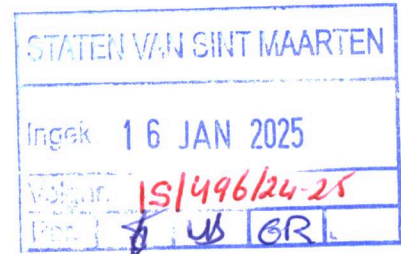

National Ordinance stipulating the
Budget of Country Sint Maarten
for the service year 2025
National Ordinance Budget 2025)



AMENDMENT BY THE MEMBERS LACROES, LEWIS AND OTTLEY

Received 16 January 2025

The undersigned proposes the following amendment:

The National Ordinance stipulating the Budget of Country Sint Maarten for the service year 2025 (National Ordinance Budget 2025) is amended as follows:

- A. In Appendix 1, the ordinary service expenditures of the Parliament is amended as follows:
 - 1. Under budget post 1010 Gross wages and Salaries budget "5,781,899" is to be replaced with: 6,065,991.
 - 2. Under budget post 1010 Travel costs budget "1,056,360" is to be replaced with: 812,268.
- B. In Appendix 1, the ordinary service expenditures of the Social Economic Council is amended as follows:
 - 1. Under budget post 2100 Travel costs budget "40,000" is to be replaced with: 61,690.
- C. In Appendix 1, the ordinary service expenditures of the Ombudsman is amended as follows:
 - 1. Under budget post 1300 travel costs budget "70,000" is to be replaced with: 31.690.
- D. In Appendix 1, the ordinary service expenditures of the Ministry of General Affairs is amended as follows:
 - 1. Under budget post 30 Minister Travel costs budget "60,000" is to be replaced with: 45,000.
- E. In Appendix 1, the ordinary service expenditures of the Ministry of Finance is amended as follows:
 - 1. Under budget post 40 Minister Travel costs budget "60,000" is to be replaced with: 45,000.
- F. In Appendix 1, the ordinary service expenditures of the Ministry of Justice is amended as follows:
 - 1. Under budget post 50 Minister Travel costs budget "45,000" is to be replaced with: 30,000.

- G. In Appendix 1, the ordinary service expenditures of the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development & Labor is amended as follows:
 - 1. Under budget post 70 Minister travel costs budget "50,000" is to be replaced with: 35,000.
- H. In Appendix 1, the ordinary service expenditures of the Ministry of Tourism, Telecommunication, Economic Affairs and Transportation is amended as follows:
 - 1. Under budget post 80 Minister Travel costs budget "50,000" is to be replaced with: 35,000.
 - 2. Under budget post 8250 Statistics Department Travel costs budget "50,000" is to be replaced with: 40,000.
 - 3. Under budget post 8260 Department of Aviation and Maritime Travel costs budget "93,360" is to be replaced with: 83,360.
- I. In Appendix 1, the ordinary service expenditures of the Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment is amended as follows:
 - 1. Under budget post 9010 Cabinet Travel costs budget "40,000" is to be replaced with: 25,000.

Explanatory Notes

The budget amendment aims to adjust the Parliament budget by an additional Naf. 390,712 to be taken from the travel costs of each Minister excluding the Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, the travel costs of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure and General Affairs, the travel budget of the Department of Statistics and the Department of Aviation and Maritime Affairs, and the travel costs of Parliament to increase the salaries amount budgeted for Parliament. This amendment will allow the legislative branch, Parliament, to enhance the human capital available within the faction staffs of Parliament. A total of 290,712 is needed for wages and salaries and an additional 100,000 has also been reserved to ensure the additional costs associated with salary increases are incorporated. The decision to take the funds from the travel budgets across Ministries and Parliament stems from the initiators opinion that policy and legislative development has a higher priority than traveling. The budget posts selected for a reduction were chosen based on a review of all travel costs across all budget posts, and any travel budget over 30,000 or more were considered for a reduction, considering the limited benefits of travelling abroad when there is so much work to be carried out locally.

Since the inception of Parliament on October 10, 2010, each faction within Parliament has been allotted a number of faction workers to support the faction. By letter of March 31, 2011, the President of Parliament proposed the allotment of faction workers to each faction

in connection with the preparation of the draft budget of Parliament for 2012. This proposal was accepted by the Faction leaders meeting at the time.

Due to certain challenges, in its meeting of June 27, 2017 the Presidium of Parliament approved a revamping of the current allotment of faction workers with the establishment of the current document entitled "Regulations for faction staff" which would take effect 2020. However, due to the change in the makeup of the constellation of the Presidium as a result of a change in governing parties, the draft was once more topic of discussion in the Presidium meeting of March 29, 2018.

The new Presidium proposed some substantial changes to the allotment of the amount of faction staff that have now been incorporated in this draft. The (amended) draft was approved by the Presidium. The Faction Leaders meeting also approved the draft on April 12, 2018.

Within the 2017/2018 amendments, the Members of Parliament at the time introduced WO level positions to attract better-qualified staff, the monthly budget for salaries for faction workers, adjustments to the categories regulating the size of the faction staff, amongst others. Since the amendments of 2018, the drafts approved by the Presidium has been used ever since for the allotment of faction workers to the factions.

These drafts have to date not been handled by Parliament as per article 17 paragraph 3 of the Rules of Order.

Furthermore, the salaries that are offered to faction workers are:

1. Beleidsadviseur, WO level (academic), scale 13, trede 15 (NAfl. 10.323) per month.
2. Ondersteunend Beleidsmedewerker, HBO level, scale 11, trede 7 (NAfl. 6.803) per month.
3. Secretaresse, MBO level, scale 6, trede 8 (NAfl. 3.540) per month

While the draft allowed for Category 1 factions to have 2 out of the 3 level functions from the Functieboek including the WO, the combination of WO and HBO exceeds the monthly maximum. In addition, with this new adjustment it also allows for factions with 2 or more MPs to hire 3 persons as opposed to 2, once the combination of academic levels chosen do not exceed the monthly maximum.

As St. Maarten's Parliament gains more strength within its legislative role, Members of Parliament struggle to retain qualified personnel due to the limitation in maximum monthly budgets and established regulation as per 2018. Therefore, to boost the active participation in the development of St. Maarten and elevation of the work produced by Parliament, this amendment proposes that each faction should have the possibility to have two high level academic positions no matter which category the factions fall within. The bare minimum should allow for 1 x HBO and 1x WO and or whatever combination other than 2 x WO. In addition, this will enable Members of Parliament to attract legislative lawyers, fiscal lawyers, and constitutional lawyers to assist in addressing the backlog of laws and in drafting new legislation, especially given the severe understaffing currently faced by the Government.

In addition, a new category has been added to reflect a fairer disbursement of staff depending on the number of members elected per faction. Once the budget is approved,

the amendments to the policy “Regulation faction staff” will be submitted to the Presidium for further handling.

Financial Consequences

This would require an amendment to category 1 including the budget to Naf. 17,126 as opposed to 13,863. This is a monthly difference of Naf. 3,263 and Naf. 39,156 yearly increase to the 2025 budget. +22,841 monthly/274,092 yearly increase.

Therefore, the new proposal entails the following:

- Category 1: a faction consisting of one (1) is entitled to a maximum monthly budget: NAFI. 17,126;
- Category 2: a faction consisting of three (3) members is entitled to a maximum monthly budget: NAFI. 17,403;
- Category 3: a faction consisting of four (4) or five (5) members is entitled a maximum monthly budget: NAFI. 24.206;
- Category 4: a faction consisting of six (6) or more members is entitled to a maximum monthly budget: NAFI. 37.792;

The Parliamentary Term of 2024 -2028 currently has a total of 7 factions with the following seat allocations:

FACTION	SEATS	ELIGIBLE FACTION WORKERS	2018 MAXIMUM BUDGET	2025 MAXIMUM BUDGET	DIFF. NEEDED
NOW	1	2	13,863	17,126	3,263
SAM	1	2	13,863	17,126	3,263
UPP	2	2	13,863	17,403	3,540
URSM	3	2	13,863	17,403	3,540
DP	3	2	13,863	17,403	3,540
PFP	3	2	13,863	17,403	3,540
NA	3	2	13,863	17,403	3,540
		<u>MONTHLY</u>	<u>97,041</u>	<u>121,267</u>	<u>+24,226</u>
		<u>YEARLY</u>	<u>1,164,492</u>	<u>1,455,204</u>	<u>+290,712</u>

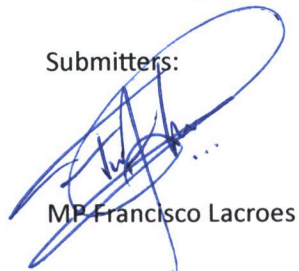
Overview Older Proposals

	Faction # of MPs	2010 -2017	Monthly Maximum (NAf.)
CAT 1	1	Max. 2 staff 1 x HBO 1x MBO	10.343
CAT 2	2-4	Max. 3 staff 2x HBO 1x MBO	17.146
CAT 3	5 or more	Max. 4 2 x HBO 2 x MBO	20.686

	Faction # of MPs	2018	Maximum Monthly Budget (Naf.)
CAT 1	1-3	Max. 2 staff 1 x Wo and 1x HBO or 1x MBO or 1x HBO	13.863
CAT 2	4-5	Max. 4 staff 1 x WO 1 x HBO 2 x MBO	24.206
CAT 3	6 or more	Max. 5 2 x WO 2 x HBO 1 x MBO	37.792

Sint Maarten, 16 January 2025

Submitters:



MP Francisco Lacroes



MP Lyndon Lewis



MP Omar Ottley

