



The local government system in St Lucia



Key facts

POPULATION (Census 2001)¹: 157,775
AREA²: 616 sq km
CAPITAL: Castries
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO GDP³: 0.46%
CURRENCY: East Caribbean dollar (XCD)
HEAD OF STATE: HM Queen Elizabeth II
GOVERNOR-GENERAL: Dame Pearlette Louisy
HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:
 Prime Minister Stephenson King
FORM OF GOVERNMENT: constitutional monarchy
 and parliamentary democracy
PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM: bicameral
STATE STRUCTURE: unitary
LANGUAGES: English (official)
 French Patois (recognised)
NATIONAL ELECTIONS: last: 2006; **turnout:** 58.5%;
next: 2011
LOCAL ELECTIONS: There is no elected local
 government in St Lucia.

SUMMARY

St Lucia is a constitutional monarchy with two levels of government: central and local. The constitution makes reference to local government but contains no specific provisions or protection. The main legislative texts governing local government are the Local Government Ordinance 1947 and the Castries Corporation Act 1967. There are 13 administrative divisions, known as 'quarters', and one city. The 13 quarters comprise three town councils, six village councils and four district councils. Local elections were suspended in 1979, and since then the Ministry of Physical Development, Housing, Urban Renewal and Local Government is responsible for the nomination of all councils. The functions and responsibilities of local government have been discharged by

centralised authorities since 1980, and many of the services provided are carried out in tandem with other governmental agencies.

1. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

St Lucia is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. The head of state is HM Queen Elizabeth II who appoints and is represented by a governor-general, who must be a citizen of St Lucia. The bicameral parliament comprises the elected House of Assembly and the appointed Senate. The 17 members of the House of Assembly are elected using the first-past-the-post system whilst the 11 members of the Senate are appointed by the governor-general; six on the advice of the prime minister, three on the advice of the leader of the

opposition and two at the governor-general's discretion. Both houses sit for a concurrent term of up to five years. The prime minister appoints a cabinet from members of both houses.

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 Constitutional provisions:

The constitution makes reference to local government but contains no specific provisions or protection.

2.2 Main legislative texts:

The main legislation governing local government is as follows:

- Local Government Ordinance 1947
- Castries Corporation Act 1967.



Table 1. Distribution of councils and population (Census 2001)

Quarter	Population* (Census 2001)
Anse la Raye/Canaries	5,717
Babonneau	11,858
Castries	56,054
Choiseul	6,370
Dennerly South	7,050
Dennerly North	5,686
Gros-Islet	16,043
Laborie	10,036
Micoud North	7,466
Micoud South	7,293
Soufrière	7,342
Vieux Fort South	8,401
Vieux Fort North	8,174
TOTAL	**157,775

*only includes private households **total population

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Local government within the state:

There are 13 administrative divisions, known as 'quarters', and one city. Local authorities within the 13 quarters consist of three town councils, six village councils and four district councils. The council for the city of Castries forms a second-tier authority within the Castries quarter whilst all other councils are single-tier.

3.2 Ministerial oversight:

Local elections have been suspended since 1979. Currently the minister in charge of the Ministry of Physical Development, Housing, Urban Renewal and Local Government (MPDHURLG) is responsible for the nomination of all council members. Officers of the MPDHURLG consult civil society organisations and recommendations are made to the minister with appointments approved by cabinet. The minister assumes overall responsibility for policy formulation and direction.

In each local authority, the director of local government functions as the administrative head with the assistance of two local government officers and an administrative clerk. The ministry provides support in four areas: advocacy, local-level innovation, capacity development and regulation.

The MPDHURLG is currently reviewing the Local Government Ordinance 1947 in an effort to establish a governing instrument that is appropriate to a new system of local government in St Lucia. The review process will include consultations at a local level to include local government authorities and marginalised and minority groups in the various communities on the island.

3.2 Council types:

There are two types of council, the single-tier town, village and district council and the second-tier City of Castries Council in the district of Castries.

3.3.1 Town, village and district councils each have nine appointed members including a chairperson, decisions are made by the full council.

3.3.2 Castries City Council has membership of nine appointed councillors including a chairperson, but its decision-making process is predominantly through sub-committees who report back to the full council.

4. ELECTIONS

There has been no elected local government in St Lucia since the last elections in 1979.

5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

There is no legal requirement for community involvement in local authority decision-making and no e-government strategy for local authorities in St Lucia.

6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There is no local government association in St Lucia.

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Local authorities have been encouraged to be involved and to participate in the development process through linkages with other civil society organisations. In the absence of a local government association, the ministry ensures that good relations exist between the various

governmental agencies and civil society organisations.

8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

Central government provides institutional support and monitoring to local government authorities through the MPDHURLG local government officers. These officers have a responsibility to interact with and assist the respective authorities in their various community initiatives. Finance officers are also appointed to carry out reviews and to ensure adherence to financial regulations.

9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

Local government is not permitted to set deficit budgets.

9.1 Locally raised revenue:

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for collecting local taxes, whilst the local council is responsible for collecting user fees. The main sources of revenue are trade, hawkers' and vendors' licences; property rental fees; market and cemetery dues; and dividends. Castries City Council collects its own revenue, which totalled approximately XCD\$8.2m (US\$1.9m) in 2008/2009 and represented an operating deficit of 4.7%. The council's capital budget for the same period was XCD\$3.8m (US\$1.4m)

9.2 Transfers:

There is no set policy for transfer payments made from central government to local councils; however, these payments do make up the majority of revenue received by local government. Local government authorities receive an allocation from central government based on multiple considerations, including the projected revenue flows and budgetary priorities of central government. Castries City Council receives an annual subvention of XCD\$2m (US\$0.74m) on top of its own locally raised revenue.

9.3 Local authority staff:

Local authority staff are recruited both centrally (higher grades) and locally. The power to discipline remains with the body responsible for recruitment. The town clerk, or clerk of council, is an established post within the government service. The clerk has an assistant clerk.

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

The functions and responsibilities of local government have been transferred to centralised authorities. Many of the services provided are carried out in tandem with other governmental agencies. Services include maintenance of and



Table 2. Aggregate revenue (2008/2009) and expenditure (2009/2010) for local government

Revenue (2008/2009)	XCD\$m	Expenditure (2009/2010)	XCD\$m
Government transfers	n/a	Recurrent expenditure	8.4
Local taxes and user fees	n/a	Capital expenditure	3.5
TOTAL	11.1	TOTAL	11.9

Source: Ministry of Physical Development, Housing, Urban Renewal and Local Government

repairs to roads, sidewalks, footpaths and streets; cleaning and de-silting of drains, streets, sidewalks and rivers; maintenance of squares, parks and open spaces; landscaping and beautification programmes; maintenance of daycare services; maintenance of public buildings; environmental monitoring and development control; supervision of solid waste collection; assistance with planning and organising national activities; management of cemeteries, playing fields and public facilities; disaster preparedness; and revenue collection.

References and useful websites

1. St Lucia Statistics Office, www.stats.gov.lc
Census 2001 www.stats.gov.lc/cenpub_f.pdf
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<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2008/Table03.pdf>
3. IMF statistics
<http://www.imf.org/external/data.htm>
4. Ministry of Physical Development, Housing, Urban Renewal and Local Government:
no website
5. National government portal
www.stlucia.gov.lc
6. Castries City Council
www.castriescitycouncil.org
7. UNDP Human Development Report 2010
www.hdr.undp.org
8. Constitution of St Lucia
www.stlucia.gov.lc/saint_lucia/saintluciaconstitution/the_saint_lucia_constitution.htm
9. Gros-Islet Town Council observes its 25th anniversary
www.stlucia.gov.lc/pr2010/march/gros-islet_town_council_prepares_to_unite_constituents_as_the_town_observes_its_25th_anniversary.htm