COCI PRESIDENTS’ REPORT
Q2 2015

June 30, 2015
By: Peggy Ann M. Brandon
Introduction
This report contains an elucidation of the undertakings of the President of and the COCI Board of Directors in the second quarter of 2015. This elucidation provides an in-depth look into all undertakings, the status of same, benefits attained and/or concerns addressed. A preview is also provided on the undertakings scheduled for Q3 and the targets to be achieved.

Q2-2015
The main undertakings in the first quarter are categorized as follows:
I] Internal Undertakings
II] External Undertakings
III] COCI and third parties

I. Internal Undertakings:

COCI BOARD:

The COCI Board of Directors in the second quarter of this year focused on achieving formulated goals/projects set for 2015. Board of Directors meetings were geared at assessing progress, providing support to teams and ensuring an overall attainment of aims.

The COCI Board of Directors also deliberated on matters affecting the business industry such as the counterpart policy and the MOT regulation and execution measures. Deliberations resulted in formulated stances and drafted communications in an effort to address and redress the impact on the business community. Pending the requested meeting with the Minister of Justice on the MOT and report from the Tri-partite representative of COCI, further undertakings on these topics shall occur in Q3.

The COCI Board published the applicable Rules of Order upon received approval of the Minister of TEATT. These Rules of order shall be reviewed in January 2016.
COCI Board members actively participated and contributed towards the launch of the Business Center. Donating paint and paint supplies, assisting with painting of the facilities, and providing support to COCI operations staff underscored the dedication of the COCI Board members. The Business Center launch became a reality through solid collaboration of COCI Board and COCI staff. The example set by the COCI Board for the COCI staff is unprecedented. This COCI Board has taken a hands-on approach and is actively participating in and outside of Board meetings.
These actions preceded the official launch of the Business Center, which now provides the possibility for your entrepreneurs to get assistance and support from professionals at the start-up of their business undertakings.
COCI Board members actively participate in events, seminars and trainings, as well as in undertakings to which COCI has contributed through donations. The COCI Policy is adhered to, and the participation has not only permitted personal growth of the members, through attained knowledge, but also of the Board as an entity. The shared information, experiences and enthusiasm through the COCI Board chat is indicative of the collaboration of the members and their focus to make every COCI contribution an effective and lasting one. The Board is result driven and its success is attributed to the close cooperation and understanding of its members.

COCI Board members volunteer at ART SAVES LIVES. The participation of COCI Board members was not limited to one or two members. The entire Board through the week of activities showed support and volunteered at ART SAVES LIVES. An eye opening experience that has brought tremendous enthusiasm with the Board members on the talent and potential of the youth in St. Maarten and appreciation for Ms. N. de Weever and her team as organizers of this event. A more structural approach to support this undertaking must be undertaken by
COCI as this initiative permits the growth of our youth in well-rounded persons, who are the future contributors to the development of St. Maarten.

**BOARD CAUCUS:**

The COCI Board caucus was held on June 27th. During the caucus an assessment was undertaken of the progress made by each team in reaching goals set or completing projects formulated. Approaches were outlined to ensure completion of projects for 2015 within 2015.

The COCI board furthermore executed its Board evaluations. Each member evaluates the performance of the other members and makes recommendations for areas where improvement is needed. The evaluations are placed on file. Noteworthy is the agreement with evaluations conducted and acceptance of failures and faults noted. The maturity of this Board permits true evaluations to be conducted, which promote individual growth of the members. Members encourage each other to increase activities and participation within Board context and keep each other on point. The evaluations are perceived in a positive manner by all being evaluated. Board evaluations are conducted twice a year, with the next evaluation due in December 2015.
Pic: The teaching

Pic: The result of the teaching

Pic: Girls bonding
COCI OPERATIONS:

In Q2 the COCI operations worked feverishly towards completion of the migration to the new data registry and quick books. This process did not proceed without difficulties, as a major systems crash in April caused a tremendous back log within days. For two weeks registry entries or extractions were not possible, to which the down time of the e-mail system added. Hacking of systems of telecom providers did not leave the COCI operations untouched. Yet the staff dedicated the required extra time and worked through the Carnival holidays and on Saturdays to work in back logs. Throughout this quarter COCI staff has focused on updating of registry information and completion of the migration to the new registry. This undertaking went hand in hand with continued staff training.

1] Staff and new corporate structure

Following the exercises in the first quarter which lead to the new corporate structure, staff has been functioning in new positions. In anticipation of impending automation further adjustments to the corporate structure will be required, as jobs will be altered due to new task delineations. Staff interviews and training shall therefore continue to ensure a seamless transition into the new service offering by COCI.

2] Migration to COCI register
This process continues and is expected to be completed by the end of the 3rd quarter. In line herewith COCI stressed on the business community to ensure the correctness of their information in the registry. Compliance with the legal obligations to maintain the registration of businesses current is the focus of COCI and will be followed up with controls. The COCI register is however currently being updated with a file by file review.

3] Digitization of COCI files

The digitization of COCI files has commenced. Scanners were obtained and setup to permit multiple terminals for scanning of files. The digitization process is undertaken in preservation of files and information, but also to enhance the overall service offering to the public. Provisioning of historic information will be facilitated through this initiative. The digitization of active businesses has commenced, upon completion of which the digitization of other categories will be undertaken.

4] HR committee review applications economist position

The vacancy has not been filled, even though the procedure in relation hereto is completed. None of the applicants were chosen for the position. With impending changes in the operations, service offerings and development undertakings an internal review of the needs of the operations shall be undertaken prior to a placement of a vacancy advertisement. The HR committee which undertook the first round of applications completed its task and has been dissolved.

5] Automation project

Having completed its task fully the selection committee selected Qualogy as the entity to provide the automation module to COCI. Initial work sessions with Qualogy have been undertaken. The automation project shall be executed in the third quarter, with a definite launch in the fourth quarter of 2015. The offering of COCI services online will be realized in 2015.
II. External Undertakings:

The following external undertakings were executed in Q2.

1) Automation project:

- Commencement of development automation module. Work sessions commenced to determine the format of the customer online interface and the back-office interface
- Review of online forms and the extrapolation of information format for pre-screening and approval was executed
- Final review of COCI forms in English in process

2) Information center:

a. Developing Business survey/information gathering and synchronization

The business survey has been developed and is being circulated. A cooperation with the Ministry of TEATT has been established to improve overall compliance with regulations within the business sector. All initiatives geared towards information gathering and analysis in support of an improved business environment and investment climate. Whilst these efforts would positively affect
the undertakings by the Tax department of St. Maarten, efforts to include this department directly or through the Ministry of Finance have not heeded any result. COCI maintains the desire to fully support the business sector of St. Maarten in all facets and hopes that other divisions within Government will join the efforts undertaken. The need for a better communication between Government and the private/business sector remains.

b. The National Economic Summit

The Ministry of TEATT has however through recent organized symposia created a new platform permitting enhanced communication between its Ministry and stakeholders. Organized sessions allowed for a direct participation and contribution to policy design by the Government. The follow up sessions organized support the fact that this Ministry not solely desires dialogue but also proceeds with execution. This is new and welcome change in approach by Government, which COCI embraces and will continue to support this initiative.

3] Business Center launched:

The Business Center- Biz Center, has opened its doors to the general public of St. Maarten and has commenced its service offering.

4] Newsletter:

COCI continues to issue its newsletter, providing information on its undertakings and highlighting business undertakings in St. Maarten. The increased circulation of the COCI newsletter is the focus of the Newsletter team, in Q3. The contact data base is being worked on to ensure all stakeholders are provided a copy of the newsletter.

5] Better Business year round in a safer and secure environment:

Whilst the undertaking under this heading may have taken a slow start, current communications with Governmental entities are promising. In following up with the response from the Ministry of Justice on promoting Caribbean tourism representatives of COCI and the Ministry met for a working session. Together parties hope to launch the project that will support a further development of Caribbean tourism to St. Maarten and thus mitigate our dependency on business during high season.
Discussions on the CCTV camera system are scheduled to occur within the third quarter and COCI remains positive that a commencement with this project can occur before the closing of 2015.

6] Development of the Business plan competition:

This competition has been designed and launched. Interest is within expectations and support from the business community above expectation. The date for submission of business plans for participants is set for **July 31st 2015**. The winner of the competition will be announced on **August 22nd 2015**. The winner will receive a package enabling and supporting a proper start-up of the business projected in the business plan.
7] Revamping of the COCI website:

The revamping of the COCI website has commenced. In a collaborative undertaking Board members and COCI staff are making contributions towards the website. Website content is being reviewed and uploaded to provide current information to visitors of the website.

III. COCI and Third parties:

Panama Miami trade mission:

A COCI-Port of St. Maarten-Business sector representatives combined delegation represented St. Maarten in Panama City and Miami for the Panama Miami Trade Mission in April 2015. The St. Maarten presentation offered through its booth in the Kingdom Pavilion was well received. Delegation members participated in sessions and networking mixers seeking to make St. Maarten the Caribbean hub for business originating from or through Panama. COCI and the Port of St. Maarten intend to formulate an approach towards the creation of
human resources for the maritime industry. A draft MoU has been presented to
the Port of St. Maarten for review.
Ministry of TEATT:

Close collaboration with the Ministry of TEATT continues. COCI Participation in the National Economic Summit, and subsequent participation of its Board members in the workgroups support the involvement of COCI and contribution towards economic development in St. Maarten.

Initiatives to enhance compliance within the business sector of St. Maarten and joint controls undertaken too are evidence of the current setting in which COCIs' representation of the business sector is realized. Creating a sound and stable business sector in support of economic development.
Ministry of Justice:

Compliance with MOT regulations is a must to ensure that St. Maarten is not utilized as a destination to funnel funds for terrorism or money laundering activities. Yet the execution of measures in light hereof should not adversely affect the tourism industry and our economic potential. A proper understanding of the regulation and the execution measures is required, so application supports both the country’s fight against the afore mentioned activities and the tourism sector. Discrepancies in explanation of the regulation and multiple interpretations have raised concerns within the business sector. Wishing to comply but unsure if the application is executed correctly is at the basis of most concerns. COCI therefore has requested meetings with the Ministry of Justice and its MOT division to address the concerns. A scheduled meeting is till forthcoming.

The Ministry of Justice, immigration division, has welcomed COCI on board in support of the formulated initiative to develop and attract more Caribbean tourism. COCI supports this undertaking and desires to actively participate in the deployment of the initiative that will permit year round tourism to the Island. Work sessions have commenced in this regard.

Q1 statistics:

- Number of Board meetings: 4
- Number of Executive Board meetings: 2
- Overall attendance percentage of meetings: 100%

Individual attendance of meetings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meetings attended</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lint</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawtani</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijlani</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illis-Friday</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bute</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philips</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meeting participation - outside meeting participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Outside of meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lint</td>
<td>Very active participation</td>
<td>Very active participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>Very active participation</td>
<td>Very active participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>Active participation</td>
<td>Very Active participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illis-Friday</td>
<td>Very active participation</td>
<td>Very Active participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bute</td>
<td>Good participation</td>
<td>Good participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijlani</td>
<td>Good participation</td>
<td>Good Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawtani</td>
<td>Very active participation</td>
<td>improved participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philips</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>improving participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEAM performance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lint</td>
<td>Very good - on target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>Very good - on target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>Very good - on target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawtani</td>
<td>Good - reaching targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3 Projections:

- Soft launch automation module
- Completion business survey
- Continued execution: Project safety and security/tourism development
- Launch of business plan competition, seminars and schedule: Project team entrepreneurs
- Launch of Business Banking forum: Project team Lint/Baker
- Project development- plan of approach: Project team compliance and business certification
- Board Caucus

Conclusion:
Whilst most of the Q2 focus has been on improving COCI operations for an enhanced service offering, the internal and external achievements of COCI in this quarter are evident. The growth of COCI will continue due to the active functioning of the COCI Board and the support to the COCI operations. Open communication lines, teamwork and a transparent approach support the direction in which COCI is developing.

Questions pertaining to this report may be filed with the President of the COCI Board.

Attn.: Peggy Ann M. Brandon
COCI
Cannegieterstreet 11,
Philipsburg St. Maarten.