

ST. MAARTEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

**FIRST QUARTER
REPORT 2021**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT US

- **History**

MISSION

VISION

CORE VALUES

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OPERATIONAL REVIEW 2020

- **New Business Registration**
- **Excerpts and Declaration**
- **Business Inactivation**
- **Business Closure**

BUSINESS SUPPORT INITIATIVE

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION ENGAGEMENT

FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL REVIEW 2021

KNOW YOUR CHAMBER AND OBLIGATIONS

About us

The St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce & Industry (COCI) is a non-profit organization. Its main role is to ensure that all businesses and legal entities on St. Maarten are registered in its Commercial Register. In the pursuit of our objective, the Chamber is a non-racial, non-sectarian, non-political, and gender-friendly organization.

HISTORY

The St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce and Industry (COCI) was established on March 12th, 1979.

Before 1979, the only place where various private sector's points of view could be exchanged was at the Executive Club, which consisted of hotel owners and managers. These meetings, which were held once every month, rotated from one hotel property to another. They provided good opportunities for private sector members to voice their concerns and demonstrate their respective good corporate citizenship. The members either announced their companies and/ or the island, or they introduced new staff members that joined their organization on the island.

The annual event was the honoring of the island's best and brightest high school students during graduation times in mid-June when companies proudly presented valuable gifts to the best graduating scholars to encourage them to further their studies in intuitions of higher learning abroad. These meetings also provided member businesses with the opportunity to invite members of the island's then-Executive Council to clarify objectives purposes, and intentions of new island Resolutions by the island Council of Federal Legislature that affected their operations on St. Maarten.

From the early 1970s, the island's modern hospitality industry provided suitable on-the-job training and supplemented study leave for qualified employees to take courses abroad at reputable institutions during the summer months when operations were not as demanding to gain additional professional instructions.

THE CHAMBERS ESTABLISHMENT

During 1979 – 1992, the Chamber was led by three prominent business persons, who at one time served as the board's president, i.e. Mr. Charles Vlaun, Mr. Franklin Brison, and Mr. Wilfred de Weever. They were supported by a staff of two persons – Mr. Louis Peters and Ms. Syrma Alberts – with intermitting staff members.

With the development of Philipsburg and the influx of various other services and offshore businesses, there was a growing demand for a Chamber of Commerce and Industry in St. Maarten.

After leaving Island Gem Enterprises N.V. in January 1979, Mr. Louis Peters, with encouragement from the Lt. Governor, Mr. Theodore Maxwell Pandt, solicited the Minister of Economic Affairs of the former Netherlands Antilles, Mr. Mauritz Larmonie, to provide the necessary decree to realize the Dutch Windward Islands with its own Chamber of Commerce and Industry. That solicitation formed the incentive for the minister to issue his ministerial decree to establish the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Dutch Windward Islands on March 12, 1979.

Mission

To ensure legitimacy of all businesses and legal entities through registration and our regulatory function of maintaining the Trade and Commercial Register of St. Maarten, while promoting economic growth through advocacy and business support.

Vision

To be that lead entity, propelling St. Maarten to a stronger and more sustainable economy by providing accurate business data, business connectivity, trade opportunities, and commercial facilitation through lobbying, advocacy, and business support.

Core Values

Professionalism: Committed to being professional in all that we do, grounded in the belief in high standard of performance and excellence.

Productivity: Committed to constantly improving our work ethic and output for the benefit of our business community and other stakeholders in an efficient manner.

Independence: Committed to being independent in our views so that the objective and the transparent representation of the business interest comes first.

Economic Development: Promote economic development via the development and growth of the Business Sector of St. Maarten.

Advocacy: Provide advocacy for the business community and other entities on matters of National Interest.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Engagements

- We issue documentary evidence such as certificates of origin, extracts, legalizations, and other statements.
- A central organization for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information of a business nature.
- We promote the general interest of the Business Community of St. Maarten and are at the forefront of various issues, which affect the private sector. Therefore, we hold business and educational seminars, and expos in conjunction with our partners in the community.
- We serve as an advocacy group and address the varied concerns of the Business Community through various dialogue and exchanges with government officials and various Non-Government Organizations (NGO's) organizations. We offer solicited and unsolicited advice on matters concerning the country's economic development.
- The Chamber organizes in-house and off-site skills and cognitive training workshops for its clients and non-clients alike. We also carry out consultancy services for clients by offering guidance, information, administrative assistance, and support to the Business Community through our **Business Center**.
- The Chamber promotes Trade and Industry and represent the opinion of the business community on matters affecting Trade and Industry in St. Maarten.

Executive Director:

Jude Houston

Operations Manager:

Ruth Patrick

Business Development Officer:

Sharilyn Bryson

Accounts Department:

Aakeem Ruan

Tian Jones

Natasha Pilgrim

Customer Service Representative:

Malaine Dublin-Lake

Xavern Labega

Darius Brown

Lindora Thomas

Donna Jean Baptiste

Esmine Richardson

Kelsee Hodge

Theodore de Weever

Liandro Rombley

Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide its readers an overview of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (COCI) operational development for the first quarter of 2021, which basically includes the activities within the registry of the Chamber. Additionally, insights are provided on the Chambers engagement and support to the businesses and general community on a whole.

During this reporting period a lot of emphasis has been placed and continues to be on the operational efficiency within the Chamber. Hence, several the activities were of internal procedures and processes. This is done with the expectation that that community will be better served.

As it relates to the business registry, compared to the same period of 2020 there have been notably a vast improvement on the overall business registration performance at the Chamber. Some of the highlights include for this **first quarter** are:

- First time registrants have increased by 27.8 percent; from 169 in 2020 to 216 in 2021.
- Annual fee payment declined by 42.8 percent; from 1,877 in 2020 to 2,681 payments in 2021.
- Annual payment of previous years increased 259.5 percent; from 284 in 2020 to 1,021 companies in 2021.
- Business closures increased 116.7 percent; from 36 in 2020 to 78 businesses in 2021.
- Business inactivation increased 18.4 percent; from 38 in 2020 to 45 in 2021.
- Excerpts request increased 41.2 percent; from 2,048 in 2020 to 2,892 in 2021.

As it relates to Business support and community engagement for the period

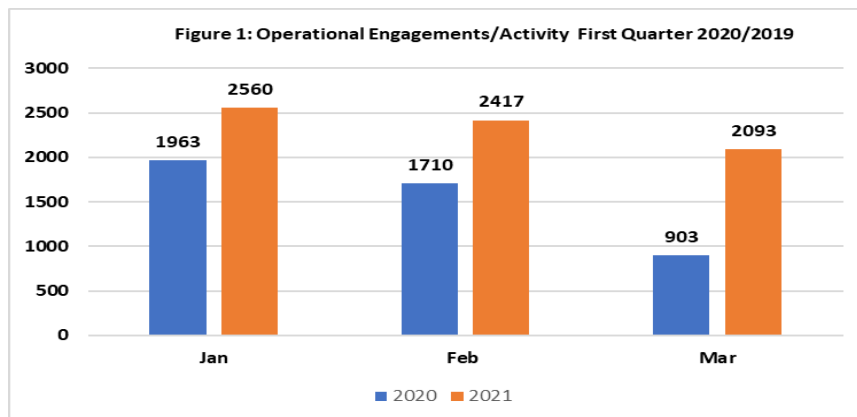
- 7 webinars were held via for the business community.
- 4 Schools with a total with a total student population of over 160 received presentation from the Chamber on the importance of Entrepreneurship.
- 2 community outreach programmes conducted: Simpson Bay and St. Peters with approximately 50 persons in attendance.

For the balance of the year 2021, focus will again continue on the operation efficiency of COCI so that we can better serve and meet the needs of the public; while at the same time the emphasis will be placed on businesses to be compliant, not only with COCI but with other entities.

Operational Review-First Quarter 2021

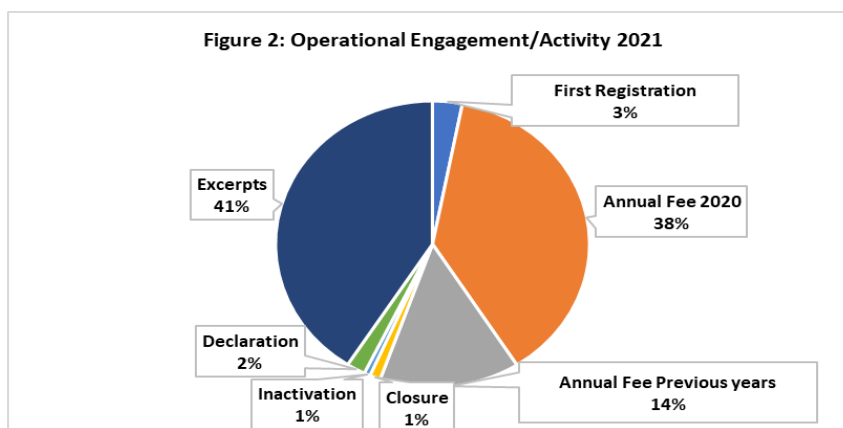
Given the mandate of COCI, its operational activity is measured or monitored by the activities within the business registry of the Chamber.

Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been a notable increase in the overall activity in the registry of the Chamber for the first quarter of 2021 compared to same period of 2020. As can be observed from figure 1, the activity and engagement over



the three-month period exceeded that of the months of the previous year. Total engagement or registry activity for the period averaged 2,356 compared to 1,525 of 2020. Possible reasons for the increase in activity are; i) due to the fact that in middle March of 2020 operations were temporarily halted hence reducing activity during that particular quarter; ii) The increased sensitization to the business community of their obligation to the Chamber and the notification of COCI's planned action of deregistering businesses in default; iii) Increased economic activity which correlates with the projected economic growth for 2021 by the Central Bank of Curacao and St. Maarten; iv) continued salary support initiative provided by the Government to the business sector, to which an updated business excerpt from the Chamber is a requirement; and v) the Enterprise Support Project under the NRPB, which provides financing to both new and existing businesses.

As illustrated in figure 2, the preparation and issuing of excerpts have been the most predominant requested activity within COCI's register for the reporting period, with 41% of the total activity. This was followed by the handling the receipts of annual fees for the year



2021 with 38% and receipts of payments of previous years with 14%. Declaration, inactivation, and closure accumulated to 5% of the registry activities for the reporting period.

New Business Registration

For the reporting period, the Chamber recorded a total of 216 new business registrants compared to 167 the same period in 2020. This illustrates a 27.8% percent increase in new registration of business and entities, which signifies there was 47 more businesses registered when compared to the first quarter of 2020. Among

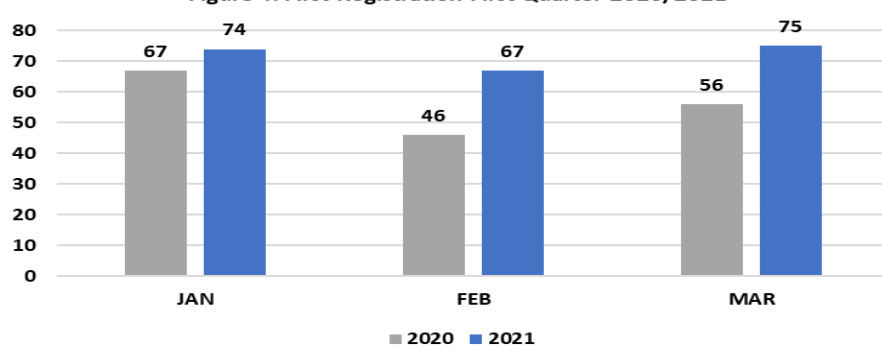
the various types of businesses and entities as newly registered for the period, Sole Proprietors were the most predominant with 92 entities, followed by Private Liability entities with 73, Limited Liability entities with 24 and Foundations with 17. There were followed by Associations, Branch and Offshore entities with 5, 4 and 1 entities, respectively. This is illustrated in table 3.

On a month-by-month basis, March month proves to be the most predominant with 75 new business registrants, followed by January with 74 and February with 67. All the months within 2021 first quarter exceeded the months of 2020. This is illustrated in figure 4.

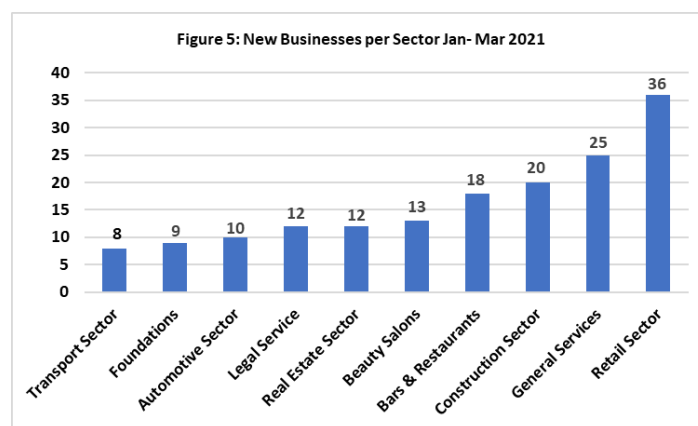
Figure 3: New Businesses by Type Jan-Mar 2021

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Associations	2	1	2	5
Branch	0	0	4	4
Foundations	8	3	6	17
Limited Liability Companies	8	10	6	24
Private Limited Liability	28	25	20	73
Sole Proprietors	28	28	36	92
Offshore	0	0	1	1
Total	74	67	75	216

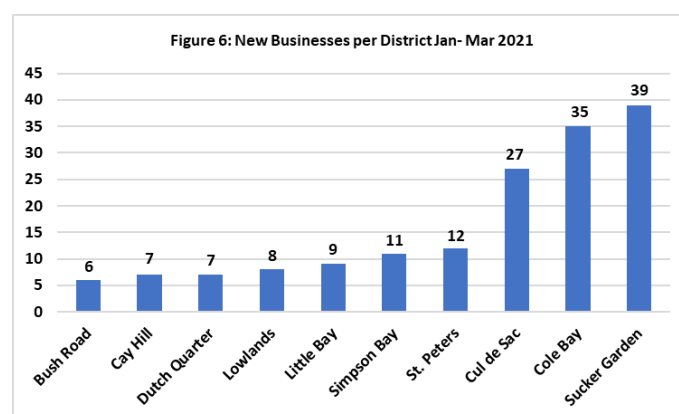
Figure 4: First Registration First Quarter 2020/2021



Analysis was conducted on the top 10 sectors for which the new businesses established during the reporting period are involved. As illustrated in figure 5, the most predominant of sectors were the retail sector with 36 new businesses for which the retail of clothing, footwear, jewelry and accessories, food and other consumables and electronics and other household items. This was followed general service sector (administrative and consultancy services) with 25 new businesses, construction sector with 20 businesses, bars and restaurants 18, Beauty salons 13, and real estate and legal services with 12 businesses respectively. This was followed by the Automotive sector with 10 businesses, which covers all automotive from sales, leasing and rent, auto parts sale, and garage and auto cleaning activities. The latter being foundations and transport sector followed, with 8 and 9 businesses respectively.



As it relates to the district for which these businesses have been established, the 10 predominant districts are illustrated in figure 6. The most predominant districts of the 10 are Sucker Garden, Cole Bay and Cul de Sac with 39, 35 and 27 businesses respectively. This was followed by St. Peters with 12, Simpson Bay with 11 Little Bay with 9 Lowlands with 8 Dutch Quarter and Cay Hill with 7 and Bush Road with 6 new businesses.



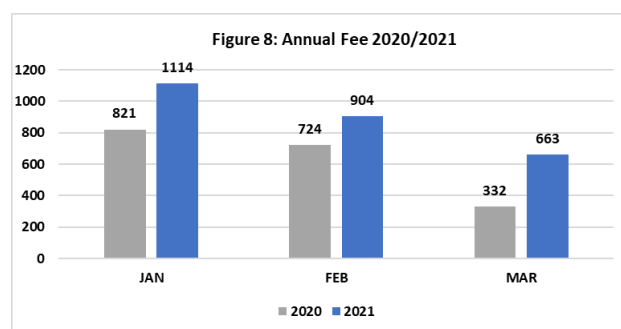
Annual Fees

For the reporting period, there has been an increase in the number of entities fulfilling their obligation of paying their annual fees. There were 2,681 business engagements in 2021 compared to 1,877 in 2020. This signifies that there was an increase of 42.8% or there were 807 more entities paying their fees when compared to the same period of 2020. This is illustrated in figure 7.

Figure 7: Registration Activity Totals Jan-Mar 2020/2021

Activity	2020	2021	# Diff	% diff 2019/2020
First Registration	169	216	47	27.8
Annual Fee 2020	1877	2681	804	42.8
Annual Fee Previous years	284	1021	737	259.5
Closure	36	78	42	116.7
Inactivation	38	45	7	18.4
Excerpts	2048	2892	844	41.2

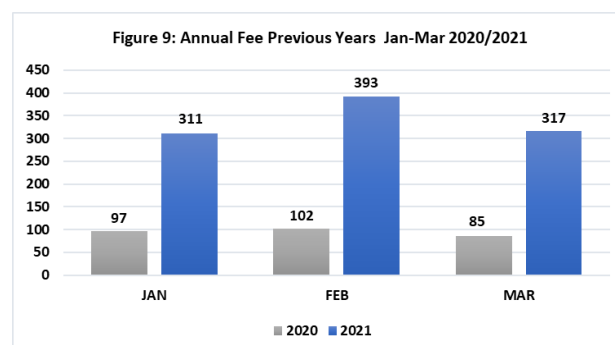
As illustrated in figure 8, month by month analysis, indicates that the month of January was the most predominant with business engagement paying their annual fees. This amounted to 1,114 businesses in 2021 compared to 821 in 2020. This was followed by February then March with 904 and 663, respectively. Each calendar month for 2021 outperformed the performances of the months in 2020.



Annual Fees Previous Years

For the reporting period, there have been a significant increase in the number of legal entities engaging the Chamber to have their outstanding fees to the institution regulated. As noted in table 7, 1,021 entities engaged the Chamber in the first quarter of 2021 compared to 284 in the same period of 2020. This signifies an increase of 737 more businesses during the period or an increase of 259.5% compared to the first quarter of 2020.

On a month-by-month basis, the average number of entities over the 3-month period in 2021 fulfilling their obligation were 340 compared to 94 over the same period of 2020. The month of February was the most predominant with 393 entities/businesses, followed by March and January. Possible reason for such increase is that fact that during the period, COCI have been making it abundantly clear to businesses and other entities of the need to be compliant and that the measure of deregistration will be implemented for those who have proved to be delinquent where the payment of Chamber's fees is concern.



Business Closures

There was a total of 78 business closures for the first quarter of 2021 compared to 36 of the same period during 2020. This represents an increase of 116.7% or 42 more businesses. Considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the business community, it can be said the closure of businesses was mitigated by the available financing possibilities through Qredits and the Government salary support to businesses. Additionally, as it relates to the overall business sector, it can be said that the negative impact of the

business closure during the period was cushioned due to the fact that there were more business openings than the closures itself.

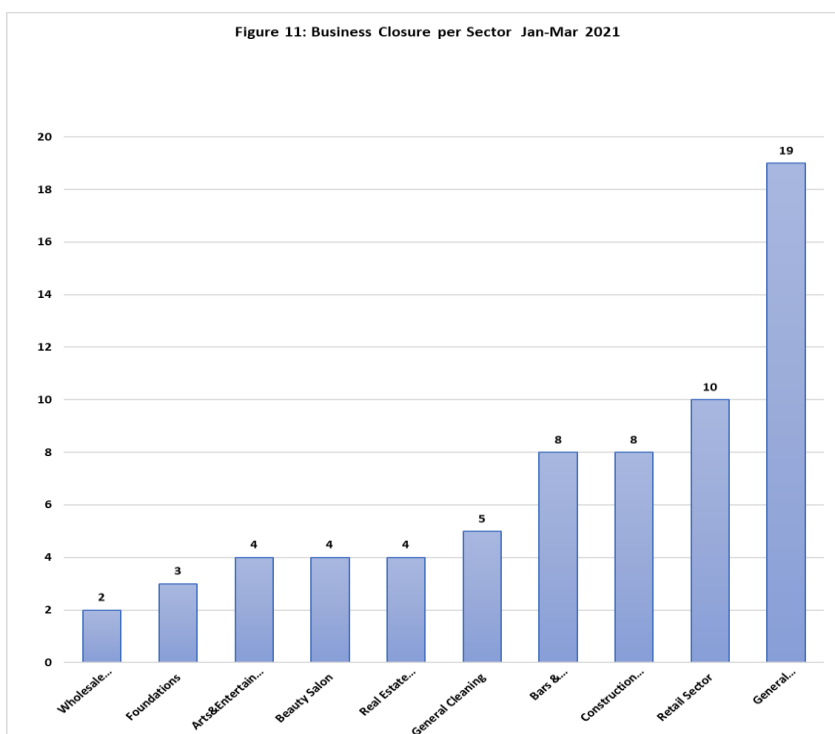
Among the various types of businesses and entities closed for the period, Sole Proprietors were the most predominant with 35 entities, followed by Private Liability entities with 25, Limited Liability entities with 15 and Foundations with 3. February month had the most closures with 32 entities, followed by March with 25 and January with 21 business closures. This is illustrated in figure 10.

Figure 10: Business Closure by Type Jan – Mar 2021

	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL
Foundations		2	1	3
Limited Liability Companies		10	5	15
Private Limited Liability	11	2	12	25
Sole Proprietors	10	18	7	35
Total	21	32	25	78

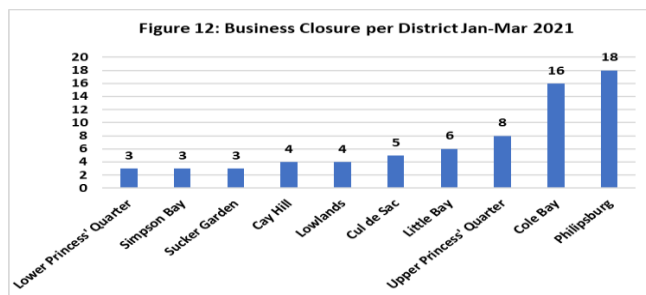
Analysis was conducted on the top 10 sectors for which business closures occurred during the reporting period. As illustrated in figure 11, the most predominant of sectors were the general service (administrative and consultancy services) sector with 19 closed businesses, followed by retail sector with 10 closed businesses for which the retail of clothing, footwear, jewelry and accessories, food and other consumables and electronics and other household items. This was followed construction and Bars and restaurants with 8 closed businesses each and general cleaning with 5. Real estate, beauty salons and arts and entertainment had 4 closed businesses each. These were followed by the foundations with 3 and the wholesale sector with 2 closed businesses for the period.

Figure 11: Business Closure per Sector Jan-Mar 2021



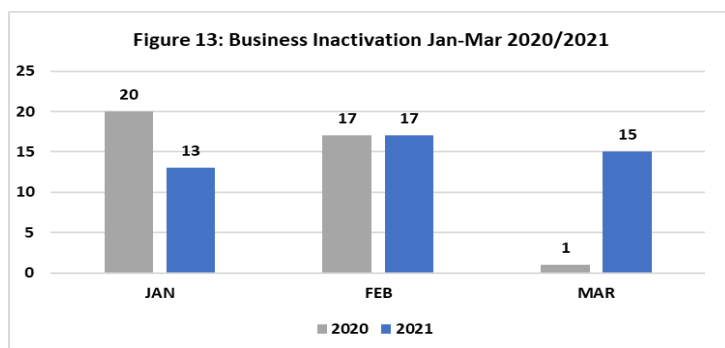
These were followed by the foundations with 3 and the wholesale sector with 2 closed businesses for the period.

As it relates to the district for with the closed businesses during this reporting period, the 10 predominant districts are illustrated in figure 12. The most predominant districts of the top 10 are Philipsburg, Cole Bay and Upper Princess Quarter (Sucker Garden) with 18, 16 and 8 closed businesses respectively. This was followed by Little Bay with 6, Cul de Sac with 5, while Lowland and Cay Hill followed with 4 closed businesses each. Sucker Garden, Simpson Bay and Lower Princess Quarter followed with 3 closed businesses each.

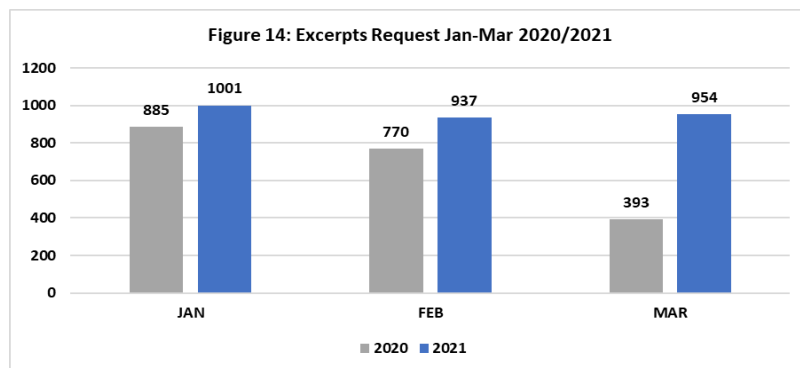


Inactivation and Excerpts

For the 3-month period, there was a total of 45 business inactivation compared to 38 over the same period in 2020. This signifies an increase of 18.4% or an increase by 7 more business requesting inactivation status. Monthly inactivation for this reporting quarter is 15 Business inactivation per month in 021 while for the same period in 2020 is 12 business inactivation.



Excerpts request for the period amounted to 2,892 requests compared to 2,048 for the same period in 2020. This signifies there 844 more request or an increase of 41.2%. Additionally, for each calendar month of 2021, excerpt request was more than the same months of 2020.



Business Support Initiatives

During this reporting period the Chamber of Commerce and Industry embarked on a number of initiatives geared towards supporting the business community and stimulating the entrepreneurial culture among our youths and communities. These initiatives took the form of online webinar series 2021, engagement with the various secondary schools and community outreach sessions.

Webinar Series 2021

Within COCI's work programme for 2021 is the provision of a series of webinars to the business community geared towards their growth and development. Therefore, during the period January to March 2021, COCI hosted seven (7) webinar series through the collaboration of a number of entities, namely:

- i) Ministry of Finance – Presenting on the topic of Business taxes.
- ii) Ministry of TEATT- Presenting on the topic of Business Licenses Requirements and Moratoriums.
- iii) Bankers Association- Presenting on the topics Business Banking Requirements and the Business community.
- iv) Social and Health Insurance (SZV) -presenting on the topic of Employer Rights and Obligations
Mingo Notary- Presenting on the topic of Notarial Procedure and Requirements.
- v) Chamber of Commerce – Presenting on the topic of Know Your Chamber
- vi) Principle Accounting and Consulting Services BV- presenting on the topic Financial Planning for Businesses.

Webinars were conducted via Zoom and Facebook livestream. On average attendees were in the vicinity of 140 persons from combined platforms. This event is rated a success thus far considering the positive feedbacks and engagements received from the general public. Since the videos have been posted on our social media platforms, it should be noted that collectively there have been over 3,500 views on posted webinars.



Figure 1: L-R COCI's Executive Director Mr. Jude Houston and Mrs. Marlené Mingo of Mingo Civil Law Notary Office, on March 23rd, 2021



Figure 2: L-R: COCI's Executive Director Mr. Jude Houston, Ms. Julia Solognier, Ms. Jaqueline Peterson & Mrs. Justine Webster (Dept. Head) of the Ministry of Finance Dept. of Economic Licenses, on March 19th, 2021



Figure 1: L-R: Mr. Ardwell Irion (Minister of Finance), Mrs. Sharon Washington Philips (the acting section head of the Business Unit) of the Ministry of Finance Dept. of Tax Administration & Mr. Jude Houston COCI's Executive Director, on March 19th, 2021



Figure 2: L-R: Mr. Derek Downes (General Manager of WIB and President of the SXM Bankers Association) and COCI's Executive Director Mr. Jude Houston, on March 19th 2021

Figure 5: L-R Mr. COCI's Executive Director Mr. Jude Houston and Mrs. Parveen Boertje (Chief Customer Officer) of SZV Social and Health Insurances, on March 19th, 2021

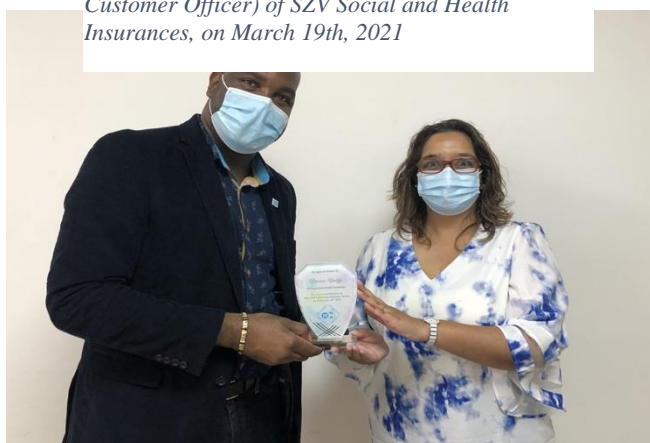


Figure 6: L-R: Mr. Jude Houston- COCI's Executive Director, Ms. Sharilyn Bryson (COCI's BDO), and Mr. Ahmed Bell of Principle Accounting and Consulting Services B.V., on April 1st, 2021

Community Outreach

As form of engaging business enthusiast and the general public, during the reporting period COCI also took part in community outreach initiatives with other stakeholders, namely, Qredits and the NRPB. During these sessions' further elaboration of the Chamber's operation and

services were explained. Furthermore, insight as to the procedure to open and close businesses were provided and the available assistance from the Chamber to the business community.

The first of these engagements named "Dreams to Reality entrepreneurs" workshop was organized in collaboration with local entrepreneur Mr. Khalil Revan, for which the Chamber, NRPB and Qredits were the presenting entities. There were approximately 30 persons in attendance.



Figure 7: Community engagement at Simpson Bay..



Figure 8: COCI's Executive Director Mr. Jude Houston, presenting on the Chamber of Commerce.



Figure 9: COCI's Board Member, Mr. Benjamin Ortega in support of workshop at Simpson Bay.

Schools Engagement

In effort to promote entrepreneurial culture among our youth, COCI embarked on a series of presentation to the various Secondary Educational Institutions. The presentation prepared by COCI is primarily geared towards educating of the importance of entrepreneurship and stimulating its interest. For this reporting period, four (4) schools received presentation. There were instances where repeat sessions were facilitated given the number of students and demand. Events are conducted via virtual means given the Covid-19 guidelines and in some instance in person. This event will continue during 2021. Institutions that have received presentations thus far, include;

- i) St. Maarten Academy PSVE
Held on March 4th, via ZOOM, 63 students.

- ii) NIPA
Held on March 15th and 18th, via ZOOM, 46 students
- iii) CIA
Held on March 22nd, in person, 10 students
- iv) St. Dominic High School,
Held on April 8th, via ZOOM, 41 students

Presentation to Parliament

During the quarter, COCI accepted the invitation of the Parliament of Sint Maarten to present its plan and initiatives going forward. Presentation was made by the President- Ms Jennifer Cathy, with support from the Executive Director and other members of the board. The opportunity was also taken to present the parliament with a copy of the 2020 Annual Report.





Microsoft Updates Available
Would you like to install these updates now?

Great presentation

Jenny Elzee 838 to Everyone
how many year do you have to become an entrepreneur?

Naicha Bubby 838 to Everyone
good afternoon some of the students are dead

Jahantel Dore 83A to Everyone
it was a great presentation it was educational

Lauren A. Nelson to Everyone
Thank you students for sharing.

I am sure there are more questions

Jenny Elzee 838 to Everyone
ok thank you

To: Everyone
Type message here...

St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce & Industry

- Founded in 1979.
- A non-profit organization.
- Ensures that all businesses and legal entities on St. Maarten are registered in our Commercial Register.

Entrepreneurship

Sharilyn Bryson, MSc.
Business Development Officer (BDO)
St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce & Industry – COCI



Before Starting

You Should Ask Yourself...

1. What makes me passionate?
2. Am I comfortable taking risks?
3. Can you trust my instincts?
4. Am I OKAY with some rejections now and then?
5. What traits do I have that make me persuasive?
6. How is my negotiation skills?
7. Can I imagine new ways to solve problems?
8. Do I have a support network?