

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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1. FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I hereby present to you the Annual Report 2023 of the Integrity Chamber Sint Maarten.

The year 2023 was the fourth operational year of the Integrity Chamber. In this year, as well as in previous years, one of the goals of the Integrity Chamber was the further strengthening of awareness on integrity in the community. Various groups within the community were engaged on the subject of integrity through community outreach events, our “Integrity in Voting” video series, and the first ever Integrity Symposium.

Much effort has been spent shaping this institute into the organisation it is today and much time has been invested in producing the high-quality advices and proposals that have been submitted to Government and its entities. Words of appreciation are in order for the Members of the Integrity Chamber, Mr. Rafael Boasman and Mr. Hans Lodder, who initially were the quartermasters of the Integrity Chamber, and the secretariat, led by Ms. Charna Pompier, who handles the daily operations.

In 2023, the Integrity Chamber said goodbye to Mrs. H.W. (Rian) Vogels, who was the first President of the Integrity Chamber. The Integrity Chamber is grateful to Mrs. Vogels for her dedication and the effective way in which she performed her tasks.

My tenure as President began on January 1st, 2024, and as I write this, I am pleased to say that the Integrity Chamber is entering a new phase.

Sint Maarten is a country with a state-of-the-art constitution, featuring for example the Constitutional Court, which is the first Constitutional Court in the Kingdom. The same sentiment can be applied in the field of integrity; the Integrity Chamber is a modern institution in the Kingdom, in terms of the promotion and strengthening of integrity.

With its modern institutions, this young democratic country can be seen as a forerunner in the Kingdom when it comes to promoting a culture of integrity. There appears to be movement in the establishment of other integrity bureaus in the Caribbean countries within the Kingdom, but an equal, which functions as the independent body currently embedded in the administrative field of Sint Maarten, has not yet emerged.

An institute such as the Integrity Chamber seamlessly fits into a system of checks and balances, as it should in any country with a properly functioning constitutional democracy.

It is my mission to take the Integrity Chamber into its next phase, guiding Government and its entities in building a stronger culture of integrity for future generations.

With confidence and optimism, I am looking forward to the collaboration with Government, Parliament, fellow advisory bodies, and other stakeholders.



G.R. (Rik) Bergman
President Integrity Chamber

2. INTRODUCTION

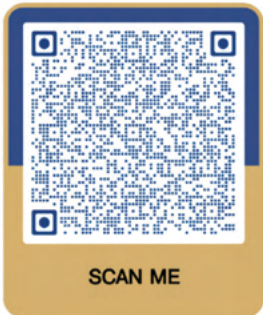
2.1 Legal Basis

The Integrity Chamber Sint Maarten hereby makes its Annual Report 2023 available to Government of Sint Maarten, Parliament of Sint Maarten, and the public, where an account is given for the activities conducted from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

The annual report describes the legal tasks and other activities of the Integrity Chamber, which finds its basis in the National Ordinance Integrity Chamber (*In Dutch: 'Landsverordening Integriteit-skamer, AB 2017, no. 41'*) (hereafter: *the Ordinance*).

The annual report of the Supervisory Council, as required by Article 14, paragraph 4, of the Ordinance, is included in the annual report of the Integrity Chamber (*see chapter 8*).

Scan this QR code to read the Ordinance:



2.2 Reading Guide

The third chapter of this report describes the role of the Integrity Chamber, its mission, vision and core values, its independency and organisational structure. Chapter four (4) briefly describes the tasks of the organisation, while Chapter five (5) provides an overview of the Integrity Chamber's 2023 activities.

Statistical information regarding the activities of the Integrity Chamber conducted in 2023, can be found in Chapter six (6). Chapter seven (7) provides an update on the finances of the Integrity Chamber. Finally, Chapter eight (8) contains the 2023 Annual Report of the Supervisory Council.

3. THE INTEGRITY CHAMBER

3.1 Focus

The establishment of the Integrity Chamber is based on several reports in Sint Maarten regarding the status of integrity within the public sector. These reports prompted the government of Sint Maarten to take the decision to establish an Integrity Chamber which led to adoption of the National Ordinance Integrity Chamber by Parliament in December 2017. The Ordinance entered into force on December 28, 2018.

Since its first operational year in 2020, the Integrity Chamber has spent its time laying the groundwork for a government and society built on integrity. Integrity within government, otherwise termed 'public integrity', is not only essential to the proper functioning of Government, its entities and government-owned companies (hereafter: Administrative Bodies), but also to ensure a positive national and international image of Sint Maarten.

The Integrity Chamber places much effort into assessing and advising on the integrity infrastructure of the various Administrative Bodies. The Integrity Chamber also places focus on determining the tools and instruments necessary to minimize and prevent integrity risks.

The role of the Integrity Chamber is only effective with the cooperation of its stakeholders such as Government, government entities, and Parliament.

The Integrity Chamber strives to attain this cooperation by strategically meeting with representatives of the various Administrative Bodies to explain the tasks and role of the Integrity Chamber, providing solutions to current integrity issues, utilizing existing tools and instruments within the Administrative Bodies when providing advices/proposals, recommending ways to ensure compliance in a practical and feasible manner, and providing integrity sessions to the employees of the Administrative Bodies, as well as the public.

3.2 Independence

The Integrity Chamber was embedded as an independent administrative body with legal personality in accordance with the requirements laid down for that purpose in Article 98 of the Constitution of Sint Maarten. The aim of this was to guarantee the independent position of the Integrity Chamber, placing it outside the scope of the regular government organisation of Sint Maarten.

As a deliberate departure from the recommendation of *Commissie Integer Openbaar Bestuur*, "Doing the right things right" (2014), the Integrity Chamber was not established as a High Council of State. However, with the Ordinance, the Government ensured the establishment of a body with a structure that allows the organisation to remain autonomous, independent, and neutral in the execution of its tasks.

This resulted in the Integrity Chamber becoming an institution of trust. Trust in the Integrity Chamber is paramount to solving the integrity issues of the country.

3.3 Mission, Vision & Values



OUR MISSION

“It is the Integrity Chamber’s mission to instil the need for integrity awareness and ethical behaviour within Government and the community, and by doing so, stimulating and increasing, a level of trust internally in Sint Maarten and outwardly in terms of international relations.”



OUR VISION

“It is the Integrity Chamber’s vision to instil the continuous importance of personal and public integrity within all levels of government, businesses, and the public.”



OUR CORE VALUES

The Integrity Chamber recognizes the following core values as values that are indispensable to the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation:

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Respect
- Independence

With the establishment, implementation, and application of processes and procedures that exhibit the above-mentioned core values, the integrity of the organisation will be ensured.

3.4 Organisation

The structure of the Integrity Chamber consists of members, a secretariat, and a Supervisory Council.

3.4.1 Members

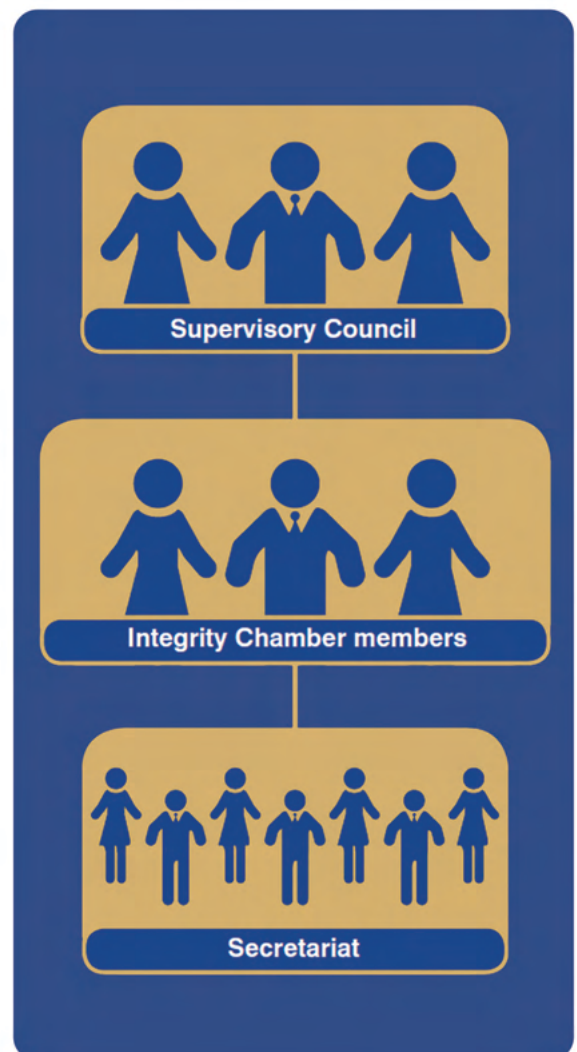
The Integrity Chamber is comprised of three (3) members. The members are appointed for a term of three (3) years and can be reappointed once for the same term. In 2023, the members of the Integrity Chamber consisted of:

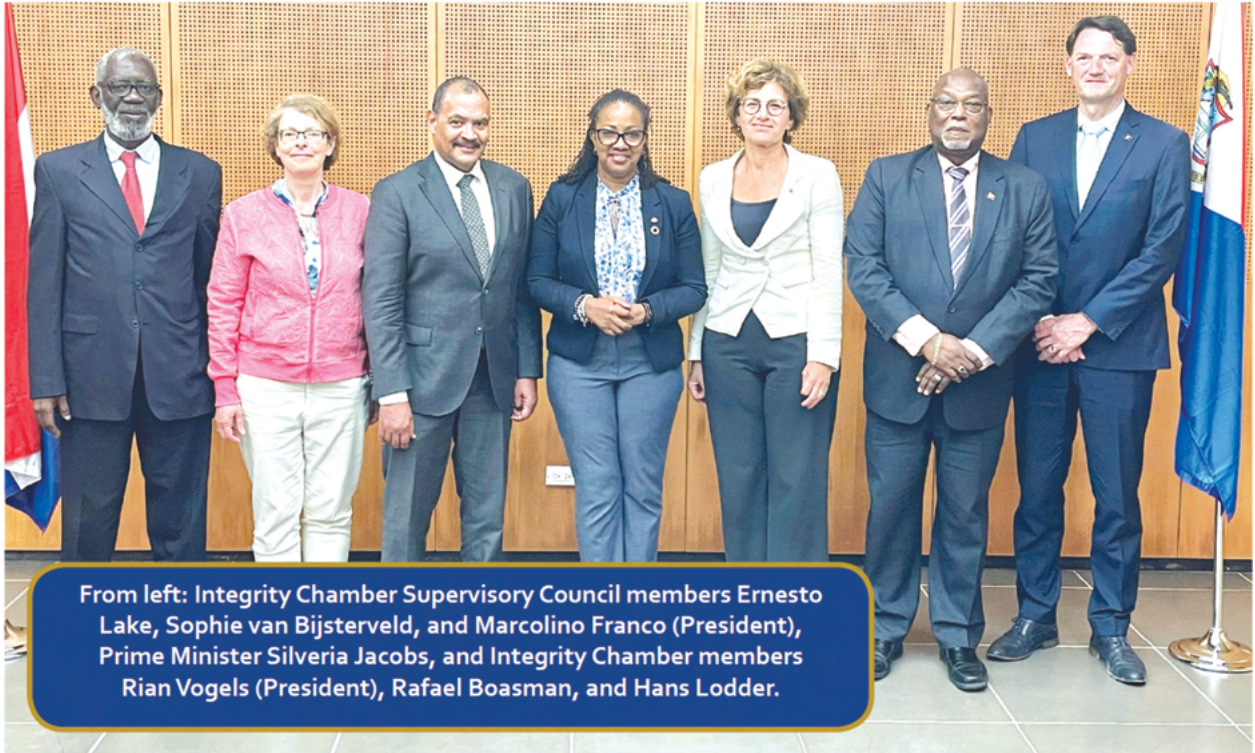
- Mrs. H.W. (Rian) Vogels, also president, appointed by Royal Decree on the binding recommendation of the two (2) other members, from January 1, 2020, for a period of three (3) years, and reappointed for another three (3) year term.
- Mr. R.A. (Rafael) Boasman, appointed by National Decree on the binding recommendation of the Council of Ministers of Sint Maarten, from January 10, 2019, for a period of three (3) years, and reappointed for another three (3) year term; and
- Mr. H.R. (Hans) Lodder, appointed by National Decree on the binding recommendation of the Council of Ministers of the Netherlands, from January 28, 2019, for a period of three (3) years, and reappointed for another three (3) year term.

3.4.2 Secretariat

The Integrity Chamber is supported by a secretariat, headed by the director, Ms. Charna Pompier. The secretariat carries out the daily activities of the Integrity Chamber. The staff of the secretariat is solely accountable to the members of the Integrity Chamber according to Article 11, paragraph 4, of the Ordinance.

The Integrity Chamber has a formation of ten (10) FTE's. In 2023, the secretariat consisted of eight (8) FTE's, including the director. To execute the tasks of the Integrity Chamber, the secretariat has qualified personnel who have legal, policy writing, research, and communication expertise. In addition, the secretariat has various supporting staff to facilitate the independence of the organisation.





From left: Integrity Chamber Supervisory Council members Ernesto Lake, Sophie van Bijsterveld, and Marcolino Franco (President), Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs, and Integrity Chamber members Rian Vogels (President), Rafael Boasman, and Hans Lodder.



President of the Integrity Chamber, H.W. Vogels, presenting the 2022 Annual Report to H.E. Governor Baly.

3.4.3 Supervisory Council

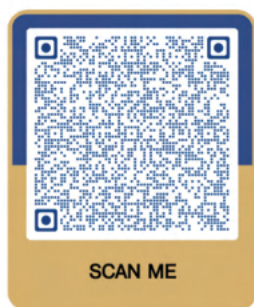
The Integrity Chamber has a Supervisory Council, based on Article 13 of the Ordinance, which oversees specific activities of the Integrity Chamber.

The Supervisory Council is comprised of three (3) members. The members are appointed for a term of three (3) years and can be reappointed once for the same term. The current members are:

- Mr. M.C.F. (Mike) Franco, also president, appointed by Royal Decree on the binding recommendation of the two (2) other members, from January 1, 2023, for a period of three (3) years.
- Mr. E.L. (Leon) Lake, who was appointed by National Decree on the binding recommendation of the Council of Ministers of Sint Maarten from January 1, 2020, for a period of three (3) years, and reappointed for another three (3) year term; and
- Ms. S.C. (Sophie) van Bijsterveld, who was appointed by National Decree on the binding recommendation of the Council of Ministers of the Netherlands from January 1, 2020, for a period of three (3) years, and reappointed for another three (3) year term.

A special task of the Supervisory Council is the granting of authorization for on-site investigations. The Supervisory Council also handles complaints against the Integrity Chamber regarding the manner in which its authorities are executed. The complaint procedure of the Supervisory Council can be found on the website of the Integrity Chamber.

Scan this QR code to read the complaints procedure



4. TASKS

The Ordinance outlines the core tasks of the Integrity Chamber. Those tasks are:

- to give advices and proposals on policies for the general promotion of integrity;
- to investigate suspected misconducts; and
- to strengthen awareness on integrity in the community.

4.1 Advices and Proposals

Based on Article 16, paragraph 1, of the Ordinance, the Integrity Chamber is tasked with giving advices or making proposals on policies to improve integrity in Sint Maarten. Advices and proposals can be given on the Integrity Chamber's own initiative or at the request of the Prime Minister, the responsible minister or Parliament.

When writing advices and proposals, the aim is to identify, assess, and address procedural gaps or loopholes to better the integrity infrastructure of Sint Maarten. The Integrity Chamber oversees the implementation of its advices and proposals.

4.2 Consultations

The Integrity Chamber has a special advisory role based on Article 16, paragraph 2, of the Ordinance. In accordance with this article, the Integrity Chamber must be heard (i.e., consulted) in cases prescribed by the Ordinance. The Integrity Chamber must also be consulted, in all exceptional cases of a significant nature, and in any other cases in which Government or Parliament deems it necessary.

While the government and Parliament are free to approach the Integrity Chamber in other cases, it is left to the Integrity Chamber to assess whether the work allows such an optional request for advice. In the event of an exceptional case of an important nature, consulting the Integrity Chamber is mandatory, even if the Ordinance does not directly provide for this. This could include, for example, far-reaching draft legislation and regulations meant to improve integrity, on which the Integrity Chamber has not yet officially advised or made a proposal.

4.3 Investigations

Articles 25 and 26 of the Ordinance gives the Integrity Chamber the authority to investigate suspected misconducts within Administrative Bodies.

Investigations can be started in response to a notification of suspected misconduct or on the Integrity Chamber's own initiative. Anyone can file a notification of suspected misconduct. A (suspected) misconduct relates to an act or failure by an administrative body to adhere to values and norms, legal requirements, or other obligations through which the interest of society, or the proper functioning of an administrative body could be harmed.

Examples of misconduct include conflicts of interest, non-compliance to regulations, favours for family and friends, intimidation, and discrimination, leaking of confidential information, misuse of organisational resources, abuse of authority, financial misconduct, etc.

Article 26, paragraph 3 of the Ordinance, gives the Integrity Chamber further authority to issue a binding advice based on the findings of an investigation.

4.4 Awareness

Based on Article 16, paragraph 5, of the Ordinance, the Integrity Chamber is further tasked with continuously providing information to strengthen awareness on integrity in the community.

This goes further than only strengthening awareness among civil servants and employees of government-owned companies, but this also includes all of society. The Integrity Chamber utilizes various mediums to strengthen awareness within administrative bodies and the community, such as informational videos, integrity sessions and workshops, and community outreach events.

“

**Integrity
is doing
the right
thing.**



5. 2023 ACTIVITIES

In this paragraph, the various activities executed in 2023, based on the core tasks and the role of the Integrity Chamber, are described.

5.1 Advices and Proposals

5.1.1 Advice on the Draft Code of Conduct Parliament

The Integrity Chamber provided requested feedback and input to the Parliament of Sint Maarten on Article 10 of the draft Code of Conduct of Parliament (hereinafter: 'CoC') on August 31, 2023. Article 10 of the CoC establishes rules concerning the enforcement of the CoC. Enforcement of the CoC will be guaranteed by the Permanent Committee for Integrity, who will receive complaints and/or concerns of breaches of the CoC. Thereafter, the complaints and/or concerns will be sent to the Handling Committee (comprised of one (1) representative of the Ombudsman and two (2) representatives of the Integrity Chamber), for further handling.

The Integrity Chamber made use of the opportunity to also advise on other articles of the CoC to contribute to a more comprehensive CoC and reinforce the implementation and execution of the CoC.

The advice from the Integrity Chamber included the following:

1. Establish an internal procedure for filing and handling complaints and/or concerns internally by the Permanent Committee;

2. Outline the authorities of the Handling Committee;

3. Broaden the definition of 'gift', 'ancillary activity', and the principle 'respect';

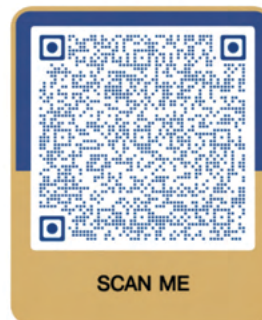
4. Incorporate the submission of an annual disclosure form for the external interests of the MPs;

5. Establish general standards for receiving or giving gifts by MPs;

6. Define confidential information and include an article that emphasizes the importance of keeping certain information confidential; and

7. Apply the recommendations and implement the CoC before the end of 2023.

Scan this QR-code to read the full advice:



5.1.2 Advice to Government on Travel and Accommodation Expenses

At the request of the Council of Ministers, the Integrity Chamber provided advice on whether it is acceptable for travel and accommodation expenses for ministers and civil servants to be paid by third parties.

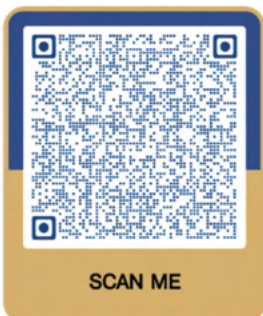
The Integrity Chamber identified several integrity-related issues, such as the risk of compromising the independent position of a minister/civil servant, damaging the public's trust in government, and creating a possible conflict of interest between a third party and the minister and/or civil servant involved.

This advice submitted on June 29, 2023, followed the Integrity Chamber's Advice on the Ministerial Gift Policy, which was submitted to Council of Ministers in July 2020.

The advice from the Integrity Chamber included the following:

1. All travel and accommodation expenses for ministers and civil servants should be paid by Government;
2. Exceptions can be made for meetings, conferences, workshops, or similar events, after careful consideration and only insofar the paid expenses are in line with Government rules and regulations;
3. Establish and implement written guidelines to ensure consistency; and
4. Register all offers for travel and accommodation in a public registry.

Scan this QR-code to read the full advice:



5.1.3 Quick scan of the Ministry of VSA

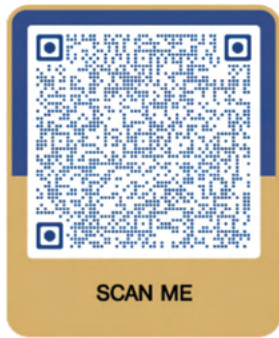
The Quick Scan was conducted to strengthen the integrity infrastructure of the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour (in Dutch: 'Volksgezondheid, Sociale Ontwikkeling en Arbeid', hereafter: Ministry) by determining the most significant bottlenecks, challenges, and areas for improvement. The integrity infrastructure consists of all integrity-related laws, policies, and procedures, including norms and values of the Ministry, as well as the additional elements necessary for the efficient execution of organisational tasks.

Among the findings of the Quick Scan, it was identified that the regulatory (integrity) framework of the Ministry is lacking or does not correspond with the objectives of the Ministry. The Ministry also faces challenges in the area of human and material resources and decisions are influenced by stakeholders and public officials. This advice was submitted to the Administrative Bodies on June 30, 2023.

The advice from the Integrity Chamber included the following:

1. All travel and accommodation expenses for ministers and civil servants should be paid by Government;
2. Exceptions can be made for meetings, conferences, workshops, or similar events, after careful consideration and only insofar the paid expenses are in line with Government rules and regulations;
3. Establish and implement written guidelines to ensure consistency; and
4. Register all offers for travel and accommodation in a public registry.

Scan this QR-code to read the full advice:



5.2 Investigation Activities

The investigation activities of the Integrity Chamber include handling inquiries and notifications and investigating suspected misconducts. Approaching the Integrity Chamber to report a misconduct can be a daunting task. The level of engagement experienced in 2023, through persons approaching the organisation both formal and informally, reinforces the Integrity Chamber as an institution of trust.

5.2.1 Inquiries

The Integrity Chamber was regularly contacted by persons requesting information concerning possible integrity issues, suspected misconducts, examples of misconduct, or information concerning the jurisdiction of the Integrity Chamber, as well as persons interested in filing a notification. Persons with a complaint that are interested in filing a notification are invited to discuss the complaint. These are registered as inquiries. During the meeting, the integrity issues are discussed. If the complaint is outside the scope of the Integrity Chamber's jurisdiction, alternatives to filing a notification are provided. This prevents submitted notifications from being deemed inadmissible. In 2023, seven (7) inquiries were handled, two (2) of which led to a notification.

5.2.2 Notifications

In 2023, two (2) notifications of suspected misconducts were reported to the Integrity Chamber. The notifications of suspected misconduct fell within the following categories:

- Unfair and non-transparent application of bidding regulations.
- Non-compliance with applicable legislation/regulations.

Both notifications were considered admissible.

5.2.3 Investigations

In 2023, three (3) investigations were conducted. There was one (1) preliminary investigation, and two (2) full investigations. The preliminary investigation is still ongoing. The full investigations were completed and the investigation reports containing advice were submitted to Government and the concerned administrative body.

1. Investigation on compliance to bidding procedure within Government

The investigation that was started in 2022 concerning compliance to bidding procedures within Government, was completed in 2023. This investigation was the result of a notification of suspected misconduct. The misconduct was described in the notification as, "a violation of, or non-compliance with, existing bidding procedures within the Council of Ministers". The findings were submitted to Government in the first quarter/half of 2023.

Results of the investigation:

The Integrity Chamber concluded that the claims made in the notification of suspected misconduct were justified as there was insufficient compliance to the bidding procedure. To obtain a better understanding of the level of compliance, other bidding procedures that occurred within Government in the last five (5) years were included in the investigation.

By analyzing the different bidding procedures, the following was determined:

- **There was non-compliance with bidding procedures and applicable laws (in Dutch: 'Comptabiliteitsverordening')** occurred regardless of the circumstances;
- **Key documents necessary for proper decision-making were not available and/or not registered in the document registration system;**
- **In circumstances where deviation from the standard procedure was possible, the required justification was not provided; and**
- **The necessary corrections were not applied when steps in the process were omitted.**

The investigation report included the following advice:

- 1. Establish and implement a National Decree pertaining to the manner in which bidding procedures should be executed (in accordance with Article 47, paragraph 6, of the Comptabiliteitsverordening), to ensure transparency and accountability within the process;**
- 2. Determine the possible integrity risks within the procurement process and adjust the procedures accordingly to minimize these risks;**

3. Ensure that the bidding procedures are accessible to all relevant stakeholders (internally and externally), to uphold the integrity of the process; and

4. Implement an internal control system to ensure compliance and reduce omissions in the procedure.

2. Investigation on compliance to integrity-related rules and procedures within N.V. GEBE

At the end of 2022, the Integrity Chamber launched a comprehensive investigation into N.V. GEBE on its own initiative. The investigation was started to determine the state of compliance to integrity-related rules and procedures within the company. The investigation spanned the years 2017-2022 and focused on the roles and responsibilities of the Managing Board, Supervisory Board, and the Shareholder, as stated in the applicable legislative framework. Based on the span of the investigation period, the findings presented in the report covers the tenure of several Managing Boards, Supervisory Boards, and Shareholder Representatives/Ministers. This investigation was completed in 2023.

Results of the investigation:

The investigation concluded that there is a general lack of compliance to integrity-related rules and procedures. The main factors that played a role in this conclusion are:

- **Missing and/or not implemented policies and procedures that ensure integrity within the company such as, a Code of Conduct, complaint procedures, confidentiality policy;**
- **Non-compliance to the already existing policies and procedures, in part due to a lack of awareness;**

- **Non-compliance to the already existing policies and procedures, in part due to a lack of awareness;**
- **An unhealthy company culture due to a lack of trust and communication between Management and employees;**
- **The selection of Managing and Supervisory Board members with insufficient regard to specific expertise and qualities needed to manage the diverse responsibilities within GEBE; and**
- **Political influence, particularly in the selection of Managing and Supervisory Board members.**

The above has led to administrative misconducts such as, undesirable behaviour, the abuse of authority, and the leaking of confidential information. The negative perception of the company is another unintended consequence.

The investigation report included the following advice:

- 1. Complete the legislative framework: Develop and implement the missing policies and procedures such as, Managing and Supervisory Board Regulations, a Code of Conduct, and Company Complaint Procedures;**
- 2. Enforce compliance to the framework: Appoint a Compliance officer to ensure compliance within the company on all levels and apply sanctions for non-compliance;**
- 3. Promote a healthy company culture: Establish company norms and values, facilitate employee trainings, promote open communication, and appoint a Confidential Advisor; and**

- 4. Prevent political influence: Create and publicize profiles for the Managing and Supervisory Boards members based on the required background and experience and ensure a transparent and accountable process and selection of candidates.**

5.3 Awareness Activities

Awareness is an important vehicle for positive change. Continuous promotion of integrity through awareness campaigns is necessary to encourage, develop and unite the public and reinforce the belief that integrity is everyone's responsibility.

As in previous years, the Integrity Chamber launched an awareness campaign to strengthen awareness on integrity in the community. The campaign involved a variety of activities aimed at engaging various groups within the community on the subject of integrity. These activities included the "Integrity in Voting" video series, and community outreach events such as a "Meet and Greet", student integrity sessions at schools, and integrity sessions for political parties. In addition to the campaign, integrity sessions on integrity in the workplace were provided and the first ever Integrity Symposium was hosted.

5.3.1 "Integrity in Voting" Video Series

The Integrity Chamber launched a new video series with the theme, "Integrity in Voting". The aim of the video series was to shed light on the importance of integrity in the electoral process, and to discuss what it means to vote with integrity. The series featured interviews with various professionals involved in the electoral process and from key sectors within the country.

The video series addressed several perspectives from which integrity in voting can be viewed, such as the regulation of the electoral process, the selection of political candidates, and the role of the citizens. Subjects that were discussed included the systems that are in place to safeguard democracy in the electoral process, the effects of frequent elections and changes in leadership, and the steps that citizens can take to make sure that they are voting with integrity. In 2023, the video series received on average 33,000 views per video.

The “Integrity in Voting” video series contained nine (9) videos with notable guests speaking on various topics. A few speakers are pictured below.

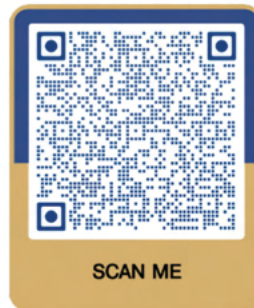


Chairman of the Electoral Council, Richard Gibson Jr., on the role of the Elector Council in the electoral process.



Chairwoman of the Central Voting Bureau, Nathalie Tackling, on the role of the Central Voting Bureau in the electoral process.

Scan this QR code to view the videos



Governor of Sint Maarten, H.E. Ajamu Baly, on the role of the Governor in the electoral process.



Former Prime Minister, Marcel Gumbs, on the role of the informateur in the electoral process.

5.3.2 Community Outreach Events

“Meet & Greet” event

The “Meet and Greet” event featured a short presentation on the Integrity Chamber and the importance of personal integrity, followed by an informal get-together. This year’s event was hosted at the Rupert I. Maynard Youth Community Centre in St. Peters. The events provided the public with a casual setting where they could become familiar with the Integrity Chamber and the people behind the organisation. These gatherings were meant to build trust between the Integrity Chamber and the community and facilitate conversations about integrity in a relaxed environment.

Student Integrity Sessions

The Integrity Chamber organised integrity sessions for students to engage the youth in the community on the importance of integrity. Four (4) primary schools were visited, namely, Ruby Labega, Oranje School, Marie Genevieve De Weever, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The sessions were facilitated by animated cartoons designed to portray various scenarios relating to integrity, such as honesty, kindness and fairness. The students were engaged in a discussion about the meaning of integrity and the consequences of their actions.



Representatives of the Integrity Chamber with students of the Marie Genevieve De Weever Elementary School.

Integrity Sessions for Political Parties

With the 2024 Parliamentary Elections slated for January 2024, the Integrity Chamber decided to provide a series of integrity sessions to political parties as part of its public awareness campaign. The Integrity Chamber believes that the ability to exercise one’s democratic right to vote is fundamental for a well-functioning society. Political parties are therefore important pillars of society. As potential leaders, political candidates would be in the position to make decisions that affect the quality of the lives of the people in Sint Maarten.

These decisions can carry certain risks, such as conflicts of interests, political pressure, or false allegations. To stimulate a discussion on how these risks can be avoided, integrity sessions were offered that featured best practices to maintain integrity, and an open discussion on integrity to exchange ideas and stimulate new perspectives.

Integrity sessions were presented to the United St. Maarten Party (USP), Unified Resilient Sint Maarten Movement (URSM), the Democratic Party (DP), the Party for Progress (PFP), and the National Alliance (NA).



Representatives of the Integrity Chamber with members of the National Alliance.



Director of the Integrity Chamber, Charna Pompier, presenting to members of the Democratic Party.

5.3.3 Sessions on Integrity in the Workplace

The Integrity Chamber organised integrity sessions for various departments and executing agencies. Civil servants were invited to participate in these sessions in an effort to generate more awareness about the Integrity Chamber and the importance of integrity. The sessions created an opportunity for direct connections to be established with the organisations, where an interactivity and engagement could be facilitated. Three (3) organisations received integrity sessions, namely, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Department of Labour Affairs and Social Services, and Algemeen Pensioenfonds Sint Maarten.



Representatives of the Integrity Chamber providing an integrity session to civil servants within the Ministry of VSA.



Representatives of the Integrity Chamber with employees of APS.

5.3.4 Integrity Symposium

The Integrity Chamber hosted its first Integrity Symposium. This symposium, with the theme: "Building Integrity to Build a Nation", aimed at stimulating a national discussion and offer new ideas about the foundational elements of integrity for building a stronger Sint Maarten. Various stakeholders within Sint Maarten and the Kingdom were invited and the public was able to participate virtually via the Facebook or YouTube pages of the Integrity Chamber. The event was opened by Prime Minister, Ms. Silveria Jacobs and there was an address by President of the Integrity Chamber, Mrs. Rian Vogels. The keynote speakers were Mr. Dion Abdool, Board Member of Transparency International and Immediate Past Chair of the Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute, and Mr. Trevor Munroe, Director of National Integrity Action in Jamaica, and member of the International Council of Transparency International.



President of the Integrity Chamber, H.W. Vogels, welcoming Prime Minister, Silveria Jacobs, to the Integrity Chamber's first Integrity Symposium.

The symposium also featured an interactive panel discussion open to both invited stakeholders and the public (virtual). The panelists included the keynote speakers and members of the Integrity Chamber, Mr. Rafael Boasman and Mr. Hans Lodder. The event received positive feedback and was well attended.



The Governor, Prime Minister, Chairman of Parliament, keynote speakers and other distinguished guests at the 2023 Integrity Symposium.

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**Integrity is being
honest.**





*Keynote speaker, Professor Trevor Munroe,
executive director of National Integrity Action in Jamaica.*



*Keynote speaker, Dion Abdool, attorney at law and board
member of Transparency International.*



Panelists Rafael Boasman, Dion Abdool, Trevor Munroe and Hans Lodder with moderator, Edna Evans.



Members of the Supervisory Council along with members of the Integrity Chamber at the 2023 Integrity Symposium.

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**Integrity is
holding
yourself
accountable.**



5.3.5 Online Activities

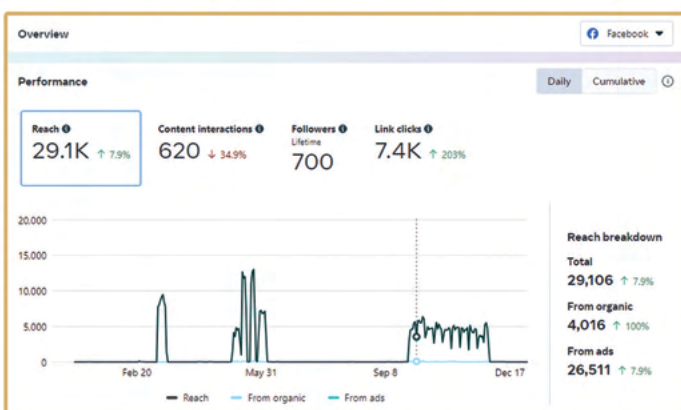
The Integrity Chamber utilizes social media as a valuable tool to expand its audience and reach, concerning the organisation's tasks. Advices, proposals, informational video's, news items and publications are published on the website of the Integrity Chamber, as well as on the social media platform. Social media is also heavily used in raising awareness of the importance of integrity, as stated in the above paragraph.

Analytics

Via its Facebook page, the Integrity Chamber achieved a total "reach" (the number of persons that were exposed to the content) of 29,100 in 2023. An increase of 7.9% compared to 2022. The total number of link clicks to Facebook website was 7,400, an increase of 203% compared to 2022.

Content interactions, which includes likes, reactions, saves, comments, shares, and replies, was 620, a decrease of 34.9% compared to 2022. The increases in reach and link clicks can be attributed to the relevance of the content, namely, the "Integrity in Voting" video series that was launched about four (4) months before the Parliamentary Elections in January 2024.

In 2023, the website of the Integrity Chamber (www.integritychamber.sx) saw 3,800 visitors.



5.4 Additional Operational Activities

5.4.1 Professional Development

Enhancing the expertise and improving the quality of professional skills is of great importance in the execution of the tasks of the Integrity Chamber. Integrity trainings and trainings on safety and security were provided. Staff members also participated in various trainings, such as Good Governance, Compliance and Confidential Advisor trainings.

5.4.2 Supporting Activities

The Integrity Chamber has three (3) supporting activities, namely: Finance, Administrative Support and Information and Communication Technology (ICT, currently provided by third parties). Activities in these areas were executed under the supervision of the director of the secretariat. Day-to-day activities within these three areas are ongoing. Special projects were ICT security and safety measures, and the Financial Management. The necessary provisions for the supporting activities are made available for the purpose of ensuring the independence of the Integrity Chamber.

5.4.3 Internship

A local student was given the opportunity to complete an internship at the Integrity Chamber. The student was allowed to experience the daily operations of the organisation and learn about the importance of integrity by completing several assignments. The internship concluded with a presentation on the performed activities as well as an integrity approach meant to bring awareness amongst peers. This opportunity was a learning experience for the intern as well as for the Integrity Chamber.

5.4.4 Networking

The members and the director of the Integrity Chamber met with important stakeholders to maintain good working relationships. This included but was not limited to (High) Councils, Ministers, Secretary Generals, (supervisory) board members and/or management of government entities. In the meetings, the activities of the Integrity Chamber were presented and discussed as well as the mutual expectations and the working relationship.

There is no international pre-established network of Integrity Chambers. It is therefore important for the Integrity Chamber to establish a network of persons and organisations in the field. The Integrity Chamber continued its efforts to expand its network with both private and public organisations that are involved in integrity-related activities. The first Integrity Summit was organised on Curacao. Staff of the secretariat attended and met with other professionals in the field of integrity and exchanged ideas and best practices.

5.4.5 Cooperation Protocols

The Integrity Chamber is an independent organisation. However, to prevent an overlap in activities and to promote coordination and consultation between organisations that are also tasked with investigating suspected misconducts, Articles 22 and 23 of the Ordinance requires the establishment of Cooperation Protocols with the Prosecutor's Office and the Minister of General Affairs, respectively. The protocols outline the working arrangements between the organisations. A start was made to review the Cooperation Protocol with the Prosecutor's Office.

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**Integrity
is being
trustworthy.**



6 Statistics and Updates

The Integrity Chamber recorded the following statistics for the Annual Report 2023:

Task	Description	Quantity
Unsolicited advices and proposals	The number of unsolicited advices and proposals issued.	1
Requested advices and proposals	The number of requests for advices and proposals received.	2
• Admissible requests	The number of admissible requests.	2
• Inadmissible requests	The number of inadmissible requests.	0
Inquiries	The number of persons/organisations requesting information concerning integrity issues and the services of the Integrity Chamber.	7
Notifications	The number of notifications received.	2
• Admissible requests	The number of admissible requests.	2
• Inadmissible requests	The number of inadmissible requests.	0
Preliminary investigations	The number of preliminary investigations carried out.	2
Comprehensive investigations	The number of comprehensive investigations performed.	2
Binding advices	The number of binding advices given.	0
Awareness activities	The total number of activities executed to raise awareness.	21
“Let’s Talk About Integrity” video series	The number of informational videos published.	18
Community Outreach events	The number of community outreach events hosted.	13

7 Finances

7.1 General

The budget of the Integrity Chamber is part of the annual budget of the Government of Sint Maarten. Article 15 of the Ordinance states that, in agreement with the Integrity Chamber and the Minister of General Affairs, Parliament provides the Integrity Chamber with all facilities for the proper and independent performance of its duties.

As an independent administrative body with legal personality, the Integrity Chamber is responsible for its own financial administration. The president of the Integrity Chamber is responsible for budget management.

7.2 Budget 2023

Based on an agreement established in 2018 between the government of Sint Maarten and the government of the Netherlands, both countries shared financial responsibility of the Integrity Chamber from 2018 till 2021. As of 2022, the Government of Sint Maarten has been fully responsible for the financing of the Integrity Chamber.

The 2023 budget for the Integrity Chamber was originally NAf 2,465,195. The budget consisted of personnel costs and material costs and was based on the planned activities of the Integrity Chamber. This budget was submitted to the Government of Sint Maarten in April 2022. The budget process of Government was executed without consulting the Integrity Chamber and a budget of NAf 2,072,932 was approved.

7.3 Expenditures

The overview of the operating budget for 2023 is presented below.

Financial Year 2023

Budget post	NAf	NAf
Budget		2,072,932
Personnel	996,404	
Members Integrity Chamber & Supervisory Council	324,079	
Material costs	802,613	
Total Costs		2,123,096
Balance		-50,164

The results show that the budget approved by Parliament was not sufficient for the operation of the Integrity Chamber. 2023 was the second year that the budget of the Integrity Chamber was cut which affected the operations of the Integrity Chamber negatively.

8 Supervisory Council Annual Report 2023

8.1 Legal Framework

The Supervisory Council of the Sint Maarten Integrity Chamber was established in 2020 in accordance with Article 13 of the National Ordinance Integrity Chamber of December 18, 2017 (Afk. Blad 2017, no. 41).

The Supervisory Council is tasked with:

- The monitoring of the efficient execution of the tasks charged to the Integrity Chamber as provisioned in the National Ordinance Integrity Chamber.
- Taking the necessary steps in the event that the Supervisory Council is of the opinion that the Integrity Chamber has been seriously neglecting its duties.
- The supervision of the lawful and proportionate exercising of the authorizations provisioned to the Integrity Chamber.
- The granting of authorizations as referred to in Article 31, paragraph 5, of the National Ordinance Integrity Chamber.

8.2 Composition of the Supervisory Council

The Supervisory Council consists of three (3) members: President Marcolino C.F. Franco, and members Ernesto L. Lake and Sophie van Bijsterveld. Following the procedure outlined in the National Ordinance Integrity Chamber, President Marcolino Franco was appointed by the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of the Netherlands per December 1, 2022, on the binding recommendation of the Supervisory Council. The other members of the Supervisory Council were re-appointed per January 1, 2023.

8.3 Complaints Procedure and Complaint Regulations

The complaints procedure which is outlined in the "Complaint Regulations of the Supervisory Council of the Integrity Chamber Sint Maarten", as referred to in Article 14, second paragraph of the Ordinance, was not activated in 2023.

8.4 Prior granting of authority on the basis of Article 31, paragraph 1, sub 5, of the National Ordinance Integrity Chamber

No requests were made to the Supervisory Council by the Integrity Chamber to grant authority for the exercising of its competences under Article 31, paragraphs 1, sub 5, of the National Ordinance Integrity Chamber.

8.5 2023 Activities

For the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Supervisory Council was able to meet in person in Sint Maarten and in its current composition. During the visit, the Supervisory Council met with the members of the Integrity Chamber and the staff of the secretariat. The Supervisory Council also had the opportunity to participate in the first integrity symposium, hosted by the Integrity Chamber on May 26, 2023, themed 'Building Integrity to Build a Nation'.

Additionally, the Supervisory Council met with Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs.

Apart from meeting in Sint Maarten, the Supervisory Council convened with the Integrity Chamber online. Several topics were discussed, such as:

- **Administration:** the outlook and the intentions for the coming year, the annual report, the budget of the Integrity Chamber, and the financial position of the Integrity Chamber etc.;
- **Developments:** the Integrity Chamber's advisory role, and its strategy and activities with regards to proposals, advices, investigations, and awareness, the state of affairs regarding the feedback that the Integrity Chamber receives on its initiatives, the position of the Integrity Chamber in the midst of other public institutions and of society, the continuity and change in personnel and members of the Integrity Chamber, and the recruitment process for a new president of the Integrity Chamber; and
- **Travel:** preparations for the visit of the Supervisory Council to Sint Maarten in 2023.

During one (1) of the online meetings, the Supervisory Council also had to opportunity to make acquaintances with the incoming President of the Integrity Chamber, Mr. G.R. (Rik) Bergman.

The President of the Integrity Chamber and the President of the Supervisory Council met regularly to keep the Supervisory Council informed.

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**Integrity is
everyone's
responsibility.**





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