



## MARIGOT

Big plans  
to improve  
the capital

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MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR 2019



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## A Word From The President

Dear fellow citizens,

My entire team and I are pleased to present issue n°3 of our quarterly territorial newsletter, which is filled with updates on public infrastructure and island development.

The Collectivité's budget was voted in an assembly meeting on Wednesday, March 27, so we can now get busy with the realization of the most important projects for 2019. This year's budget is very limited as far as investment is concerned, which drove us to prioritize our public policies, and plan for improvements in every big neighborhood of the island in order to benefit the entire population.

The reconstruction of the island's schools has advanced nicely over the past few months, and is reaching completion. We have done 80% of the work included in the 2018 budget, with the final phase to be finished before school starts in September 2019. A temporary middle school created with prefabricated classrooms will be built by Robert Weinum high school, while awaiting the construction of a new middle school for 900 students by 2021. This project takes priority and we are working hard with the Department of Education and school superintendent. I know that quite a bit of effort was put forth by the academic community, students, parents, teachers, and staff during this long period of reconstruction, and I would like to thank all those who understood the challenges that the Collectivité faced and have been very patient.

Several new public infrastructure projects have been started since the beginning of the year. They are hard at work on the marketplace in Marigot, the gazebos at Orient Bay, the Rue de Hollande, improving the access roads at Hameau du Pont and Howell Center, and putting all electrical and Internet cables underground. Other projects will start in the second trimester of the year. I am thinking about the future Maison des Associations in Grand-Case, the improvements at the Place du Tribunal in Marigot, the creation of new water and sewage systems, and the restoration of public lighting. Traffic might be backed up at times, but we must do this work that is in the public interest.

I know I can count on your comprehension and support, as our primary objective is to complete the reconstruction efforts in order to kick-start sustainable economic development on the island.

Daniel Gibbs

### Newsletter of the Collectivité of Saint-Martin

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**Texts and Photos:** Communications Department of the Collectivité of Saint-Martin

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# INVESTMENT ON THE HORIZON IN SPITE OF BUDGET CONSTRAINTS

**On March 27, the Territorial Council of Saint Martin adopted a preliminary budget for 2019. In spite of not receiving an expected 25M€ from the post-Irma operational protocol, as signed by premier minister Edouard Philippe in November 2017, the Team Gibbs majority presented a balanced budget after revising certain large investment projects and economizing on the operating budget.**

The provisional spending package for 2019 will allow for the realization of necessary public service projects for the island, as well as the control of expenses where possible, permitting the president and his team to make new investments for the reconstruction of the island (Plan Phoenix). As a result, 2M€ will be allotted for the renovation of island schools, 4.9M€ to support various associations (sports, cultural, professional insertion, and prevention), and 800,000€ for rebuilding damaged roofs. In addition, 17.9M€ will go to people in difficulty, who need various kinds of social aide (APA – RSA – PCH...). Thanks to strict control, the Collectivité was able to reduce its expenses related to RSA from 16M€ in 2017 to 14M€ in 2018. The Collectivité will also dedicate 6.2M€ to support of youth projects (scholarships, mobility, training). And finally, 16M€ will go to the Collectivité's satellites (CTOS – SDIS – Tourist Office– CCISM – EHPAD Bethany Home). Operating expenses for the year equal 23M€, while salaries represent 42M€.

Operating expenses are partially covered by tax revenue, which is expected to reach 86M€ (compared to 110M€ before Irma). Another 76M€ comes from the French government through various programs.

## Community Projects To Improve The Quality Of Life

Investment projects are high on the list this year, in spite of a fragile financial context. The Collectivité plans to invest 120M€ in

structural resources, 6.8M€ to maintain the island's property and heritage, and provide financial aid of 2.4M€ to the EEASM to improve water and sanitation systems. Another 6M€ is directed toward rebuilding low-cost housing, and an exceptional subsidy from France will be distributed directly to the social sector.

To finance its projects, the Collectivité has access to co-financing from France and Europe for up to 75M€, and will take on a loan 10M€ to complete the financing of its investments.

Among the top projects for this year, the Collectivité is focusing once again on reconstruction of educational facilities, including the renovation of school buildings, making the high school in Marigot earthquake-resistant, the installation of a fiber-optic network in the schools, renovating the cafeterias, and improving public lighting and video surveillance equipment. There are also plans for reconstruction of sports centers, renovation of the Sandy Ground Bridge, and rehabilitation of electrical grids and water and sanitation systems.

## Structural Projects For The Island

Plans for new wooden shelters at Orient Bay, new Lolos at the market in Marigot, rebuilding Marina Port la Royale, development of the waterfront by the cemetery, renovation of the courthouse square in Marigot, and the construction of the Maison des Associations de Grand-Case are all



projects on the horizon for 2019. Construction of the new Middle School 900 should start at the end of 2019/ early 2020. In the meantime, 14 prefabricated classrooms will be built for the students of Soualiga Middle Schools, who have been housed at the Cité Scolaire Robert Weinum since hurricane Irma.

As president Daniel Gibbs points out, "The Collectivité is using its own means to complete those projects that are realistic and feasible, and which are community-based projects intended to improve the quality of life for the people of Saint Martin."

A meeting with Overseas Minister Annick Girardin on April 13 provided the opportunity to go over the terms of the French government's level of assistance for the reconstruction of Saint Martin. An amendment to the protocol signed in November 2017 could soon be ratified, to redefine this support. A new partnership France/COM, focused on projects for the future, is on the drawing boards. A concerted effort in working with the services of the French government should confirm these modifications, and the budget for the Collectivité would be revised in keeping with this new agreement.

# URBAN REVITALIZATION

## The Collectivité Continues Island Reconstruction To Improve Quality Of Life For Residents

**If the top priority for the Collectivité remains its young people, as seen in the rebuilding of all the schools and sports complexes expected to be totally operational by the next fall when classes begin, there is also a focus on the quality of life for the entire population.**

Various urban renewal projects and ongoing roadwork, as noted in the January 2018 issue of this newsletter, are nearly completion. The work to improve traffic near Howell Shopping Center in Marigot started in February and should be finished by the summer. The new parking lot next to the sports complex at La Savane was started in late March. At the same time, work to restore the Lolos in Marigot is also underway and planned to be complete by summer as well.

The Collectivité, which takes heed of the needs of its citizens, and considered the economic issues at stake for the nautical community if the bridge at Sandy Ground does not function properly, is planning major renovation so that this bridge is not regularly closed due to mechanical difficulties.

The reconstruction of Saint Martin is well underway.

### What To Do About Sandy Ground Bridge



Recurring problems over past years with the Sandy Ground Bridge, which were amplified since hurricane Irma, prompted the Collectivité to think seriously about the problem. An important navigational point for maritime traffic in Simpson Bay lagoon, the bridge was once again closed since last December, causing major problems for those who use it. The screw jack was recently replaced for a cost of 22,000€, and the bridge was able to go back to its usual hours for openings and closings as of March 7.

However, as the bridge is very corroded and in bad shape, its hydraulic accessories also impacted over time and corrosion, and as the harbor office also has to be rebuilt, the Collectivité is looking at more substantial work to be done throughout 2019.

Three options are being examined. The first consists of restoring the bridge with a complete cleaning and consolidation of the structure. This would certainly be the least expensive option, but also the most restricting for boaters. Because, in order to

do this, the entire bridge deck would have to be put in a “cocoon,” which would prohibit all maritime traffic. The second option under consideration would be taking the movable bridge span to an atelier where it could be treated and repaired. This solution would require something provisional to link the two sides of the road, but would also restrict all navigation. Finally, the third option being studied, certainly the most expensive but the least restricting: replace the moveable bridge span with a new one. For this third option, a call for proposals to select construction companies went out in early March. The cost is estimated at 1.3€. Work should start in the month of June, for a period of at least seven months, which would make the repairs of the bridge ready for the start of the next tourist season. As maritime traffic would be impacted, the Collectivité is working with the southern part of the island to make sure that the other two bridges, Simpson Bay and Causeway, will be operational during the work period.

# A New Intersection at Rue de Hollande/Howell Center/ Hameau du Pont

Work began in February to widen the road near the entrance of Howell Center, to create three lanes and make traffic more fluid in this busy spot. This project should take about six months, during which time traffic will certainly be impacted, but the Collectivité is doing its best so that this does not inconvenience anyone more than need be. The solution of making the street one lane is less of an issue than alternating traffic. So, from March 1 through April 12, and again from April 15 through June 14, there is one-lane traffic from the shopping center to the Agrément traffic circle. Those who use that road to get to the center of town from the Agrément traffic circle should use Boulevard Hubert Petit, better known by the name of Route de Galisbay. The paving of the road should be done at night.



## Work Should Be Finished By September

As we know, the entrance and exit to Howell Center are very busy and the intersection as it was had become outdated, even dangerous for those who use that road. The work consists of widening the road to three lanes, including a left-turn lane when coming from Agrément/Marigot, so that cars can position themselves to turn without blocking the traffic behind them. For those cars coming from

the other direction, from the center of town, which want to enter the shopping center, an extra lane on the right is planned. The goal is to make the traffic on Rue de Hollande as fluid as possible.

The redesign of the intersection also means moving the bus stop and well as the removal of several parking places near there.



## Consolidation Of The Pic Paradis Ravine (French Quarter)

Rainwater that runs down from Pic Paradis flows into the ravine of the same name, but which currently shows weakening along its embankments, creating a potential danger of the road collapsing. This danger has been taken seriously by the services of the Collectivité and studies that were done revealed three points that must be consolidated in the ravine. First, the work will consist of recalibration and repairs on the existing bridge where the RN7 cuts through the French Quarter. Secondly, upstream and downstream of the ravine, work will reinforce the embankment by Rue Cross The

Range. The requests for proposals went out in early March, and work should start next June, lasting for about eight months. In order not to impact the traffic on the RN7 as it crosses the French Quarter, the goal is to widen the road while the work is being done.



# A New Town Square Planned In Sandy Ground

Vue générale depuis Sandy Ground



Always in the quest to improve the quality of life for residents and create new pedestrian zones, while also making the island more beautiful and attractive, the Collectivité voted to create a town square in the neighborhood of Sandy Ground.

Adjacent to the Sandy Ground tennis courts, this land measures close to 350 sq meters and has been used as a parking lot, which will now be replaced by a tree-lined square with a promenade exclusively for use by pedestrians. Trees will be planted in front of the tennis courts with flowering plants on the roadside. The creation of this town square, where all traffic will be prohibited, will start in June 2019 and be completed by the end of the year. The cost is estimated at 500,000€.

## New Bleachers For Jean-Louis Vanterpool Stadium In the Starting Blocks



The sports hall and soccer field at Jean-Louis Vanterpool Stadium in Marigot have been operational for several months already. All that's missing are the bleachers—then the sports complex will be totally rebuilt. This will be done shortly, as the repairs on the metal roof, badly damaged by hurricane Irma, started on February 18. In addition, the roofs of other buildings at the stadium, such as the restrooms, and caretaker and maintenance facilities, are also

under construction. After four months of work necessary for the renovation of the metallic roof sheeting, the sports complex will be completely ready to host school athletic activities next fall. Under the aegis of vice-president Valérie Damaseau and sports director Charles Henri Palvair, this project is advancing as planned. The cost for rebuilding all of these roofs is 160,000€.

# EDF: All Electric Lines To Go Underground

It took four to five weeks for the EDF to restore power to all its clients after hurricane Irma. An unprecedented technical and logistical challenge in terms of personnel and equipment, especially in terms of the serious damage that Irma caused to the infrastructure. After the emergency phase was over, and while waiting for definitive reconstruction, it was necessary to secure the grid to avoid the risk of accidents: bare wires that were live, wires hanging too low, temporary cables unwound on the ground, open electrical boxes... The reconstruction of underground networks in Saint Martin started in early 2018, as in Saint Barthélemy, which hopes to have almost 100% of their electrical grid underground by the end of 2020. According to Laurent Veguer, manager of the reconstruction of the electrical grid for EDF Archipel Guadeloupe in the Northern Islands, this progress qualifies as "exceptional in comparison with Guadeloupe and even metropolitan France," and will allow the island to experience the next hurricanes cyclones with more serenity: electrical outages will be more limited, according to the strength of the storms, and getting power back on will be easier. The best news is the progressive removal of electrical poles.

## 30 million Euros To Rebuild The Grid

Past climatic experiences had already led the EDF to progressively bury two-thirds

of the electrical grid underground in Saint Martin, where the work done after Irma concerns the 75 remaining kilometers of wires, primary low-tension, of which 22 km have been put underground since the reconstruction project began.

Since the beginning of 2018, the Collectivité, the French government, and the EDF developed a project with a cost of close to 30 millions euros for the Northern Islands. 20 million are being used for Saint Martin, financed by funds to help collectivities for rural electricity. The sum is colossal, but justified by the size of the project, which required 15 specialists from EDF to come to the island, and of course all of the equipment and sub-contractors needed. After proposals were called for, several local companies were selected to do the work. They had to hire and train additional personnel, especially those in the areas of excavation and electricity.

## Work Inevitably Impacts Road Traffic

Reconstruction work—which no one can ignore in Saint Martin! —generates serious traffic problems, of which the Collectivité and EDF are well aware, but which are necessary to get the island back to normal. In order to avoid the maximum of one-lane alternating traffic, which is sometimes in-



Electricity and telephone cables next to each other in the same trench

evitable, the technical services office of the Collectivité and EDF are coordinating the work to minimize slowdowns as much as possible. In 2018, everyone experienced the temporary detour on the road in Grand-Case, by way of the school.

Additional projects include creating a third lane, as is the case on the top of the road at La Savane. In addition, certain work takes place during school vacations, when traffic is lighter. EDF, working with the Collectivité, informed local telephone companies that this was a good opportunity to put their cables underground as well, which would avoid digging up the roads and yet one more time. Water and sewage pipes are a different story.



A temporary third lane on the road at La Savane



Impasse Maccow at Agrément, EDF wires are now underground

# Let There Be Light - Pubic Lighting

85% of the island's public lighting suffered during Irma. Out of 1,589 streetlights, 53% disappeared as of September 6, 2017, and another 32% were damaged.



Re-establishing public lighting destroyed or damaged by hurricane Irma is one of the many priorities of the Collectivité, as part of its reconstruction efforts. An audit completed in June 2018 listed all of the lights, street-by-street, neighborhood-by-neighborhood, with a photo of each fixture. On the same date, 40% of the 1,589 various lights extant before Irma had been replaced or repaired and the number has certainly increased since then. The durable development office, chaired by vice president Steven Patrick and run by Romain Perreau, gave itself a double objective: to have everything back in service in the next two or three years, and to seize the opportunity to save energy, primarily by using LEDs, which use 70% less energy. The idea is also to focus on visual coherence in terms of overall design of all the light fixtures, to be aesthetically pleasing, but above all for optimal mechanical stability and resistance to wind. The choice of materials for the support poles is between concrete or galvanized steel, which is stronger than aluminum. The final goal is to put all electrical cables underground to secure the network in case of other climatic catastrophes. Getting all the public lighting back in service is part of the development contract signed in 2018 between the French government and the Collectivité, with a budget of 3.5 millions euros, financed 50% by each of those partners. The actual work is divided between a private company and the paid staff of the Collectivité's technical services department, all in close coordination with the EDF.

# 50 New Parking Places At La Savane Grand Case



As the new sports facilities are now complete, it's time to focus on the parking lot located between the sports complex and the Grand-Case post office. After studies were done, proposals for the work were requested, and are currently being considered. Once the contracts are awarded, the work will begin imminently, and should continue through the end of 2019.

Fifty paved parking spots are envisioned for cars and buses, with trees planted to provide shade. In addition to the parking lot, the Collectivité also plans for a pedestrian zone as well as a place for "street-workouts," and a senior citizen center. The section of the land located along the pond will be managed by the Conservatoire du Littoral, which owns the property and plans to create a bird observatory there.

The goal is to create a parking lot primarily for those people using the sports facilities, but also for the private elementary school and the Grand Case post office. At the moment, and well before hurricane Irma, this parking lot was used in a rather chaotic manner. The Collectivité wants to remedy the situation and offer people a pleasant place to park vehicles.

The provisional budget for this project is approximately 700,000€.





## New Agency For Economic Development In Saint Martin

One of the election promises for Team Gibbs was the creation of the Economic Development Agency, which suffered some setbacks in terms of other priorities imposed by hurricane Irma. However, the Collectivité's economic office is being restructured and the Collectivité hopes to divide its economic activities in three major sectors, so that each one can handle an equal part in the developmental planning and setting up of new programs. As a result, three distinct areas, all under the same office, will be created: Tourism; Rural and Fishing Affairs; and Economic Development Agency.

### Three Main Missions

The Economic Development Agency, whose organizational structure should be announced shortly, will have three main missions: **The attractiveness of the island**

and its image in terms of exterior investors; **Support for local businesses and the development of economic wellbeing;** **Revitalization of urban business zones** (Marigot and Grand Case).

The main goal of each of these missions is to promote local economic development. To promote the attractiveness of the island on the exterior, an agreement was signed with a French governmental organization, Business France, which will serve as an ambassador, representing the island to the outside world. Two tradeshows are already on the calendar, one in Miami in May, which targets international investors, and the other in Europe.

For the mission of supporting local businesses, the Economic Development Agency will work closely with existing organizations, the CCISM, Initiative Saint-Martin Active, and the ADIE, which recently opened in

Saint Martin. Businesses will be directed to one or the other of these organizations, based on their needs, their size, and the projects they have in mind. The role of the Economic Development Agency will be to serve as a reliable source of information, to act as a go-between, and support local businesses.

Finally, the mission of revitalizing urban business zones, propositions to beautify these zones and make them more dynamic, must be planned for financially. One of the first ideas under consideration: renovation of the storefronts in Marigot and Grand Case.

In 2019, The Economic Development Agency will develop internal activities with Collectivité, but is determined to be an autonomous entity and satellite to Collectivité, under a status that remains to be defined (EPIC, association...).



# Revitalization Of Downtown Marigot, A Major Project For The Majority

Our administrative capital, Marigot, has suffered from a declining image for quite a few years, in spite of efforts from merchants to keep the town alive. If certain businesses have definitely closed their doors since Irma, others have reopened. All they need now is attract a clientele. Revitalizing the business district requires drastic measures before confidence can be restored. Safety, beautification of squares and streets, new cultural and commercial amenities, new parking lots, organized transportation, and restoring public lighting... in short, it's the major component of the "Grand Marigot" project that president Daniel Gibbs envisions. A project that cannot be solved with the wave of a magic wand, but which must be faced in a pragmatic manner and built over time, taking into consideration the lack of public funding.

With this in mind, besides urban improvement projects that want to focus on pedestrians and other that want to embellish public spaces, the Collectivité has created a new post dedicated to the revitalization of downtown: the city manager, a position that already exists in other towns and collectivities. And it's Maggy Gumbs, with a keen interest in the economic situation, and who spent almost 30 years at the head of the CCI in Saint Martin, who has been entrusted with this role. The city manager has submitted several projects to the territorial council in hopes of kick-starting this revitalization. A few of these projects are being considered, others have been validated, and they will be part of a larger venture that encompasses the center of town as well as the waterfront.



## Revitalization Of Marigot And Grand Case

Full of ideas to revitalize the downtown area of Marigot, the city manager is creating a digital map of all businesses, counting the number of active companies on the island, as well as vacant premises. To complete this task, a census of businesses and stores in Marigot and Grand Case is underway. Eight young people were recruited last summer as part of the "Youth Vacation Employment" program to do the census. A total of 1,200 stores and businesses have been listed. Vacant premises have also been counted. All businesses and stores will soon be identified on a map that can soon be downloaded as a mobile app for smartphones.

# Restoring The Fish Market



Included among approved projects, for which work started in March, is the reconstruction of the fish market along the waterfront in Marigot. This market, which sells fish caught by the 15 professional fishermen on the island, is a true tourist attraction as well as the supplier of ultra-fresh seafood for restaurants and individuals. Like much of the island's infrastructure, the fish market was damaged by hurricane Irma and has to be restored to meet health standards. The reconstruction project as approved by the executive council last November, so the fish market should soon be back in its former splendor. European Funds (FEDER) paid 133,000€, with the Collectivité providing close to 58,000€.



# Landing Site For Fishermen

In the same vein, the executive council should vote on the creation of a landing site for fishermen along the waterfront in Marigot. A project supported by the city manager, complementing the fish market and allowing the fishermen to be closer to the principal point of sale for their seafood, as well as reinforcing the charm of local traditions and folklore for tourists. The estimated budget for this project is 1,580,000€, and European Funds will once again be solicited.

# High Speed Internet By Late 2022

Take advantage of the island's reconstruction to create a new Saint Martin. This promise made by president Daniel Gibbs the day after hurricane Irma is fully illustrated by the project to reduce the digital divide by putting an underground fiber-optic network in every neighborhood.



*The digital telecommunications sector met at the prefecture on April 4 to discuss the project to bring underground fiber-optic to all homes on the island.*

As Irma destroyed the telephone wires that once carried landlines and Internet, many homes have been deprived of these essential services. Today, the Collectivité is on board with the national desire to reduce the digital divide by bringing high-speed Internet into every neighborhood and every house on the island, even the most difficult to reach. The goal is to ensure the resilience of the network in the face of a future hurricane, by placing the maximum of the fiber-optic cable sleeves underground, explains Jean-Sébastien Hamlet, the elected official in charge of the commission for new technologies and audio-visual, along with Jean-Pierre Razin, director of digital and audio-visual technology for the Economic Development Department. This project to provide the entire population of Saint Martin with very high-speed broadband is in the planning stages, in coordination with digital service providers and the French government. It is part of the overall French Very High-Speed Broadband Plan, which is committed to bringing a minimum speed of 3.75 MB/s all across France by 2022.

The job is monumental: close to 78 kilometers of distribution networks and almost as many for the backhaul network to be built on the entire island, for an initial estimated cost of between 14 M€ and 18 M€. The territorial master plan for digital development is being updated, in order to take into account all of the new data, and should be ready by summer 2019, when it then must then be approved by the Territorial Council. The service providers, who offer high-speed Internet in places where the underground network already exists, are in the starting blocks. In addition, the Banque des Territoires (group Caisse des Dépôts) has launched a study to accelerate the reconstruction of the digital infrastructure. This was presented to all the players on the digital stage on April 4 at the prefecture, during a technology meeting. The project should get underway in 2020, with the goal of covering 100% of the homes in Saint Martin by the end of 2022. Which requires serious cooperation between the telecommunications service providers as well as with the public authorities and the service providers if that goal is to be met.

# Deck Repairs Started By **The Collectivité** At **Marina Port la Royale** in Marigot



Marina Port la Royale primarily comprises private condos. The Collectivité holds 5% of the property including the decks that encircle the water. After Semsamar's management contract for the two marinas in Marigot expired on December 31, 2018, the Collectivité took over the management of its property and started repairs on the deck at Marina Port la Royale. Semsamar will compete other projects as part of the completion terms of their contract.

Representatives from the Collectivité's technical services department are rebuilding the wooden walkway that runs along the businesses and restaurants at the marina. Once this deck has been consolidated, it will be covered with a synthetic surface and decorated with flowers. The Collectivité is also improving the overall lighting in the public areas at the Marina. This work should be finished by the start of the next tourist season. The beautification with flowers project also includes the business district of Marigot.

## Parking At The Marina, A Question of Security

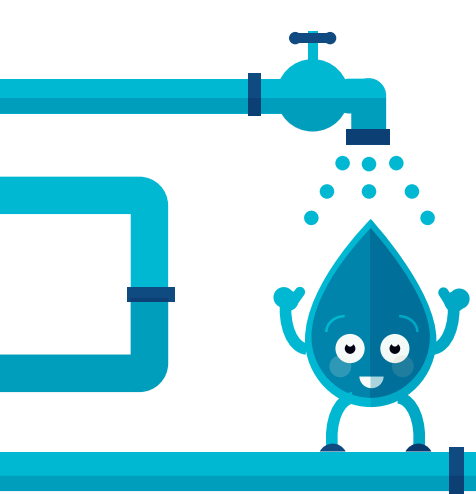
Prefect Sylvie Feucher and president Daniel Gibbs decided to be proactive about security and access to the marina, allowing tourists

to stroll about without fear, and merchants to work in calm conditions. A meeting was held with local merchants on April 3 to present ideas that had been discussed beforehand by the Prefecture and the Collectivité to solve the problem of security that has existed for several years.

Decisions made by the authorities concerning parking (Low-Town side) are as follows:

- Demolition of the low walls around the parking area
- Replace public lighting on the parking area
- Use of the neighboring public land as overflow parking
- Install video protection at the parking area
- Surveillance and investigations of drug traffic by the gendarmerie
- Regular notification by merchants of any aggressive or violent behavior
- An agreement with the ARS/Justice to provide interventions for homeless people living on this site
- Securing and cleaning up of the condo area by the people who are responsible for it; a joint meeting will be set up.

The Prefecture and the Collectivité will follow up regularly to make sure that these commitments are upheld.



# WATER AND SANITATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

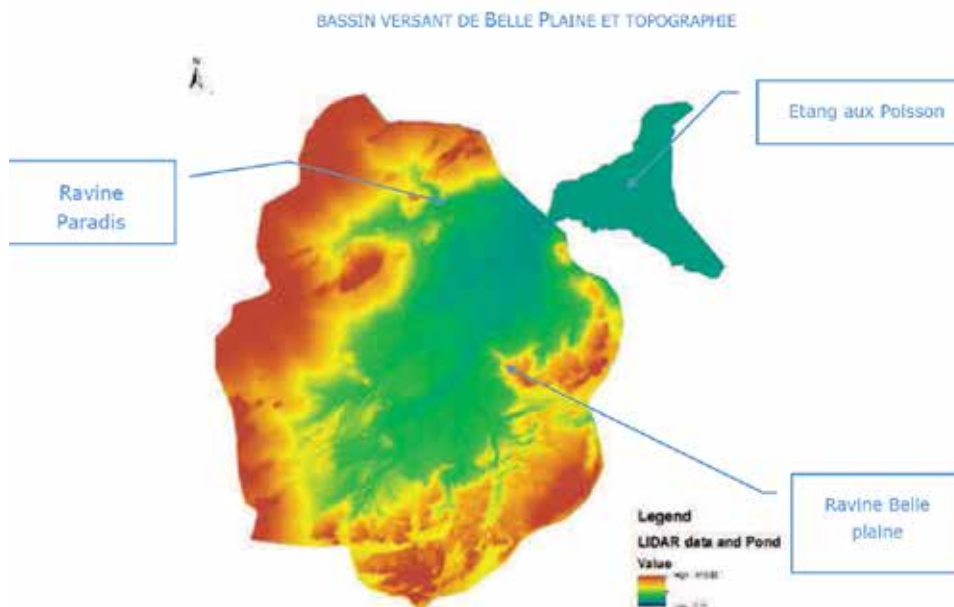
## A Political Desire To Stop Flooding In The French Quarter

**Past experience has proved the need to create a system of protection against flooding in the French Quarter.**

The drainage basin flowing into the ravine in the French Quarter and the Paradis ravine, which measures 9 sq. kilometers, extends to the community of Belle Plaine, which is divided between the French side and Dutch side of the island. In times of heavy rain, these two ravines are the source of recurring flooding, as happened in 1999 with hurricane Lenny and again more recently with the heavy rains in November 2014. In order to protect people and their property, as well as ensure sustainable development in new business zones, a project designed to reduce flooding was envisioned, in coordination with the Dutch side.

### Work To Start In 2019

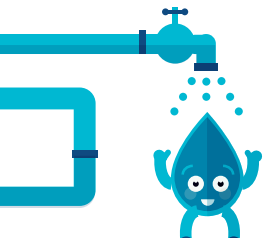
As part of the operational agenda for cross-frontier collaboration, this project was delayed due to the volume of red tape—including water legislation—which is why the work initiated by the government of Sint Maarten in 2016 was suspended after a control by the gendarmerie on the construc-



tion site at Captain Oliver's marina. If the first phase of the work can start in 2019, with the construction of two civil engineering projects at the Paradis ravine, the remainder will be subject to a public inquiry to inform the population and seek their opinion.

The totality of the project will essentially require the creation of two retention basins with a capacity of 140,000 cubic meters, as well as raising the height of the retaining wall around the middle school.





## New Water Treatment Plant For Friar's Bay

Already damaged by hurricane cyclone Gonzalo, the water treatment plant (STEP) for the Batterie development at Friar's Bay, was entirely destroyed by hurricane Irma and must be replaced. This month, the EEASM will begin construction of this new plant, with the work expected to take four months. The capacity is estimated for 450 residents, with the possibility of doubling its volume in the future, as this residential neighborhood continues to expand.



## Water Treatment At Canonnières: Final Repairs By The EEASM

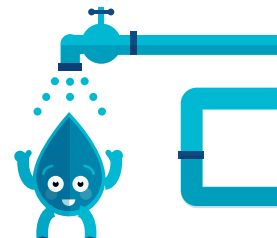


Located in Les Terres-Basses along the beach, at the far end of Long Bay, the water treatment plant was badly impacted by hurricane Irma, in spite of a protective wall built after hurricane Gonzalo. This plant receives wastewater from Agrément, by way of Galisbay, Concordia, Marigot, Sandy Ground, and Nettle Bay. But not Les Terres-Basses, where the villas all have an individual water

treatment system. The damage from the hurricane was repaired as best as possible, especially the electrical system, but the plant is only functioning on a partial basis while waiting for the arrival of the new system as ordered by the EEASM. In the end, the water treatment plant at Canonnières will be repaired exactly as it was before, with a total budget of 900000€, financed by Europe

as part of the post-Irma reconstruction. The plant is expected to treat the wastewater for 12,500 residents, but a significant amount of the intake will come from rainwater, as it sometimes less complicated to divert the rain into the sanitation system, rather than into storm draining systems or ravines.

# Organic Water Treatment Plant For The French Quarter



**The Collectivité and its EEASM has opted for organic water treatment for the French Quarter, taking into account post-Irma constraints.**

Irma: Average winds at 295 km/hour with even stronger gusts. Not to mention high seas, which at the apogee of the storm reached 3.6 meters higher than normal, partly due to storm surge and partly due to a strong decrease in barometric pressure. Sadly, as these extreme conditions could be repeated with another such storm, it is essential to take them into consideration when building. This rule of thumb was applied by the EEASM (Water and Sanitation Department of Saint Martin) for the construction of the new water treatment plant for the French Quarter, located on the edge of the Etang aux Poissons. As a result, only the foundations and the tanks could eventually be flooded. But all of the fragile equipment, and especially the electrical and digital circuits were installed four meters above the ground to be sheltered



*Overall view of the water treatment plant in the French Quarter*

from any possible water damage. At this time, only 9,000 clients are connected to the new water treatment plant in the French Quarter, which treats an average of 1,000 cubic meters of wastewater every day. Designed for a maximum of 18,000 habitants and 3,100 cubic meters per day, this facility

is also treating wastewater from not only the French Quarter but also Orient Bay, Chevise, Cul-de-Sac, Mont Vernon, Hope Estate, and Espérance. This capacity will allow for the extension of the wastewater collection system, notably in the French Quarter.

## French Quarter: A Modern Water Treatment System

**The new water treatment plant in the French Quarter will be inaugurated before summer 2019.**

Known as a Sequencing Batch Reactor, the new Organica water treatment plant in the French Quarter Organica selected by the EEASM functions via a modern biological process that allows for the treatment of wastewater on a reduced footprint with optimal results. A large space planted with vegetation treats the water as it leaves the station, thanks to bacteria naturally affixed to the roots of the plants. At the end of the cycle, the treated water goes into the Etang aux Poissons without any concerns. Another reason that this system was chosen is that it does not generate any odors, which is important in such a dense urban neighborhood. The idea is to compost the sludge from the station at the eco-site in Cul-de-Sac. Any grease will be recycled and sand used in public works projects. Any inevitable trash found in the wastewater will be moved to the eco-site.

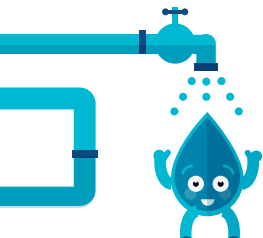
The water treatment plant is managed by

SAUR, the new company responsible for public drinking water and drainage service in Saint Martin. The plant went into service in November 2018 for a trial period to work out any kinks, and will be officially inaugurated in May. Total budget: 13.5 million euros: 39% FEDER, 22% AFB, 13% French government, 26% Collectivité and EEASM.

In conjunction with the school district, the EEASM envisages signing an agreement to increase students' awareness about environmental protection and the treatment of wastewater, working with the schoolteachers and professors from the SVT.



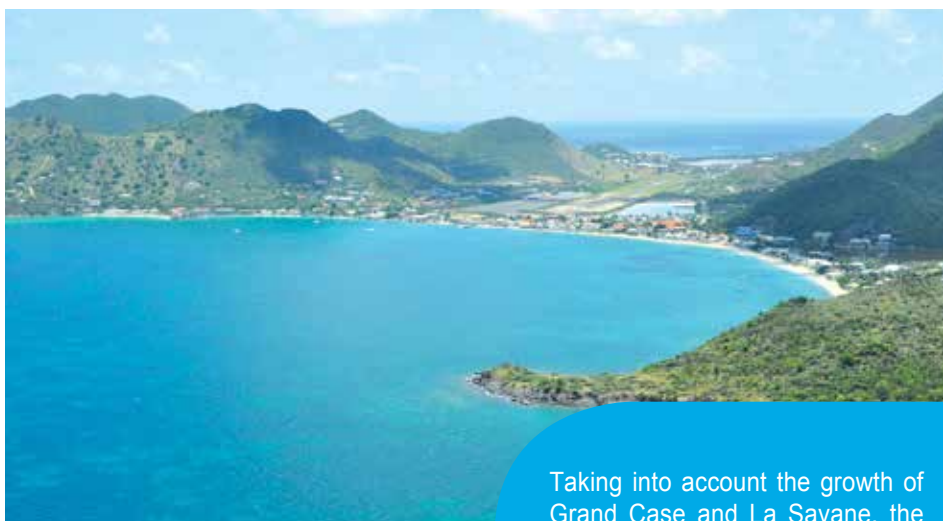
*A modern water treatment system for the French Quarter*



## Grand-Case: The EEASM To Put In Sewers

Politicians have been discussing it for 20 years, and someone is finally doing something about it! A priority for Daniel Gibbs, president of the Collectivité, and Dominique Riboud, president of the EEASM, the request for proposals has gone out to give Grand Case the sewage system it so badly needs.

Grand-Case, located between the Caribbean Sea and a salt pond, has long dumped its wastewater into the environment. No sewers in Grand Case, where the most ecologically minded have a tank for wastewater, and a truck comes to empty it when full. Only La Savane and the public schools are connected to the Millrum pumping station along the national highway. This lack of a proper sewage system could not continue, and the EEASM has taken on the financial feasibility of this project, putting out a call for proposals for the creation of sewers and a sewage treatment plant at Millrum (close to the CTOS). The work should begin before summer 2019 and be completed before the end of the year, primarily impacting the Boulevard de Grand Case. Trenches will be dug for the sewage pipes as well as for potable water pipes, rainwater drainage pipes, and cables for public lighting at the request



*Grand Case: Finally, a sewage system*

Taking into account the growth of Grand Case and La Savane, the Millrum pumping station will be replaced with a water treatment station designed to serve 8,000 residents.

of the Collectivité, so that the roads are not dug up every five minutes.

## Grand-Case: Wastewater Collected By Vacuum Pump

The technique chosen by the EEASM for wastewater treatment in Grand Case is like a vacuum system, where the water is pumped into tanks beneath the road, and whose contents are automatically emptied when full. The pressure from the water forces the valve to open and the wastewater is pumped toward the main vacuum system.

This process has several advantages. First, it allows the pipes to be placed at a depth of just 30", which does not endanger foundations, which are frequently quite old. It is also less expensive than a traditional drainage system and it lasts longer. As the wastewater does not stagnate in the pipes, there is less production hydrogen sulfide—the same

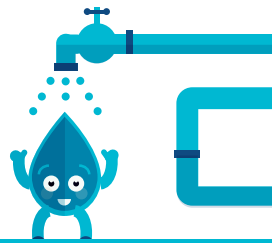
gas given off by sargassum seaweed. This gas is very corrosive for metal and can also attack the plastic in the pipes and cause it to break. Currently underway, the call for

proposals to do this work only concerns the handful of companies that can handle this modern technique. Budget: 3 million euros, uniquely for the vacuum system.





# Drinking Water: A Simplified, Optimal Process



*Reverse osmosis water desalination system*

Did you know that the Galisbay desalination plant, owned by the EEASM, produces more than 5,500 cubic meters of drinking water per day? That's two million per year! Since December 2018 and the signature of a contract with the Collectivité, SAUR (Society For Urban and Rural Development) is 100% responsible for the water: production and distribution, the treatment of wastewater, maintaining the system, billing, and optimization of procedures. This new arrangement allows the Collectivité to simplify the old process, when the UCDEM and Générale des Eaux —both subsidiaries of Veolia—shared the water management duties:

the UCDEM produced it and Générale des Eaux assumed all responsibility once the water left the plant in Galisbay. Created in 1986, using the rather expensive method of thermo-compression, the desalination plant switched to the more modern process of reverse osmosis in 2006. Thirteen years later, it is necessary to revise the equipment, with an ecological eye. "We are planning to get the necessary equipment to measure the performance of the water production, and optimize everything," Patrick Lentz, director of EEASM, tells us. For example, by recuperating energy in order to decrease the use of electricity produced at the plant by

EDF's diesel generators. The good news is that your water bill, already reduced by SAUR, should only continue to go down, to the great satisfaction of all customers.

## Improving Efficiency

Another way to reduce the cost of water consists of working on the efficiency of the system. Only 60% of the water produced arrives at your faucets, the other 40% disappears along the way. Leaks, occasional breaks, very old water meters, and theft are at the origin of this loss, as well as a salty environment, which is very aggressive, and tends to weaken the pipes. We are still far from the efficiency goal of 85%, as set by the government in 2010 as per the Grenelle II Law, but very happy that this goal is expected by the EEASM by 2023.



## Medico-Social Help For Seniors And Disabilities

A 60-bed residence for senior citizens and a center for those with disabilities represent new medico-social projects for the island.

The last steering committee meeting for the medico-social office, co-presided by the Collectivité and the Regional Health Agency (ARS) in late February, approved financing for the construction budget of 42 M€, via a loan from the French Agency for Development. The financing for the ARS for the operation of this structure was also set. The 1900 sq meter property at La Savane was purchased several years ago, with an eye toward this project, which is a real need for Saint Martin. The ground-breaking is planned for late 2019, and the inauguration of the building in 2021.

### A Complete Structure For Seniors

As the EHPAD in Galisbay is already at capacity, the 60 beds at this new structure are anxiously awaited and will comprise:

- An assisted-living unit
- An Alzheimer unit
- A gerontology-psychology unit
- A multi-purpose unit

The services offered also benefit from a method that integrates support service and treatment (MAIA). The service for home nurses (SSIAD) will be based at the home, which also plans to include autonomous seniors among its residents. «This centre will meet the needs of a new EHPAD, but also cover and take into account the needs of all those with disabilities, for whom there is almost nothing available on our little island today,” says Annick Petrus, responsible for solidarity and family services, and who has been following this project very closely.

### Many New Services For Handicapped Adults And Children

When it comes to handicaps, from severe physical disabilities to intellectual limitations, children up to 20 years old are currently obliged to go to centers in Guadeloupe or metropolitan France. But when the family does not have the means to pay for such a move, the child has no option but to stay at home. As for adults, the only options are to go to a structure in France or be cared for by their family. The future site in Saint Martin has planned many new services to help those children and adults with handicaps:

- An early medico-social center for children up to 6 years, to handle the screening of handicaps, care, and therapy;
- A medico-educative institute with 10 beds for children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities;
- A special-needs home care service for



*Annick Petrus, third vice president of the Collectivité, responsible for solidarity and family services, training, and education*

children 0 to 20 years, to help them live in a normal situation;

- A special home for adults with multiple handicaps;
- A service to help provide work for handicapped adults with an eye toward inserting them into a professional situation;
- A medico-social support service for handicapped adults; and an accompanying service to a more normal life, intended to define the life project for people 20 to 60 years old, in an open environment.





*Jean-Marie Marchais, director of the EHPAD, and council member Annette Philips, president of the EHPAD, with two residents of the home.*

## Bethany Home: Reconstruction Underway

**The senior citizens living at Bethany Home are returning little by little to a more normal daily existence while work continues.**

When Irma hit, the 35 seniors at Bethany Home were invited to move to lower floors of the building located in Galisbay. And it's a good thing, as the roofs of the EHPAD—an establishment for housing dependent senior citizens—did not resist the assaults by high winds. As a result, the capacity was reduced from 40 beds to 33. Several residents were rapidly evacuated to Guadeloupe, based on a decision by the Regional Health Agency (ARS), and were replaced by seniors whose homes were no longer fit for occupation. Several weeks after the hurricane, president Daniel Gibbs made the decision to have the roof fixed in a temporary manner, allowing life to start to get back to normal. "I must applaud the staff of the

EHPAD," notes Annette Philips, territorial council member and president of Bethany Home. "They were all there to help, even if they were going through difficult times themselves, and «they did not shirk their responsibilities. These are people who are big-hearted and love their work."

### Work Completed by September 2019

The rebuilding work that started in October 2018 is still ongoing, and should be completed by September 2019. This comprises replacing the roofs, replacing woodwork with aluminum, and replacing the doors

The EHPAD building belongs to the Société Immobilière de Guadeloupe (SIG), which rents it to the Collectivité for a sum of 152,000€ per year. There are currently 28 residents, of which the oldest will be 97 in a few months.

to all the rooms. At the same time, work is being done in the kitchen to improve production conditions and general hygiene. During this time, meals are being prepared in the hospital kitchens and delivered to the EHPAD, with the help of the staff. As required for security, the fence was also replaced. «We are trying little-by-little to get everything back to normal," notes Jean-Marie Marchais, director of the EHPAD, who is unhappy about the economic deficit caused by the consequences of the hurricane, as the establishment had been on a good financial footing. He is however happy to be able to welcome new residents.

# A Territorial Training Program To Help The Local Economy

One of the priorities for Team Gibbs this term is the young people of the island. Often at loose ends, many of them just hang out on the streets. The Collectivité, under the aegis of Annick Petrus, its vice president in charge of professional training, would like to come to grips with this fundamental societal problem in Saint Martin and working with various partners has come up with a territorial plan for professional training, whose first phase (2019-2020) is now in place



As a reminder, a study of the island of Saint Martin done by the INSEE Guadeloupe in 2016 highlighted the demographics for the younger sector, and found that 35% of the population is under 20 years old. The study also noted another disturbing reality: With the scarcity of post-high school educational possibilities in Saint Martin, less than 25% of the 18-24 year olds are in school (compared to 46% in Guadeloupe and 52% in metropolitan France). This low number of 18-24 year olds in school leads to a deficit of diplomas superior to two years of study after high school: only 14% of 15 year olds no longer in school hold a diploma of level I, II or III, compared to 18% in Guadeloupe or 26% in metropolitan France. Official unemployment among young people is high (26% of those from 15-24 years old) and there are even more not in school or working.

To try and combat this trend, which causes societal problems, and in collaboration with the Pôle Emploi (employment office) and the principal training organization in Saint Martin, a study was done to see what kind of employment opportunities exist at the most influential local companies. The study

revealed a need for training. As a result, the first phase of the Territorial Plan For Professional Training comprises 30 training courses, directly modeled on local economic needs and presented in a brochure with an evocative title: "Get A Grip On Yourself. Get A Job!" The various options include refresher courses for trainees, training for building and construction jobs, as well as for social and cultural activities. "The training options selected by the Collectivité for this territorial initiative are those which best meet the needs of local businesses, and the Pôle Emploi is responsible for their implementation with the training organizations," indicates vice-president Annick Petrus.

## Very Successful Training Forum Held In March

The Collectivité invited the general population and especially young people to participate in a forum on March 22 at the CCISM where all of the training programs were presented by the organizations selected for this program (Greta, Fore IDN, Kaïri Formation, Ifacom Formation, CREPS Antilles-Guyane,

and LADOM, the organization dedicated to mobility). A large number of people attended, young people as well as those of all ages who are seeking employment, and they were able to get all of the necessary information about the 30 training courses. With an innovative option: the possibility to pre-enroll during the daylong forum. In addition, another advantage of major importance: all of these training programs are paid. Which means that those job seekers already getting unemployment payments will continue to do so, and for the others, the Collectivité has planned for a salary or allowance. "Another note-worthy aspect of this Territorial Training Program is a schedule in three phases, over three years, offering the trainees the option of taking a long course. This is good news not only for the trainees, but also for the training organ," adds vice-president Annick Petrus.

*The brochure with the training options for 2019-2020 is available on the Collectivité website: [www.com-saint-martin.fr](http://www.com-saint-martin.fr). The Department for Training, Apprenticeships, and Employment can answer any questions from the population.*

# Visit To Cité Scolaire Robert Weinum

**President Daniel Gibbs and school superintendant Mostafa Fourar went together to visit the Cité Scolaire Robert Weinum, on Monday April 1, 2019, to see the six new modular classrooms built as an extension of the building to house the students from Collège Soualiga de Cul de Sac, which was destroyed by hurricane Irma. They were accompanied by Madame Annick Pétrus, vice president in charge of education and Michel Sanz, head of education in Saint Martin.**

Since they went back to school in November 2017, the students from Collège Soualiga have been housed at the Cité Scolaire Robert Weinum at La Savane, which as a result has one high school and two junior highs under its roof. The Collectivité, with the support of the Foundation of France, undertook the building of the six modular classrooms to increase the school's capacity. The delivery of these classrooms was considerably late, due to logistical problems during the school year. However, these six air-conditioned modules are now operations and welcomed students as of April 1st. Other than a leak in one of the air-conditioners that disturbed the teacher in that classroom (the air-conditioner was replaced the next day), the integration of the new classrooms went very smoothly for all of the students. These classrooms add 60 sq meters of space and are sufficiently large to provide students with good learning conditions.

Welcomed by the principal of Lycée Robert Weinum, Madame Borel, and the principal of Collège Soualiga, Monsieur Frigo, and the president of the Caisse Territoriale des



Œuvres Scolaires (CTOS), Madame Laborde, Gibbs and Fourar made a first stop at the school cafeteria. They then visited

the new classrooms and took the time to chat with the students and their teachers, recognizing the efforts that were made in difficult conditions over the past months, and encouraged them to see their situation relative to that in other places.

Desirous of providing students with the most optimal learning conditions in the future, the Collectivité opted to build a new middle school, expected to open in 2021. While waiting, the Collectivité of Saint Martin and the school board approved the creation of 14 additional modular classrooms for next fall. These will be for the students from Collège Soualiga. High school students at Lycée Robert Weinum will use the six modular classrooms already built. The four Algéco classrooms, which were made available by the gendarmerie, will be move close to the sports complex and will serve as locker rooms for students and for storage of scholastic materials.



*Une des six classes modulaires de la Cité scolaire*

# Helping Students Pass Their Driving Test



On Monday, April 1, President Daniel Gibbs and school superintendant Mostafa Fourar signed an agreement with Jeanine Hamlet, principal of the Lycée Professionnel, and a driving school, in order to pay for students in the Auto Mechanics Preparation class at the professional high school to pass their driving test.

This agreement has a budget comprising 40,000€ from the school district, 10,000€ from the Collectivité in direct funding and 30,000€ from post-Irma donations for Saint Martin from the Foundation of France, which decided to support this project. As a result, 20 students in their last year of school will pass their driving test before the end of the term. This agreement was signed for four years, and will benefit a total of 80 students from the Auto Mechanics class through 2022. The students in this program especially need a driver's license in order to be hired by garages once they finish school and become skilled at their trade. Gibbs recognizes the support of the school district and the Foundation of France for this project, which helps local students: "You will benefit from this wonderful opportunity," says the president. "You have to do your best and work hard to pass your exams. I am very supportive of this type of project and I'd like to thank school superintendant, Mr. Fourar, as well as the Foundation of France, which has provided support for numerous projects in Saint Martin."

If the project proves successful, the superintendent and the president envision renewing the agreement and why not add other classes as well.



# Digital Tablets Gifted To Students

It's an idea that the French government launched in 2016, as part of the Digital Technology For Education program: provide primary and secondary school students with individual digital tablets to help them learn.



Since the 2016 fall term, the Digital Technology For Education program has become a reality in 1,668 middle schools and 1,817 elementary schools. It is part of a global academic concept designed to develop pedagogical innovation, while improving learning and success for the students. A total investment of close to one billion euros has been made so far.

The Collectivité de Saint-Martin is no exception, and will be part of this national Digital Technology For Education program, through financial participation. The first public schools in Saint Martin have been equipped, including Mont des Accords Middle School on February 14 and Hervé Williams Elementary School in Marigot on February 15, 2019.

Represented by third vice-president, Annick Pétrus, who is in charge of education, the Collectivité provided 27 digital tablets to an eighth-grade class at Mont des Accords, who were the first students to get this fabulous electronic device. What a great surprise for these middle-school kids, who were not expecting a gift of this kind to help with their homework. The distribution of these tablets from a French company by way of the supplier, GIG, as selected by the Collectivité, will continue in other schools on the island over the next two academic years.

By the end of this program, the Collectivité de Saint-Martin will have given out 1,427 tablets for a sum of 700,000€, co-financed by the French government.

