

ORTCP NEWS



Newsletter of the OECS Regional Tourism Competitiveness Project

September 2018

ORTCP Holds First Meeting With Business Community in Castries Central Business District

Sections of the Business Community from the Castries Central District met officials of the ORTCP at the end of August in an introductory meeting aimed at sensitizing them about the plans for Castries under the ORTCP. The meeting was addressed by Mayor Peterson Francis, who is a frontline supporter of the Project, followed by the main presentation by Dr Lorraine Nicholas, Project Manager of the ORTCP. During her presentation, Dr Nicholas explained the main purpose of the Project, which she noted was 'to improve tourism competitiveness', while highlighting some of the critical issues faced by visitors to Castries. "The City is so congested", she said, "that it makes navigation difficult and uncomfortable for tourists, whether they are walking or in a taxi." In addition, "the lack of signage, and the lack of uniformity of the buildings (combined with aged architecture in some cases) make parts of the city unattractive and may be partly responsible for the lack of spending by tourists", Dr Nicholas asserted.

The Façade Improvement Programme is focused on enhancing sections of the Central Business District (including the Boulevard) and in particular, increase the aesthetic appeal of the buildings to increase the overall experience for visitors. The programme is expected to get underway later this year.

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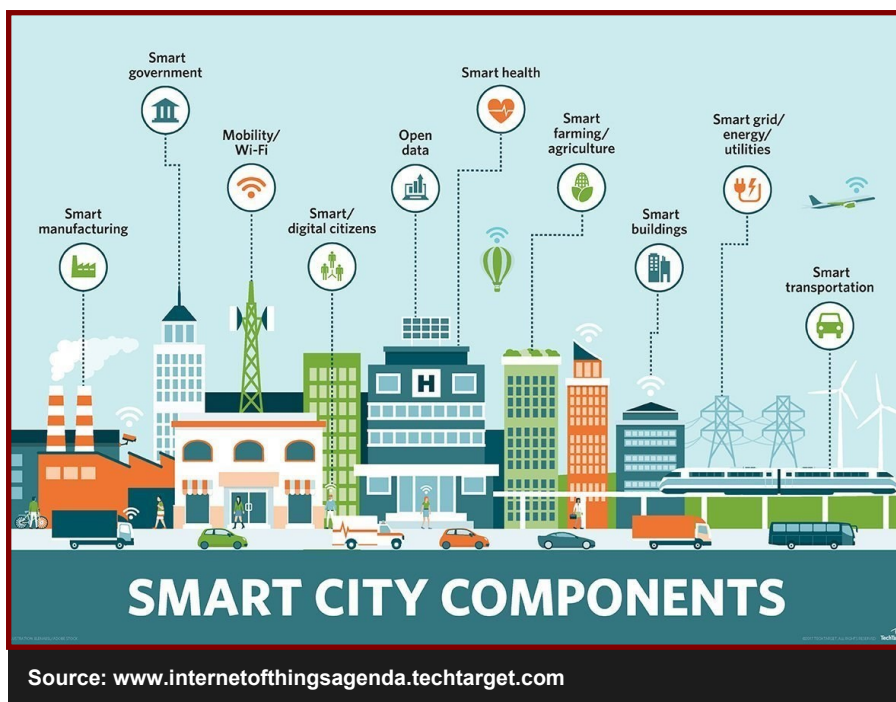
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Project Manager of the ORTCP, Dr Lorraine Nicholas presents at Meeting with Business Community

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Can Castries Become a Smart City?

Smart Sustainable Cities is a people centered phenomenon that responds to the needs of modern societies, by introducing information technology that help make cities smarter. Some of the early developers of smart city technology are Cisco and IBM, and in addition to these technology giants laying claim to being among the pioneers in smart city projects, they can equally gain credit for providing innovative opportunities for today's seekers of contemporaneous methods to collect, access, analyse, and transmit data and information.

The concept of smart cities began more than one decade ago. According to Tyler Falk, writing on the topic of Innovation, as early as 2005, the initial concept was catalysed by former US President Bill Clinton, when he "challenged network equipment maker, Cisco, to use its technical know-how to make cities more sustainable". Falk notes that "as a result, Cisco dedicated \$25 million over five years to research the topic, spawning what it called the Connected Urban Development programme. This involved working with the cities of San Francisco, Amsterdam and Seoul on pilot projects to prove the technology's potential. In 2010, when Cisco's pledge to the Clinton Foundation expired, it launched its Smart and Connected Communities division in order to commercialise the products and services that it had developed during the programme."

Since then, smart city technology have continued to grow with many other IT Companies adding to the pie, leading to the forecast that "annual spending on smart city technology will reach \$16 billion by 2020".

ORTCP Project Manager Learns from a World Leader in Smart Cities

Korea is distinguished as a world leader in smart cities and e-government, boasting an estimated 70 smart cities across its nation. In July, ORTCP's Project Manager, Dr Lorraine Nicholas learnt more about the concept of Smart cities, when she participated in the 3rd conference on Smart Sustainable Cities and E-Governance. With the gained knowledge the Project Manager is expected to steer the components of the Project that focus on the sustainable city redevelopment and improvements to the business environment in Castries.

Establishing a Smart City

A Smart city is described by techopedia.com as "a designation given to a city that incorporates information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance the quality and performance of urban services such as energy, transportation and utilities in order to reduce resource consumption, wastage and overall costs. The overarching aim of a smart city is to enhance the quality of living for its citizens through smart technology."

Key fundamentals required for establishing a Smart City platform includes:

- Preparation of data ecosystem;
- Data exchange and sharing;
- Integrated analysis and application; and
- Private/public collaboration



Façade Improvement Programme for Castries

The Façade Improvement program and the pedestrianization of the William Peter Boulevard are among the first activities to be implemented under the ORTCP. These activities were strategically selected as a means to enhance the economic viability of businesses; as well as improve the aesthetic image and the attractiveness of the Castries Central Business District (CBD) to retail customers and visitors.

In addition to the façade improvements, the program is also seeking to provide complementary business support services to these local businesses, in a bid to help beneficiary businesses to improve their operations and offerings, especially retail businesses that cater to tourists.



Participants during meeting show keen interest in discussions



Section of the Business Community during meeting with the ORTCP

Business Community in Castries Support Façade Improvement Programme

The Business Community in downtown Castries has shown interest in and support for the Façade Improvement Programme that is to be introduced by the ORTCP. During the first scheduled meeting held at the end of August, which was attended by some business owners/operators, there was muse and curiosity, as individuals used the opportunity to seek clarifications and make recommendations on how the city can be improved. Some of their interests centred around the planned improvements to sidewalks, to traffic flow, to pedestrianisation of the Boulevard, and to the Castries Market upgrade. In commenting on the planned sidewalk improvements to be undertaken by the Project, the business community agreed that this should be treated as a priority, and suggested that the designs might include installing railings for the safety of pedestrians, while ensuring a well designed foot network, accompanied by proper signage that makes traversing and navigating the city easy. To further coordinate pedestrian flow in the city, and particularly to improve the visitor experience, the construction of a pedestrian overpass on Jeremie Street was also recommended by the Business Community, in addition to a well thought out pedestrian route from the Berth Port to the centre of Castries leading to landmarks, such as the Castries market, the Boulevard, and La Place Carenage. Other key concerns and recommendations emanating from the Business Community included comments on the issue of garbage disposal and vagrancy, traffic congestion in the city and ways this might be improved, and the need for evacuation plans that are effective and known to the public.



Honourable Dominic Fedee addresses closing ceremony

Curtains Come Down on Vendor Training Programme

After four months of a training programme for vendors of the Castries Market which was delivered to two cohorts of vendors - each receiving 5 days of training which spanned over the months of May through to August - Honourable Dominic Fedee brought the programme to a close, during a grand closing ceremony held on September 4, at the Finance Administrative Centre.

In addressing the ceremony, Minister Fedee told the vendors that they are the ambassadors, the chief representatives and the front line operators for Saint Lucia's tourism sector. "The role that you play is so important, and the products that you sell are so significant to your own success, your own accomplishment, your own revenue and your own ability to sell more," the Minister conferred "and that is why the training exercise under the ORTCP is a great opportunity for you to improve." The Minister reminded the vendors that this was an opportunity for them to shine, to stand out, and to present Saint Lucia as a unique experience to visitors in order to capitalize on more tourist spending.

In addition to the vendors who were present during the Closing, guests at the ceremony included the Mayor of Castries, Mr Peterson Francis and some of his members of staff, presenters and facilitators of the vendor's training, staff from Departments of Tourism and Departments of Economic Development and other government officials.

Vendors Happy About the New Techniques

During the ceremony, two vendors delivered testimonies of their experiences of the training programme on behalf of their colleagues—both noting the tremendous new insights they had received on food safety, customer service, packaging, branding and marketing.

The highlight of the Ceremony came when vendors were called individually to receive their certificates, which were handed to each of them by Minister for Tourism, Information and Broadcasting, Honourable Dominic Fedee. The ORTCP plans to continue to provide technical assistance to the vendors.

Highlights from Closing Ceremony



Presentation of Certificates by Minister for Tourism

ORTCP conducts survey on Vendors of the Castries Market

In order to acquire baseline of vendors of the Castries Market and their Operations, the ORTCP undertook a survey of 94 persons who attended the vendor training programme between May and August 2018.

Some key findings of the survey suggest that, most vendors operating at the Castries Market:

- * *Are over 40 years old, with the majority falling between the age group 45-54 years; and are female with an estimated 85%*
- * *Have tremendous vending experience with the majority vending for more than 15 years;*
- * *Sell a combination of both local and imported goods, with 69% indicating this response;*
- * *Fall in the category of Craft and Souvenir vendors – an estimated 46%;*
- * *Source their products both locally and overseas, with 33% getting their products exclusively from local suppliers;*
- * *Are in support of an upgraded market (94%).*

The findings also show that:

- * *The highest percentage of buyers/customers spending at the market are tourists, while local buyers account for a smaller percentage of 33%;*
- * *Most buyers (whether foreign or local) are interested in the purchase of local products.*



Crystal Beroo, Financial Management Assistant, ORTCP

Crystal Beroo Joins ORTCP Team

Crystal Beroo is a recent addition to the ORTCP, joining the team on June 18, in the Finance Section of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), in the Department of Economic Development.

Crystal holds a Bachelor's Degree in Accounts from the University of the West Indies (UWI), where she completed studies in 2016. Prior to taking up her position as Financial Management Assistant, on the ORTCP, Crystal worked at the National Printing Corporation as a Payroll Clerk. During her 5 year tenure, the longest position held in any institution, she developed a keen interest in accounting principles and practices, and registered for her Bachelor's Degree with UWI.

In her early years, Crystal worked in sales and customer service at a number of local agencies including American Eagle, Cable and Wireless and Sandals Halcyon Hotel. It was these exploratory years, which gave Crystal the grounding for her latter pursuits in accounting.

On the ORTCP, Crystal is responsible for maintaining the integral accounting system established for the project, and utilizes standard accounting procedures, to ensure full documentation and recording of sources and uses of funds. Some of her specific duties include: preparing Financial Management Reports and Financial Statements for the Project, in addition to financial management planning, administration, monitoring and reporting.

Crystal loves to volunteer in her community and uses her gifted voice in a church gospel group. When asked about her hobbies, Crystal noted: "Work and family accounts for a lot of my time, but on the weekends, I like to get out and enjoy nature. I camp at least four times a year and try to get out to the beach every weekend. It's a good way for me to refresh and reset before tackling the work week, and a great way to get exercise."

Please help us welcome Crystal Beroo to the ORTCP.

Regional Steering Committee Meets in Grenada

The Regional Steering Committee (RSC) of the ORTCP held its first meeting on August 23rd, 2018 in Grenada. The meeting was hosted by Grenada's Ministry of Tourism and in attendance were Ms Aviva St. Clair – Deputy Permanent Secretary in Saint Lucia's Department of Tourism, Information and Broadcasting; Mrs Arlene Buckmire-Outram, Permanent Secretary in Grenada's Ministry of Tourism & Civil Aviation; and Mr Ruel Edwards - Director of Technical and Economic Cooperation of Grenada's Ministry of Finance, Planning, Economic Development and Physical Development.

Dr Lorraine Nicholas, Project Manager of Saint Lucia's ORTCP and Mr Francis Robertson, Project Manager of Grenada's ORTCP presented project updates to the Meeting, during which they both highlighted the key activities that had been implemented on the Project to date, in their individual countries. Both managers reported that over the past year, they were mostly engaged in undertaking start-up activities, including launching the ORTCP in the respective countries; holding various meetings with key stakeholders, convening meetings of the Project Steering Committee at the national level; and initiating procurement arrangements for the start of technical and professional consultancy services to the Project

The Committee also discussed a number of key issues regarding project implementation, including progress to date, challenges thus far and priorities for the next six months.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our Project

Department of Tourism, Information and Broadcasting
Sir Stanislaus James Building
ing

The Waterfront

Castries

Tel: (758) 468-4629/4603

Email:

tecla.fontenard@govt.lc ;
ortcpslu@govt.lc

Enhancing Tourism Business in Saint Lucia

ORTCP
Department of Tourism, Information and Broadcasting
3rd Floor
Sir Stanislaus James Building
The Waterfront
Castries
Saint Lucia

