$140,000 to fund the installation of lighting and construction of a fruit and smoothie stall at a soon to be developed community health and wellness park in New Development, Soufriere.

Project Rationale and Scope

Despite the presence of two parcels of open space/reserved lands in the area, the spaces are not utilized for their intended purposes and are instead used as a vehicle holding area, grazing area for cattle, a storage site for road building materials and sometimes a garbage dump for non-residents.

This project seeks to improve the overall health and wellness of the community members of all ages, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds; provide an attractive urban green space which enhances the physical environment of the area; create a place for social engagement; inspire a sense of identity and community pride and overall, improve the quality of lives of the residents of the area by constructing a community health and wellness park on Lot 0231 B Parcel 250 in New Development, Soufriere.

The park will be equipped with a jogging track, deco shading, kids play area, outdoor gym, seating, toilet and change room which will be financed by the National Insurance Corporation (NIC) at a cost of EC\$ 1,225,012.00. The park will also have lighting and a fruit and smoothie stall. The latter elements remain unfunded.

Beneficiaries

The residents and visitors to the area

Estimated Costs

Total cost: EC\$1,356,012 of which a balance of \$140,000 is required

Funding Secured

NIC will totally fund the construction of the jogging track, deco shading, kids play area, outdoor gym, monument, seating, toilet and change room.

Outstanding Needs

- Completion of transfer of open/reserved lands to Crown
- Financing of lighting component – decorative solar powered and photocell sensor controlled LED park lights - \$120,000.00
- Financing of construction of a fruit and smoothie stall - \$20,000.00

SITE PICTURES



LENNY HILL PARK

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$465,300.00 to construct and equip a park in Lenny Hill, Soufriere.

Project Rationale and Scope

On the left side of the road adjacent to the Lenny Hill Housing Development lies a vacant lot which holds a commanding view of the town of Soufriere and despite its huge social value is unfortunately used merely as an area to install large commercial billboards, dump refuse and hang household laundry thus creating an unappealing and unfavorable first visualization of Soufriere.

This project proposes to transform this open public space into a small park thereby creating an attractive physical symbol that visually and physically connects the natural landscape of the neighboring Coubaril Hill and the urban landscape of Upper Church Street in a manner which captures the identity of the town, creates a positive first visualization of Soufriere, provides the residents an area for social engagement and relaxation, generates a greater sense of community pride and improves the quality of lives of the residents of Lenny Hill and Upper Church, Victoria, Bridge and High Streets.

The area will be landscaped to introduce a look-out area, walkways, flowers and trees, timber fencing, solar lighting, children's play area, fountain, park benches and a prominent sign made of local igneous boulders welcoming non-residents and residents to Soufriere. The focal point of the park will be a LED-lit and solar powered waterfall garden fountain in a small pond. The pond fountain will provide visual appeal and tranquility and attract the different bird species of the area. The park's lighting will complement the park's overall design theme.

Beneficiaries

The residents and visitors to the area

Estimated Costs

EC\$465,300.00

Funding Secured

Matching grant of EC\$100, 000.00 from the SRDF

SITE PICTURES



FOND BERNIER PARK

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$590,420.75 to redevelop a community park in Fond Bernier, Soufriere.

Project Rationale and Scope

The proposed park for redevelopment is located in the centre of Fond Bernier, Soufriere. It was built by the Soufriere Pitons Lions Club sometime in the 1990s and rehabilitated at least once by a group of concerned residents in the mid-2000s. Thereafter, there was no maintenance or improvements made at the park thereby resulting in decay in the infrastructure and the conditions of the grounds and consequently, have fallen into disuse.

The present park lack's relevant infrastructure for adult and children's activities and its gazebo, which once served as its focal point, was completely destroyed during the passage of a storm, last year. The park's run down nature and absence of multi-functionality has created a negative visual and psychological impression which has turned users away. Thus, instead of being an integral part of the community infrastructure, it is of negative social and economic value, causing residents to become disconnected from it.

Through the redevelopment of this park, this project seeks to restore the park's prominence in the life of the community, improve the visual and environmental character of the area, re-create a place for social engagement and physical activities and restore the sense of identity and community pride which once characterized this community.

The proposed park has been redesigned to enhance its visual impact and functionality and consequently, is equipped with modern park furniture, a replacement gazebo, deco shading, additional trees, landscaped grounds and additional walkways.

Beneficiaries

The residents and visitors to the area

Estimated Costs

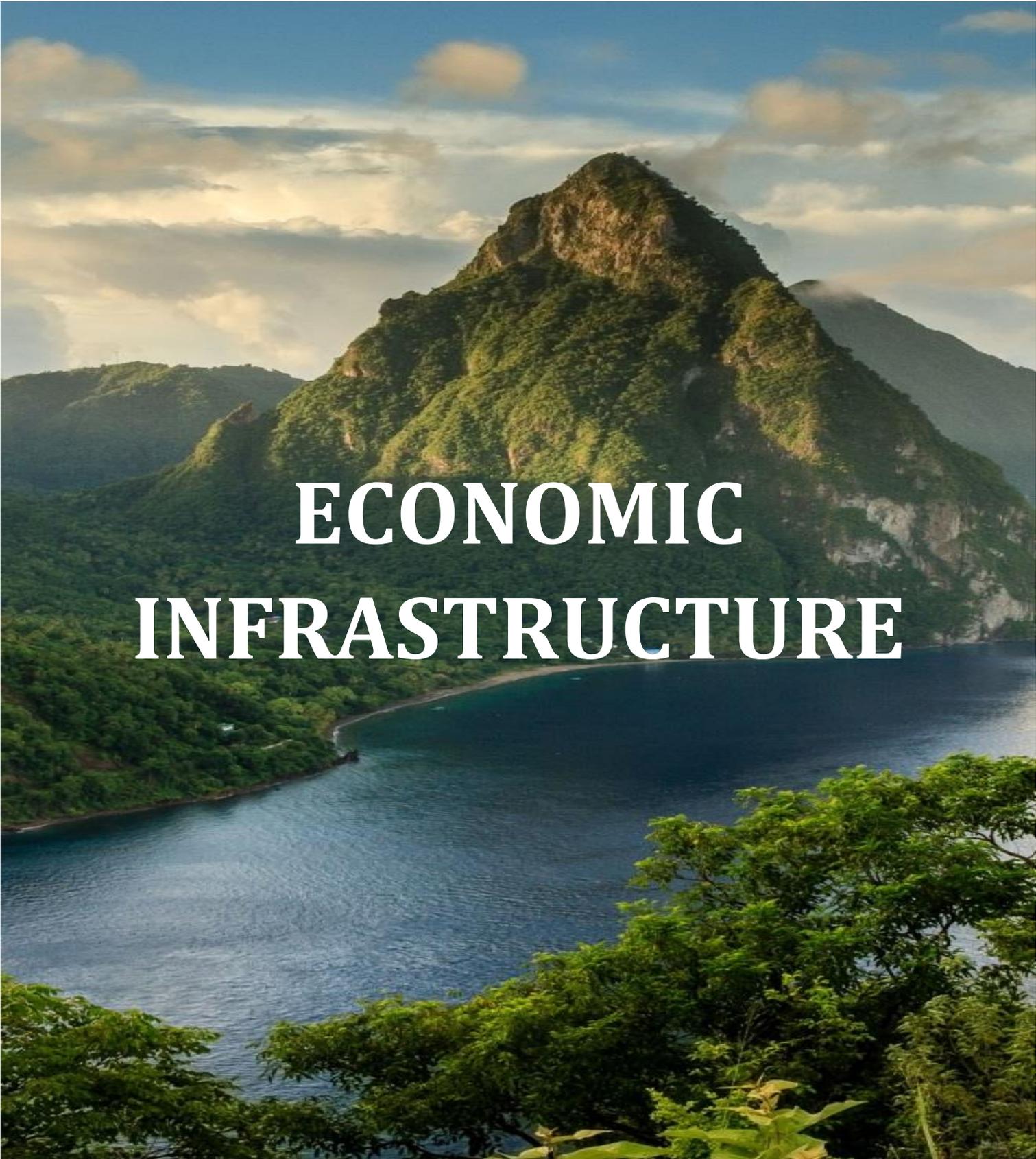
EC\$590, 420.75

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

SITE PICTURES





ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

SOUFRIERE WATERFRONT AND PORT MODERNISATION

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks a project developer and funder to transform the Soufriere waterfront and expand port capacity.

Project Rationale and Scope

Part A

The Soufriere waterfront is of immense economic and social value to the district of Soufriere. However, because of uncoordinated developments, absence of an integrated planning policy and ageing infrastructure, the area appears distressed and is in dire need of urban revitalization.

This project seeks to redevelop the waterfront from Barons Drive to the Soufriere Beach Park into an aesthetically appealing corridor (including the addition of a boardwalk) that caters to a mix of business, social and recreational activities and takes advantage of the opportunities that come with the growth of the number of non-residents visiting the town.

Part B

Since its construction, the port of Soufriere has brought incalculable economic and social benefits to the local population and has served the past needs of the community well. However, the rapid growth of the tourism industry provides new opportunities, while ageing infrastructure, climate change and security concerns presents challenges that the port authority must deal with now in order to ensure its long-term sustainability and deliver the best outcome now and in the future for the people of Soufriere.

This project seeks to replace or rehabilitate existing piers to make them climate resilient and secure and build new and efficient port infrastructure to expand port capacity at the Port of Soufriere. The completed developments will create a vibrant Soufriere waterfront which actively contributes to improved economic growth and well-being of the people of Soufriere.

Beneficiaries

People of Soufriere, tourism industry sectors (retail, food and beverage, tours operations, sites and attractions and transportation), Soufriere Regional Development Foundation (SRDF), and the Government of St. Lucia (GOSL).

Estimated Costs

Undetermined

Funding Secured

To be Determined

SITE PICTURES



SOUFRIERE STREETScape

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks an undetermined sum to undertake streetscape improvements on Bridge, Church and Henry Belmar Streets.

Project Rationale and Scope

Despite Soufriere's stunning geographic features, the built area is underdeveloped to poorly developed and is visually unattractive and frankly, unsightly to some. This is a stark contrast to what one would expect of a community that residents commonly refer to as "the mecca of tourism" and which receives about 80 percent of the visitors to the island. At present, the two main entrances to the town provide a largely uninspiring welcome and many of the buildings in the primary study area need repainting and the streets within the town centre are dotted with unsightly utility poles and uneven pavements. They also lack planters, landscape strips, trash receptacles (amenities which are characteristic of any tourist destination) and outdoor café spaces for outdoor social interaction. Individually and collectively these conditions create a poor visual image of Soufriere. In sum, the town centre lacks character and a unique identity and is in desperate need of revitalizing.

The recent development of the Soufriere Beach Park, Bus Stop/Vendors Complex and the Soufriere Square has gone some way in transforming, inter alia, the visual look and functionality of the town. These infrastructure developments represent the beginning of the transformation of Soufriere into an attractive and aesthetically pleasing town.

This project intends to complement these developments. It is broken into two phases as follows:

Phase A

Commissioning of a study to determine the required infrastructural improvements needed to enhance the quality of Soufriere's urban experience, its aesthetic quality and sustainability, and provide a general design palette for implementing a streetscaping and architectural preservation and propagation project within the primary study area, and

More specifically, the study will:

1. Provide recommendations, designs, preliminary budget and implementation schedule for, but not necessarily limited to:
 - Streetscape improvements that establish a Downtown Soufriere identity that builds on its historical characteristics and relaxed small county-town feel and integrates adjacent developments such as the Soufriere Square, Waterfront, Market and Beach Park. The categories for attention include:

- Street amenities (benches, garbage receptacles, public art, ornamental street lighting, planters, landscape strips, special events spaces and wayfinding signage)
 - Transportation (traffic flow, pedestrian crosswalks, slip-resistant and physically challenged accessible pavements, pedestrianisation of Maurice Mason Street opposite the Soufriere Square)
 - Utilities (placing all utility lines underground)
 - Architectural enhancements to buildings in the project area that is aligned with the Downtown Soufriere identity and which restores the buildings' original colonial architecture
2. Provide a final Downtown Soufriere Streetscape Improvement Master Plan with supporting budget including cost estimates for each element of the streetscape plan.

Phase B

Implementing the recommendations of Downtown Soufriere Streetscape Improvement Master within time and budget.

Beneficiaries

The residents and visitors to the town, business owners, the hotel and tourism sectors, SRDF, SFSJCC and the Government of St. Lucia

Estimated Costs

Study - EC\$100,000.00

Streetscape improvements - undetermined

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00



HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

INSPIRING A NEW GENERATION OF CRICKETERS THROUGH FACILITIES PROVISIONING

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$76,000.00 to construct three cricket practice training nets/pitches at the Soufriere mini-stadium

Project Rationale and Scope

In 2017, the playing surface of the Soufriere mini-stadium was dug up and replaced in 2021 with a synthetic turf surface as part of the government's drive to modernize sports infrastructure in the country. Unfortunately, the synthetic surface does not lend itself to hosting cricket matches or practice. Thus, since 2017, there has been no cricket match and practice facility in Soufriere. The loss of access to and use of the only cricket playing and practice area in the Soufriere district and the unlikely probability of one being built in the near future has led to a number of issues:

- presently no cricket – match or practice - is played in Soufriere;
- there are no alternative match and practice venues in the district;
- cricket is neither able to maintain the interest of current players nor generate or inspire youth interest;
- an exodus from the sport with players and fans alike being relegated to mere television spectators with some also moving on to other more accessible sports and activities, and
- an overall decline in the significance of cricket in its important roles of bringing communities together, providing opportunities for entrepreneurship, providing an alternative form of recreation to football, creating a strong Soufriere identity, etcetera.

This project aims to install safe and accessible practice infrastructure thereby providing present players with a year round practice facility, attract, engage and inspire a new generation of cricketers, improve performances of the members of the Soufriere team and improve the sustainability of the sport and its facilities.

The proposed project primarily involves the construction of three (3) St. Lucia National Cricket Association (SLNCA) approved outdoor practice cricket training nets/pitches at the south western end of the Soufriere mini-stadium. In addition, a management plan which focuses on their operation and maintenance will be developed in order to ensure that after construction the facility is sustainably and optimally utilized.

Beneficiaries

Youth and adults of Soufriere and visiting non-residents

Estimated Costs

EC\$76,000.00

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

Site Pictures



IMPROVING THE LIVELIHOODS OF WOMEN THROUGH AGRO PROCESSING

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$249,000 in funding to train 12 females and to start and operate a cooperative business producing flours from macambu, potatoes, coconut and virgin coconut oil.

Project Rationale and Scope

In St. Lucia, females make up 51.4 % of the population yet only 48.5% of the employed workforce. Additionally, despite having higher levels of educational attainment than men, female earnings are below male earnings, especially those with a basic primary school leaving certificate. The disparity persists in decision making spaces in society where men predominate. In light of the above, it is not surprising that gender violence is a concerning social issue.

This project is designed to empower women by doing the following:

- providing them with the skills and resources to earn an income
- making them financially independent
- increasing their sense of self-worth
- increasing their decision making power, and
- Giving them the opportunity to control their own lives and effect change.

The project will seek to achieve its objectives by providing agro-processing training, equipment, start-up capital and two months subsidized salary to 12 unemployed females from the district of Soufriere to enable them to form a cooperative business and engage in the processing and selling of value added foods thereby providing themselves with decent and fair work.

Beneficiaries

The project beneficiaries will be the 12 women trainees. The indirect beneficiaries would be their immediate family members who would benefit from the income earned.

Consumers of non-wheat flour and virgin coconut oil will also be indirect beneficiaries of this project.

Estimated Costs

EC\$249,000.00

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

IMPROVING EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks an undetermined sum in funding to train its unemployed mothers, youth-at-risk, and members of other vulnerable social groups for the job market and self-employment.

Project Rationale and Scope

A district's people are its most valuable resource. The district of Soufriere is endowed with approximately 8,432 of these resources. According to data from the Central Statistical Office, Soufriere has an unemployment rate of approximately 13.6 percent. Of that 1,069 unemployed, an estimated 435 persons are females and 634 are males. While in relative terms, the figures are better than the national average of 21.9 percent and that of most other St. Lucian districts, in absolute terms the unemployment rate is high and worrying.

Unfortunately, it is a common belief in the district that education is the most important criterion for employment thus little to no effort is made by school graduates to equip themselves beyond their pursuit of academic education for their chosen career. That phenomenon coupled with their lack of proximity to technical vocational institutions and the cost of tuition and travel to the unemployed make participation in technical vocational training for the unemployed in Soufriere prohibitive and may account for the low enrolment of Soufrierians in technical vocational courses.

On the contrary, the evidence shows that while education enhances one's chances of employment it does not guarantee one and that vocational training helps bridge the skills gap between education and work and plays a critical role in skill development and employability. Thus, students who pursue vocational training especially those with a competency based assessment that is customised to meet the needs of a specific industry can leverage their training and perform more favorably on employability skills assessment and are more likely to gain employment.

This project aims to build a more competitive labour market by providing technical vocational training to people of a number of vulnerable social groups in the district so as to equip them with specific competency based skills consequently improving their employability and livelihood opportunities.

The project intends to partner with supplier institutions such as NSDC and NELU to deliver training in the following industry-relevant skills (400 hours) such as Cookery, Electrical

Installation, Massage Therapy and General Office Administration at the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ) level and non-competency assessed courses in Bartending, Tree Trimming and Cake and Pastry Baking.

Beneficiaries

Young unemployed people, employers of target sectors and training institutions in the short to medium - term and the district and government in the medium to long-term.

Estimated Costs

The funding requirement is based on the course, training centre and number of participants.

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

SITE PICTURES



IMPROVING THE FOOD & NUTRITION ROOM AT THE SOUFRIERE COMPREHENSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks the sum of EC\$50,000.00 to rehabilitate the Food and Nutrition Room at the Soufriere Comprehensive Secondary School (SCSS) to promote a culture of culinary excellence.

Project Rationale and Scope

Food and nutrition has been one of the most popular subjects of study for fourth and fifth formers of the SCSS and the school performs exceptionally well at the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) exams. The CXC food and nutrition syllabus is designed to prepare students for employment in the tourism industry, change attitudes and improve the health status of students.

Besides the students, the food and nutrition room at the SCSS is also used by the community during the conduct of adult education courses in culinary arts, cake making and decorating, pastry and bread making, stewarding and bartending, by a number of national technical vocational institutions.

However, the present food and nutrition room is affected by a number of problems; namely:

- the cabinets and associated kitchen furniture have deteriorated considerably;
- the room has no pantry and thus items requiring storage and/or safekeeping are kept on a table near the door in an area accessible to everyone;
- water has damaged the base of the cabinets in several areas;
- the kitchen countertops which are made of wood, do not meet modern environmental health standards and have become damaged by water and stains over time and presently are a potential source of bacteria, and
- The room is under equipped to meet the needs of the student population.

This project seeks to remodel the existing facility. This will involve undertaking the following works:

- Improving the plumbing
- Improving the electrical
- Replacing the cabinets
- Installing tile countertops
- Adding storage solutions
- Adding a backsplash to amp up the personality of the kitchen
- Replacing several defective appliances including the stove and fridge

Beneficiaries

Students of the SCSS and adults from the districts of Soufriere, Choiseul and Canaries pursuing continuing education courses in culinary arts (National Enrichment and Learning Unit (NELU)) and (National Skills Development Centre (NSDC)), cake making and decorating (NELU), pastry and bread making (NELU and NSDC), stewarding (NSDC), bartending (NSDC) and fish handling and processing and (NELU and NSDC) will be the project's direct beneficiaries.

Estimated Costs

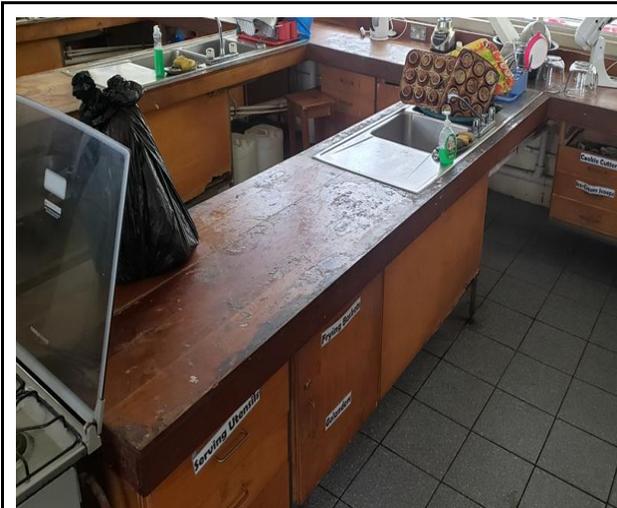
EC\$75,000.00

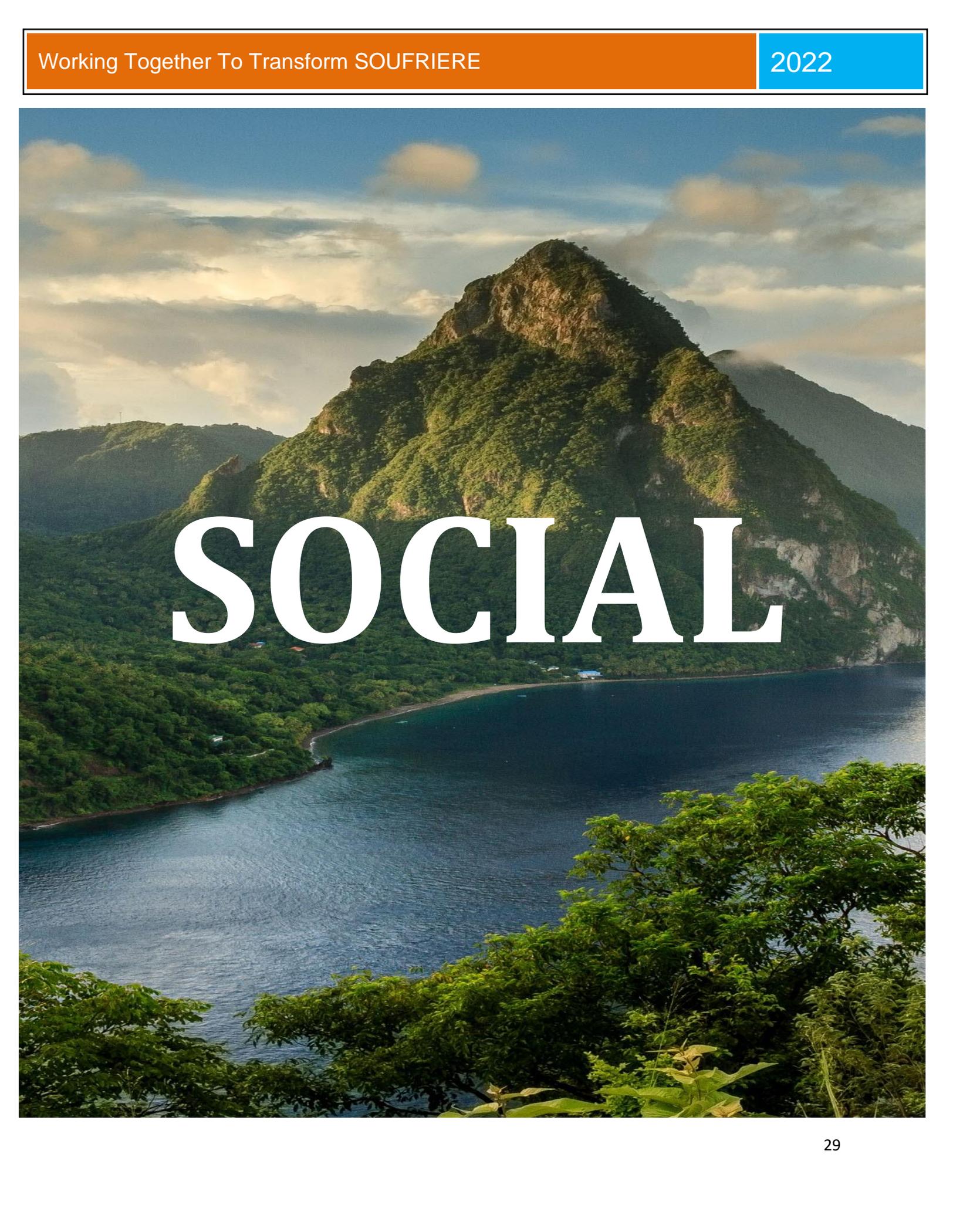
Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

Outstanding Needs

- Ministry of Education permission
- Tenders
- Funding

Site Pictures



SOCIAL

STRENGTHENING THE DISTRICT'S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH ITS HOMELESS

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$1,000,000.00 in funding to construct a single adult shelter for its elderly and homeless where they can shelter, meet their basic needs and connect to rehabilitative services in a dignified and respectful manner.

Project Rationale and Scope

This project aims at addressing two social issues:

- a. a day care facility for elderly of Soufriere
- b. a home for Soufriere's homeless

Soufriere has a relatively high number of homeless persons - poor, dispossessed, mentally challenged and drug addicts - living off the streets of the town centre when compared to other districts in St. Lucia. Homelessness is a complex social problem with underlying social and economic roots. Like elsewhere, in Soufriere it may likely be caused by social factors such as domestic violence, family issues, mental disorders, drug addiction and economic factors such as poverty and lack of low income housing.

In Soufriere, the homeless can be found everywhere and at any time and the numbers appear to be growing. They practice poor hygiene; litter, urinate and defecate indiscriminately; lie and sleep in the most conspicuous of locations; beg and harass locals and visitors, and give a poor visual impression of the town centre. Ironically, despite how acute and horrifying the problem is, the townspeople appear to ignore the homeless while others persecute them, in the process exposing an increasingly threadbare society.

It has been proven that the solution to homelessness is housing. Thus, this project seeks to provide residents with a safe, secure and supportive environment where at nights they can sleep protected from the adverse environmental, physical and psychological conditions; during the day relax and have a nutritious meal, undergo medical, mental and drug abuse treatment, and reconnect with their families, while being treated with dignity and respect. **Note that this project's objective is to manage homeless but not to solve it.**

The project involves shelter construction, and vehicle, furniture and equipment procurement. The facility will offer rest, leisure and laundry facilities to its residents, meals in conjunction with the St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen, medical and psychiatric services in conjunction with the Soufriere Hospital and clothing in conjunction with the private sector and general community.

Beneficiaries

The project beneficiaries will be the poor and dispossessed, drug addicts, mentally challenged, families and the community.

Estimated Costs

EC\$1,000,000.00

Funding Secured

EC\$300,000.00 matching grant from the Soufriere Regional Development Foundation.

Site Pictures



EXPANDING EFFICIENT ACCESS TO THE INTERNET FOR THE POOR AND NON-RESIDENTS

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$345,467.36 to renew and expand the free public Wi-Fi network in the district

Project Rationale and Scope

Many residents of depressed Soufriere communities have a difficulty accessing the internet and taking part in the digital world because of the high cost of internet services - monthly subscription and/or data plans and others because of a lack of internet access. This has resulted in a digital divide between the residents of these depressed communities and the more affluent ones and between the middle to high and low income households within and outside of these communities. This places the children, residents, visitors and businesses operating in these communities at a relative disadvantage in relation to efficient access to information and perpetuates social and economic inequalities.

This project seeks to ensure reasonable availability of internet access and broadband connectivity in indigent Soufriere communities and public spaces for locals and visitors; promote educational, economic and social development of the poor and indigent populations in Soufriere; facilitate access to information on essential public services and public safety (hurricane warnings, blocked roads, etcetera); reduce the digital divide by promoting information and communications technology; make Soufriere a more visitor-friendly destination and enhance the quality of life of the underprivileged by allowing them to participate in the digital world at minimal cost.

The project hopes to attain these objectives by expanding the existing free public Wi-Fi network - installing nine (9) additional Access Points (AP) in the town area and six (6) new APs in several underserved communities outside of the Soufriere town centre, to include communities along the Zenon to Fond St. Jacques corridor and Fond Gens Libre.

Beneficiaries

The residents, business owners and visitors to the above-named areas

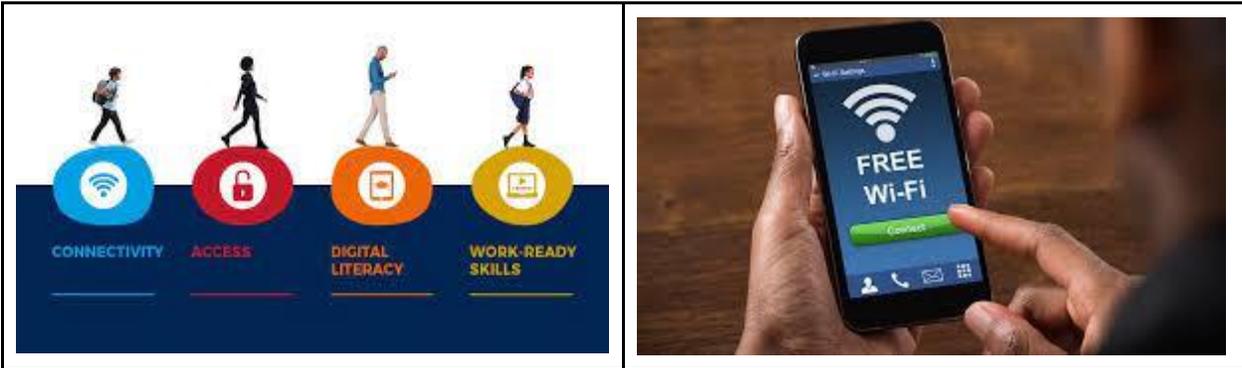
Estimated Costs

EC\$345,467.36

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

Site Pictures



CARING FOR OUR NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$150,000.00 in funding to run a two-year afterschool program for primary and secondary school children of Soufriere.

Project Rationale and Scope

Tourism is the main employment provider in the district of Soufriere. The industry requires employees to work unsociable hours, hours which traditionally parents would spend together nurturing their children. In view of the new working schedules parents resort to leaving their children with relatives, friends or older siblings. Invariably, the quality of supervision provided to these children is less than would be if it was provided by the parents themselves. Thus, it is the norm in Soufriere to see children - individually or in groups - wandering and loitering in the town centre after school hours or absconding from school and harassing the tourists on the streets, waterfront and jetty areas.

Education District 8 which comprises Soufriere and Canaries has consistently been one of the worst performing education districts in the annual Common Entrance Exam and almost always scores below the national mean. It is instructive to note that the Soufriere Primary is almost always one of the culprit schools behind the poor mean scores. To date, no known research has been done to determine the cause of the Soufriere Primary's low performances. Notwithstanding, research shows, that attending afterschool programs can improve students' academic performances.

The project seeks to improve social and emotional learning and academic development, encourage school participation, provide adult supervision that promotes positive youth development thus reducing risky behaviors supports working families and improves youth dietary consumption.

The project will seek to achieve its objectives by running a high-quality afterschool programme for primary and secondary school children at the Soufriere Primary School between Mondays and Thursdays, each week. The programme will offer academics taught in an interactive manner to actively engage the youth, specialized skill development, community service projects, field trips, physical activity, music and nutrition sessions, inter alia.

Beneficiaries

The project beneficiaries will be children, families, schools and the community

Estimated Costs

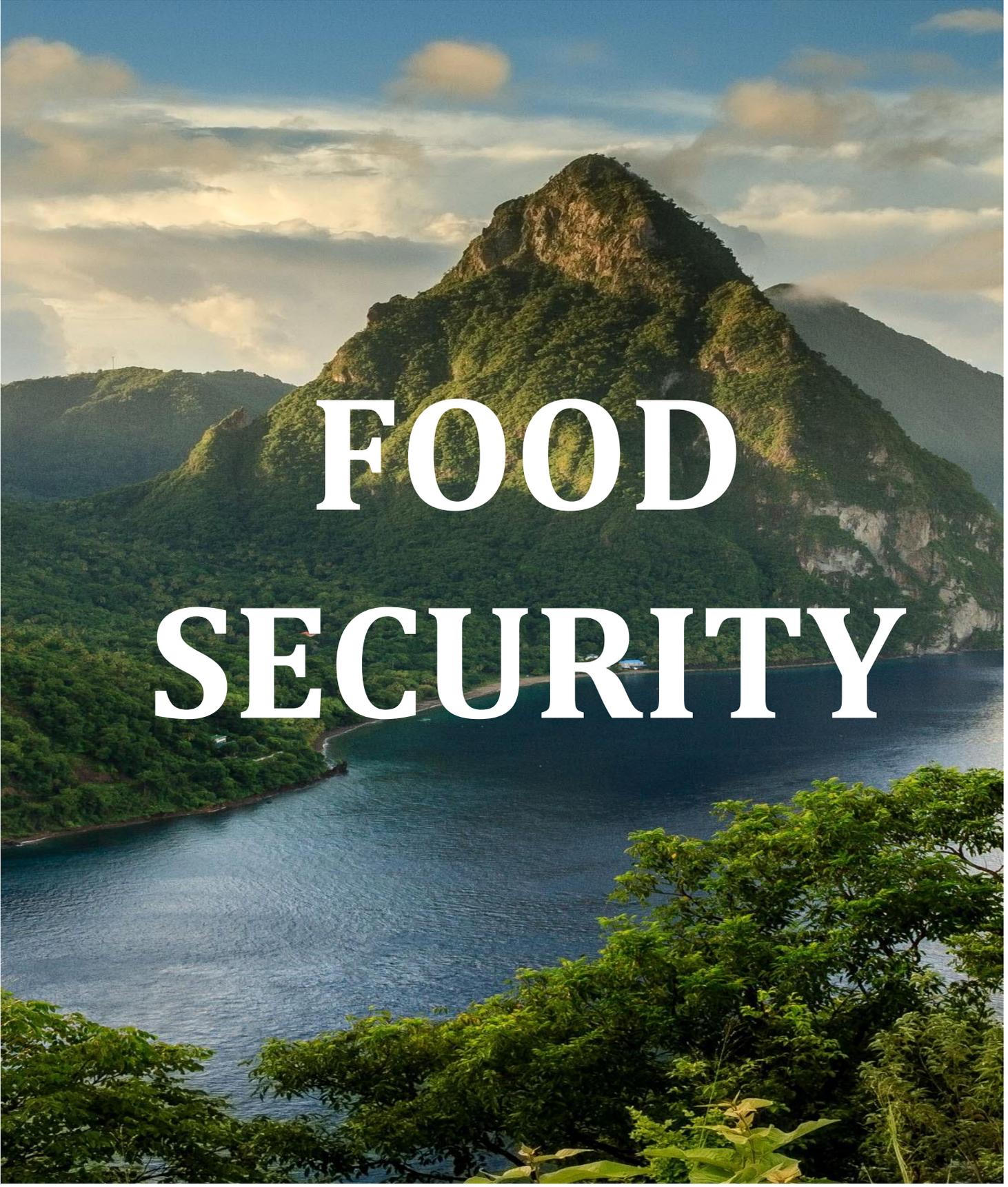
EC\$150,000.00

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

Site Pictures





FOOD SECURITY

IMPROVING STUDENT NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY IN SOUFRIERE SCHOOLS

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$100,000.00 in funding to rehabilitate a school garden at the Soufriere Primary School (SPS) and SCSS, and construct one each at the Bouton Combined School (BCS), Fond St. Jacques Combined School (FSJCS) and the Les Etangs Combined School (LECS).

Project Rationale and Scope

In many low and middle-income countries, governments run School Feeding Programmes. According to the World Bank these programmes are “targeted social safety nets that provide both educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children, thereby increasing enrolment rates, reducing absenteeism, and improving food security at the household level.” St. Lucia’s school feeding programme dates back to 1983 and covers every education district in St. Lucia, including Soufriere.

In light of developing country governments’ inability to properly fund these programmes, St. Lucia being no exception, and concerns over their nutritional content, education and agriculture planners have promoted school gardens as a tool to improve children’s’ nutrition by supplementing school feeding programmes with a variety of fresh micro-nutrient and protein-rich products and as a means of providing school-aged children practical experience in food production. Notwithstanding, school gardens also play a role in encouraging school children to love nature, environmental education and develop a greater knowledge about and a more positive attitude towards vegetable consumption.

The project seeks to restore and expand a number of school gardens in the district. More specifically, it involves the following components:

Part A

The re-establishment of the school garden at the SPS and the extension/expansion of the school garden at the SCSS.

The former includes, the

- repair of two existing greenhouses, and
- purchase and installation of one additional greenhouse at the SPS and the latter, the
- Purchase and installation of one additional greenhouse at the SCSS.

Part B

The construction of a school garden at Bouton, Fond St. Jacques and Les Etangs Combined Schools.

Beneficiaries

Infant, primary and secondary school children, parents, and the GOSL

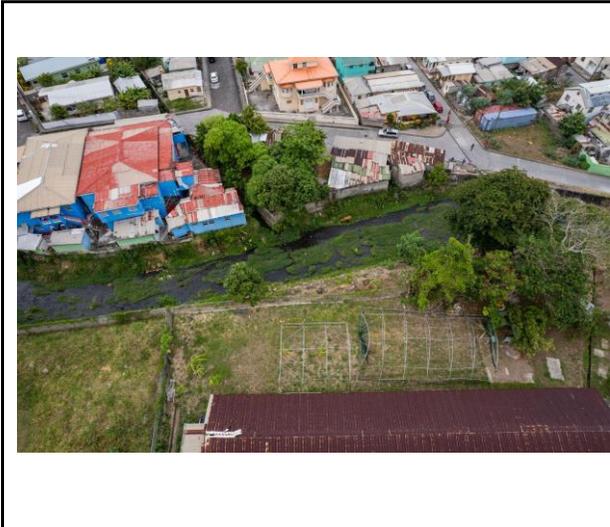
Estimated Costs

EC\$100,000.00

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

Site Pictures



STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY AND FISHER LIVELIHOODS THROUGH FISH PROCESSING

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks an undetermined sum of grant funding to develop a fish processing plant at the Soufriere Fish Landing Facility.

Project Rationale and Scope

The Soufriere Fishermen's Cooperative Society Limited (SFCSL) with a mix of grant and loan funding (if necessary) intends to purchase a deep sea fishing vessel. It is anticipated that as a result of the vessel, significantly more fish will be landed than the daily requirements of the locality during particular periods of the year. Value added fish processing and preservation provides one means of dealing with the catch and the copious supply of lionfish and balawoo, which populate the south west coast of St. Lucia, reducing post-harvest loss, providing more convenient products for more discerning and busy consumers, and greater quantities of fish supplies throughout the year.

This project's goal is to build and equip a fish processing facility at the Soufriere Fish Landing Facility, provide a market for its members, process catch from members and a proposed deep sea fishing vessel, sell processed fish to residents, vendors, supermarkets and hotels and the export market.

The project will involve the following elements:

- Design
- Civil Works
- Plant and Equipment Procurement
- Training

Beneficiaries

Fishers, fish processors, fish vendors, fish buying public including households, restaurants and hotels, and Soufriere Fishermen's Cooperative Society Limited members.

Estimated Costs

Undetermined

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

Site Pictures



IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH BACKYARD GARDENING

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks EC\$150,000.00 to develop 50 backyard gardens in the New Development Area, Soufriere.

Project Rationale and Scope

St. Lucia's food import bill in 2021 was approximately EC\$418.4 million. This figure reflects our country's large dependence on imported food to feed its people. In order to combat the country's food insecurity situation, the Government of St. Lucia initiated the Seven Crops Project. This project's main aim is to reduce the food import bill and improve household nutrition by encouraging households to practice self-reliance by growing what they eat and eating what they grow. Backyard gardening is being strongly promoted by the government as a means through which citizens can help the country attain its objectives. Cantaloupes, honeydew melons, lettuce, tomatoes, pineapples, watermelons, cabbages and bell peppers are the seven crops presently being promoted for growth and consumption.

Beyond its contribution to improving the country's food security, improving nutrition and building resilience, backyard gardening also brings with it a number of inherent economic and social benefits to practicing households. On the economic side, backyard gardens improve family incomes, livelihoods and household economic welfare as well as promote entrepreneurship. While on the social side, it improves nutrition and food security by increasing utilisation, availability and accessibility of food crops and is a means of relaxation.

According to the 2010 St. Lucia Census, New Development, Soufriere, had a population of approximately 1,198 people. The average property in the area is about 3,400 square feet while the average home is 1,600 square feet. This in effect means that every household has approximately 1,800 square feet of yard space of which part could be developed into a garden.

This project seeks to increase household nutrition and food security, generate income, build resilience to economic shocks and natural disasters, encourage self-reliance and support the government's agricultural policy goal of reducing the country's food import bill.

The project involves the construction of 50 backyard vegetable gardens for and the supply of the relevant vegetable seeds to 50 households in the New Development Area.

Beneficiaries

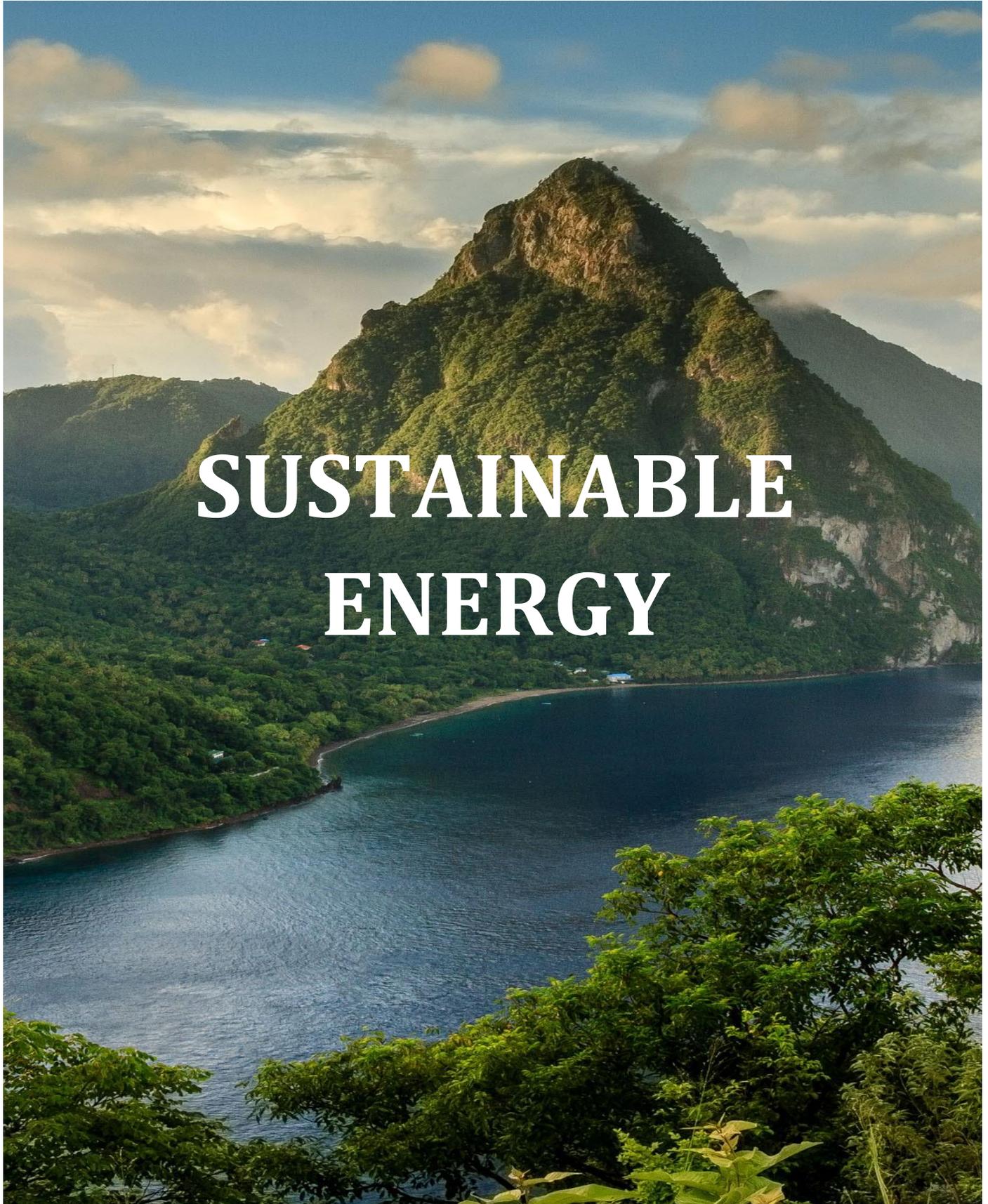
Residents of New Development, GOSL and country

Estimated Costs

EC\$150,000.00

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00



USING PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS AS A MEANS OF REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS AND POVERTY

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks an undetermined sum of grant funding or investor financing to retrofit a number of public, commercial and residential buildings with distributed solar photovoltaic systems (PV).

Project Rationale and Scope

Under the Paris Agreement, the Government of St. Lucia set its nationally determined contribution targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions at 16% by 2025, and 23% by 2030 and renewable energy targets of 35% by 2025 and 50% by 2030. While from the start, the targets seemed bold and ambitious, it set a visible target and provided an opportunity for the government to take the lead in meeting it. It now appears that beyond the installation of the 3 Mw solar farm in Vieux Fort, very little movement has been made in attaining the renewable energy country targets and the initial momentum generated may have been lost.

At present, decentralised solar energy in the form of grid-connected and standalone solar photovoltaic systems on public, commercial and residential buildings present a distinct opportunity for the country to fill the gap between its renewable energy generation levels and its targets and accelerating access to affordable, clean-energy generation without making investments in large-scale, centralized power grids.

The project seeks to accelerate the country's progress towards reducing carbon emissions and thus create a positive impact on the environment, create jobs and reduce poverty - reduce the energy bill of targeted households.

It intends to fulfill these objectives by installing solar PV systems on all suitable public buildings in the district, financed through grant funding or as an investment in partnership with the SRDF. Under either scenario, the rooftops will be leased, power sold to the government at a discount and any excess sold to the grid. The project also seeks to install systems on commercial and residential roofs. Likewise, the commercial or residential owners would be paid for use of their rooftops, sold the generated power at a reduced rate and excess generation sold to the grid. If the project is exclusively grant funded and the excess is paid back in credits, these credits will be spread over a number of targeted households by way of a **Low Income Household Electricity Rebate**.

However, for this project to be successful reform of the energy policy is required, the system changed to allow generators to deal directly with consumers and/or a more investor friendly PV remuneration system is put in place.

Beneficiaries

The project beneficiaries will be the rooftop owners, low income households, investors, environment, district and country.

Estimated Costs

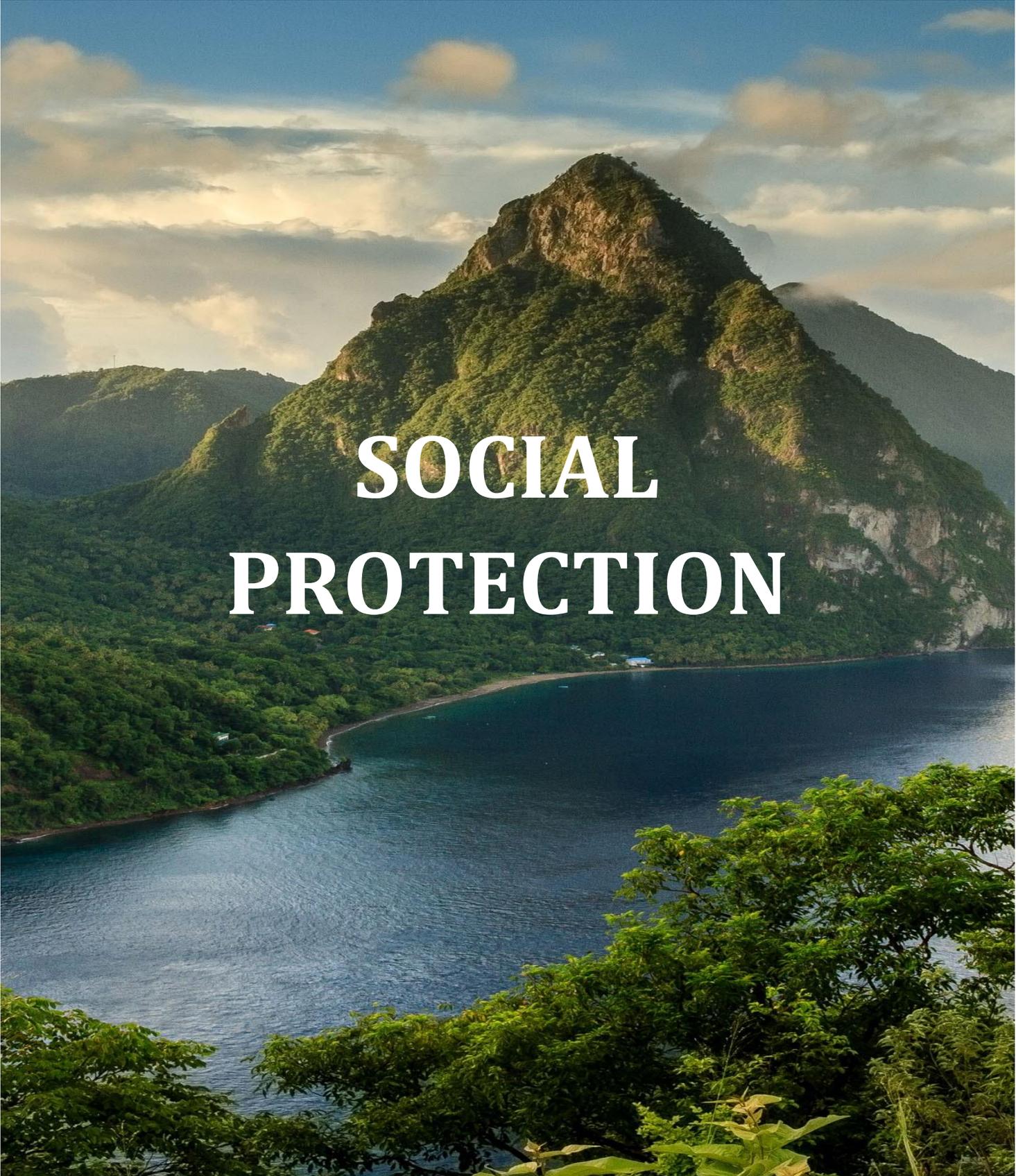
Undetermined

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00

Site Pictures





SOCIAL PROTECTION

IMPROVING BUSINESS VIABILITY TO PROVIDE SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR FISHERS

Request

The district of Soufriere seeks an undetermined sum of grant funding to purchase a deep sea fishing vessel for the use of the Soufriere Fishermen's Cooperative Society Limited (SFCSL) and to provide skill development training to its operators.

Project Rationale and Scope

The fishing industry in Soufriere is affected by a number of social and economic challenges. Higher operational cost, reduced near shore catch, dwindling fisher numbers and an absence of social protection for retiring fishers are but four of these challenges. The operational cost increase is due to the higher cost of fuel and further distances artisanal fishers have to travel for fish because of the depletion of near-shore fish stocks. While, the reduction in fishers is due in part to the retirement of ageing fishers, transfer of young fishers to the more lucrative marine tourism and the low rate of entry of young new fishers.

This project seeks to acquire a deep sea fishing vessel for the Soufriere Fishermen's Cooperative Society Limited to undertake deep sea fishing and thereby create employment for a few young persons while having a greater amount of fish available for sale resulting in an additional revenue stream for the cooperative. The project will also have an element of training to ready fishers for the switch from the pirogue to the deep sea fishing vessel, undertake onboard processing, etcetera.

It is hoped that the project will attract young persons to the industry, start a paradigm shift by moving from artisanal/subsistence fishing to commercial fishing thereby encouraging investments in deep sea fishing, reducing food insecurity by supplying an increased amount of catch for the proposed fish processing facility. Ultimately part of the profits of the fish processing business could be channeled into a pension fund from which quarterly or mid-annual payments could be paid to retired fishers.

Beneficiaries

Young fishers, unemployed youth, fish buying public including households, restaurants and hotels, SFCSL members and retired fishers.

Estimated Costs

Undetermined

Funding Secured

EC\$0.00



"A transformed Soufriere is a better Soufriere for all of us."

Hon. Emma Hippolyte
Parliamentary Representative

For More Information, Contact:

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