



**NTRC**

UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND (USF)

# Annual Report 2016

In Photo: NTRC's Director, Mr. Apollo Knights hands over computers to community center.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

The Universal Service Fund was established under Section 42 of the Telecommunications Act of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Revised Edition 2009. The Fund is managed by the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) – which collects, disburses and makes relevant decisions with regards to the proper and effective management of the Fund.

### **1.1 What is the Universal Service Fund?**

The Universal Service Fund (USF) is a fund which is used by the NTRC to compensate any telecommunications provider that is required to provide or promote Universal Service.

Universal Service includes the provision of:

- Public voice telephony
- Internet access
- Telecommunications services to schools, hospitals, similar institutions and the physically challenged
- Other services by which people access efficient, affordable and modern telecommunications

The Fund will encourage efficient access to, and use of telecommunications networks and services throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines with special focus on rural, under-served and maritime areas, and with the goal to help promote social, educational and economic development.

The Fund will also ensure the reasonable availability and affordability of basic and advanced telecommunications services, where the commercial telecommunications market is unable to deliver such services in a financially viable manner independently; and also to the physically challenged, elderly and indigent communities.

The Fund will also provide support for the introduction and expansion of telecommunications services to schools, health facilities and other organizations serving public needs.

## **1.2 Who contributes to the Universal Service Fund?**

As set forth in the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund Contribution) Order 2008, all telecommunications providers shall contribute to the Universal Service Fund. In terms of due dates for payments of these contributions, Section 5 of the Contribution Order states that within forty-five (45) days of the reporting year, the contributor must pay and provide supporting documents used in the calculations. Parliament may also appropriate funds for use by the USF. Grants and donations may also be made to the Fund by individuals or legal entities.

## **1.3 Management of the Fund**

Effective September 16, 2008, the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations 2008 were gazetted and came into operation. The aim of these Regulations is to provide for the efficient and effective management of the USF. The Regulations govern the way in which the Fund operates. Along with these Regulations, there are Universal Service Guidelines issued under Section 7 of the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations to facilitate the proper operation of the Fund. These guidelines are an indication of the policy and procedures that must be followed in the operation of the Fund.

The USF will play an integral role in the development and technological innovation of the telecommunications sector and of the country as a whole.

## **2. SWOT ANALYSIS**

### **2.1 Strengths**

- To date, the USF has been able to properly manage our seven projects which are providing various services to Vincentians. The proper management of these projects through the contracts which are in place ensures a high level of service is being provided at each location being served by the USF.
- Due to the fact that the SSID's for the wireless access points under our projects are appropriately named either NTRC or USF, the NTRC and the USF are quickly becoming a household name for the provision of wireless high-speed internet access island wide.

### **2.2 Weaknesses**

- The NTRC has not signed any new contract for projects since 2012. The primary factor is the unavailability of resources to implement projects which have already been developed.

### **2.3 Opportunities**

- The NTRC St Vincent will be working along with the NTRC of Dominica and Grenada on two new projects which we will be seeking international funding for. These projects are expected to get funding from an international donor agency and the proposals are expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2017.

## **2.4 Threats**

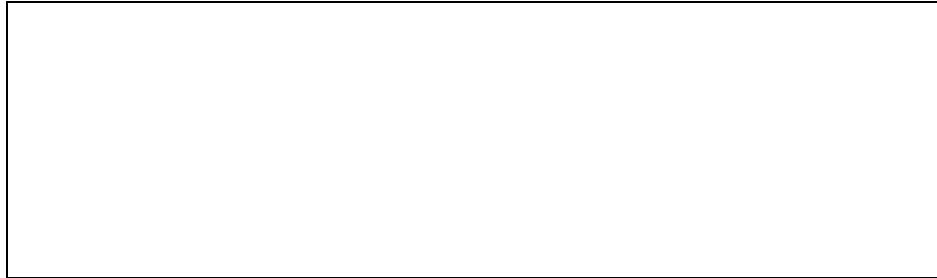
- With over 300 free wireless access points which are open to the public on a 24/7 basis, the issue of cybercrime being committed at one or multiple locations under the USF has become a reality within recent years.

## **3. CRITICAL ISSUES**

The decline in revenues of the telecommunications providers, if continued over time, will negatively impact the ability of the USF to continue funding current projects and directly impacting the ability to fund new projects.

## 4. SECTOR REVIEW

### 4.1 Telecommunications Revenue



*Fig 1. Shows data from the NTRC Annual Report 2016*



The revenue generated by telecommunications operators decreased by a margin of 5.6% in 2016. This was due to a decrease in Cable & Wireless' and Digicel revenues from their mobile services. While it appears that the subscribers across both networks are stagnant, the revenues generated from the subscribers have decreased over the period.

## **4.2 Financial performance of the Universal Service Fund**

### Revenue

For the year ended December 31, 2016, the Universal Service Fund was budgeted to receive a total of One Million, Three Hundred and Forty Thousand Dollars (\$1,340,000.00) from telecommunications service providers, and interest on the account was projected to be Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00). The actual revenue received by the Universal Service Fund in 2016 was One Million, One Hundred and Ninety Three Thousand and Fifty Two Dollars and Ten Cents (\$1,193,052.10). This was due to the decline in the revenues from the telecom providers. A total of Ten Thousand and Thirteen Dollars and Fifty Three Cents (\$10,013.53) was received as interest on the account. There was also a slight increase in the interest amount obtained which is due to the fact that the commissioning of the Payphone Project was postponed thus the project payments had to be deferred.

### Expenditure

Recurrent:

For the year ended December 31, 2016, the USF budgeted to spend Three Hundred and Sixteen Thousand, Five Hundred and Fifteen

Dollars and Ninety Cents (\$316,515.90) on recurrent expenditure. However, three hundred and seven thousand and thirty seven dollars and thirty three cents (\$307,037.33) was actually spent.

### Projects:

For the year ended December 31, 2016, the USF budgeted to spend One Million and Seven Hundred and Sixteen Thousand, Three Hundred and Forty Five Dollars and Eighty Four Cents (\$1,716,345.84) for payment on projects. However, Nine Hundred and Twenty Two Thousand, One Hundred and Fifty Five Dollars and Thirty-Three Cents (\$922,155.33) was actually spent. The main reason for this is that the NTRC had budgeted for the Payphone Project commissioned in 2016. Additionally, the maintenance payment for the schools project was budgeted to be paid out in 2016. These two payments were differed to 2017.

### Conclusion

The performance of the USF over the 2016 financial year was fitting and the management of the Fund continues to be efficient.

### 4.3 Projected revenue for 2017

The Fund is projected to receive just under Two Million Dollars in 2017. This consists of contributions from telecommunications service providers of One Million, Seven Hundred and Ninety Five Thousand Six Hundred and Fifty Seven Dollars (\$1,795,657.00), and an interest on the Fund's account of Two Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00). This projection for the interest amount is as a result of the expected project payments in 2017 which will significantly decrease the amount of funds available for the USF throughout.

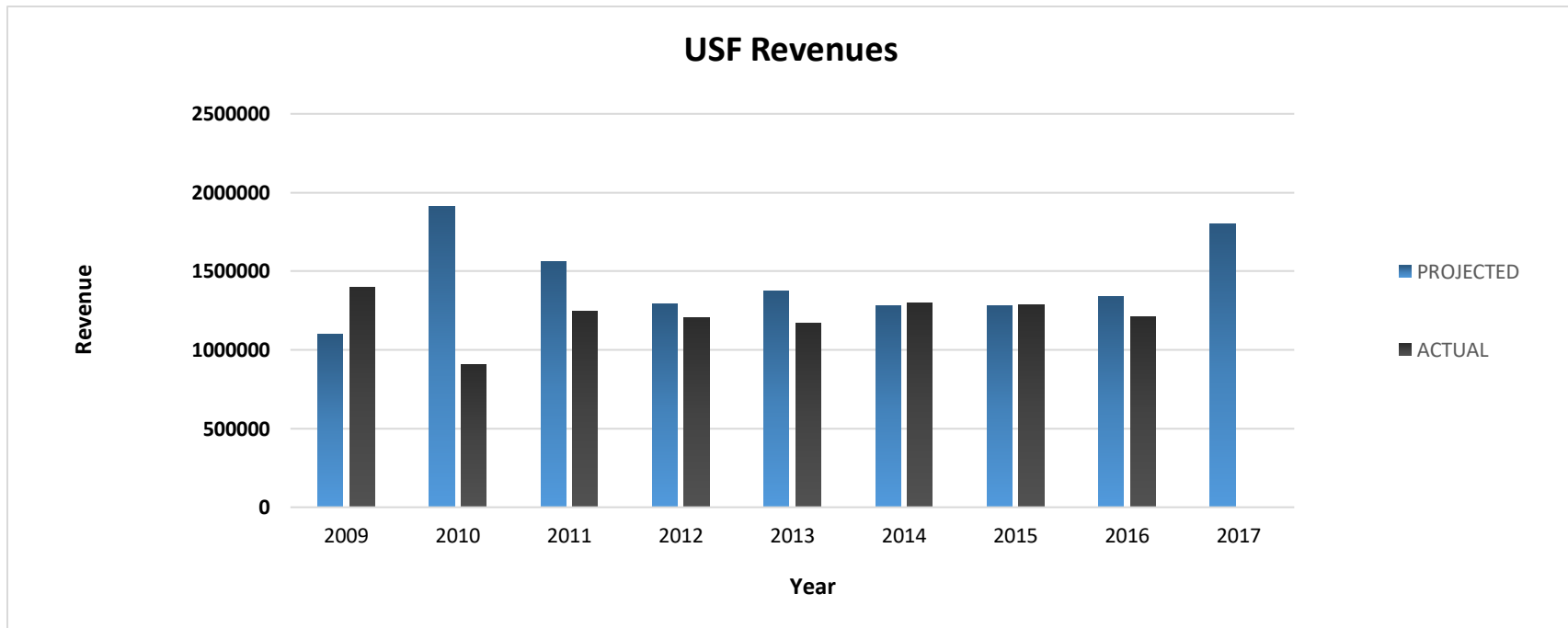


Fig 2. Shows data from the NTRC Annual Report 2016

## 5. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR 2016:

The NTRC continues to expose its staff to relevant courses and seminars that would benefit the organization, both in the short and long term despite the limited resources available.

The USF Administrator has successfully completed his written exams a Masters in Project Management Program which commenced in March 2015 and is scheduled to be completed in April 2017 with the completion of his thesis.

The following learning material was also purchased and reviewed by members of the USF staff:

- Winning by Jack Welsh

## 6. PUBLIC AWARENESS

The USF held the following events in collaboration with the NTRC during 2016:

1. **Town hall meetings:** Town hall meetings were held in Kingstown, Bequia, Belair and Barrouallie. An event was scheduled to take place on Nov 29, 2016 at the George Stephen's secondary School in Colonaire but due to the adverse weather conditions, the town hall meeting was postponed to Jan 26, 2017. At these events, persons were educated on the complaint filing process and were given demonstrations on how to complete the relevant forms along with the functions and works that the NTRC is engaged in.

2. **GMDSS Radio Training Sessions:** The NTRC in collaboration with the St Vincent and the Grenadines Coast Guard Services delivered five (5) GMDSS radio training Sessions at the popular fishing communities throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines for fishermen and other persons involved in maritime activities. The training sessions advised the participants of the new GMDSS system which was implemented by the NTRC to facilitate emergency and non-emergency communications at sea. Additionally, the training involved practical sessions on how to use the GMDSS radios which have the necessary features that allow persons to communicate with the GMDSS system and other ships that possess the system. The sessions were held at the locations which include Barrouallie, Bequia, Calliaqua, Union Island and Kingstown. A raffle was conducted and Randolph Dickson of Barrouallie won a free portable GMDSS radio.

## **7. TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECTS**

In 2016, due to the limitations that were experienced by the NTRC as a result of the current USF contribution rate, no contracts were signed for the implementation of new projects by the USF. However, to date, the USF has undertaken a total of seven projects:

### **7.1 Internet Project**

The first project undertaken by the USF in SVG was called the Internet Project, and was signed in with telecommunications provider LIME, at a cost of Four Hundred and Twenty-Seven Thousand, Six Hundred and Eight Dollars and Ninety-Eight Cents (\$427,608.98). It saw twenty-eight (28) rural locations outfitted with wireless internal and external internet access points with minimum speeds of 8 Mbps. These locations included thirteen (13) Learning Resource Centers, nine (9) rural schools and six (6) Community Centers. This project was commissioned on July 6, 2011, and will run for a period of five (5) years. This project was combined with another project, the Community center project and was retendered in the third quarter of 2016. These two projects were amalgamated due to the fact that they provided the same services at similar locations. In addition to this, both projects were coming to an end and the NTRC saw it advantageous to merge the two projects which would save administrative cost over the long run. The new amalgamated project is called the community access project and an agreement is expected to be entered into by the second quarter of 2017.

### **7.2 Payphone Project**

The second project is called the Payphone Project and was signed with LIME in 2011, at a cost of One Million, Four Hundred Thousand, Five Hundred and Seventy-Five Dollars and Forty-Five Cents (\$1,400,575.45). This project has seen twenty-five (25) payphones installed at various locations across SVG – including tourism sites, beaches and at points along the main road. Internet access will also be provided at the tourism sites and beaches at a minimal cost. Overt vandal proof security cameras were also installed at selected tourism sites and at the beaches to minimize the threat of vandalism to the payphones, as well as to provide some security for visitors to these locations. All of the equipment has been installed and the commission is working along with cable and Wireless in getting this project commissioned in January of 2017.

### **7.3 Schools Project**

The third, and largest project is the Schools Project – which provides internet services to all one hundred and seven (107) educational institutions via interior and exterior high-speed wireless connections, with speeds of up to 20 Mbps. This contract was signed in 2011 in telecommunications provider Cable and Wireless, and the project was commissioned in 2012. The project is expected to come to a close in 2017 and will be retendered. The cost of this project is Five Million, Two Hundred and Thirty Thousand, Six Hundred and Twenty-Three Dollars (\$5,230,623.00); with a duration of five (5) years. There is also a content filtering system established for this project to prevent access to undesirable websites. In an effort to improve the internet connection being offered at the SVGCC Glen Campus noting the large student

population, the NTRC, negotiated with Cable and Wireless and a fiber network was installed at the college with speeds exceeding 100 Mbps.

## 7.4 Maritime Project

The fourth project, which is the VHF Maritime Project, was implemented to provide access to both emergency and non-emergency communications in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of St Vincent and the Grenadines and saw the implementation of a GMDSS system in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The project is being executed for a total cost of One Million, One Hundred and Twenty Five Thousand, and Seven Hundred and Eighty Eastern Caribbean Dollars (\$1,125,780.00) and is being maintained for a period of five years. Five Hundred and Forty Thousand Dollars (\$540,000.0) of this amount was accessed from the World Bank for the purchase and installation of the equipment. The remaining Five Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighty One Dollars (\$585,781.00) was paid by the Universal Service Fund for the maintenance of the services and equipment over the 5 year period.

GMDSS stands for Global Maritime Distress and Safety System and it is a set of safety procedures, types of equipment and communication protocols used to increase safety and make it easier to rescue distressed ships, boats and even aircrafts. GMDSS provides for distress alerts, distress relays, search and rescue, on scene communication and location services. This system is mandatory for all ships subject to the Safety of Life At Sea (SOLAS) convention of 1974. The basic concept of this system is that the Coast Guard, as well as vessels in the immediate area of a ship in distress, will be rapidly alerted to the emergency so that they can assist with minimum delay time. Digital Selective Calling (DSC) is one of the most important

aspects of this GMDSS system and is a standard for sending pre-defined digital message via the pressing of one button. Noting this fact, the NTRC identified and implemented this project to improve the VHF maritime coverage around the country.

Under this project the control system was installed at the Coast Guard Base while three antennas and three transceivers were installed at the Mt St Andrews remote site. These two locations are also linked via a 2Mb leased circuit.

One hundred (100) VHF DSC handheld and ten (10) VHF DSC mobile radios were also procured under this project and were sold at a subsidized price of Four Hundred Dollars (\$400.00) to interested persons. The NTRC also distributed a number of the radios to registered fishermen throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Six (6) VHF base stations radios were installed at six (6) rural police stations throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines to assist in the monitoring of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). The purpose of these six radios is to provide access to both emergency and non-emergency communications which may occur within the Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with special emphasis on those areas which were not covered by the GMDSS system in place.

Under this project, several training sessions were held in 2016 in collaboration with the St Vincent and the Grenadines Coast Guard Services with fishermen in various communities informing them of the system and use of the VHF DSC enabled radios. This project will be retendered out in 2017 as the current contract comes to an end in 2017.

## **7.5 Police and Health Center Project**

The fifth project is the Police and Health Center Project. This project provides wireless internet access at all twenty-nine (29) Police Stations and forty-two (42) Health Centers throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines at a minimum speed of 8 Mbps. The cost of this project is seven hundred and eleven thousand, and fifteen dollars (\$711,015.00), and is being implemented by Karib Cable for a period of two (2) years. Thirty-one (31) computers were also installed at various clinics, and fourteen (14) computers were installed at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital. The Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines (RSVG) Police Force Training School was also outfitted with ten (10) computers to assist the recruits and other officers with their research work. This project was commissioned on June 12, 2015 and the NTRC has been routinely monitoring the services being provided to ensure that the necessary measures can be implemented to reduce the down time of the service. The project is expected to close in 2017 and will be retendered.

## **7.6 Community Center Project**

The sixth project implemented is the Community Center Project. This project provides wireless internet access at eleven (11) Community Centers in various communities throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as a Learning Resource Centre, and seven (7) group institutions and public venues, all at a minimum speed of 20 Mbps. The contract for this project was signed in 2012 with Karib Cable, at a cost of one hundred and nineteen thousand, five hundred

and three dollars and twenty-nine cents (\$119,503.29), and is being implemented for a period of two (2) years. The project was commissioned on March 4, 2014. Under this project, the newly established Salvation Army Children's Home will also be outfitted with six (6) computers and internet access to assist with the development of the children's ICT skills. All residents from the various communities, where these project sites are located, will have access to the wireless internet on a 24/7 basis.

This project was combined with another project, the internet project and was retendered in the third quarter of 2016. These two projects were amalgamated due to the fact that they provided the same services at similar locations. In addition to this, both projects were coming to an end and the NTRC saw it advantageous to merge the two projects which would save administrative cost over the long run. The new amalgamated project is called the community access project and an agreement is expected to be entered into by the second quarter of 2017.

## **7.7 SMART Project**

The seventh and last project that is currently being undertaken by the NTRC is the SMART Project. This project will facilitate the necessary infrastructure and platforms at SVGCC to enable it to offer its existing and new courses online and in real time. Another component of this project is that three hundred and forty (340) households will benefit from subsidized internet access at a price of ten dollars (\$10) per month for a maximum of two (2) years. Additionally, a state-of-the-art computer lab containing thirty-five (35) high powered computers, including twenty (20) Apple Mac computers, were handed over to the Division of Technical Education, SVGCC. This project will be executed at a total of One Million, Six Hundred and Ninety-Eight

Thousand, Nine hundred and Ninety-Four Dollars (\$1,698,994.00), and is being implemented by LIME. This project was commissioned on September 25, 2014.

As of October 20, 2015, the three hundred and forty (340) quota for the subsidized internet service was reached however, the NTRC is still accepting applications for the service because in the following two years, the service will be provided to a new batch of three hundred and forty (340) persons. The NTRC will try and source some funds in 2017 to increase the number of households benefiting from this initiative.

The programs at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College which include the Associate Degree in Cyber Security and an Associate Degree in Software Development are in operation now and the programs are based at the Division of Arts and general Science in Villa. The software development program was upgraded in 2016 from a certificate program to an associate degree program.

## **8. GOVERNMENT PROJECTS**

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines over the past years have invested significantly into the ICT sector locally. One of the major program is that of the Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Program (CARCIP). CARCIP is a World Bank financed initiative which seeks to increase St. Vincent and the Grenadines' access to regional broadband networks, and advance the development of an ICT-enabled service industry in the Caribbean region.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made significant progress in boosting the development of the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) sector. To this end, grants

totalling more than XCD 2.5 million have been distributed to twenty-one (21) local businesses within the past year.

The funds were awarded through the Business Incubation and Training Grants programme that is a component of the Caribbean Regional Infrastructure Programme (CARCIP) SVG project that was launched in 2014. CARCIP SVG forms part of Government's initiative to increase the range of local business enterprises utilizing modern technology, support business expansion and create jobs.

Under the Business Incubation Grants programme, sixteen (16) businesses, including existing and start-up enterprises have each received funding of up to XCD 150,000. A total of over XCD 1.4 million has been disbursed. The businesses received funding for equipment, software and marketing support. The recipients are also receiving assistance in the development of skills as incubatees of the National Centre of Technological Innovation (NCTI) Business Incubator Programme. Six (6) incubatees located across St. Vincent are being supported virtually while ten (10) are residential incubatees stationed at the NCTI's Business Incubator at the Diamond Industrial Estate.

Under CARCIP SVG's Training Grants programme, six (6) businesses are benefiting from funding of up to XCD 150,000. This programme has committed XCD 586,000 in grants for Vincentian small businesses and non-government institutions. The training is improving the skills set of their employees/members in ICT or ICT-related areas. Businesses also received equipment and software to support the training activities.

Meanwhile, over three hundred and ten (310) Vincentians have received ICT training at the NCTI over the past year. The Government distributed approximately XCD 300,000 thousand in bursaries under the CARCIP Training Grants programme to cover eighty percent (80%) of the cost for courses. Courses included webpage design, mobile app design and development, graphic design, Cisco Certified Associate, Android development, Comptia A+, Security + and Network +.

## 9. OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE USF

**i<sup>2</sup> Competition Fourth annual i<sup>2</sup> competition:** On September 16, 2016 the Commission launched the fourth annual i<sup>2</sup> competition. This competition is a forum that challenges students to develop and present projects in the form of Ideas and Mobile Application. Previously, the competitions were geared towards the development of ideas that can implement new systems or improve existing systems in the departments within the Public Service of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and other state agencies that provide services to the public. However, for this year, the competition targeted the private sector within St. Vincent and the Grenadines with the aim of improving the efficiency of their business operations.

The public awareness activities were carried out in the first half of the year. Additionally, Public awareness initiatives were done during the launch in September 2016 and also during the registration period which came to an end in November 2016. However this year saw a decrease in the number of

entries. Twenty Two (22) entries were received compared to the Thirty Seven (37) entries which were received for the 2016 competition. This was mainly as a result of two schools that in the past had many entries but did not participate in 2016, namely the St. Vincent Grammar school and St. Martins Secondary.

The entries from the secondary level were from the Petit Bordel Secondary School, Mountain View Academy, Union Island Secondary School, Thomas Saunders Secondary School, St. Vincent Girls High School, Troumaca Secondary School, George Stephens Sr. Secondary School, Bishops College Kingstown and the St. Joseph Convent Kingstown.

The tertiary level saw participation from the two (2) divisions of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College entering the competition. This includes the Division of Teachers Education and the Division of Arts, Science and General Studies.

For the first time in the history of the competition, entries were received from the Bishops College Kingstown, St. Joseph convent Kingstown and the Division of Teachers' Education. The finals of the competition concluded on January 19, 2017.



## **9.1 Field Work**

In an effort to gather feedback on the various projects which have been implemented by the USF, as well as obtain ICT project related ideas that can be implemented in SVG, the NTRC went out into the various communities throughout SVG to conduct field work. During these field visits, the NTRC was able to identify various telecommunications issues being faced by the public. The NTRC was also able to inform the general public about the Complaint Resolution Regulation which is a process used to guide the actions of those consumers who are not satisfied with the telecommunications services they receive. Additionally, from the impact assessments conducted by the USF throughout the past couple of years, it was observed that most persons were unaware of what the NTRC and/or USF is and all that has been achieved through the NTRC and USF. Through these field work excursions, the NTRC has been able to inform the general public of the telecommunication initiatives and projects that the NTRC has been involved in or implemented. These fieldwork activities took place on the Windward and Leeward sides of the island and we also traveled to the Grenadines where field work was conducted in Bequia, Union Island and Canouan.

## **9.2 My App Summer Program**

The NTRC held its second annual MyApp Summer program. The program ran for the period July 25, 2016-August 31, 2016 and took place at the Petit Bordel Secondary School. Nineteen students attended the program. The objective of the NTRC's MyAPP Program is to teach participants between the ages of 13-18 who may or may not have previous exposure on how to code and design applications. The

program introduced participants to ways in which they can portray their acquired skills in larger, incentivized forums such as the annual NTRC's *i*<sup>2</sup> Competition or any other technological area in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

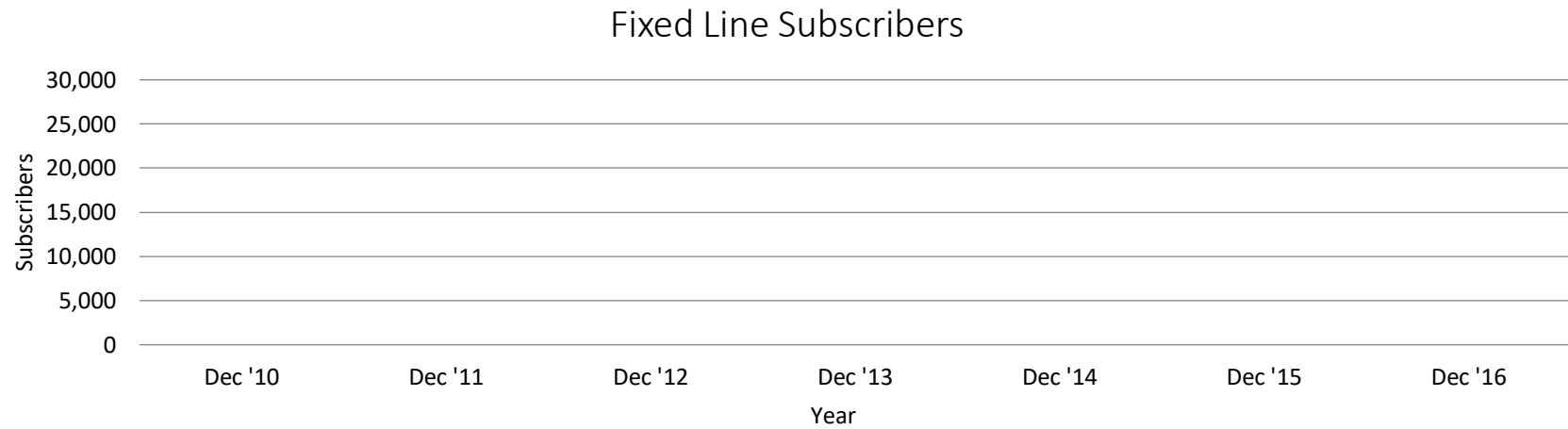
## 10. STATISTICS

### 10.1 Fixed Line Subscriptions

Figure 3 shows the fixed line subscribers over a six year period. In 2016, there was a decrease in the number of subscribers to Cable & Wireless (LIME) and Karib Cable.



*Fig 3. Shows data from the telecommunications providers in SVG*

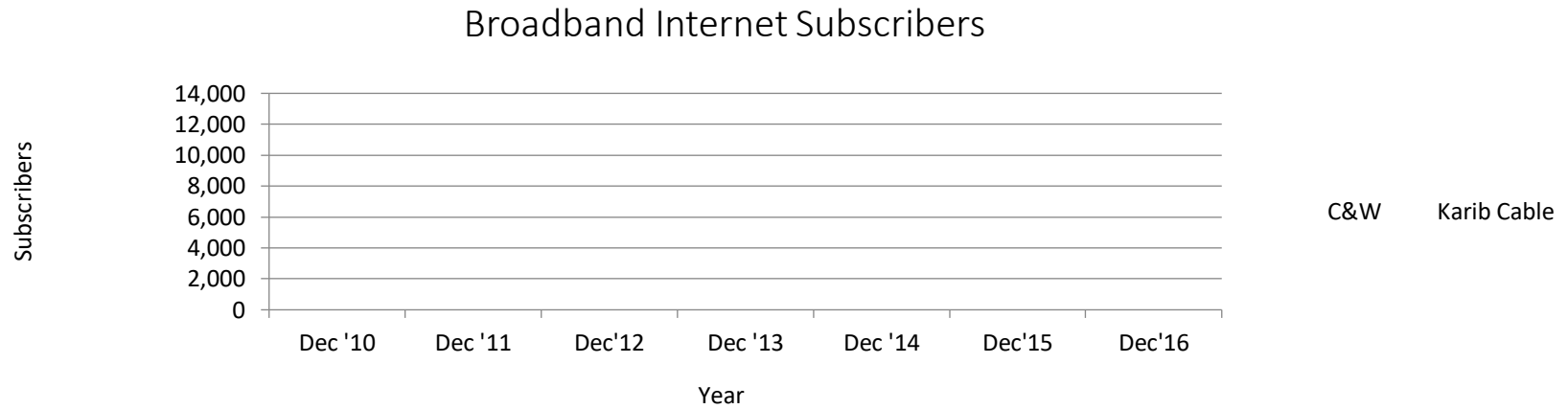


*Fig 4. Shows data from the telecommunications providers in SVG*

Figure 4 above shows that overall, fixed line subscribers has decreased in 2016 compared with the figures for 2015. This information was obtained from Cable and Wireless (LIME) and Karib Cable.

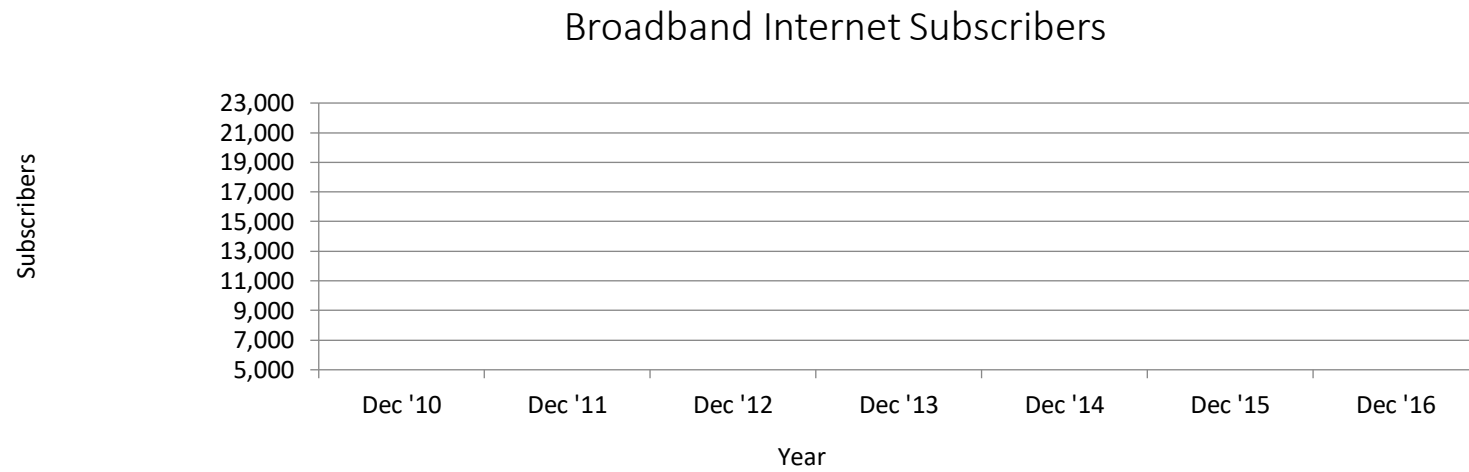
## 10.2 Broadband Internet Subscribers

Figure 5 below shows the number of broadband Internet customers by provider. Cable and Wireless (LIME) had a marginal decrease in subscribers while Karib Cable had an increase in broadband subscribers in 2016.



*Fig 5. Shows data from the telecommunications providers in SVG*

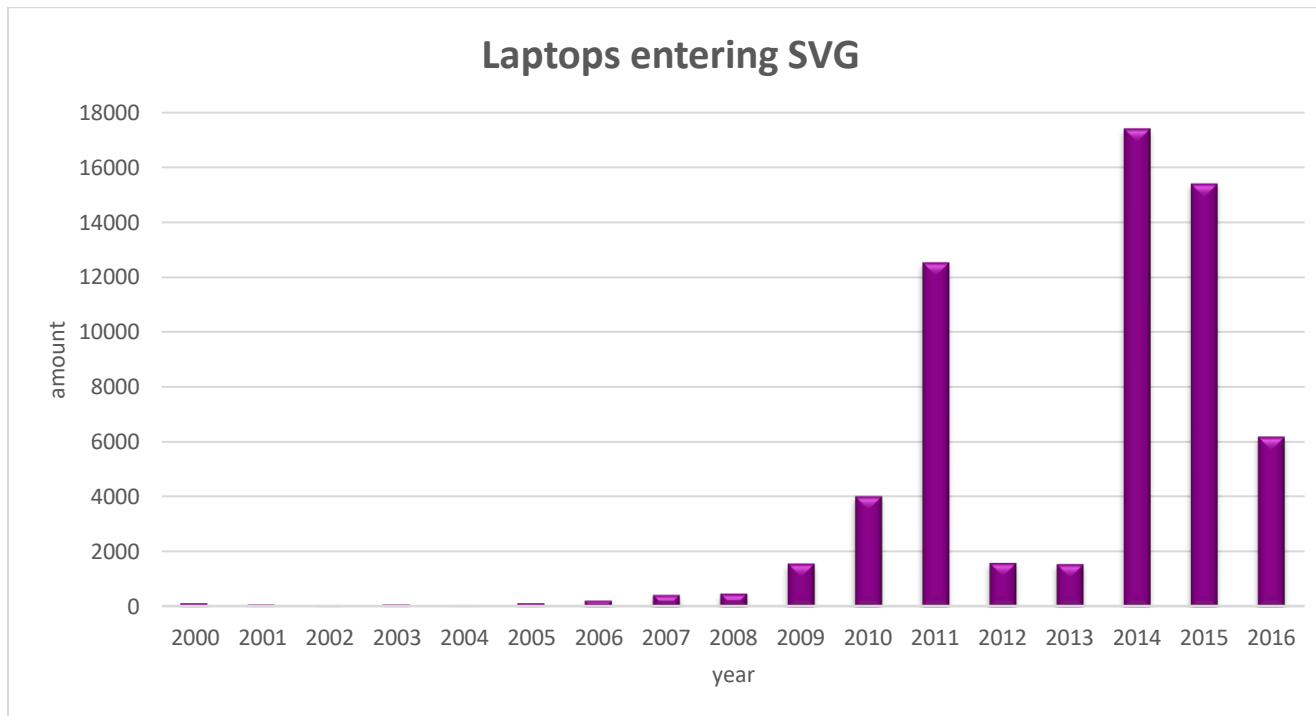
Figure 6 below shows the total broadband Internet customers in the country. The graph depicts a 14.9% increase in 2016, in comparison to the figure for 2015.



*Fig 6. Shows data from the telecommunications providers in SVG*

### 10.3 Portable Computers

Figure 7 below depicts the number of portable computers entering St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2016, 6189 laptops were imported in SVG. This is a significant decrease from the year 2015 which saw 15,415 of the devices being imported. This 59.85% reduction in imports can be attributed to the fact that the Government did not import any laptops as was the case in 2011, 2014 and the early part of 2015.



*Fig 7. Shows data from the Customs and Excise Department*

## 10.4 Desktop Computers

Figure 8 below shows the number of desktop computers entering the country. The graph shows that there has been an increase in the number of desktops being imported. In 2016, there were 1,665 units which were imported. This represents a 28% increase in the figures for 2016. This can be as a result of more persons refreshing their systems as the lifespan of a Personal Computer is about five (5) years.

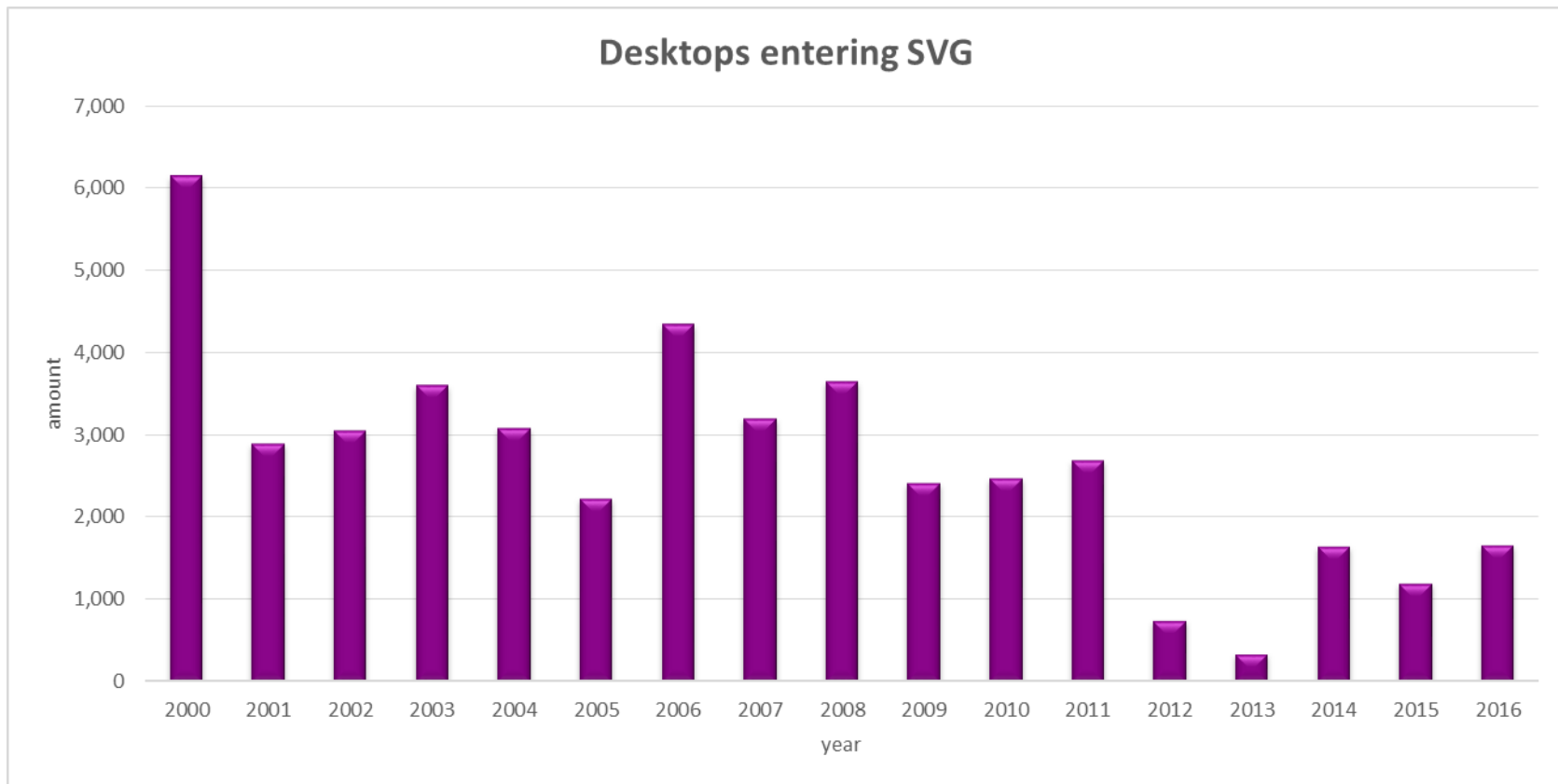


Fig 8. Shows data from the Customs and Excise Department

## 10.5 Mobile phones

Figure 9 below shows the number of mobile phones entering the country. The graph shows that there has been an increase in the number of mobile phones being imported. The figure rose from 32,774 in 2015 to 35522 in 2016, showing a 7% increase in the number of mobile phones imported in the year 2015. This amount can be attributed to the fact that the cost for smart phones has dropped which gives the average individual the opportunity to purchase a smart phone or to buy an upgrade.

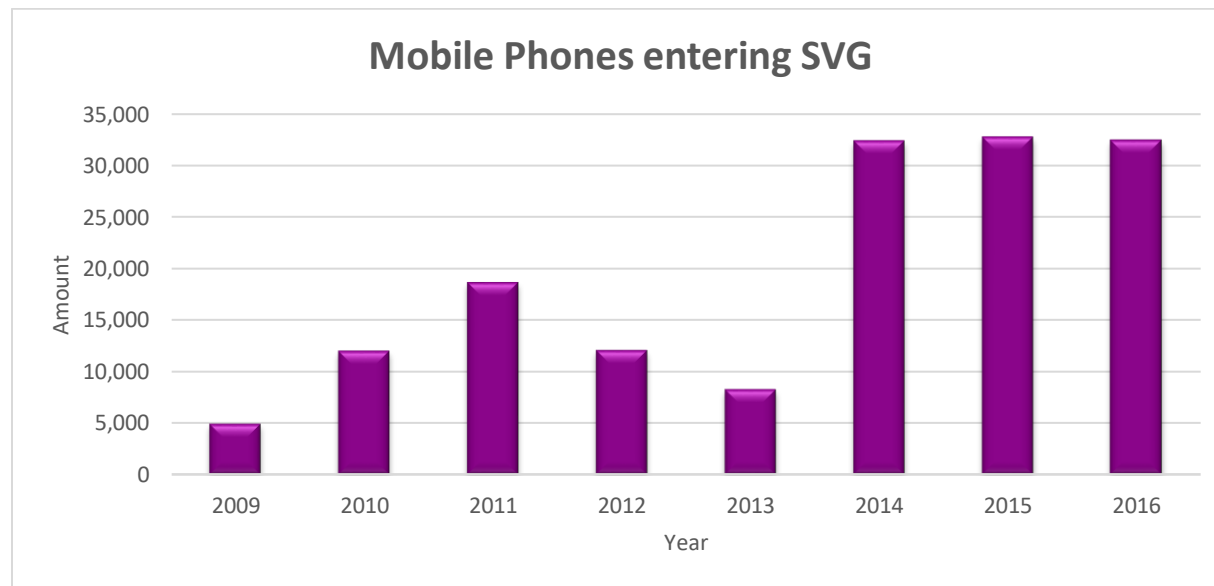


Fig 9. Shows data from the Customs and Excise Department



## **11. BROAD RESPONSE STRATEGIES**

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition to the I Squared Competition will be held in 2017. The scope of the competition will be revised to encourage greater participation from schools and the general public

The USF will continue its field work activities in the various communities island wide. This activity not only generates project ideas from the public but also helps to educate the general public about the NTRC, the USF and the various projects which the USF has implemented.

The NTRC will be retendering several projects in 2017 which will be coming to an end. These include the Schools project, the police and health center project and the Maritime project.

The USF will continue to monitor the activities of the projects which we have implemented. These projects are of vital importance to various sectors of our society and the proper functioning of the services and equipment under each project is very important.

The NTRC will be identifying new project to implement by the USF.

## **12. RESULT INDICATORS 2016**

- 1. The 2016 Operating Plan will be established. This plan will set out the objectives of the Fund for the operating year 2016.**

This objective was completed. The USF 2016 Operating Plan was established. This plan outlined the priority goals of the USF for the year.

- 2. The NTRC will be working on getting an increase in the rate of contribution by the telecommunication providers to the Universal Service Fund.**

This objective was complete as the rate increase was taken to Cabinet for approval and approval was granted. The approval was granted in December of 2016.

- 3. Projects will be developed on a regional level and the USF, in collaboration with the other regional NTRCs, will be seeking funding from international funding organizations. This funding will supplement the USF contributions received from locally-operating telecommunication providers.**

This objective is not complete. In 2016, the NTRC St Vincent and the Grenadines developed two projects with we will be seeking funding from the World Bank. These project are a mixture of free wireless internet access at playing fields, hard courts and rural locations where persons congregate. Additionally, there are plans to provide ICT training in various subject areas at the Learning Resource centers nationwide and a project to provide emergency communication capabilities to senior citizens locally. In an effort to secure funding for these projects, our NTRC held meetings with the four other NTRC's to incorporate them into various aspects of the project. NTRC Dominica and NTRC Grenada have agreed to partner with us with these project initiatives. NTRC Dominica have already submitted their scope of works and NTRC Grenada is expected to complete their document and submit to us by the end of February 2017.

Following this, the NTRC will be working along with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to finalize the document to seek the funding.

- 4. Projects which have been implemented thus far under the USF will be routinely visited to ensure that the services and equipment being paid for are present at the various locations.**

This objective was completed as regular visits were made at project sites to ensure that the services and equipment at these sites were in place and functional

- 5. The USF will be conducting the third annual I<sup>2</sup> Competition, which will seek to have students in the secondary and tertiary institutions create and present projects in the form of innovative ideas and mobile applications, to improve the existing and current systems in the public service and other state agencies. There are opportunities available for both mobile applications and innovative ideas to be implemented locally, regionally and internationally.**

This objective was completed as the NTRC successfully held the fourth installment of the I<sup>2</sup> Competition. Twenty Five (25) groups which submitted sixteen (16) ideas and nine (9) mobile applications took part in the competition representing nine (9) different schools.

- 6. Public awareness activities will continue, and will include school discussions at various schools, community discussions, radio and television presentations and five training sessions for fishermen in the use of the VHF handheld radios.**

This objective was completed, with several public awareness drives being conducted and five (5) VHF training was held in various fishing communities

- 7. Additional projects will be identified to be undertaken by the USF.**

This objective is complete. During field work exercises, various stakeholders outlined various project ideas which can be implemented by the NTRC including the following;

- Wireless internet access in the following communities;
  - Roseau
  - Mesopotamia
  - Owia
  - Greggs
- Implementation of a system of wireless internet kiosk through St Vincent and the Grenadines.

- 8. Projects which are being implemented will be monitored to ensure that all the services and equipment are operational. Impact assessments will also be carried out at**

**all of the locations under the seven projects that have been implemented.**

This objective was completed. Schools Wi-Fi checks along with visits to police stations, clinics, Community centers and other USF project sites were visited for the year.

### **13. OBJECTIVES FOR 2017**

1. The 2017 Operating Plan will be established. This plan will set out the objectives of the Fund for the operating year 2017.
2. The USF will be working on seeking funding from international donor organizations for two projects which have been developed. The USF will be working along with the regional NTRCs so that we can all benefit from these projects.
3. Projects which have been implemented thus far under the USF will be routinely visited to ensure that the services and equipment being paid for are present at the various locations.
4. Public awareness activities will continue, and will include school discussions at various schools, community discussions, radio and television presentations.
5. Additional projects will be identified to be undertaken by the USF via field work and from feedback from the general public from activities carried out by the NTRC.
6. Projects which have been implemented will be monitored to ensure that all the services and equipment are operational.
7. The USF will ensure that the commissioning process for the Payphone Project is finalized within the first half of 2017.
8. The retendering of the schools project will be undertaken in the second quarter of 2017 as the current contract for this project will be coming to an end.
9. The retendering of the Police and Health center project will be undertaken in the second quarter of 2017 as the current contract for this project will be coming to an end.

10. The retendering of the Maritime project will be undertaken in the fourth quarter of 2017 as the current contract for this project will be coming to an end.

## **14. AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**