

The **Power** to Change



Eight short stories highlighting the successful collaborative efforts between the European Union (EU) and the Government of Montserrat



Dear Friends,

The European Union (EU) has enjoyed a long and successful partnership with the Government and people of Montserrat. Through this relationship, which can be traced back more than three decades, Montserrat has been able to progressively advance its development agenda.

The developmental aspect of the projects over the years has been truly catalytic and most importantly sustainable, evidenced in the development of the country's infrastructure, tourism, private sector, and human resources. We are encouraged to see the resources generated by our partnership continue to be utilised effectively, which is a clear demonstration of the commitment of our partners in the Government to formulating and implementing programmes which have a real and profound impact on the economy and day-to-day life.

The EU is committed in our continued collaboration on the implementation of the Montserrat's Medium Term Economic Policy. The actions delivered under this programme have been particularly effective, as the eight stories in this booklet demonstrate. We consider that such initiatives in the key areas of renewable energy transformation, tourism promotion and infrastructure development will generate concrete and tangible gains for the people of Montserrat. Indeed, they highlight Montserrat's continual efforts to create a coherent, comprehensive, and sustainable policy framework that will ensure inclusive economic growth in the long term.

On behalf of the European Union, I thank Montserrat for our continued excellent cooperation and invite all readers to enjoy these stories that showcase it.

Malgorzata Wasilewska

Head of Delegation

EU Delegation to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM



Greetings to all readers.

On behalf of the Government and people of Montserrat, I would like to express our gratitude to the European Union (EU) for the excellent cooperative relationship we have enjoyed over the years. Montserrat and its residents have experienced many natural disasters resulting in the loss of major infrastructures. The European Union has been generous in providing funding for significant projects on the island, which were instrumental in contributing to our reconstruction and development pathway.

Montserrat's partnership with the EU began with the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Promoting economic and social development with a keen focus on reducing and alleviating poverty, is a long-term aim of this treaty, and Montserrat has certainly experienced the benefits of this through our development partnership. As an island and as a people, we are honoured to be a part of a valuable and positive global development programme, benefiting from several generations of funding under the European Development Fund (EDF).



Funding received has been channelled across all sectors of our economy, from Health to Education, Communications, Housing and Infrastructure. The Government of Montserrat has put EU funding to a variety of uses, from studies and pilots to sole funding partner for the 750KW Solar PV and Battery Storage Project, empowering us to transition gradually to green/natural energy sources, in line with our 'Power to Change' Energy Policy; a soon-to-be completed Air Traffic Control Tower will bring Montserrat up to international Airport standards. Thanks to EU funding, under project "Lightspeed", the Government has launched a new voucher programme to facilitate the

rollout of fibre optic broadband to both local and business premises across the island, building on the reconnection to the international subsea fibre optic network funded by the UK.

It has been an excellent relationship and one we hope will continue for generations to come – of course, with support from and cooperation with other stakeholders and agencies. My technical teams are unanimous in their appreciation not only of the funding of these projects, but the nature of our partnership – hallmarked by trust, mutual respect and a spirit of collaboration. Our shared focus on sustainable and green growth, locally driven implementation, and the strengthening of the island's capabilities, has made for a fruitful and co-created development blueprint, that we hope can continue well beyond the EDF Programme.

On 20 February 2020, when we received the second disbursement under EDF 11 of €4 million (EC\$11.98 million), I took the opportunity to thank the EU, on behalf of the people of Montserrat, for their continuous support and commitment to our beautiful island. Now as these projects near an end, I do so again.

I know that the stories, testimonials and photographs in this booklet will give you a greater appreciation of how invaluable the funding support has been and memorialize how this partnership – indeed this friendship – is central to Montserrat's continued growth and development. Please read on!

Hon. Joseph E. Farrell
Premier
Government of Montserrat

Introduction

This booklet contains eight short stories highlighting the successful collaborative efforts between the European Union (EU) and the Government of Montserrat:

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Many of these projects were developed through the EU – Government of Montserrat Partnership using Budget Support.

Understanding Budget Support

What is Budget Support?

“Budget support” is a means of delivering effective aid and durable results in support of EU partners’ reform efforts and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It involves (i) dialogue with a partner country to agree on the reforms or development results which budget support can contribute to; (ii) an assessment of progress achieved; (iii) financial transfers to the treasury account of the partner country once those results have been achieved; and (iv) capacity development support. It is a contract based on a partnership with mutual accountability.

How does Budget Support Work?

Unlike specific projects, budget support involves the transfer of financial resources to the National Treasury of a partner country, once the latter has met the agreed conditions for payment set out in the contract. Transfers are made in Euros to a Government account held at the Central Bank and then converted into local currency to the National Treasury Account.

Once the transfer has taken place, budget support funds are used in accordance with the partner country’s own public financial management (PFM) systems. The responsibility for the management and use of these transferred resources rests with the partner government.

The Power to Change – the Change to Power

The Government of Montserrat is reducing reliance on fossil fuels – and cutting islanders' electricity bills – with the help of EU funding



The newly commissioned 750kW Solar Photovoltaic plant in Look Out, Montserrat



Like most of its Caribbean neighbours, Montserrat has traditionally relied on fossil fuel to generate electricity. This is expensive for the island and its inhabitants – especially since all fuel has to be imported – and has resulted in the Montserrat economy being exposed to volatile energy prices, major outlays in imported fuel and has limited economic growth. In the 21st Century, fossil fuels are also now acknowledged to be a major source of pollution.

The Government of Montserrat's National Energy Policy 2016 – 2030, "The Power to Change" – therefore determined to explore ways to develop renewable energy resources and improved energy efficiency for our island nation.

This is being pioneered through a two-phase Solar photovoltaic (PV) Project. In the first phase, a 250 Kilo-Watt (KW) solar PV system was successfully installed in Brades by the Salt Energy Company and handed over to the Government of Montserrat in March 2019. The incorporation of Solar power has resulted in a 13% renewable energy input to the Montserrat energy grid – 3% above the European Union's own key performance indicator (KPI) of 10%.

The second phase, the Montserrat 750kW Solar Photovoltaic (PV) plus 1 Mega Watt (MW) Battery Storage Project, completed ahead of schedule and commissioned on 1 September 2021, includes five solar PV arrays (built to withstand a Category 5 hurricane), a control building, a Medi-

um Voltage Power Station and Battery Container. Linked directly to the 250 KW facility in Brades, this makes a total 1 MW contribution to the Montserrat energy grid. The system also accommodates a Mini-Grid to provide backup in case of power outages to critical facilities such as the Hospital, Lookout Warden's Facility, Lookout Primary School (hurricane shelter), the DMCA and the Radio Link on top of Silver Hill.

This makes Montserrat one of the most advanced Caribbean nations in terms of sustainable energy; already neighbouring islands are asking about the possibility of Montserrat "mentoring" them in their own energy transitions. Montserratian Owen Lewis, Project Manager for both the Solar PV Project and Montserrat Public Lighting Improvement Project, is happy that the installations on Montserrat are state of the art: "I work for the Rocky Mountain Institute – Island Energy Programme (the dominant energy transition think-tank worldwide) and I can tell you that the work here is absolutely top of the line!"

Rocky Mountain Institute Projects Director Christopher Burgess adds "Montserrat may be the smallest island we work with in the Caribbean, but they are surely making the biggest impact. Montserrat is leading the Eastern Caribbean by example, putting sound policy into remarkable progress in a few short years. From volcanic survivorship two decades ago to 21st Century sustainability today, the people of Montserrat define resilience and I see them achieving even more



One of the five solar PV arrays, built to withstand a Category 5 hurricane

this decade, raising the bar for the region and the globe”.

Another positive outcome funded by the EU has been the move towards electric vehicles on Montserrat. Under the project, the Ministry of Communications, Works, Labour and Energy has purchased an electric car and trained 45 technicians in electric vehicle maintenance. New Government subsidies and tax exemptions for electric and hybrid vehicles has encouraged private citizens to explore their potential: at time of writing (August 2021) there were four electric and seven hybrid vehicles on the island.

This restart of Montserrat’s electricity generation transition from 100% fossil fuel to sustainable, brings many benefits. The expectation is that 40% of Montserrat Utilities Limited (MUL) Daily Electricity Peak Demand and 14% of Annual Electricity demand will be generated by the 1MW Solar PV. To date (28-months), the 250KW system has generated 1,103 MWh of operational electricity and saved, 126,340 lbs of CO₂ emission. On that point, MUL foresees the possibility of selling Montserrat’s unused “carbon quota” to countries and or large regional/international companies to offset future operation and maintenance costs,

reducing the financial burden on the consumer.

Cost-effective sustainable energy, reduction of fossil fuel imports, reduction in pollution ... all are clearly advantageous. From the point of view of the consumer, it will mean lower electricity prices: current estimations envisage a decrease of around 10% – a reduction of roughly one month’s bills every year.

MD of MUL Mr Kendall Lee states “We expect to see a more noticeable reduction in MUL’s electricity generation operational costs and thereby the average electricity charge on consumers’ utility bills. We see this as just that first step towards Montserrat’s target of 100% of its electricity needs being met by renewable energy. Further grant funding will need to be made available for future projects in additional energy storage and solar PV and the completion of Wind and geothermal energy installations.”

All this has been achieved with a total EU investment of EC\$13.09 million.

Let there be LED and Off-Grid LED Solar light!

The EU supported the Government of Montserrat's aim of bringing environmentally-friendly street lighting across the island



Aerial view of the newly installed LED public lighting on the S-corner of the A01 Road at Hilltop

The Government of Montserrat has determined to explore ways to develop renewable energy resources and improve energy efficiency under the National Energy Policy 2016 – 2030, “The Power to Change”.

Specifically, where public lighting is concerned, the Montserrat Public Lighting Improvement Project means developing a new generation of LED {“Light Emitting Diode”) and Off-Grid LED Solar Streetlights across the island. The European Union (EU) is supporting this policy aim, picking up the whole cost of the exercise – EC\$3, 532,000 – under its European Development Fund programme 11 (EDF11).

The project will cover provision of LED and Off-Grid LED Solar Streetlights and lighting for Government of Montserrat compounds, Air and Sea Ports, Little Bay and Salem Village Playing Fields and the Warden Supported Facility.

In 2016 there were a total of 800 streetlights across the island; under this project these will be supplemented by an additional fifty per cent, that is to say 391 LED and /or Solar streetlights. The EU's support includes all elements of installation, including supervision, and purchase of necessary hardware to undertake the work.

So far (August 2021) the new streetlights have been rolled out across the island, so has lighting for Government compounds, Air and Sea Ports, sports fields and the Lookout Warden Supported Facility; the rest of the project – the Little Bay and Salem Parks sport fields – is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021.

The impact has already been significant. The project has increased streetlighting by 50% island wide; it will reduce the cost of public lighting by around 25%, compared to 2019; imports of fuel for public lighting electricity generation have fallen by 3,219 gallons; the roads of Montserrat are far safer for both drivers and pedestrians – and of course pollution has been reduced with a saving of 72,100 pounds of CO₂.

And the public like it. One benefit among many, recreational walking in the early morning and evening has increased – a boom to public health – and walkers, in particular the elderly and women, feel far safer as a result of improved lighting. Two of Montserrat's regular walkers commented: “Thanks to the new LED streetlights, I have been able to increase the time I spend walking each week significantly because I now feel a lot safer walking at night. In fact, not only has my physical and mental well-being improved but also pride

in my community and appreciation for our natural environment” says Debra Lewis. Shanique White continued “I can walk at a brisk pace at nights without obstruction because the new LED streetlights give me the lighting I need to see clearly”

Of course, you can't please all of the people all of the time: one old-timer remarked that “The new streetlights shine through my window – forcing me to buy new curtains!” Another complained that before “when I saw a light on the road ahead, I knew it was a car coming; but now it might just be the new streetlights!” A more scientific commentator complains that the new street lighting “interferes with my star-gazing”. All are valid complaints ... but even the grumblers admit that the pluses far outweigh the negatives.

The Government of Montserrat has a long history of working successfully with the EU and the relationship remains good and close. The harmonious and successful collaboration on the LED and Off-Grid LED Solar Street Lighting project has helped to cement that bond.

3

Connecting Montserrat to the global superhighway through fibreoptics

The EU is funding “Lightspeed”, bringing fibreoptic internet into Montserrat homes

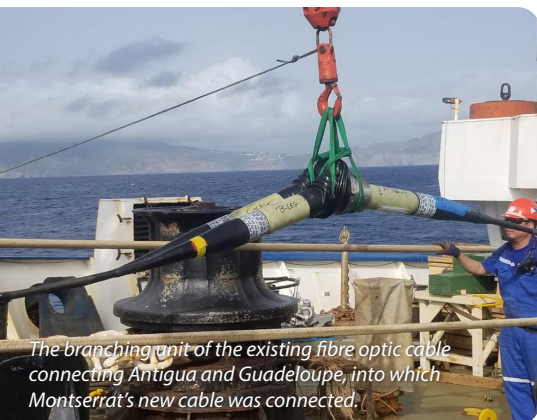


Preparations for the landing of the subsea fibre optic cable at Bunkum Bay, Montserrat

Like so many other pillars of Montserrat’s infrastructure, Montserrat’s fibre-optic connectivity was lost following the Soufriere Hills volcanic eruptions. For the next two decades, at a time when the rest of the world was making huge advances in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), which depends for optimal impact upon high-speed data transfer, all telephony and data communications had to go through a microwave network to Antigua – costly, cumbersome

and outdated technology that is very vulnerable to bad weather.

To address this deficit, in October 2019 the Government of Montserrat commissioned Southern Caribbean Fiber (SCF), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Digicel, to install and maintain a new subsea fibre optic cable system. The cost of this work - £4.8 million (c. EC\$17.7 million) was funded through the UK’s Capital Investment Programme for Resilient Economic Growth (CIPREG).



The branching unit of the existing fibre optic cable connecting Antigua and Guadeloupe, into which Montserrat’s new cable was connected.

Work progressed well and the installation of a new submarine fibreoptic cable system connecting Montserrat to the “global superhighway”, via a “Branching Unit” between Guadeloupe and Antigua, was successfully commissioned on 01 October 2020.

So, Montserratians can now enjoy a reliable, fast and secure internet connection. This also holds huge potential for new economic activities, employment and social benefits: “telemedicine” has long been considered an opportunity, given the limitations of access to specialist care on island. Distance education, business process outsourcing

ing, data centres and related applications are other possibilities. There is potential for Montserrat to host fintech ventures, to operate a satellite ground station facility relaying internet signals from providers to satellites; Montserrat could become the home of a relay station transmitting data from earth to satellites orbiting the earth; or a global centre for volcanology, enabling scholars around the world to interact with the Volcano Observatory on a daily basis.

A Government task force is exploring all these potential ideas. As Montserrat's Premier, the Hon. Joseph Farrell, stated at the official event to mark the completion of the project, "Technology plays a critical role in advancing the development of Montserrat; and this project is symbolic of our thrust and desire to build our economy in a digital age. We can rest assured that Montserrat has positioned itself for more business opportunities and our communications systems are now more robust."

Where the UK's CIPREG Programme focussed on investment in the subsea infrastructural element of the fibre installation, the EU's contribution is firmly on land. With EC\$3 million of investment from EDF11, Montserrat's Department for Information Technology and E-Government Services (DITES) is upgrading the terrestrial network infrastructure for all government buildings, ensuring that the public sector secures maximum value from the high speeds now available.

This work, which has already been completed for most government buildings, involves the replacement of all microwave dishes and point-to-point wireless radios across the government estate with the very latest fibre optic cabling. The ongoing project will make use of underground ducting, where possible, providing added resilience to the Government's communication networks.

Together with the capability provided by the CIPREG Programme, the EU-funded terrestrial up-grade will drastically improve the speed of the government's network systems and allow the operators to store backups of the data at different locations outside of the main data cen-



Project team members aboard the survey vessel, exploring the seabed conditions to inform the best cable landing route.

tre at Government Headquarters, which will improve network resiliency and data redundancy. It will also significantly reduce our vulnerability to storms and hurricanes; and when connected to the Subsea Fibre Network, will result in our capacity to have most of the network live and available in all weather conditions.

Last but not least, thanks to EU funding, the Government has launched a new voucher programme to facilitate the rollout of fibre optic broadband to both local and business premises across the island. Known as project "Lightspeed", the overall aim is to reduce the cost to consumers of connecting their premises to the new fibre network, so accelerating the national roll-out of gigabit cable internet service to Montserratian business and homes.

With these complementary grant funded projects, Montserrat is now positioned to harness the socio-economic power of "gigabitcapable" internet services. Montserrat is committed to ensuring that the benefits of these investments are felt by everyone in Montserrat, in business, in education, across the public sector, and in Montserratians' homes. In the age of long-distance connectivity, Montserrat has laid the foundation stones for a new digital economy, at a pivotal moment where the future of work, learning and commerce presents new prospects on island, and beyond our shores.

Affordable housing for Montserratians

With EU funding support, the Government of Montserrat is helping the people of Montserrat get onto the housing ladder and improve existing housing stock



An example of social housing in typical Montserrat style and colour

There is a famous old saying that “a person’s home is his or her castle”: there is universal human need and desire to own the roof over your head – and the Government of Montserrat has a comprehensive policy to achieve this goal, supported by the European Union (EU) and the UK Government.

Providing affordable housing of a good quality, in particular to help first time buyers get on the housing ladder, is always a challenge – but especially in Montserrat. As a small island, with limited production facilities, most of the material required for construction has to be imported, making it very costly. Montserrat’s climate and weather conditions impose special standards on the construction industry – measures to anticipate earthquake, hurricane and of course volcanic activity. Above all, Montserrat is still suffering the devastating impact of a natural disaster doublewhammy: Hurricane Hugo in 1989, which destroyed over 95% of the existing buildings, and the Soufriere Hills eruptions in 1995 and following years, when pyroclastic flows and mudflows covered much of the capital city, Plymouth, and

two thirds of the island had to be evacuated. This resulted in the abandonment of much of the island’s housing stock – largely rebuilt since 1989.

As part of their overall scheme to promote more, better construction of affordable housing, the Government of Montserrat has drawn on EU funding to set up its “Housing Investment Programme”. Under this scheme, which has now closed, customers could apply for funding for a series of different actions. In total, 110 Montserratians benefitted from the programme, as follows:

- 41 were assisted with financial assistance grants of \$40,000 to provide the equity needed to secure mortgages for home construction and purchases
- 18 obtained building materials grants of up to \$40,000 to construct their homes
- 17 received home finishing grants of \$25,000 to bring their dwellings to a habitable stage
- 34 obtained home improvement grants of \$10,000 to undertake minor repairs to upgrade their homes.

In total, 110 Montserratians benefited from this scheme: and the EU invested a total of EC\$3.3 million, with counter-finance provided by local financial institutions.

Besides helping first-time buyers and the most hard-pressed to get onto – and back onto – the housing ladder, the injection of funds has helped stimulate the construction industry, the financial services mortgage lenders and generate greater movement in the real estate market. Other benefits this scheme has brought to Montserrat include the following:

- Employment creation in the construction sector
- Increased commercial activity for building materials and household white goods.
- Increased tax revenue three years after the homes are completed
- Increased private sector investment in housing
- Increased mortgage lending
- Increase in the number of habitable dwellings on island

- Reduction in health and safety issues due to poor housing
- Increased property values
- Improved quality of lives for the householders

A win, win, win for the Government, for the economy and for the people of Montserrat. Another example of quality cooperation between Montserrat and the EU.



A duplex social housing development in Montserrat

Developing employment potential, sporting prowess and distance-learning

The EU co-funded the Department of Education's "Youth & Sports Development Programme"

A small Caribbean island, Montserrat must make the most of its most valuable resource – the intelligence and skills of the Montserratian people. So, good education, training, social, and emotional skills are crucial in a highly competitive environment – and the emphasis must be on both mind and body. Sustainable development of human resources being a European Union priority, the education sector has therefore been a key focus of Government of Montserrat-EU cooperation.

Unemployment, particularly among young people, is a problem across the Caribbean, but the challenges in Montserrat are made worse by the "usual suspects" – Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and the Soufriere Hills Volcano in 1995. These in turn triggered the exodus of three quarters of the population between 1997 and 2005 and the inevitable subsequent economic downturn. For those that remain, achieving good educational standards leading to gainful employment has therefore been a major issue. Meanwhile, Montserrat has a shortage of technically trained workers in a number of fields.

The Government of Montserrat therefore decided to address these related concerns through a series of youth formation programmes, starting with the 2-year "Youth & Sports Development Programme" (YSDP), launched in 2017, the lion's share of which was funded by the EU. YDSP was fashioned to support development of Montserratian youth whilst also providing a valuable and efficient service to micro and small businesses seeking temporary and permanent staff, meanwhile finding suitable career opportunities for qualified or skilled persons.

Under the first pilot phase of YSDP, 2017-2018, some 30 trainees/candidates were engaged to take part in a skills development apprenticeship

programme: they were placed with 15 suitable businesses six months or so into the programme and paid a monthly stipend of \$1,000 to help offset their transportation and other work-related costs. The partner businesses received an allowance of \$500 per month to help with utilities, mentoring and other facilitation costs, estimated to have been a very small percentage of their overall operations cost. In Phase 2, 2018-2019, the scheme was re-engineered to take account of the experiences of the previous year and with the addition of several young entrepreneurial activities. In 2019, YSDP was merged with "Helping Youth Prepare for Employment" (HYPE) to form HYPE 2.0.

The EU's contribution to YDSP, under European Development Fund 11 (EDF11), was EC\$2 million. This funding helped process approximately 100 apprenticeships and has placed many trained young people in businesses needing their skills. It provided the foundation stone for continuing HYPE 2.0, which has seen the successful placement of some 40 graduates of the scheme in a range of disciplines, from trainee teachers and sports coaches to technical apprenticeships in various fields: HYPE 2.0 graduate employers include the Water Authority, Public Works Department, Radio Montserrat, Customs, Montserrat Statistics Department, shipping, the Royal Montserrat Police Force.

With EU funding, the Government of Montserrat has therefore made an important step towards reducing youth unemployment, meanwhile developing much-needed skills for Montserratian businesses and institutions. Graduates of the scheme had the following things to say:

- "I got to develop myself as a Sports Coach and it helped to build and enhance my connection with children." (Mr. Ahijah Daley)



- "I am now permanently employed at the Utilities Division and have been able to purchase my own vehicle, which is a great help with taking care of my son." (Mr. Leon Williams)
- "I learned so much more about Early Childhood Education ... and ... now I am attached to the Look Out Nursery School as a Teaching Assistant!" (Ms. Damonique Alexander)
- "Being engaged on the YSD Programme helped me to develop my confidence. Now I pass this skill onto the students in my care." Ms. Anna Kay Duggan

EC\$770,000, aims to create greater equity to e-learning among local students, while reducing disruptions to the territory's education system in the wake of recurrent and extreme natural events such as hurricanes, and the current global COVID-19 pandemic. Some 500 students and teachers are expected to benefit from provision of laptops, upgraded facilities for e-testing, subsidized mobile hotspots for vulnerable youth and training for teachers.

And that cooperation continues: the Government Department of Youth, Sports and Community Engagement will use some residual EDF11 funding for further sports development activities in 2021-2022 and a new programme of cooperation to provide improved access to e-learning is due to come on stream over the same period.

This project, funded by EDF11's Resilience, Sustainable Energy and Marine Biodiversity Programme for Caribbean Overseas Countries and Territories (RESEMBID) to the value of nearly

The new Airport Control Tower: “a guiding light ... for Montserrat’s future”

The EU co-funded construction of the new Airport Control Tower at John A Osborne Airport



The installation of the new control cab on the newly constructed control tower



Early construction of the shaft of the airport tower – Montserrat’s tallest structure

The devastation brought by the Soufriere Hills Volcano, in 1995-1999, has created serious infrastructure challenges for Montserrat. The island lost its main port, in Plymouth, as well as its main point of air access, W.H. Bramble Airport. It is a testimony to the civic preparedness of the Government and the calm and orderly conduct of Montserratians that so many escaped from the island and so few lives were lost. The last plane to leave Bramble took off just minutes before the pyroclastic flow from the Soufriere Hills smothered the runway. For several years after the disaster, Montserrat was only accessible by helicopter or boat.

In February 2005, John A Osborne Airport, formerly Gerald’s Airport, was dedicated by the Princess Royal (Princess Anne) and formally opened on 11 July that year and has become the lifeline of air access for Montserrat, bringing in passengers, cargo, mail and so on. Originally designed only to take light aircraft, at 600 metres/1968 ft John. A. Osborne Airport is the third shortest commercial airport runway in the Caribbean, after Juancho E. Yrasquin Airport, Saba (400 metres/1312 ft) and Codrington Airport, Barbuda (500 metres/1640 ft). The tower is now the tallest building to be constructed on Montserrat and is

also unique in the Caribbean as the only airport with a public tunnel under its runway.

The airport has to comply with regional and international regulations to remain open and to function as a safe and reliable airport facility. In this respect, the old airport tower was not fully adequate, being of insufficient height for the aerodrome and poorly positioned with respect to the runway.

The Government of Montserrat therefore resolved to build the new tower and received agreement to EC\$800,000 funding from the European Union and EC\$2.63 million from Montserrat’s DfID-funded Capital Investment Programme for Resilient Economic Growth programme (CIP-REG). Work began in January 2021 and is scheduled to finish in autumn of that year.

The immediate benefits will be to give Montserratian air traffic controllers 360° visibility of all incoming and outgoing aircraft, improving air traffic safety and enhancing the smooth operation of the airport generally. The new tower will mean that John. A. Osborne Airport is fully compliant with International Civil Aviation Organization operating criteria and the requirements of Air Safety

Support International (ASSI), the regulatory body responsible for overseeing aviation safety and security in UK Overseas Territories.

Airport Manager Joseph JL Irish summed up the benefits of the new Control tower as follows: "The height of the new tower, plus the design of the new Air Traffic Control "cab" on top represents a state-of-the-art facility to meet international standards, which will provide more space and comfort for the Air Traffic Controllers and, crucial-

ly, will help us to maintain our Aerodrome certification and compliance".

Speaking at the Ground-Breaking Ceremony, on 7 January 2021, Minister of Works, Dr. the Hon. Samuel Joseph said the new tower would provide a "guiding light of where we see Montserrat in the future."



Main construction complete, before finishing works and internal installations.

7 A Little Bay port with Shelter from the Storm

EU funding is helping to build a modern, fit for purpose port at Little Bay to help promote Montserrat's recovery, economic growth and sustainability



A view of Little Bay from Rendezvous Bluff, showing the current jetty facility

Visitors to Little Bay will be aware that there is major work in hand to refurbish the port and construct a new jetty. Once complete, the new jetty will be approximately 130m long and 20m wide, with a roll-on roll-off ramp to support ease of cargo operations. It will act as its own breakwater and provide shelter to the existing quay, making it safer and more usable for visiting vessels in rough weather.

The aim of the Montserrat Port Development Project, in a nutshell, is to improve efficiency, effectiveness and resilience of the Port facilities and provide a safe harbour and accessibility to all users. This has been identified as a high priority project, for the sustainable development of Montserrat and crucial for Montserrat's recovery, economic growth and sustainability.

As with so much of the island's key infrastructure – the airport is an obvious parallel – Montserrat's main port facilities were lost when Plymouth had to be evacuated in 1995, a very successful operation in which Plymouth harbour played an

important role. The port at Little Bay has since become the island's main point of access by sea, which has placed enormous demands on so small a facility. Currently, rough seas cause significant downtime at the existing port, and 58 out of 475 ships were unable to berth in 2016. Climate change is likely to worsen the situation, with increased and more frequent storm conditions and sea levels expected to rise. The construction of a much larger and better protected jetty is therefore particularly important. It will help to create a safe harbour that is climate resilient and adequately protected. Improved dock facilities will also cut "downtime" at the port, meaning that cargo vessels and ferries will be able to unload and load up far quicker.

Currently, no cruise ships can dock on the existing facilities, but have to anchor off-shore and send launches into harbour, so the new facility will also create new opportunities for shore arrivals and increased touristic potential. So, port development will also support the growth of

Montserrat's tourism sector, improving access and connectivity to the island. It is expected that phase one development of the port development works will be completed by 2021.

The European Union is co-funding this work, in particular construction of the new jetty, with a grant of roughly EC\$26 million, complementing a grant of roughly EC\$53.5 provided by the United Kingdom Caribbean Infrastructure Partnership Fund (UKCIF) and channelled through the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

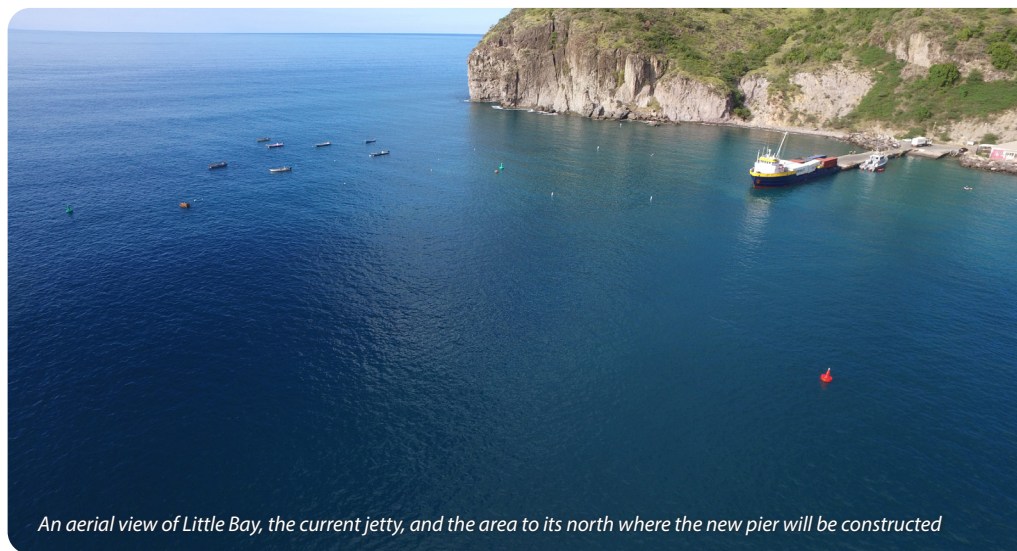
In December 2017, Head of Infrastructure Partnerships at the CDB, Andrew Dupigny, summarised the importance of these developments to providing a safe harbour and access for vessels up to 150 metres in length at the port.

"The current jetty at Little Bay is exposed to rough seas ... as there is no offshore breakwater. This makes it unsafe for vessels to dock at times and means that Montserrat is unable to provide a continuous safe harbour for cruise ships, ferries, yachts, cargo and other vessels, which impacts economic activities on the island. The development of the port is seen as vital for Montserrat's economic recovery and sustainability ... Over the long term the provision of a reliable access and connectivity to the island, the movement

of people goods and services would increase its creativity potential which would ultimately positively impact growth."

Sections of the harbour will also be dredged to allow larger vessels to berth along the jetty. This will mean more and bigger cargo ships will be able to dock and, crucially – remembering 1995 – will allow larger rescue ships to have direct access, should there be another mass evacuation crisis caused by the Soufriere Hills volcano.

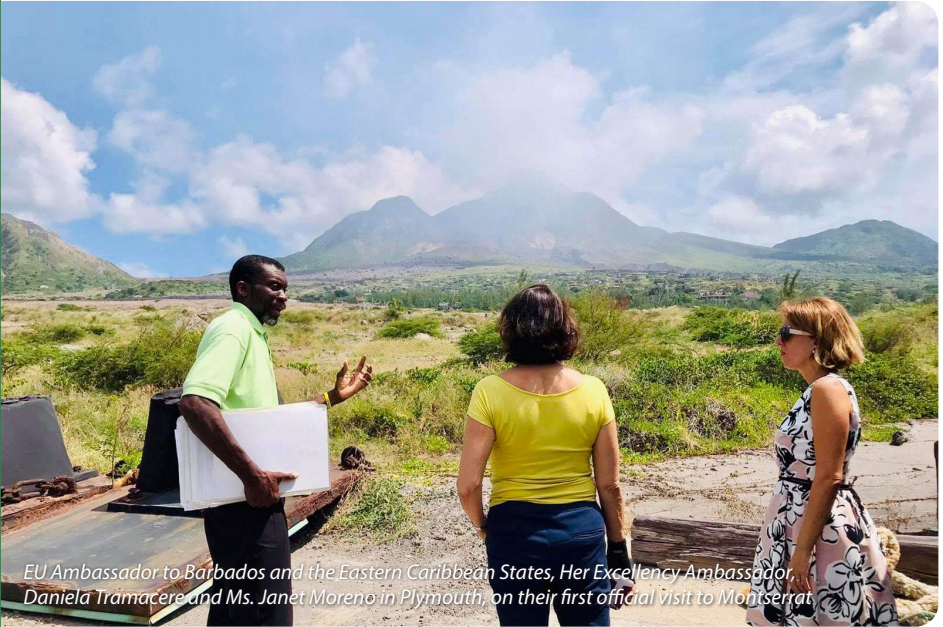
This project, which has been very effectively implemented by the Government of Montserrat and their contractors, is testimony to the impact and effectiveness of multi-party funding cooperation, in which the EU has played an important part.



An aerial view of Little Bay, the current jetty, and the area to its north where the new pier will be constructed

Making the most of Montserrat's Tourism potential

The EU's support for the Government's Tourism Strategy: holistic and "intelligent" planning



EU Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean States, Her Excellency Ambassador, Daniela Tramacere and Ms. Janet Moreno in Plymouth, on their first official visit to Montserrat

Rich in natural beauty, Montserrat must make the most of what it has in abundance: its sun, sea, beaches, forests, mountains, agreeable climate, tranquillity, seclusion and enviable safety record make it a unique destination; and, the greatest asset of all, its people – the intelligent, educated and welcoming Montserratians. This mix offers great promise for the tourism industry.

As with most other sectors, the island's tourism took a big hit following the Soufriere Hills Volcanic eruptions, but in recent years tourist arrivals and income had been on the rise: visitor expenditure in 2019 was EC\$27 million between January and December, slightly above the EC\$26.8 million over the same period in 2018. Then the era of COVID began ...

Undaunted, the Government of Montserrat is following the approved Tourism Strategy for the

period 2019 – 2022, which focuses on sustainable development through quality tourism. There are six key areas of focus:

- Promoting the Soufriere Hills Volcano as a pull factor for visiting Montserrat.
- Developing and delivering exceptional and transformational experiences – superior customer service, culinary mastery, great storytelling, entrepreneurial excellence
- Using technology to drive Montserrat's competitiveness
- Conserving and promoting the environment
- Developing quality tourism products services and experiences
- Deploying digital techniques to effectively and efficiently market Montserrat

Within that framework and with European Union funding the Government of Montserrat Tourism Division has implemented four main projects:

1. Expansion and diversification of the tourism product (eight hiking trails cleaned, signage and safety features improved and/or added between July 2019 to July 2021). Three viewing sites are to be cleaned and binoculars added by the end of 2021.
2. Industry training and capacity building (in key areas such as customer service, housekeeping, tour development, social media, presentation and packaging, tour guide training, from May 2019 to November 2021).
3. Improvements of Directional add and Trail Signage From August 2021 – March 2022
4. Developing visitor attractions and amenities, e.g.:
 - Creating Volcano Interpretation Centre (from May 2021 to late 2023). This is the sector signature project, which will take up 50% of the EU funding available to the Tourism Division.
 - Developed Destination Website (June to October 2020) and Enhancing Social Media Management (On-going - from 2020 to 2022).
 - Beach improvement (Sep. 2020 – Oct. 2021)
 - Installation of showers, changing rooms lighting and other beach facilities at Isles Bay, Old Road Bay, Lime Kiln, Woodlands Beach and Bunkum Bay. Facilities at Little Bay – which will accommodate the physically challenged – will be completed by the end of 2021.

These projects, in which the EU has invested more than EC\$6.5 million, were specifically designed to enhance the six key areas of focus identified in the Government's Tourism Strategy. Although progress has been hindered by the pandemic, which began in early 2020, the work has been carried out efficiently and on time and all the portents are good.



One of Montserrat's recently improved rainforest hiking trails

In addition to the specific tourism work funded by the EU, activities in other sectors will have very positive impact on Montserrat's tourism potential – for example enhanced aviation safety at the airport as a result of the construction of a new control tower and, in particular, improvements at the port and construction of a breakwater, which will increase the potential for cruise ships to dock and make visiting the island easier and more enjoyable for their passengers.

Visitors to the island like the improvements: "Garibaldi Hill is one of the true gems of Montserrat ... the place to see what was and what can still be" (David Cort); "I was thankful for the well-kept road towards the top, and the quaint lookout deck was brightly painted." (Ms Bajkor). The "well-kept" road and lookout were EU-funded.

All-in-all, holistic and "intelligent" planning across sectors – and an excellent use of EU funding.



A popular lookout spot at the top of Garibaldi Hill affording incredible views of Soufriere Hills

Concluding thoughts from the Financial Secretary

Montserrat has enjoyed a development cooperation partnership with the EU since the early 1990s and so has benefited from several generations of funding to drive the island's sustainable economic development under the European Development Fund (EDF).

Now in the closing stages of the 11th EDF, under which Montserrat's overall programme budget for EDF support was EC\$57.35 million (€18.72M), the cooperation has been celebrated by both partners for the smoothness and effectiveness of implementation and the impacts that the Government of Montserrat has achieved with EU financial support.

Over the years, the Government of Montserrat has put EU funding to a variety of uses: funding studies and pilots to be explored further with other donors; as sole funding partner in various ventures; and in Government-managed cooperative funding partnerships with other agencies, notably the UK's Department for International Development (now part of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office).

In a statement welcoming the EDF11 budgetary support, in February 2020, Premier and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Joseph Farrell, expressed profound thanks to the EU for their continued support and commitment to the people of Montserrat. As the Premier remarked at the time, "One of our key enablers is renewable energy, and in this regard EU funding will support [as sole funding partner] the new 750KW solar farm ... which will result in Montserrat having over 1MW of solar production. The EU has also provided the funding to convert all street lighting to energy efficiency LED bulbs."

As reported in previous Chapters, EDF11 assistance has also been used as part of wider cooperation partnerships: to enhance Montserrat's education, apprenticeships, youth and sports schemes; to develop its tourism potential, with investment in a Volcano Interpretation Centre amongst others; plus important investment in backbone infrastructure development projects such as the new ATC tower at the airport and the new port development, which are key building blocks to enhancing the island's economic environment.

So, a varied mix of uses, that have one factor in common: all have been very successful and fruitful. They have improved and enhanced the economy and society of Montserrat and the lives of ordinary Montserratians. Therefore, we step out of this current chapter of development support and into the next in full anticipation of a rejuvenated and reformulated partnership. Montserrat will continue to partake in all the programmes and forums we are eligible for and pledges to be a partner for the EU. As a small island developing nation, we are eternally grateful. From the Office of the National Authorizing Officer (NAO), and on behalf of the Government and people of Montserrat, I say thank you to the Delegation of the European Union in Barbados and to the European Union.



Ms. Lindorna Lambert.