



**Sociaal  
Economische  
Raad** Social  
Economic  
Council



# Annual Report 2024

# Table of Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 1. The SER.</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Institution.	4
1.2 Amendment of the National Ordinance Social Economic Council.	4
1.3 Constitutional Court.	4
1.4 Advisory task.	5
1.5 Operating procedure and objective.	5
<b>Chapter 2. The Council.</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Composition.	6
2.2 The delayed appointment of 2023-2026 Board.	6
2.3 Remuneration of board members.	6
2.4 Council meetings.	7
<b>Chapter 3. The secretariat</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Personnel.	8
3.2 Performance management.	8
3.3 Training sessions and courses.	8
<b>Chapter 4. Financial management.</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 Budget 2024.	9
4.2 The Caribbean guilder.	9
4.3 Budget realization.	10
<b>Chapter 5. Local and international contacts.</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 6. Advice.</b>	<b>13</b>

# Foreword.

It is with distinct honor and a profound sense of responsibility that I present this Annual Report for the year 2024 on behalf of the Social Economic Council (SER) of Sint Maarten. This report encapsulates the period from January 1st to December 31st, 2024, a year characterized by both the resumption of our full operational capacity and a revitalized dedication to serving the Government, Parliament, and the people of Sint Maarten. The year 2024 witnessed the reinstatement of the SER Board on August 5th, 2024, following a challenging sixteen-month hiatus caused by delays in crucial board appointments. This period of inactivity underscored the critical importance of a fully functioning SER as an independent advisory organization.

As the newly appointed Chairman, elected by my esteemed fellow board members on September 5th, 2024, I look forward with a positive outlook on our future. Having served as a dedicated member of the SER since 2018, I have long recognized the indispensable contribution this council makes to the legislative process and the overall well-being of Sint Maarten. My immediate priority upon assuming this office has been to proactively engage with all relevant stakeholders. This has included productive introductory visits to our counterparts at the SER's of Aruba and Curaçao, fostering the re-establishment of strong regional ties that have historically proven invaluable for shared learning and mutual support, and for deeper collaboration on shared socio-economic challenges that impact our interconnected island nations.

Our outreach extended beyond our regional partners to the international stage as well, marked by a significant introductory visit

to the SER in The Hague on December 6th, 2024. This important meeting with Chairman Prof. Dr. Kim Putters served to reaffirm the enduring collaborative spirit between our two councils, thoughtfully building upon the solid foundation established by my predecessors and fostering continued dialogue on matters of mutual interest. Furthermore, demonstrating our commitment to transparency and collaborative governance, the SER actively engaged with the Parliament of Sint Maarten through a comprehensive orientation meeting held on September 23rd, 2024. This vital interaction provided an essential platform to clearly articulate the SER's crucial role within the governing and democratic processes of our country.

Despite the considerable operational challenges encountered during the earlier part of the year, the latter half of 2024 witnessed the SER actively and diligently working on several crucial advisory requests submitted by the Government and Parliament. This renewed activity underscores the resilience and dedication of the newly reconstituted Board and the unwavering commitment of the management and staff of the SER to fulfill its responsibilities effectively. As we navigate the path forward, we are resolutely determined to overcome any obstacles that may arise and ensure that the SER continues to serve as a vital cornerstone of sound policy development, contributing meaningfully to the progress and prosperity of our people and nation.

**Harlec G.F. Doran**  
**Chairman of the Social Economic Council**  
**of Sint Maarten**

# Chapter 1. The SER.



## 1.1 Institution.

As part of the Constitution of Sint Maarten and as one of the required organic laws, on October 10th, 2010, the National ordinance Social Economic Council AB 2010, GT no. 19 became effective, establishing the Social Economic Council of Sint Maarten.

## 1.2 Amendment of the National Ordinance Social Economic Council.

Since the establishment of the SER, the advisory body has issued advice to the Government and different factions within Parliament. However, the legal basis to issue advice to Parliament was not regulated by law. The amended National Ordinance Social-Economic Council AB 2023 no. 38 was signed by the Minister of General Affairs on August 22nd, 2023, and published in the National Gazette of September 1st, 2023. The law went into effect on October 4th, 2023, granting the SER the legal basis to render advice to the Parliament of Sint Maarten.

## 1.3 Constitutional Court.

In 2023, the Ombudsman of Sint Maarten conducted a constitutional review of the amendments to the National Ordinance of the SER. This review reaffirmed the conclusions of the Joint Court of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba in its *Verdict of June 29, 2022 from the Joint Court of Justice case ECSM vs Minister of General Affairs* which determined that there was no governmental interference in the SER's nomination process concerning employer organizations. Consequently, the Joint Court found no violation of the right to freedom of association as enshrined in Article 12 of the Constitution of Sint Maarten.



## 1.4 Advisory task.

The task of the SER is to advise the Government and Parliament on important topics of a social-economic nature. The provision to advise the Parliament of Sint Maarten went into effect on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. In accordance with article 2 paragraph 1 of the National Ordinance Social Economic Council AB 2023, no. 38, the Council provides its advice upon the written request of one or more Ministers or the Chairperson of Parliament. The Council may also provide unsolicited advice on topics of a social economic nature to the Government whenever the Council deems it necessary.

## 1.5 Operating procedure and objective.

The SER is a tripartite advisory body that, in the process of bringing about its advice, works conscientiously to render a realistic account of its viewpoints on the social-economic matters in our society, viewpoints that have significant implications. The implications from the legal, financial, and social-economic perspective are directives in this framework.

Broad-based support for social-economic policy is essential for a stable and enduring development of our country. During the SER board meetings, the aim of the Board is to reach consensus concerning social-economic issues that otherwise, in a separate setting, would be conducive to divergent opinions and potential disputes that could have a negative effect on the implementation of draft policy or statutory regulations.



# Chapter 2. The Council.

## 2.1 Composition.

Article 3 of the National ordinance Social Economic Council AB 2023, no.38, stipulates that the Council consists of nine members, which includes three representatives of employers' organizations, three representatives of employees' organizations and three independent members (independent experts). The independent members are nominated by the Minister of General Affairs. A substitute member is appointed for each member. All eighteen Council members are appointed by national decree for a period of three (3) years.

According to article 12 paragraph 2 of the National Ordinance Social Economic Council AB 2023, no.38, persons who are appointed as members or substitute members to fill a vacancy in the interim shall step down on the date on which the person whose seat fell vacant should have stepped down. In the year under review, there was one mutation that transpired in the composition of the board of the SER.

## 2.2 The delayed appointment of 2023–2026 Board.

Due to a prolonged impasse between an employer organization and the former Minister of General Affairs, the SER was left without an appointed Board from April 2023 to August 2024, resulting in a 16-month operational delay. Consequently, all advisory requests submitted by the Government prior to April 2023 were placed on hold by the SG, pending the reinstatement of the Board.

The three-year term of the previous Board 2020–2023 concluded on April 30, 2023.

## 2.3 Remuneration of board members.

In accordance with article 22 of the National Ordinance Social Economic Council AB 2023, no.38, the members are entitled to monetary compensation. The remuneration is further explained in the National decree, containing general measures, dated December 14th, 2017, concerning the financial provisions of the members, their substitutes, and the Secretary-General (SG) of the SER. The members only receive compensation for the meetings they attend, with maximum compensation of 2 meetings per month, while SER substitute members only receive remuneration when they substitute for their members.





## 2.4 Council meetings.

In general, the Council meets twice a month, on the second and fourth Thursday of the month. In accordance with article 13 paragraph 1 of the National Ordinance Social Economic Council AB 2023, no.38, the Chairperson shall convene meetings whenever he or she deems it necessary or appropriate, stating the matters to be discussed. In 2024, no board meetings were held in the months of January – July 2024 due to non-appointment of the Board. On August 5th, 2024, the Board of the SER was reinstated by national decree. From September – December 2024 the Board held a total of ten (10) board meetings of which two were extra ordinary board meetings.

## SER Board 2023 – 2026

### Members

#### Independent experts

Mr. Harlec Doran / *Independent expert*  
 Mr. Judensy Coffie / *Independent expert*  
 Ms. Carmen Berkel / *Independent expert*

#### Employer representatives

Mr. Paul Henriquez / *Employer Council Sint Maarten (ECSM)*  
 Ms. Edna Evans / *ECSM*  
 Ms. Paulina Lake / *Sint Maarten Small Property Association (SSMPA)*

#### Employee representatives

Mr. Shevlin Francis / *Windward Island Chamber of Labor Unions (WICLU)*  
 Mr. Donald Webster / *WICLU*<sup>1</sup>  
 Mr. drs. Raymond Jessurun<sup>2</sup> / *WICLU*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> During the compilation of the Annual Report for the year 2024, the WICLU was the umbrella organization for employee representatives. The WICLU decided which unions are represented in the SER. Mr. Donald Webster was appointed by the WICLU on behalf of the Association of Staff Employees of the Windward Islands (ASEWI).

<sup>2</sup> On December 12, 2024, member R. Jessurun was honorably discharged when he attained the age of seventy. In accordance with article 8 b National Ordinance Social Economic Council, members are discharged by national decree when they reach the age of seventy.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Raymond Jessurun and Shevlin Francis were appointed by the WICLU on behalf of the Windward Island Civil Servants and Private Union Sector. Ms. C. Richardson, Mr. A. Henrietta and Mrs. M. Peterson-Regales represent the WICLU/PSU union.

### Substitute members

#### Independent experts

Mr. Kevin Jeffers / *Independent expert*  
 Ms. Ayumi Bervoets / *Independent expert*  
 Ms. Leonie Bryson / *Independent expert*

#### Employer representatives

Mr. Sidharth Bijlani / *ECSM*  
 Mr. Jelle Hamstra / *ECSM*  
 Ms. Jeanina Dupersoy / *SMSPA*

#### Employee representatives

Ms. Cassandra Richardson / *WICLU*  
 Mr. Alexander Henrietta / *WICLU*  
 Ms. Mireille Peterson-Regales / *WICLU*

# Chapter 3.

## The secretariat

### 3.1 Personnel.

The staff of the secretariat is appointed, suspended, or dismissed by national decree, upon the Council's recommendation. As of December 31st, 2024, of the six (6) positions, five (5) were filled on a full-time basis. In the year under review, there is one vacancy for the position of Policy Advisor.

### 3.2 Performance management.

Performance management in the SER mirrors the government's approach. It involves guiding staff performance and competencies. In the year under review, staff evaluations occurred in three stages: planning, interim evaluation, and final evaluation. The functioning of the SG is evaluated based on article 8 of the Rules of order of the Social Economic Council AB 2024 no. 25. The evaluation is done by the Council.

### 3.3 Training sessions and courses.

In October the office manager and policy worker attended a workshop aimed at providing tools to aid in time-saving techniques for writing clear, complete, and concise text. In addition, further guidelines and strategies were explained which would enable the participants to formulate business emails, reports, outlines with haste and accuracy.



*Pictured from left to right SER Office manager, S.de Weever, facilitator, SER Policy Worker, U. Salomon*

# Chapter 4.

## Financial management.



### 4.1 Budget 2024.

The SER specifies its budget annually. The budget is subsequently submitted to the Government. The Government allocated a budget of ANG 1,304,379 for the year 2024 to the SER. The budget of the SER is part of the annual budget of country Sint Maarten. In accordance with article 23, paragraph 2 of the National Ordinance of the Social Economic Council AB 2023 no.38, the Chairperson is responsible for financial management. The Chairperson may delegate the authority to enter financial obligations to the SG. This is especially important for regularly recurring costs that do not exceed a certain amount.

### 4.2 The Caribbean guilder.

During the compilation of the Annual Report for the year 2024 the Netherlands Antillean Guilder (ANG) was still in use as the legal tender of Sint Maarten and Curacao, two constituent countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. As of March 31, 2025, the Caribbean guilder (Cg) will be officially introduced as legal tender in the countries of Curaçao and Sint Maarten. The Netherlands Antillean guilder was in circulation across the former islands of the Netherlands Antilles namely Aruba, Curacao, Bonaire, Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius, and Saba. The Netherlands Antillean Guilder will remain the legal tender on Sint Maarten and Curacao until June 30, 2025. Thereafter, it will be formally withdrawn from circulation.

In this Annual Report for the year 2024, all financial figures are presented in ANG.



### 4.3 Budget realization.

The actual expenditure and differences are provided by the Finance Department of the Government of Sint Maarten. During the compilation of the 2024 Annual Report, the amounts could not be verified as the Government’s 2024 financial statement is not yet available.

Budget post	Budget 2024	Actual expenditure	Balance
Personnel Expenditures	ANG 727,901.00	ANG 696,523.00	ANG 31,378.00
Material cost goods and services	ANG 576,478.00	ANG 393,684.00	ANG 182,794.00
Total cost	ANG 1,304,379.00	ANG 1,090,207.00	ANG 214,172.00

The material costs were less than initially budgeted. The difference of ANG 182.794 was ascribed to the reduced spending of the budget posts, remuneration of the board members, Business travel, and legal and professional advice. The SER remained within the budgeted amount of ANG 1,304,379.00.



# Chapter 5. Local and international contacts.

Following the reinstatement of the Board on August 5th, 2024, the advisory body commenced efforts to reestablish cooperation at the local, regional, and international levels. The Chairman actively participated in a series of meetings and consultations with key stakeholders to this end. The SER extends its sincere appreciation to its valued stakeholders for their patience and understanding during this transitional period.



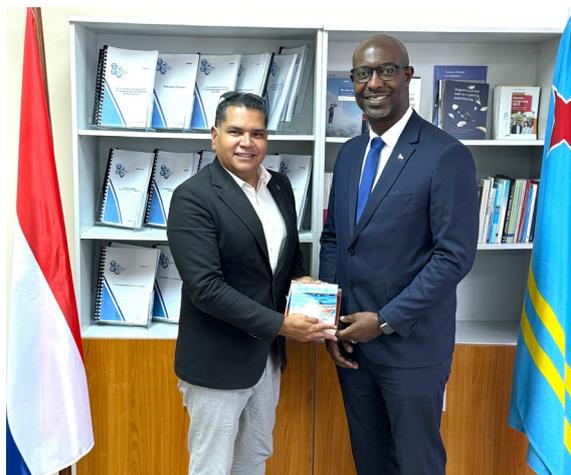
*Pictured from left to right: former SER Chairman Ir. D. Richardson  
Chairman elect H. Doran.*



*Pictured from left to right: Director of joint secretariat of SER/GOA/ROA, drs. R. Henriquez, Chairman SER Sint Maarten, H. Doran.*



*Pictured left to right SER Chairman H, Doran, Honorable Prime Minister/ Minister of General Affairs, Dr. L. Mercelina, SER SG, G. Richardson*



*Pictured from left to right: Chairman SER Aruba, mr.Hose Figaroa, Chairman SER Sint Maarten, H. Doran*



*President of the Consejo Económico y Social of the Dominican Republic, R. Toribio, Chairman SER Sint Maarten, H. Doran.*



*The SG of the Boards of Financial Supervision (Cft), H. van Midden, SER Chairman, H. Doran.*



*SER SG, G. Richardson, CEO Artech consulting, J. Hamlet, Office manager, S. de Weever, Senior Policy Advisor/Act SG Drs. Ing. S. Arnell, Legal Policy Advisor, C. Bute LLM*



*SER Vice Chairman J. Coffie, SER SG G. Richardson, Greece staff, President SER Greece, Ionais Paidas, Chairman H. Doran, Senior Policy Advisor Drs. Ing. S. Arnell, SER substitute member L. Bryson*



*SER Sint Maarten Vice Chairman, J. Coffie, Chairman SER Netherlands Prof. dr. K. Putters, Chairman SER Sint Maarten H. Doran*



*SER substitute member J. Dupersoy, SSMPA member P. Rogers, President SSMPA/SER member P.N. Lake, SER Chairman H. Doran*

# Chapter 6. Advice.



In the interest of transparency, the SER hereby publishes the list of all solicited advisory requests received during its period of operational delay. The advisory requests listed below were submitted during the period at which the Board had not yet been appointed.

1. Solicited advice request on the National Ordinance Sustainable Affordable Accessible Health Care Act (SAAHA) (previously known as the General Health Insurance (GHI) and the National Health Insurance (NHI) received from the former Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor, O. Ottley.
2. Solicited advice request on the National Ordinance Visitor's Tax and National Ordinance Preparedness and Resilience Resources Public Health and Tourism received from the former Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor, O. Ottley
3. Solicited advice request on amendment of National Decree passenger transport received from the former Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication, L. Lambriex.
4. Solicited advice request to conduct research on early childhood development funding model received from the former Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, drs. R. Samuel.
5. Solicited advice request concerning the revision of book 7 title 10 of the civil code concerning the short-term labor contracts received from the former Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor, O. Ottley.

During the preparation of the Annual Report for the year 2024, the aforementioned advisory reports had not yet been submitted to the Government of Sint Maarten. As such, these advisory reports will be made publicly available on the SER's website in the course of the year 2025.



**Sociaal  
Economische  
Raad Social  
Economic  
Council**

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL OF SINT MAARTEN

© 2024 Social Economic Council of Sint Maarten

Tel: +1 (721) 542-4060 • 542-4065 • 542-4066

E-mail: [info@ser.sx](mailto:info@ser.sx)

Address: Harbor view Building /Unit 4K, Eagle Road, Philipsburg, Sint Maarten

Website: [www.ser.sx](http://www.ser.sx)

