

Press release

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Progress in the design of the new infrastructure of the Prison of Sint Maarten

Philipsburg - The design of the newly enhanced Sint Maarten prison facilities is underway and will be ready by May 2024, under the project implementation schedule. The procurement process was completed in October of last year ensuring a considerable saving on the initial budgeted cost for the new prison, thus ensuring efficient management of public resources. Following the procurement process overseen by UNOPS to select the architectural design company for the new prison, CSI Engineers from Uruguay has been awarded the contract to design the staged construction of the new Point Blanche Prison and House of Detention Facilities.

Speaking about the subject, Minister of Justice Anna E. Richardson, said:

"I'm thrilled with the upcoming construction of the prison and was recently updated on the architectural conceptual design of the expansion. The features include a pre-trial ward, improved male and female wards, educational facilities, health consultation rooms, dental facilities, psychologists, recreational areas, staff facilities, and more. As safety is a priority, we have also ensured enhanced security systems with panoramic and static cameras. This new prison project represents a giant leap forward for the Government of Sint Maarten, as it will bring our detention facilities in line with the highest regional standards and address our local needs effectively."

As part of the project's progress, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is preparing to launch the bidding process for the construction of the new facilities around mid-2024.

To this end, a market study will begin in February to identify potential companies in the local and international markets interested in participating in the process. The Ministry of Justice and UNOPS will ensure wide dissemination so local companies can learn about the UNOPS procurement process and participate in this solicitation.

This competitive and transparent process will allow both local and international suppliers to participate under equal conditions.

The project for the design of Rule of Law Facilities, phase I of the new prison project is funded by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of the Government of the Netherlands with a budget of approximately US\$ 4 million.

Sint Maarten Rule of Law Facilities

The Sint Maarten Rule of Law Facilities project will design the new Point Blanche Prison for the benefit of both the prison population and its staff, ensuring full compliance with human rights and the consideration of social, gender, and environmental components in its design.

This first phase of the project which started at the end of the first quarter of 2023, is planned for 20 months in total and is on schedule. The second phase of the project encompasses the construction of the new infrastructure.

“UNOPS strengthens criminal justice systems by planning, designing, building, and rehabilitating secure and humane correctional infrastructure such as courts and prisons. In Sint Maarten we are ensuring that social, gender, and diversity perspectives will be included in the development of the prison design, covering adequate detention for different societal groups based on specific needs of women and youth”, explained **Martín Arévalo, Director of the UNOPS Office for Costa Rica and the English & Dutch Speaking Caribbean.**

A strong criminal justice system is a fundamental pillar for compliance with human rights and freedoms, legal certainty, and good governance for its citizens. Since the establishment of the various facilities and due to several structural challenges caused by the effects of climate change, Sint Maarten’s correctional infrastructure has reached a critical point.

UNOPS, as a specialized UN agency, is in charge of the project management, adhering to the Human Rights and Sustainable Development Goals frameworks, managing this project comprehensively through Fair Public Management to maximize the transparency and profitability of public spending, generating significant impacts on the use of public resources through practices that increase efficiency, sustainable value and transparency.

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Notes to the editors

About the project

The Sint Maarten Rule of Law Facilities project is an initiative of the Ministry of Justice of St. Maarten, fully managed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) with funding from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

About UNOPS

UNOPS mission is to help people build better lives and countries achieve peace and sustainable development. We help the United Nations, governments and other partners to manage projects, and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement in an efficient way. Read more: www.unops.org

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