

SUMMARY

(a) The factors affecting the construction sector in St. Kitts are examined and solutions offered with a view to improving the efficiency and capacity of the sector. Special emphasis is placed on the building sub-sector as this is the most dominant.

(b) A study of this nature is important as it is necessary to improve the production levels of all sectors of the economy in order to increase the rate of national development. This is more crucial at this time due to the fact that the island has recently attained Independence. Further no research work in the construction sector has been done in recent times.

(c) The approach adopted by the author was to discuss with the direct and indirect participants in the construction sector, the problems and factors they perceive as affecting this sector.

Based on my personal experience within the sector and using my professional training the data was analysed and possible alternative solutions developed.

/(d) The paper

(d) The paper is structured into three main parts. Part 1 is an attempt to give the reader extensive background information on the environment in which the construction operates. It concludes with a look at the state of the national economy and examines the contributions of its various sectors.

Part 2, which consists of Chapters 3 and 4 reflects on the historical development of the 'Construction Sector' and the 'Construction Sector Today'. Part 3 deals specifically with the 'Factors Affecting the Construction Sector.'

(e) The research and subsequent analysis provide the following:

Most of the construction entities are ill-structured and as a consequence are inadequately staffed and this is ultimately reflected in the low level of production that is obtained. There is a shortage of mortgage finance and that which exists is mismanaged. The use of local savings by government for non-capital investment and the high cost of capital are some of the factors that restrict the level of mortgage finance available. The home construction that is undertaken with the

/limited finance

limited finance available is being managed by the most inefficient sub-sector of the building sector. Further, the imported materials being used in construction are of low quality and are priced relatively high. The use of local materials is restricted to aggregate and aggregate products while at the same time there is no research taking place into the development of local resources and materials. Inefficiencies within the Building Boards and the Planning Unit in conjunction with political practices and decisions also influence the level of efficiency that is obtained. In absence of a Contractor or functioning Engineering Association the industry is without any voice to seek and protect its interest.

(f) Based on the identification of the problems that now plague the construction sector various alternative solutions have been offered with a view to increasing the existing level of efficiency. The solutions include re-organisation of the education system to remove the stigma attached to vocational and technical training and to improve

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the level of training that is now provided. Suggestions have been made to increase the capacity of the sector and range from improved financing, the reduction in the cost of construction materials and components to the improvement in the functioning of government bodies. Ways of reducing the level of political interference in the industry have been offered.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ISLAND OF ST. KITTS

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