

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WOODFORD HILL

2014 - 2019

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This Strategy is a working document developed by the Community of Woodford Hill, in collaboration with the Woodford Hill Local Economic Development Planning and Advisory Committee (LED-PAC), the Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs and the Caribbean Local Economic Development Project (CARILED).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The community of Woodford Hill, with technical assistance from the Caribbean Local Economic Development Project (CARILED), prepared this Local Economic Development (LED) strategy that will cover the five-year period of 2014 to 2019. Through the conduct of interviews, focus groups and workshops, pertinent data was gathered on the local economy with emphasis on demographics, business environment, hard infrastructure and a scan of local government and Caribbean-wide programs. This information provided a good picture on the status of the local economy and a basis for a participatory community process to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) among four key sectors; agriculture and agro-processing, tourism, fisheries and retail Micro-Small-and-Medium Enterprises. In addition, a comparative advantage and cooperation analysis was undertaken to help determine possible opportunities and prioritize focus areas.

The agriculture and agribusiness sector has traditionally been the most vibrant sector in Woodford Hill and North-East Dominica by extension, but has seen an economic slow-down. More recently, interest has grown within the community to develop the existing natural resources into tourism products and explore partnerships with the neighbouring communities of Calabishie and Wesley as potential markets for tourists staying or visiting there. On the other hand, for the fisheries sector to grow more significantly, additional investment is needed to add value to the industry and take advantage of new opportunities. The community also experienced inconsistent growth in retail MSMEs in recent years due to an ailing agricultural sector.

After conducting the SWOT analysis of the local economy, the community crafted a shared vision: ***“Woodford Hill, a thriving community which focuses on the sustainable development of its people by leveraging all its assets to ensure that youth and the community have an improved quality of life.”***

In support of this vision, three critical goals with the accompanying objectives, programs and projects were then identified for implementation over the next five years. These programs and projects identified are specific to the three productive sectors namely agriculture, tourism and fisheries and are in sync with Dominica Central Government policies and programs. The strategy also encourages capacity development to upskill / train the large unemployed and underemployed youth in the area and ensures a labour supply of needed skills in these key productive sectors. The strategy further promotes the strengthening of institutional partners for LED development and delivery.

The neighbouring communities of Calibishie and Wesley have similar local economies. Therefore the strategy is designed to complement the strengths and gaps of each community in an effort to promote the comprehensive development of a North East Enterprise Zone.

Specific action plans will be drawn up to move these programs and projects quickly into implementation and to provide a roadmap for implementation.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACP	African Caribbean and Pacific States
CARILED	Caribbean Local Economic Development
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
DCTA	Dominica Community Tourism Association
DDA	Discover Dominica Authority
DEXIA	Dominica Export Import Agency
EU	European Union
FCM	Federation for Canadian Municipalities
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GSPS	Growth and Social Protection Strategy
LAEP	Local Area Economic Profile
LED	Local Economic Development
LEDO	Local Economic Development Officer
LEDPAC	Local Economic Development Project Advisory Committee
LRP	Local Resource Person
MSME	Micro Small and Medium Size Enterprises
NAC	National Advisory Committee
NNETEDC	North North-Eastern Tourism and Environmental Development Committee
OECS	Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats
TVET	Technical Vocational Educational training
WTDC	Woodford Hill Tourism Development Committee

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. INTRODUCTION..... 1
 - The Beginnings of Woodford Hill..... 1
- II. DEVELOPING THE LED STRATEGY 2
 - Organizing for LED 2
- III. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED) ASSESSMENT 4
 - Background 4
 - Challenges..... 4
 - Current Situation..... 5
 - Woodford Hill 5
 - CARILED Support 5
 - A. Local Economic Development Synthesis Report 6
 - B. SWOT Analysis 12
 - C. Competitive and Cooperation Analysis 13
 - D. Synergy with Central Government 14
 - Tourism..... 15
 - Fisheries 15
 - Retail MSMEs 16
- IV. LED STRATEGIC PLAN..... 16
 - Goals and Objectives 17
- V. NEXT STEPS 21
- REFERENCES..... 22

I. INTRODUCTION

Local Economic Development (LED) is a process by which the public sector, businesses and civil society work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation. Its purpose is to build the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. With the technical assistance and support of CARILED, the community of Woodford Hill began the LED process in 2012 where critical stakeholders were engaged in sensitization meetings, fact-finding interviews and workshops to facilitate the development of a LED Strategy for their community.

The community of Woodford Hill welcomed this LED approach as evidenced by their active participation during focus group sessions and a two-day workshop conducted to plan the way forward for the community. In the development of the strategy and based on a local economic assessment, four key sectors were in-focus: (i) Agriculture and Agro-Processing; (ii) Tourism; (iii) Fisheries; and (iv) Retail MSMEs. Strategic planning for the local economic development of Woodford Hill surrounded these sectors and the recommended intervention will be explored in the implementation of the strategy. Various community stakeholders drafted the strategy with guidance from the consultants and experts who facilitated the planning process.

This document presents the five-year (2014 to 2019) LED Strategic Plan for Woodford Hill. It provides a brief assessment of the local economy in Woodford Hill, placing emphasis on demographics, economy, business environment and hard infrastructure. It includes an overview of the process involved in developing the LED Strategic Plan and examines the role of the critical players. The strategic plan is based on the results of a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis done during the two-day workshop with stakeholders, and a competitive and cooperation analysis with the neighbouring communities as also explained in this document. Importantly, in presenting the LED strategic plan, there is a clear definition of the vision, goals, objectives, programs and projects. It is anticipated that these actions will be executed during a 3-5 year period with annual reviews to update the action plan.

THE BEGINNINGS OF WOODFORD HILL

Woodford Hill is located along the North East Atlantic coast of Dominica at latitude 15.56 degrees and longitude 61.333 degrees. It is one of the fifteen villages situated in the parish of St. Andrew and its boundaries are contiguous to Calibishie and Wesley. Woodford Hill's topography is characterized by an upward sloping ridge making the area ideal for settlement and agricultural production. Historically, this rural community has been known for intense agricultural production and was initially one of the leading communities in banana production during the banana era.

Over 1400 years ago, the area was once occupied by Amerindians, but was occupied by the French in the 1700s who named the area La Soir. During the British occupation of Dominica from 1763, the area

was put up for sale by the crown and three hundred acres were bought by Napleton Smith, hence the creole name for Woodford Hill, Simit. For most of the 19th century, the land was owned by the sugar king of Dominica, Charles Leatham and his heirs, and was the largest sugar estate on the island. Five years before emancipation, 112 slaves worked on Woodford Hill, producing 66,000 pounds of sugar, 2,550 gallons of rum and 400 gallons of molasses.

At the end of the 19th century Woodford Hill amounted to 1,123 acres and was bought by Estates Investment Trust of Dominica who had ownership of it up until the 1930s. It was sold to Frobel Laville in the 1940s who in turn sold it to Messrs Foley and Band of Antilles Products in 1948. It was later transferred to Geest in 1954. In 1974 a large portion of the land was bought by the Government of the day and during the late 1970's to 1980's, Geest divided the rest of the estate into farm lots, sold mainly to villagers of the north east. The village of Woodford Hill is now located on the western boundary of the old estate.

II. DEVELOPING THE LED STRATEGY

ORGANIZING FOR LED

The development of the LED Strategic Plan for Woodford Hill was spearheaded by a multiple-tier stakeholder structure, which oversaw the entire process. At the local level is a Local Economic Development Project Advisory Committee (LED-PAC) which coordinated the development of the LED Strategy and is responsible for the implementation of the LED Strategic Plan. The LED-PAC is chaired by the village council chairman and is made up of nine members representing various groups in the community.

At the national level is the National Advisory Committee (NAC), which was appointed by the Cabinet of the Government of Dominica and is chaired by the Local Government Commissioner. The NAC includes representatives from the public and private sector and its main function is to provide support to the LEDO and various strategies for project implementation. The NAC reports directly to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs.

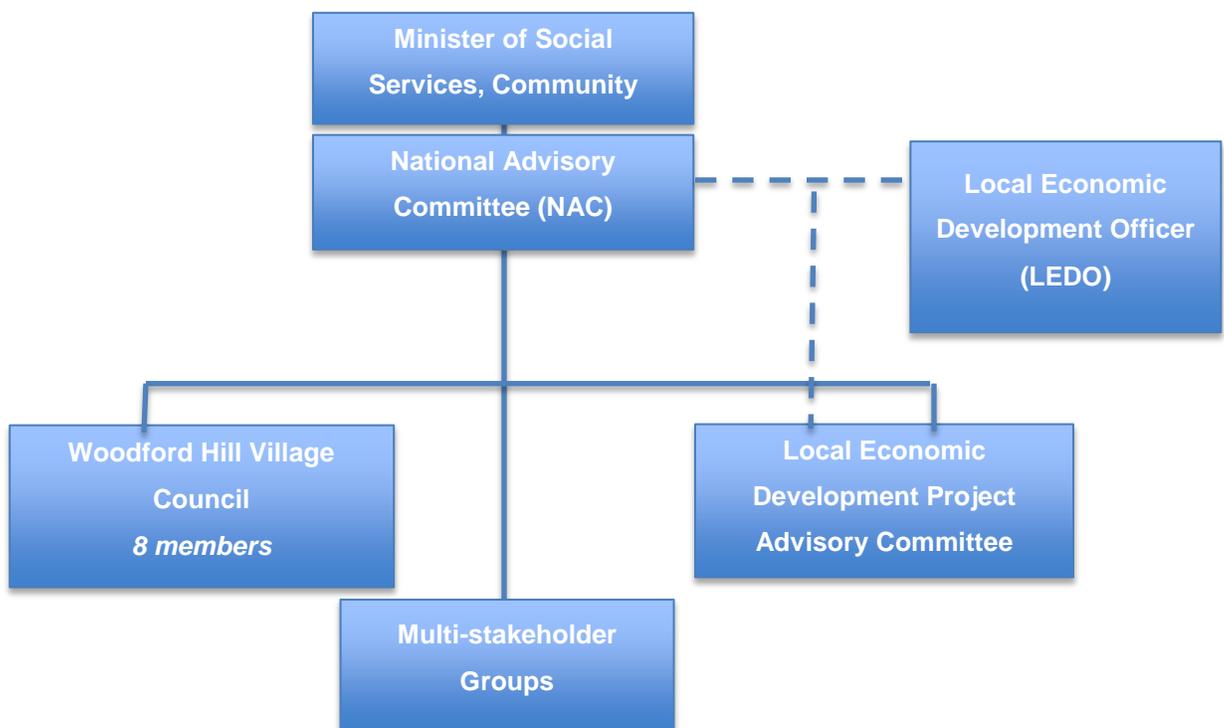
A Local Economic Development Officer (LEDO) plays a critical role in local economic development and acts as the link between the LEDPAC and the NAC and between the LED-PAC, the NAC and CARILED. The LEDO also helps to facilitate links between the community and donor projects in the community.

Multi-stakeholder groups in the community also played an essential role in the development of the LED Strategy. The groups include the Fisher Folk cooperative, the Woodford Hill Agricultural Producers Group,

SOUL Enterprises and the WTDC. These groups actively participated in the LED strategic planning process and meaningfully contributed while advocating for their priority sectors.

The Woodford Hill Village Council, which is the local authority, served as the community secretariat for the development of the LED Strategy. The Council is comprised of eight members, a statutory requirement for all local authorities in Dominica. Of the eight, five members are elected and three members are nominated by the Government. The Council employs a clerk who carries out duties such as bookkeeping, scheduling of meetings and appointments, sending notices and maintenance of village bulletin boards. The council has a chairperson and a deputy chairperson and each councillor is assigned a specific responsibility to oversee activities relating to sanitation and health, agriculture and fisheries, road maintenance, youth and the elderly, sports, sponsorship and publicity, and education. The **Figure 1** below illustrates the multi-tiered structure.

Figure 1 - Organizational Structure



III. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED) ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND

The Commonwealth of Dominica, located in the Eastern Caribbean, is the largest and most northerly of the Windward Islands. Dominica is approximately 29 miles long and 16 miles at its widest point; its area is 289.5 sq. miles. Officially, Dominica is branded the 'Nature Island of the Caribbean' and is prominently marketed as an eco-tourism destination. While tourism is largely becoming a lucrative economic activity in the country, Dominica still has a thriving agricultural sector with a third of its labour force employed in agriculture.

Traditionally a banana export economy, Dominica has diversified its fresh produce exports to include root crops, plantains, citrus and avocados since the late 1990s, in response to the European Union's receding trade and moving away from the preferential treatment which Dominica enjoyed for over five decades. In the last decade, the country experienced a rather steady growth rate of 1% per annum and according to a report by the World Bank, Dominica's GDP is expected to grow by 1.7% in 2014.

CHALLENGES

According to the U.S. Department of State (2012), Dominica is seemingly the most challenging economy in all the Eastern Caribbean States. Banana production and export agriculture in general dominate the island's economy. However, due to the island's geographic location, its primary export is susceptible to fierce weather conditions that disrupts production and ultimately affects commodity prices.

From 2002 to 2009 the poverty head count level recorded a decline from 39.0 percent to 28.8 percent respectively. The poverty gap was also markedly reduced from 10.2 percent in 2002 to 8.9 percent in 2009. This indicates a drop in the severity of poverty on the island and incomes are now better able to meet basic consumption needs. Correspondingly, Dominica's national unemployment rate has been on the steady decline since 1997. It has declined from 23.1% in 1997 to 10.9% in 2005 respectively and in 2011 unemployment rate stood at 11.5%.

The apparent reduction in the poverty rate is largely attributed to national programs implemented through the Growth and Social Protection Strategy (GSPS) implemented since 2006. Among many of the targeted programs to alleviate poverty and economic hardship include; additional resources allocated to the Public Welfare Assistance such as access to medical services, increased coverage of School Feeding, School Supplies Scheme, Education Trust Fund, Child Fund, Public Housing Program, the establishment of the Small Business Fund and continued investments in Public Sector Investment Program (PSIP) and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries reform to name a few. As per Dominica's performance in meeting the

UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the 2009 poverty assessment reports impressive progress in the areas of poverty, education, healthcare and housing.

CURRENT SITUATION

Although many of the economic and social indicators record overall improvement, it is seemingly insufficient to qualify Dominica as an economic success story. Public opinion, coupled with the stagnant nature of Dominica's economy suggests that much is still left to be done. The community of Woodford Hill, presents a case in point. The government's PPA Report identifies Woodford Hill among the top 12 locations as having higher levels of poverty on the island.

Of particular importance in the GSPS operational plan is its focus on agriculture, forestry and fisheries because agriculture is embedded in the culture of Woodford Hill and is the community's primary economic activity. Within this framework, the government has established a Revised Banana Recovery Plan which ultimately plans to invest EC\$5.6 million over three years for the banana recovery program. The community, like much of the Dominica was severely affected by the decline of the banana industry in the 1990s and is in a good position to benefit from the strategies outlined in GSPS.

WOODFORD HILL

Woodford Hill was not identified as a special focus area in the GSPS. However, it was selected under the umbrella of the Focus Area Programme as one of the areas in great need of attention from a poverty, social protection and economic activity standpoint. The other communities selected were Dubique, Mero, Layou, Belles, St. Joseph, Penville, Gutter/Tarish Pit and Silver Lake.

The community of Woodford Hill, and by extension Dominica, continues to face economic, social, political and environmental challenges. Though the island's history is impacted by centuries of colonialism, economic underdevelopment, political discontent, and exacerbated by external forces such as trade liberalization, globalization and the continued ramifications of the 2008 global economic recession, the natural resources in Woodford Hill are rich. It is expected that sustainable development can be achieved with the effective implementation of the GSPS, corresponding supportive regional policies and continued Foreign Direct Investments (FDI).

CARILED SUPPORT

Woodford Hill was selected as a pilot site to receive support from CARILED upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs. CARILED supported the conduct of a Local Area Economic Profile (LAEP) which provided a snapshot of the demography and economy of Woodford Hill and an assessment of the micro-small-and-medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the community and their contribution to the local economy. The LAEP also included the provision of

technical guidance in the development of a local economic development strategic plan by the community and assistance in moving the plan forward.

A. Local Economic Development Synthesis Report

A synthesis report on the data gathered from the LAEP and other existing reports was validated during interviews and focus group meetings with stakeholders in the community. Comprehensive long term development plans and other studies from government were used to further validate the information gathered and to complete identified gaps. A summary of the data collected is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: LED Assessment Report – Woodford Hill

Local Economic Development Assessment – Woodford Hill																													
Demographic	<p>Population :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural • 1,034 (population as of 2011) • Population trend - Declining; 1,140 (2001) • Ethnic makeup - 99.99% African/Black • Gender breakdown - 545 males (52.7%); 489 females (47.3%) • Population under the age of 35 - Approximately 60% • Working Population - 55%; self-employed and part employed • Monthly household income - Approximately EC\$1,500.00 • Household size - 2.7 person • Household headed by women - Approximately 45% • Factors affecting population - Yes; out migrations and rural-urban shift 																												
	<p>Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Major Economic/Industrial Activity - Mixed subsistence farming (primary) ▪ # Employees per each activity <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Industry (2001 census report – this is the most recent government census publicly released)</th> <th>Number Employed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agriculture, hunting and forestry</td> <td>204</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fishing</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mining and quarrying</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manufacturing</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Electricity, gas and water</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Construction</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wholesale and retail trade</td> <td>33</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hotels and restaurants</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transport, storage and communication</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Financial Intermediation</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Real estate, renting and business activities</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Public Administration and defence</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Industry (2001 census report – this is the most recent government census publicly released)	Number Employed	Agriculture, hunting and forestry	204	Fishing	5	Mining and quarrying	0	Manufacturing	11	Electricity, gas and water	2	Construction	24	Wholesale and retail trade	33	Hotels and restaurants	7	Transport, storage and communication	11	Financial Intermediation	3	Real estate, renting and business activities	3	Public Administration and defence	23	Education	12
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Local Economic Development Assessment – Woodford Hill

Health and social work	8
Other community, social and personal service activities	10
Private Houses with employed persons	6
Extra-territorial Organizations and bodies	1
Not stated	1
Total	357

- Major employers: Self-employed farmers and agro-processors, government service providers (e.g. teachers, health workers, extension officers)
- Age structure of the employed: Overall, 54% below the ages of 35.
- Gender breakdown of the employed: 33.6% female, 65.6% male
- Gender breakdown of the unemployed: 20% female, male 80% (Among persons seeking employment); otherwise unemployment among women is twice as high as men given the number of persons employed, disabled or otherwise unable to work.
- Unemployment: approximately 30-40%
- Underemployment: approximately 60%
- Average gross weekly earnings (male): \$300.00
- Average gross weekly earnings (female): \$200.00

Education:

- Numbers and types of schools: Pre-school (1) Primary School (1) Secondary School (0) Skills or vocational (0)
- Numbers of teachers at primary school: 8 at an average class size of 15
- Students access secondary school in neighbouring community and college at Roseau the country's capital
- Educational attainment levels by numbers and types: Most of the population have had primary education; in the past, few have attended high school, but in recent times more youth are attending secondary school in Portsmouth and Marigot; a few but growing number are attending the Dominica State College.
- Ten students in Woodford Hill are presently pursuing tertiary education
- The major area of study is business related subjects
- In recent times, only one student has returned to the area from pursuing tertiary education overseas.

Training:

- The community could not identify anyone presently undergoing technical training.
- Skills training can be accessed through the Youth Division in the neighbouring community of Wesley. Training in computer skills is made available once per year.
- The community has a fair amount of skilled workers in the construction sector but they work outside the community as far as Roseau or Portsmouth.

Local Economic Development Assessment – Woodford Hill

Economic

- Economic Development Plan: None available for Woodford Hill
- Presently agriculture and agro-processing are the fastest growing sectors
- Factors hindering business expansion: local entrepreneurs do not have the capacity to start up business, no secure markets, lack of purchasing power, and no special training or mentoring is available for export market support
- Factors promoting business activity: Entrepreneurial drive of youth, potential export markets for agricultural products and tourism
- Local Employers: For the last ten years, the Woodford Hill Credit Union and the primary school have remained among the largest employers in the community with five and eight employees respectively. In recent times, Corky Farms Inc. has become the firm with the most people employed in the community with a count of 15.
- There was no major firm closure in the last ten years.
- Recently there was some investment in the Tourism sector, specifically the development of boat ride tours long the mangrove swamp in Woodford Hill.
- There were five new business start-ups namely: a hair salon, three guest houses, and a bar / restaurant.
- Number of Companies that export/to where/company size: Ten Hucksters trading in banana industry exported to St. Maarten, Tortola, St. Kitts and Anguilla. Other farmers are producers of a variety of crops such as ground provisions, coconuts, grapefruit and oranges and mango for both the domestic and regional markets.
- Proportion of the population working outside of the Woodford Hill Area: Approximately 20%
- Activity appears to be waning in light of the challenges experienced in the main economic activity of mixed agriculture; however, it was observed during the validation interviews and focus groups that more people have moved back to their farms in recent times.
- Financial institution in area: Credit Union
- Natural or other resources in the Woodford Hill Area: The *Morne Diablotin National Park* which is part of the *Waitikubuli National Trail*, the rare and endangered *Jaco* parrot, *Pan Lake* - one of the few “white” sand beaches in Dominica
- Opportunities for the development of clusters: suppliers of primary products to the nascent agro-processing sector. Opportunities for clusters also exist among livestock farmers.
- Economic needs that remain unfulfilled: Good feeder and access roads; vocational skills training for unemployed youth; preventive health education in relation to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), particularly nutrition and physical activity

Local Economic Development Assessment – Woodford Hill

<p>Investment Climate Infrastructure (Ease of Doing Business)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MSMEs in Woodford Hill do not pay taxes since the threshold for paying taxes on business stands at \$60,000. None of the MSMEs earn more than \$60,000 annually. ▪ For any business to benefit under the government program it must be registered. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business owners find difficulty in having their business registered. Most of them are not aware of the process and do not see much benefit ▪ Owners of restaurant and agro processors must acquire a food handler's permit through the Ministry of Health. Acquiring the permit includes a one day training course and a full personal medical assessment. The training is normally held in Marigot and many times the processors cannot afford to do the full medical assessment. ▪ Occasional training is provided as well as business incentives. ▪ Business support networks and services exist nationally but owners of MSMEs are not aware of this support service. ▪ No formal assessment of the local authority has been done but it is evident that capacity building is needed. ▪ The Planning Division is currently doing a National Land Use Plan ▪ Provision of some incentives, support from the government's Small Business Unit and Invest Dominica and from Discover Dominica and the Youth Development Division is available for tourism related enterprises ▪ Women, youth, rural poor and ethnic minorities benefit from the programmes managed and implemented by the institutions mentioned above; the National Council of Women is also active in the area and provides training, counselling and support in cases of domestic violence
<p>Hard Infrastructure</p>	<p>Utilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electricity is available in the area and service is said to be reliable ▪ Dominica has the highest cost of electricity among the OECS member states ▪ The on-going geothermal development is a source of green energy and is expected to reduce the cost of energy by 30% thus reducing the cost of production, particularly in the manufacturing sector. ▪ Cost of water and cable TV is very reasonable compared to neighbouring countries. <p>Land and Land development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Woodford Hill Land Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10% which includes the residential area, all rural ○ Arable farming: 20% ○ Animal Husbandry: Small farmers can rear livestock on their holding ○ No mining allowed ○ Forestry: 70%

Local Economic Development Assessment – Woodford Hill

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are two small guest houses for rent, built on family plots within the village ○ Unused land includes forestry <p>Roads and Transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are challenges with the road network, particularly the main road that splits the village in two halves; most of the main institutions are located along that road ▪ Members of the community access ports very easily. Both the airport and fisheries complex are approximately 15 minutes away. <p>Agriculture/Fisheries Development Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No farm irrigation system exists, limiting the number of harvests and types of produce. ▪ More often, exporters come to the community to purchase produce. Other times, farmers either transport their harvest to the port in Portsmouth for sale to exporters. <p>Telecommunications/Internet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 70% of households have access to the internet and cell phones
	<p>Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural or other leisure facilities: no facilities for leisure and cultural activities are available ▪ Youth support activities: none available (e.g. Entrepreneurship training, leadership skills building, etc.) ▪ Natural hazards affect the area: hurricanes, droughts, potential flooding from the PAN Lake and sea surges. There is no disaster management plan for WH in place but every hurricane season which runs from June 1st to September 30th a disaster preparedness committee is mobilized. ▪ Land degradation, arising from flooding and inappropriate use of sloping lands can have a negative impact on soil fertility thereby affecting small producers, especially those farming on hillsides; extracting sand from the beach can lead to increased erosion of the coastline ▪ <i>Morne Diablotin</i>, the tallest mountain in Dominica is a protected area and is included in the <i>Waitikubuli national trail</i>; activities such as tour guiding and the need for home based lodging could stimulate tourism related economic activity ▪ Laws, regulations or policies in place to protect the environment: Under the CITES agreement there are regulations that protect endangered species such as the Jaco and Sisserou parrots which are endemic to the greater Woodford Hill area; the village council works closely with Environmental Coordinating Unit, the Forestry and Wildlife Division (FWD) and the Fisheries Division to sensitise villagers and to get them involved in protecting the environment. The FWD manages a protected area along the national trail and at the base of Morne Diablotin and controls the harvesting of rare species of trees in the area.

Local Economic Development Assessment – Woodford Hill	
<p>National and Regional (Caribbean-wide)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The neighbouring communities of Calibishi and Wesley have a more buoyant economy as they are leading in agriculture, tourism, construction and MSMEs. They have numerous guest houses or small hotels where tourists stay. ▪ These communities have the competitive edge of being located along the highway in comparison to Woodford Hill which is located inland. Woodford Hill on the other hand offers tourism sites which are already visited by tourists staying in Calibishie or Wesley. ▪ There is a good potential for the community of Woodford Hill to take advantage of the markets in Calibishie and Wesley for livestock products and fish. The community can also collaborate with the guest houses there to organize tours in Woodford Hill to key areas such as the white sand beach. The unemployed in the community can also provide labor to the growing agriculture and construction sector of their neighbors. ▪ National level activities that may impact on the community - Growth and Social Protection Strategy (GSPS) – Focuses on overall growth and development. National Export Strategy - The ‘new’ Dominica Export-Import Agency (DEXIA) will pay greater attention to the export rather than Imports. ▪ The <i>Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME)</i> and the <i>OECS integration programs</i>, presently in implementation-stage are other opportunities for the community. These arrangements allow free movement of labor throughout the region. ▪ Regional (Caribbean-wide) trends that may impact on the community: <i>OECS Economic Union</i> priorities are in harmony with those of the GSPS: economic transformation, growth, employment and poverty reduction; <i>CSME</i> provides an enlarged space for the interplay of factors of production, including movement of people across the member countries of CARICOM; <i>The EU-ACP Economic Partnership Agreement and the CARICOM Canada Trade and Development Agreement</i> will provide opportunities for export markets.
<p>Crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praedial larceny - farmers complained of crop and livestock theft particular goats and rabbits • Addressing crime: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sensitisation of the public, occasional surveillance by the police who are located in nearby Wesley and Calibishie ○ The police are entitled to attend village council meetings and do so occasionally; the council invite the police to discuss special security issues affecting the community ○ No formal neighbourhood watch schemes exist, but neighbours look out for each other

*Please note that information specific to the demographics of Woodford Hill was not available from the 2011 summary census report but during the focus group discussion, data was further verified by the community as accurate.

B. SWOT Analysis

A two-day workshop was held with a broad group of stakeholders to conduct a SWOT analysis on four critical sectors in Woodford Hill local economy. The team then used the economic data collected and proceeded to draft the LED strategy. The sectors analysed included: agriculture and agribusiness, fisheries, tourism and retail MSMEs. The results from the SWOT, presented in the tables below are a summary of the most critical strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Table 2: SWOT analysis for Agriculture and Agro-processing in Woodford Hill

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
	Strengths	Weaknesses
INTERNAL	Farm lands are available	Cost of living is high
	Market for commodities are accessible through the huckster trade	Lack of on-farm irrigation
	Agricultural related skills are available locally	Difficult to access credit to invest in agriculture
		Tertiary institute that provide agricultural related courses is located far from Woodford Hill
		Wages are low
EXTERNAL	Opportunities	Threats
	IT training for farmers is available	High interest rates from lenders
	Offers more possibilities to increase wages	Deplorable feeder roads
	Possible new investments e.g. establishment of packing house	High cost of energy in Dominica
		Lack of a pension retirement plan for farmers – no long term security support system

Table 3: SWOT Analysis for Fisheries in Woodford Hill

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
	Strengths	Weaknesses
INTERNAL	Training for fishermen is available (e.g. use of GPS etc.)	Boats and equipment are not insured
	Fishers cooperative exists	Number of fishermen are decreasing
	Fisheries facility exist and is located close to highway	
EXTERNAL	Opportunities	Threats
	Value adding activities offer options	The effects of tropical storms
	Development of fish farms is another possible method to increase income	The effects of climate change
		Invasive species of sea grass
	Rapidly growing population of Lion Fish	

Table 4: SWOT Analysis for Tourism in Woodford Hill

INTERNAL	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
	Strengths	Weaknesses
	Sites and attractions exist (beaches, lake, mangrove swamp)	Lack of proper accommodations in community
	Rich cultural heritage can be tapped	Road leading to sites are in poor condition
	Available labor can be harnesses	Lack of capital financing to develop sites
EXTERNAL	Opportunities	Threats
	Prospects for agro-tourism development	Out migration and urban drift
	Opportunities to access funds from donor agencies	High level of crime in Woodford Hill
		Cruise ship ports are far from community

Table 5: SWOT Analysis for Retail and MSMEs in Woodford Hill

INTERNAL	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
	Strengths	Weaknesses
	Entrepreneur spirit is strong among youth in community	Business know how in the community is weak
	Labour is readily available	Lack of purchasing power
	Potential market exists	Difficulty in accessing start-up capital for retail and MSMEs
EXTERNAL	Opportunities	Threats
	Support for the development of MSMEs is available from the small business unit	Resourcing from supporting agencies are limited
	A wide range of business ventures yet to be explored	High cost of energy

C. Competitive and Cooperation Analysis

The community of Woodford Hill is located between the communities of Calibishie and Wesley and is approximately 6.5 kilometers from the Dominica's main airport, Melville Hall. Being located inland poses many challenges to local economic development compared to the neighbouring communities that are located along the highway. It is evident that the neighbouring communities have a more buoyant economy as they are leading in agriculture, tourism, construction and MSME growth. Despite an increasingly unemployed population that is more critical among women and youth, the community of Woodford Hill should take advantage of the thriving fisheries and agriculture sectors as well as a budding tourism sector that exist within the neighbouring communities.

Calibishie is benefitting from a rapidly growing hospitality sector (accommodation), which opens opportunities for the supply of fish and livestock products and for additional hospitality workers. Woodford Hill, as a leader in the fisheries and livestock subsectors, can build a formal relationship with neighbouring

communities to provide a ready supply of agricultural / fisheries products and skilled labour as needed. Woodford Hill residents are presently exploring opportunities in tourism and have already begun providing tours to the overnight visitors in Calibishie, a relationship that can be further explored and capitalized on in the future. This community partnership can significantly contribute to the development of the local economy as Woodford Hill would then be able to more fully utilize their natural sites including the white sand beaches, mangrove swamp, Pan Lake. As well, there is the potential for developing the agro-tourism business in Woodford Hill seeing that some interest has been expressed by tourists about staying with the farmers experiencing life on a farm.

The community of Wesley, on the other hand, has a well-developed agriculture and construction sector which offers more opportunities for the unemployed of Woodford Hill. This situation also presents an opportunity for further growth in agro processing and agricultural expansion. Based on the analysis of the comparative advantages that exist between three communities it is important that Woodford Hill must view this as a larger economy and positions itself to benefit from the growing sectors of its neighbours and to be the hub of a North East Enterprise Development Zone.

D. Synergy with Central Government

Before prioritizing the programs and projects that form the foundation of this strategy, a further assessment was conducted to ensure that proposed projects were in sync with central government's policies and programs to ensure the buy-in and support of the relevant authorities. The programs and projects articulated in this strategy will be used to inform investment made in the community by central government and funding agencies. In developing the strategy, the competition and cooperation that exist among the neighbouring communities were also considered in order to avoid duplication, but rather complement what already existed within the key sectors. A description of the relevant sectors is articulated below.

Agriculture and Agri-business

Woodford Hill has traditionally been a farming community stemming from the 19th Century when the area was the largest sugar estate in Dominica. In the 1980s Woodford Hill was also one of the leading communities in banana production. Presently, Woodford Hill accounts for 250 of the 1,500 farmers in the North East, a figure that could have been double in the 1980s when farmers enjoyed a secure market. Banana still remains the main cash crop supplemented by plantain, yam, dasheen, avocado and citrus, which accounts for the 400 acres presently under cultivation. Marketing arrangements for fresh produce is not organized, but farmers have long-standing relationships with exporters who trade regionally. Small ruminants, mainly goats, are the major livestock reared in Woodford Hill and the North East part of the island by extension.

Dominican farmers are challenged by deplorable farm access roads and the unavailability of inputs. Although a local credit union exists, the terms for accessing credit poses a major challenge for farmers in Woodford Hill. The agro-processing sub sector remains relevant as it is the livelihood for many women in the community. The emergence of young groups such as SOUL has brought new energy to the sector and has expanded to other agro products such as pepper sauce, jams and jellies.

The potential for the development of clusters along the value chain is enormous, as there are both forward and backward linkages along the chain for the planning and scheduling of production, the bulk purchasing of inputs for both crops and livestock sub sectors, the pooling of supplies for joint marketing, negotiations with buyers, and supplying an embryonic but potentially lucrative coconut processing-wide business (LAEP Report 2013).

Woodford Hill is home to a government-owned agricultural research station which can provide support to the farming community. The Central Livestock Station is minutes away and can also provide healthy stock to livestock farmers. The Division of Agriculture through its extension service provides technical assistance to the farmers in the area who also benefit for ongoing programs such as the Support to Horticulture Program, which provides farm inputs to farmers. Other government initiatives such as the National Abattoir will be in full operation by the end of 2014 and will provide a secure market for pork and poultry to farmers.

The Division of Agriculture is presently developing a National Agricultural Policy that is geared at enhancing the market competitiveness of Dominica's fresh produce exports while creating the enabling environment for the expansion of the livestock sub-sector. This policy should be finalized by the end of 2014.

Tourism

The formation of the Woodford Hill Tourism Development Committee (WTDC) has generated considerable interest in the tourism sector particularly among youth. The main objective of the WTDC is to harness and utilize the abundant tourism resources for the benefit of the community. The potential for community tourism development is huge as the community is blessed with resources that can be developed into major national attraction sites. The resources include five adjoining and distinctly coloured sand beaches, a fourteen acre man-made Pan Lake, a breath-taking mangrove-lined river and pristine waterfalls. Additionally, there are opportunities for trail biking, jogging as well as hiking and exploring.

To date, these resources remain generally underdeveloped and underutilized. The mangrove is partially developed, although a privately funded and operated project with potential to be a unique revenue-generating tourism enterprise.

The WTDC must quickly form linkages with the North North-Eastern Tourism and Environmental Development Committee (NNETEDC) and the Dominica Community Tourism Association (DCTA) to benefit from their efforts in identifying and seeking funding to develop potential sites. Community tourism has taken a new place of prominence in Dominica and was highlighted in the draft Dominica Tourism Policy of 2020. Efforts have been intensified to facilitate the further development of the existing community tourism groups through training and technical assistance, as well as contributing to their needs in terms of administrative and infrastructural requirements. The DCTA continues to play a major role in the development of the groups by monitoring the individual group's activities and advocating on their behalf.

It should be noted that central government usually provides incentives for the development of community tourism projects throughout the island once it has envisaged that the product will assist in achieving the targets set in the Tourism Master Plan 2022.

Fisheries

The fisher folk of Woodford Hill have benefited from activities of the Fisheries Division of central government which are aimed at increasing fish production, generation of income, supporting livelihoods of rural fishing communities, enhancement of fish quality, fish nutrition promotion and overall management of the fishing industry. They also actively participate in fish handlers' certification training and navigation and radio communication training. Their catches are marketed mostly through the fisheries complex in Marigot and to the neighbouring communities of Calibishie and Wesley.

Retail Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

The retail Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Woodford Hill have not experienced significant growth due to the slow-down of the agricultural sector over the years. This has reduced spending power in the community thus making it difficult for businesses to survive. Approximately 70% of the retail MSMEs are managed by men with the remaining 30% owned by women. Approximately 40% of them are managed by persons under the age of 35. Over the last year, three new retail MSMEs started up in the community including a hair salon and two bars.

Table 6 below provides a list of existing MSMEs in Woodford Hill.

Table 6 List of existing retail MSMEs

Type of Business	Number
Tire repair	1
Snackette	4
Salon	2
Welding shop	3
Auto repair	2
Internet café	2
Barber shop	1
Seamstress	1
Night club	1
Bars	4
Manufacturing company	1

The basic infrastructure to facilitate investment exists, but more can be done to facilitate investment in retail in the Woodford Hill community. Potential entrepreneurs need to be trained in business management and opportunities that exist through central government for the business start-ups must be made known to the community by their local authority.

Some of the opportunities that exist include grant funding up to XCD \$15,000.00 which is managed by the Small Business Unit within the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Employment and Diaspora Affairs.

There are a few business ventures that can be considered by potential entrepreneurs for possible investment in the community. They include:

- Restaurants
- Stationary Store
- Health and Wellness Centre
- Print and Document Centre
- Ice Cream Parlour

IV. LED STRATEGIC PLAN

A participatory approach was used to develop the five-year LED strategic plan for Woodford Hill. This took place during a two-day workshop where the community described their economic aspirations for Woodford Hill and agreed on a vision.

The participants also further analysed their economy using the LED Assessment Synthesis Report alongside their own knowledge and mapped out the direction of their LED strategic plan.

This LED Strategic Plan seeks to address the limitations that exist within the local economy of Woodford Hill and proposes programs and projects that are geared to achieving their shared vision and desired goals.

VISION

Woodford Hill, a thriving community which focuses on the sustainable development of its people by leveraging all its assets to ensure that youth and the community have an improved quality of life.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To support this vision, goals, objectives, programs and projects were developed and are articulated in Table 7 below.

Table 7 Summary of LED Strategy for Woodford Hill

Goals	Objectives	Programs	Projects
G1: To create mechanisms/ structures for building capacity of community to optimize the economic opportunities for locals	G1: O1: To build capacity of the community in key productive sectors	G1: O1: Pg1: HRD and Capacity Development for Job Creation	G1. O1. Pg1. P1. Conduct a capacity needs assessment
	G2: O2: To have 90% of skilled workers/ trades TVET-certified by 2019		G1. O1: Pg1: P2. Identify available capacity development opportunities, raise awareness
			G1: O1: Pg1: P3: Facilitate access to training programs
			G1:O1:Pg1:P4: Identify location and develop Resource and Capacity Development Hub (including business development support services)
G2: To create an	G2:O1: To develop	G2:O1:Pg1:Tourism	G2:O2:Pg1: P1: Assessment

Goals	Objectives	Programs	Projects	
enabling environment for the expansion of local business in the community in the target sectors of Tourism, Agriculture, Fisheries and any supporting retail MSMEs.	the tourism assets making Woodford Hill the #1 tourism community in NE Dominica	Development Program	/Mapping of community tourism and tourism assets (include Calibishie and Wesley)	
			G2:O2:Pg1:P2: Market assessment and feasibility study of select priority tourism assets	
			G2:O2:Pg1:P3: Partner with relevant central government authority to develop tourism products	
	G2:O2: Increase agricultural production and improve quality of product	G2:O2:Pg2: Agriculture Development Program	G2:O2:Pg1:P1: Conduct assessment of local agriculture sector in WH (including feeder roads assessment)	G2:O2:Pg1:P2: Develop Agricultural Development Plan for WH
				- include small ruminants project and fit in Agri - Development Plan
G2:O2:Pg2:P3: Identify and develop Cottage Industry Clusters (i.e. clusters engaged in agro-processing)				
G2:O2:Pg2:P4: Provide technical assistance and funding support to agro-processing to enhance the quality of agro-products				
G2:O3: Improve and	G2:O3:Pg3: Fisheries	G2:O3:Pg3:P1: Conduct	- supply of appropriate equipment & facility for processing	
			- access support from central government programs or donors	

Goals	Objectives	Programs	Projects
	add value to the fishing sector	Development Program	feasibility study for fish processing plant
			G2:O3:Pg3:P2: Explore potential for high value fish farming (market study/ feasibility study)
G3: To enhance/ strengthen the institutional partners for LED planning & delivery including the local authorities and key Community Based Organisations (CBOs)	G3:O1: To empower local authorities and key CBOs to facilitate the LED process and streamline the dissemination of critical information for LED	G3:O1:Pg1: Capacity Development Program on LED for local authorities and key CBOs	G3:O1:Pg1:P1: Procure the necessary office equipment that would enhance efficiency of the local authority, the LEDPAC and other CBOs.
			G3:O1:Pg1:P2: Disseminate LED Strategy process and Woodford Hill LED Strategy document to community, other neighbouring communities, government divisions and donor programs

Goal #1: *To create mechanisms/ structures for building capacity of community to optimize the opportunities for locals.*

This goal will be achieved by building the capacity of the community in the key productive sectors namely agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and supporting retail MSMEs. Programs focusing on human resource development and geared at making the labour force more marketable should be carefully selected, towards creating opportunities for employment. A critical objective to this goal is capitalizing on recent initiatives by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council to have skilled workers in Woodford Hill certified in preparation for good paying jobs.

The projects proposed for this particular goal can be facilitated by the relevant line ministry with support from the local authority and the LED-PAC. The capacity needs assessment should outline training needs of the community in the productive sectors bearing in mind the programs that are provided by the central government through various government institutions such as the Youth Division, Adult Education, Fisheries Division and the Division of Agriculture. Non-Governmental Organizations such as the National Development Foundation of Dominica (NDFD), the Bureau of Standards, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) among others can be accessed to provide capacity building opportunities for rural communities.

The Woodford Hill community also lacks a proper facility that can house such building capacity activities. Therefore, one of the projects under this goal seeks to identify and develop a resource and capacity development hub in the community which will include business support services.

Goal #2: *To create the enabling environment for the expansion of local business in the community.*

This goal focuses on three key productive sectors; tourism, agriculture and agro-processing, and fisheries. One of the main objectives of this goal is to develop the tourism assets making Woodford Hill “the #1 community in North-East Dominica. As aforementioned, many sites have been earmarked for development. To guide the process, a feasibility study on community tourism and an assessment of the tourism assets in Woodford Hill and the neighbouring communities will be conducted. The WTDC will partner with NNETEDC, DCTA and DDA to undertake the feasibility study. Tourism products will be prioritized and developed based on the results of the study.

The second objective to this goal is to increase agriculture production and improve the quality of produce. This can be achieved through an agricultural development program where the first step will be a thorough assessment of the agricultural sector in Woodford Hill. This assessment will inform an agricultural development plan for the community in order to increase production and productivity on farms while improving the quality of produce. The assessment of the sector and the development of the plan can be funded through ongoing EU funded programs such as the Banana Accompanying Measures, which is a 54 million XCD funded program over a five-year period. In improving the quality of the farm produce, the farming community can also benefit from the National Farm Certification Scheme spearheaded by the Dominica Bureau of Standards.

The start of a small ruminants business in Woodford Hill, which is already supported through CARILED as a quick start-quick win project should be properly evaluated through a value chain analysis to identify and address the existing gaps and bottlenecks. For example, the need for an abattoir was overlooked upon approval of the small ruminants’ project, which is a major factor for adhering to food safety regulations and marketing the meat. The possibility for investing first in pork and poultry as a possible project adjustment should be considered, based on the ability to supply the readily available market which will be provided once the government-sponsored abattoir currently being constructed is operational. Targeted support to the cottage industry is viewed as another quick win that can stimulate economic growth in Woodford Hill. Support for the provision of the necessary equipment should also be explored while promoting the formation of clusters within this sub-sector.

The third objective of goal 2 involves improving and adding value to the fishing sector. To achieve further growth in the sector, the cooperative recommends that adding value to their catch will attract a more lucrative market. This can be done through the development of a processing facility for the smoking of fish in different forms as one option to adding value. The development of a fish farm adjacent to the fisheries complex is also being contemplated in order to have a consistent supply of fish. This proposed project will be further analysed through a feasibility study with support from the Fisheries Division.

Goal #3: *To enhance/strengthen the institutional partners for LED planning and delivery involving the local authorities and key Community Based Organizations (CBOs).*

The continuation of the LED process is critical to the successful implementation of the LED Strategy. The objective of this goal is to empower local authorities and key CBOs to facilitate the LED process through the dissemination of critical information for LED. This will be done through training programs and other capacity development methods to enable the local authorities and other relevant community groups to effectively communicate critical information to the community. Support for the provision of basic equipment is relevant to the process thus enabling the organizations to operate more efficiently in the execution of its duties.

It was recommended that during the implementation process, the LED-PAC should play a critical role and should be empowered with the necessary tools and systems such as training in project monitoring and evaluation to support other implementing partners including the village council and the WTDC.

V. NEXT STEPS

This LED Strategy will be presented to the community and the LED-PAC in a community meeting for comments and feedback. An Action-Planning session with support from the LEDO and other resource persons will follow to discuss the specific activities under each project, including timelines, budgetary requirements, and personnel assignments in more detail. The action plan must be prioritized, valued, time bound and measurable as it will establish the time frame and the personnel responsible for execution. The CARILED LED Strategic Planning Guide will be used as a resource in further developing the action plan.

Once the LED strategy is approved by the community, it will then be submitted to the NAC which will seek its endorsement from the Minister. **Upon approval of this strategy, the LED-PAC will spearhead the implementation of specific program components.**

The proposed interventions, which form the core of the Strategic Plan, should greatly contribute to the economic development of Woodford Hill once the necessary resources are made available for its implementation. For its success, the buy-in from central government is critical; hence the reason for ensuring that the goals are in sync with government's planned policies and programs. The composition of the LED-PAC should also be reviewed in order to ensure that it involves all the critical stakeholder particularly representative from government agencies including, the Cooperative Division, Fisheries Division, Division of Agriculture, DDA and Environmental Health Division. Multi-stakeholder committees should be assigned to carry out the various activities in the action plan for each project.

Going forward, the community of Woodford Hill will build on the past and take advantage of the present in their quest to fulfil their vision.

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