

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN – Saint Lucia	
Background	
General description	<p>Professional services are occupations in the tertiary sector of the economy requiring special training in the arts or sciences. Some professional services require professional licences such as architects, accountants, auditors, engineers, doctors and lawyers. Others like management consulting do not; but there are voluntary professional standards and codes of conduct.</p> <p>Professional services play a significant role in the functioning of modern economies. They operate as important inputs to other industries and other parts of society by lowering transaction costs, avoiding waste and securing stability and accountability; they also create spillovers of knowledge into other parts of the society and economy and contribute directly to economic growth. They are a sub-set of what is known as ‘Business Services’ in international trade.</p>
Types of services	<p>Business Services, according to the categorization used by the World Trade Organization (WTO) include a variety of subcategories, among them ‘professional services’ as well as ‘other business services’.</p> <p>Professional Services include a wide range of traditional and newer professions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Services • Accounting, Auditing, Bookkeeping and Taxation Services • Architectural, Engineering, Urban Planning and Landscape Architectural Services • Medical, Dental, Midwife, Nursing, Paramedical, Physiotherapy and Related Services • Veterinary Services • Management Consulting <p>Other Business Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising services • Market research and public opinion polling services • Management consulting services <p>According to the most recently conducted WTO Trade Policy Review, the GOSL noted priority sectors in professional services include: accounting, architecture, engineering and management consulting. These sectors will be the focus here with a view, however, of distilling overall trends and lessons of relevance to other professions and sub-sectors where possible.</p>
Size of sector, trends, growth (global/regional)	<p>Professional services are among the fastest-growing sectors worldwide, in developing as well as developed countries. Research suggests that the rate of consumption of professional services in a given economy provides a strong indicator of its growth and growth potential. Firms which use professional services are generally significantly more likely to grow and prosper.</p>

	<p>Although most markets are served domestically, there is a growing trend to outsource and to offshore some business activities, as such, professional services are becoming increasingly international. Even the practice of law is now in significant part an international affair. And Indian lawyers do back-office work for law firms in the United States, particularly legal review and analysis. Engineers design structures that are built in third countries for companies that are not based in their own jurisdictions.</p> <p>The Internet and the application of technology in business have made it possible to commoditize and package knowledge as a 'product'. Service providers can now outsource business functions, allowing them to scale up the production of their core services. This trend is most pronounced in the context of regional integration systems, including in the OECS and CARICOM.</p> <p>The global Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) market size in 2013 was US \$304 billion. In 2014, 4 out of 10 US companies had indicated that they plan to start or expand '<u>finance and accounting outsourcing</u>'. The #1 noted reason for outsourcing in <u>North America</u> and Europe is to <u>reduce costs</u>; this may provide an opportunity for Saint Lucian professionals.</p> <p>The Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) industry was estimated at US \$17 billion in 2014. KPO areas experiencing above average growth are: banking, finance, securities, insurance and research and analytical services, LPO services such as legal, paralegal and intellectual property and publishing. KPO areas that are lagging behind are data management, search and analytics, translation and localization services and architectural services</p> <p>Many smaller businesses and start-ups are also starting to outsource their non-core functions. They often seek talent on global freelance marketplaces including accounting, architecture and engineering (e.g. www.elance.com / www.guru.com / www.peopleperhour.com). These platforms serve as an opportunity and threat to Saint Lucia professionals.</p> <p>The US and Europe are the largest markets for consulting services. The emerging markets are China and Brazil. Even the Saint Lucian market is significant in Caribbean terms. Data from the Ministry of Finance indicated that the total value of construction projects in Saint Lucia from 2007-2012 amounted to EC\$ 2,583 million. This included tourism, government projects and private commercial buildings. If engineering and architecture elements amount to 6 percent of that total, the estimated market for these services was about EC\$ 155 million.</p>
<p>Professional Services in Saint Lucia</p>	<p>Architects - 28 Full members of the Saint Lucia Institute of Architects / 5 Level 1 Associate Members (B.A. Arch)</p> <p>There are 10 architectural firms listed in the Yellow Pages.</p> <p>Engineers - Corporate Members of Association of Professional Engineers of Saint Lucia: 1 chemical engineer / 39 civil engineers / 2 'construction' engineers / 13 electrical engineers / 1 electronics engineer / 6 mechanical engineers</p>

	<p>The Engineer Registration Board and the Architect Registration Board are bodies constituted by the Government of Saint Lucia (GOSL) through an Act of Parliament to regulate the practice of the professions in Saint Lucia. In order to legally practice in Saint Lucia professionals must be registered, however, there is no obligation to associate. The number of registered architects and engineers is not available and neither is there sex-disaggregated data on the professions. The Government Gazette of April 23, 2012 contained a list of 85 persons on the Register of Engineers.</p> <p>There are 22 engineering firms listed in the Yellow Pages but it is likely that some are construction firms and not pure engineering. There is no requirement in Saint Lucia for a construction firm to have an engineer on staff.</p> <p>Management Consulting - The Association of Management Consultants (St. Lucia) Inc. has 15 members of which 10 have been certified by the Caribbean Institute of Certified Management Consultants (CICMC). The database of the SLCSI lists 38 management consultants. There are 110 persons listed in TEPA's Consultants database covering a broad range of services but it is not clear how many are Saint Lucian.</p> <p>Accountants - The website of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Eastern Caribbean Saint Lucia branch indicates a list of 46 members. There are 26 accounting firms listed in the Yellow Pages.</p>
Gender Issues	<p>The <i>Situational Analysis of Gender Issues Affecting the Services Sector in Saint Lucia</i> showed that greater proportions of females than males tend to take up subjects suited to a services career. In professional services, the type of subject is not as critical as developing a high level of expertise, for which tertiary and often postgraduate education is necessary. At this top level of education there is more gender equality than at lower levels. Professional services stakeholders indicated that there were no barriers to entry into this subsector for either sex, especially as there were sufficient highly qualified professionals of both sexes. They perceived that many women are now providing these services. This appears to be corroborated by Labour Force survey data for 2012 that showed that the majority of professionals and technicians and associate professionals in Saint Lucia are women (55%).</p> <p>The <i>Situational Analysis</i> also showed that women are the majority of employees in micro-enterprises and that they are the majority of owners in the "individual proprietorship" category (56.4%). Since most professional services enterprises in Saint Lucia are micro-enterprises we can expect some to be run by women. The disadvantages of small size thus appear to accrue largely to women, including difficulty in responding to changes in demand and in developing an international profile. These are lessened in small and medium enterprises in Saint Lucia, of which only a quarter are owned by women according to the World Bank Enterprise Survey 2011. Lack of provision for care of dependents may also particularly constrain women-owned professional services enterprises, especially in their ability to export their services.</p>
Potential economic impact for Saint Lucia	<p>Professional services provide critical support to other economic and social activities. For example, accountancy services secure sound financial management, accountability and good corporate governance more generally; legal services improve the stability and predictability of the business environment, in terms of both business-to-business (contracts, transactions, liability) and business-to-government (regulation, administration) relations; engineering is essential to the development of infrastructure and networks. Research shows that greater usage of professional services is strongly associated with <u>higher labour productivity</u>.</p>

		Professional services are <u>high value-added services</u> . Increasing exports of such services from Saint Lucia thus provides the opportunity of significant foreign exchange earnings. Their <u>knowledge-intensity</u> leads to multiple spill-over effects across society by encouraging learning, elevating public debates and promoting traditional professional ethics.
Main players in the sector		Architects: Michael St. Hill, Melon Design, IAPL Engineers: FDL Consult Accountants: KPMG / PKF / BDO / Grant Thornton Consultants: Chase Consulting Ltd. / Preville & Associates / Accela
Associations and Intermediary Organizations		Saint Lucia Institute of Architects - www.slia-sl.com Federation of Caribbean Associations of Architects – www.caribbeanarchitects.info Association of Commonwealth Societies of Architects in the Caribbean (ACSAC) - www.comarchitect.org Association of Professional Engineers of Saint Lucia - www.stluciaengineers.com Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Eastern Caribbean - www.icaec.org Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Caribbean - www.icac.org.jm Caribbean Institute of Certified Management Consultants - www.caribbeancmc.com Saint Lucia Association of Management Consultants
Internal to Saint Lucia	Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some well qualified, experienced professionals • Some practitioners with regional/international experience • Native English speaking professionals and workforce with cultural affinity to the North American markets • Strong roots in English and Commonwealth professional traditions and mechanisms, resulting <i>inter alia</i> in potentially high portability of qualifications
	Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most professionals traditionally focused on the local market, only few providers with export-orientation. As noted above, these issues apply somewhat more to women than men. • Outside of the small circle of high-performing professionals and professional firms, average professional work ethics in Saint Lucia pose a problem. While young qualified professionals often start on a high, their standards and performance reportedly often decrease, making them less able to project themselves beyond Saint Lucia's shores. • Lack of continuing professional development programmes and efforts. • Small size of firms and lack of a culture of teamwork and cooperation make the formation of consortia and partnerships difficult; difficulties in identifying international partners • Limited domestic demand (private sector often does not recognize the value of professional services), with existing opportunities not necessarily used to develop the industry (i.e. government procurement); overall current slow business activity and foreign investment affects demand for professional and business-related

		<p>services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited 'respect for information' noted in St Lucia – reports sit on shelves and decisions are often made on 'gut' rather than rigorous research data and statistics • Lack of child care and care for other dependents weakens the ability of women (more than men) to expand their companies or their practices and venture into exports • Access to finance is a challenge, especially for women operating independently • Challenges were also noted in accessing qualified technical staff • Challenges with recognition of skills (engineers/architects) and lack of mutual recognition of qualifications in the region • Weak professional associations 	
External to Saint Lucia	Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worldwide growth of the sector and outsourcing trends • International market access for professionals on average easier than for other service providers, as immigration rules are often more relaxed (including within OECS, CARICOM) • Tourism provides potential exposure to international clients, both within and beyond the “tourism product” in the wider sense (also house owners and other hybrids etc.) • Regional integration (OECS Economic Union & CARICOM Single Market) 	
	Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undervaluation - donors and foreign consultants do not want to pay foreign consultant rates to national consultants (under-value their services) • Reduced investment (FDI) in Saint Lucia’s offshore financial services sector affects professions such as accountants and lawyers; and unpredictability or cyclical fluctuations in construction affects architects and engineers • International competition, including from strong English-speaking jurisdictions (Caribbean, US, Canada, UK) • Increasing connectivity leads to increasing competition through cross-border supply from worldwide sources (including freelance marketplaces) • Migration or brain drain among young intellectuals and professionals 	
Demand			
Potential Markets:	Characteristics of Potential Clients & Mode of Supply:	Why interested:	Competitors:
Saint Lucia	It was noted that the national demand for professional services was low and typically consumers sought out the lowest prices rather than quality (bookkeepers rather than accountants / draftsmen rather than architects). Internal demand can be increased through marketing campaigns conducted via sector associations and in collaboration with the government.		Regional in some instances (architects, consultants)

	E.g. Architects do little private business, as draftsmen, who are much cheaper, dominate this market locally. (There is no legal requirement for submissions to be from a licensed architect).		
Caribbean	<p>The Caribbean is a natural market for professional services from Saint Lucia, with (broadly) the same caveats and opportunities as domestically.</p> <p>Progressive Caribbean, in particular OECS regional integration will likely provide better market access (movement, recognition, etc.); direct demand for services related to problems prompted by integration itself (e.g. legal advice on CARICOM integration-related changes, market access; accounting advice to firms growing regionally, regional studies done by consultants, etc.); increased opportunities for specialization among OECS (e.g. specialization in certain fields of law, with others served by practitioners on a different island)</p>	<p>Increasingly, professional services are being sought regionally including consultants, architects and engineers.</p> <p>Saint Lucian professional service providers have developed a niche in “Caribbean expertise” and tend to focus export efforts on the region.</p>	Regional / International (British, Canadian, American)
Canada & USA	<p>American firms are seeking to grow their services industries by reversing the foreign outsourcing of activities.</p> <p>There are opportunities for niche services, in particular those with some formal or substantive relation to the Caribbean (trade, investment, tourism, offshore).</p> <p>American consumers are the primary users of online freelance marketplaces. This may be a good place to develop export experience.</p>	<p>The reduction in offshore outsourcing by US firms means less opportunities for professional services providers from Saint Lucia.</p> <p>Price advantages can be exploited in outsourced contracts.</p> <p>The diaspora community can potentially act as an interesting anchor client base</p>	Global offline/online competition.
United Kingdom/ Europe	<p>The United Kingdom has aggressively sought to align its domestic services sector with international projects and support consortia building to ensure a high rate of contract award.</p> <p>Opportunities – and hence potentially demand – are generally enhanced through the commitments undertaken by the EU/UK side in the Economic Partnership Agreement</p>	<p>The UK’s well organized and funded strategy to grow its professional and business services industries even at the SME level will create greater competition for Saint Lucians in bidding for and winning smaller donor funded projects (often those sought after).</p>	Global offline/online competition.

	<p>(EPA). In particular, Article 83 of the EPA offers facilitated market access inter alia for some professional services providers under “Mode 4” when providing their services into the EU as contractual service providers or independent professionals (i.e. as natural persons travelling to the EU to provide the services). Under the EPA market access was granted for professionals without reservations as follows: accounting and bookkeeping – 13 states; architectural services - 12 states; engineering – 12 states; and management consulting – 14 states.</p> <p>But it should be noted that in some EU Member States there are “minimum wage” regulations in the traditional professions. This can reduce the prospects for Saint Lucian professionals in some countries. The best option may be to associate with European firms to execute projects in third countries.</p>	<p>Strategic alliances should be pursued.</p> <p>‘Caribbean’ knowledge and experience must be highlighted from a marketing standpoint.</p> <p>Price advantages should be exploited.</p> <p>97 per cent of EU architects work or reside in the same country in which they are registered. EU architects are therefore not developing significant export capacity (except for the larger firms). This could indicate that there is room for export strategies to third markets involving strategic alliances. There is an opportunity for Saint Lucian architects and engineers to capitalize on knowledge-induced early mover advantages gained from being able to play a lead role in tenders in the region and elsewhere that their EU counterparts may not know about.</p>	
<p>Latin America</p>	<p>Same as above (US/Canada), with less price advantage and less anchorage in diaspora community. Business-links between Saint Lucia and Latin America are generally increasing, which provides opportunities for professionals to project themselves via their local clients.</p> <p>Language (Spanish, Portuguese-speaking clients) will continue to act as a barrier in the short term in some areas (e.g. law), but less in other (e.g. accounting). In addition, Spanish language capabilities in Saint Lucia have significantly improved in recent years, as Spanish is taught</p>		<p>Global offline/online competition.</p>

	in school and young professionals are increasingly exposed directly to Spanish-speaking environments in partner countries such as Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela.		
Saint Lucia's competitive advantage or unique selling point?	<p>There is no clear unique selling point for Saint Lucia as a source of professional services.</p> <p>Clients such as foreign investors and the offshore sector may often require advice (law, accounting, human resources) where regional expertise and experience is important such as execution of regional projects or the establishment of regional businesses.</p> <p>Other international clients may appreciate price advantages combined with other native English language capacities.</p> <p>For OECS/CARICOM the physical proximity and the ability to work in regional markets (through short stays or Mode 4) provides a strong advantage for professional services in the regional markets as many clients and services, despite much-improved possibilities to interact through electronic communication, still require physical presence.</p> <p>Specifically improved regional recognition of professional qualifications will support this advantage. The EPA-induced work on mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) is reportedly having the welcome side effect of accelerating this process.</p>		
Cost comparison	Competitive (vis-à-vis North America/Europe) but not with locations such as India, Mauritius, South East Asia.		
Marketing and Promotion	Current Context	Other Considerations	
Existing channels	<p>As it relates to architects, engineers, consultants and accountants – the larger firms frequently have a web presence. Architects (possibly because of the visual nature of their work), typically have websites. However, many Saint Lucian professionals do not. Fewer even have a professional social media presence or LinkedIn profile.</p> <p>Word-of-mouth seems to be the most utilized 'channel'.</p>	<p>Professional service providers must make an extra effort to raise awareness at the national level – emphasizing the value of professional services, quality and reliability. As, it seems, that there is insufficient 'buy-in' at the national level with respect to professional services.</p> <p>Ensure a 'voice' (via the corresponding associations) on all relevant matters of national concern.</p> <p>Professional service providers must equally consider how they market their services at an international level. In general, this is not being adequately done (e.g. websites are not world class, websites do not emphasize international</p>	

		experience, not include credibility boosters). And very few professionals participate in foreign trade missions.
New channels	<p>There is opportunity, particularly for architects to capitalize on social media interest in architecture and design via platforms such as Houzz and Pinterest.</p> <p>Consultants would likely adopt a different strategy of registering on consultant databases and making themselves known to international firms who do business in the region.</p> <p>Websites for international funding institutions and donors should be monitored for opportunities and contract winners should be contacted for outsourcing opportunities. Consider a subscription to DevelopmentBusiness (www.devbusiness.com) which compiles global opportunities.</p> <p>Accountants may target offshore businesses.</p> <p>Strategies will vary depending on the profession and target market.</p>	<p>Keep abreast of trends in the industry. Subscribe to e-newsletters and follow key organizations and companies on social media.</p> <p>'Channels' frequently change.</p> <p>Professional service providers should undertake SLCSI's services exporting programme for some insight into how to effectively market internationally. Capacity is limited in this regard.</p>
Branding & Advertising	<p>Yellow Pages – minimal marketing is presently being undertaken.</p> <p>Few professional firms are 'branded' – but Melon Designs is a good example (www.melondesign.net).</p>	
Collateral marketing material	Limited	
Coordinated Strategic Plan (Stakeholders)	<p>There is no strategic plan for developing the professional services sector or any sub-sector. On a point of interest, Barbados and Trinidad have developed professional services strategies but there is not implementation. CARICOM Secretariat is also developing a regional strategy for professional services but its expected value-added is unclear.</p> <p>It is highly recommendable to develop strategic initiatives, both on the sectoral and on the sub-sectoral levels. As professional</p>	Strategic plans should include gender equity.

	<p>services, in particular in the context of bigger and major projects are often bundled, there are likely significant opportunities in cross-sectoral cooperation. For example, lawyers and architects form a logical pair when it comes to planning/design; accountants and lawyers in corporate transactions; architects and engineers in virtually all instances (which is why this is also largely happening already). A national strategy combined with strengthened associations, information platforms and routine cooperation mechanisms could provide a strong platform for tackling major projects in Saint Lucia and regionally.</p>	
<p>Investment incentives</p>	<p>There are no investment incentives for the professional services sector, outside of <i>ad hoc</i> measures. Most professional services are not capital-intensive, and hence do not face duties and taxes. (Incentives in Saint Lucia are often concessions in these areas).</p> <p>It has been suggested that tax incentives to companies who seek advice from local service providers in areas that directly impact growth should be extended.</p> <p>All ICT inputs (the primary tool of professional service providers) should be duty free – beyond computers – to include e-boards, smart phones, tablets, projectors, etc.</p>	
<p>Standards and quality</p>	<p>Some professions in Saint Lucia rely <i>de facto</i> on traditional and/or international standards (e.g. bar practices, accounting standards), but so far often without actual mandatory regulation or self-regulation.</p> <p>Architects are governed by the Architect Registration Act 2005 and Engineers by the Engineers Registration Act 1985. There appears to be a lacuna regarding accounting/auditing. To date, little progress has been made in introducing the relevant regulations related to the Institute of Chartered Accountants Agreement Act in St Lucia. Nevertheless there are 45 St Lucian members on the roster of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Eastern Caribbean (ICAEC).</p> <p>Most sub-subsectors outside of the major traditional professions are unregulated and operate without any agreed or implied standards (e.g. landscape architects, interior designers). The</p>	<p>Professional service providers are encouraged to adopt international standards where possible – i.e. Chartered Engineer/Architect/Accountant. And they should lobby for the introduction of laws and regulations for their profession based on international best practices.</p>

	<p>same applies to other business-related services.</p> <p>There are encouraging trends to counter this situation. In management consulting, for example, the regional “Caribbean Institute of Certified Management Consultants (CICMC)” offers certification for quality consultants, continuous upgrading and information and networking across a large network of management professionals and will be establishing an OECS chapter.</p> <p>The regulatory deficit clearly hurts Saint Lucian professionals in their international dealings – as well as locally, where sophisticated clients reportedly sometimes prefer properly certified and regulated foreign providers over locals. And most international tenders certainly do.</p>	
Innovative marketing	<p>Little innovative marketing is presently being undertaken in professional service providers. Professional service providers seem to rarely engage in creative marketing – almost as if creativity were at odds with the professional nature of their businesses.</p> <p>An interesting tool could be a web-based platform of Saint Lucian professionals, which would allow potential clients, including investors and businesses abroad, to gain an overview of and approach Saint Lucian professionals as providers and/or cooperation partners. This effort could be undertaken by the SLCSI and the relevant professional associations. This would ideally be combined with, or eventually replaced by, a regional industry platform. Similar sub-initiatives should be considered on a sub-sectoral basis.</p> <p>A good example is the basic but dynamic platform provided by the Caribbean Institute of Certified Management Consultants (CICMC) through its website.</p>	<p>Invest Saint Lucia website should feature professional services providers and efforts should be made to match investment with local services.</p> <p>Investors should be introduced to the local business community and inbound trade missions should always incorporate a strong private sector element (often inbound trade missions are received by public sector officials and the business support community – but not the private sector).</p>
International outreach strategy	<p>Outreach efforts, where they have been undertaken, have largely focused on the region or internationally to those doing business in the region. Many professionals have developed a niche with respect to regional expertise (hurricane-proof engineering,</p>	

	Caribbean designed homes, Caribbean knowledgeable consultant) – this is an appropriate strategy.	
Regional collaboration	<p>There is some regional collaboration among professionals, but overall far less than would be desirable in view of the market demand for strong teams of professionals and the OECS Economic Union and CARICOM Single Market.</p> <p>There is also collaboration and networking happening via the regional professional associations.</p> <p>There is significant space/need for regional industry platforms to further foster cooperation among regional firms and professionals and a need for cultural mindsets with respect to collaboration to change.</p>	Mentorship programmes, examples of successful regional collaborations, increased emphasis by government and funding agencies for proposals that include national/regional collaboration, will help to improve opportunities for Saint Lucian professionals.
Linkages with other clusters of economic activity	<p>Professional services are, by their very nature, closely connected to virtually all other economic activities.</p> <p>As such, there is a generic possibility to develop joint products and/or joint marketing strategies with other (potential) exporting businesses (e.g. financial services combined with legal and information technology (IT) services; accounting services combined with remote access or IT intranet/extranet platform services; music performance with legal services; etc.)</p>	
	Action to be Taken	Other Issues to be addressed
Policy barriers	<p>There appear to be no major policy barriers to the development of the sector and its export capacity. The sector as such receives in fact very little attention, positive or negative, from the government.</p> <p>Indirect policy issues may exist with regard to Saint Lucia or Saint Lucian clients, in particular the financial services industry, which could in principle act as catalysts for professional services domestically and as exports. The decline of the offshore sector has likely indirectly led to a net loss of local and export opportunities for the legal and accounting profession as well as, probably, others.</p>	

Administrative barriers	<p>Many professionals indicated an apparent preference by government agencies for foreign professionals in public procurement projects; or at least there is no incentive or requirement for foreign firms to partner with local professionals such as engineers and architects. This should be addressed by government policy since the GOSL is the biggest consumer of services in Saint Lucia the public sector has an important role in helping the development of the engineering and architecture sectors.</p>	
Business environment	<p>The lack of a “culture of cooperation” affects businesses’ ability to attract and service bigger projects locally, regionally and internationally, and generally to project service professionals beyond Saint Lucia’s borders.</p> <p>Overall professional ethics/standards of workforce, outside of top-performers, may not be fully up to international standards. This applies not so much on the level of the actual professionals in the major professions, but on the support level, which thereby most likely loses out on significant potential. For example, paralegal processing operations, such as those perfected for export by India, may be difficult to envisage in Saint Lucia without significant investment in this part of the sector.</p> <p>There is, in particular in government, (at least perceived) latent bias in favour of foreign providers of professional services on major projects, based apparently on an underlying assumption that Saint Lucian providers may not be good enough (see Standards above) when it comes to important and/or complex projects. This is unfortunate and should be corrected.</p>	<p>On their part, professionals have to start thinking strategically about what is needed to win bigger projects and form consortia (nationally and regionally) to do so. The current sole-professional or sole-consultant business model has obvious limitations and does not allow for significant growth of the sector in Saint Lucia since local professionals are only hired by foreign firms that can meet the bid requirements of most large donor projects, including some projects funded by regional entities such as the Caribbean Development Bank.</p>
Regulatory environment	<p>There are various issues in the regulatory frameworks for accounting, architecture and engineering professions in Saint Lucia. See below.</p> <p>Architects Registration Act 2005</p> <p>Engineers Registration Act 1985</p> <p>Entry into the Saint Lucian engineering profession is regulated by the Engineers Registration Board / Engineer Registration Act</p>	<p>Apart from the domestic issues in Saint Lucia, the advent of the OECS Economic Union has regionalized the issues facing Saint Lucian professionals. National initiatives alone will not be sufficient because Economic Union is intended to allow totally free movement of professionals across all OECS member states. However, there is significant variation across the sub-region in terms of the necessary qualification requirements</p>

	<p>1985. The regulatory regime for engineers and the engineering profession in St Lucia should be upgraded to meet international standards with the introduction of new legislation and regulations. This initiative should also be synchronized with regional efforts to allow for free movement of services and service suppliers in the OECS and CARICOM market.</p> <p>Draft Model Professional Bills have been developed at the CARICOM level, which deal with requirements and procedures for registration and licensing of certain service providers, including professional services.</p> <p>Management Consultants This sector is not a traditionally “regulated” sector in the de jure sense internationally but it is important to have industry standards and a code of conduct to govern professionals in this sector. It is in the marketing interest of the local management consultants for all their members to operate to high standards of quality and professional excellence. Therefore, the CMC certification should be sought by all management consultants in St Lucia.</p>	<p>in practice to be licensed in the various professions, except law.</p>
<p>Human Resources & Standards</p>	<p>In spite of the existence of high quality professionals in some disciplines, growth-constraining deficits are most relevant at the technical level. Often businesses rely heavily on one or two high-quality professionals, rather than tiered high-quality teams, partly for lack of sufficient access to qualified human resources.</p> <p>There is a need to improve the overall quality and professionalism in all of the professions in Saint Lucia. Some stakeholders lament the mediocre quality of professionals (on average) as well as a lack of professionalism, which makes hiring good quality and reliable staff a challenge. This applies especially to professional services SME businesses which cannot afford mediocre staff, neither from an operational perspective (clients will not tolerate) nor from a financial perspective (size of business does not allow for “dead weight” on payroll). There is a need for an improved culture of professionalism in Saint Lucia, which should be taught early on in schools.</p>	

	<p>While a main challenge may be attitude, there is still a relative lack of dynamic networks of professionals, nationally and regionally, which affects professional service businesses' ability to respond flexibly and dynamically to market demands. This could be remedied by creating a platform/database of qualified professionals. This could be done through associations, some of which already provide basic information on members, through government or – possibly – on a commercial basis by an individual provider.</p> <p>Outsourcing services through freelance marketplaces should also be a strategy when quality services are unavailable nationally.</p>	
Financing	Access to finance is a challenge to all service providers in Saint Lucia (given the lack of physical collateral), and for SMEs in particular.	
ACTION PLAN FOR BUSINESSES/PROFESSIONALS		
	Action to be Taken	Responsible Entities
Preparing Business for Export	<p>Be aware of industry specific trends and norms (subscribe to newsletters in your sector and join international associations for access to information).</p> <p>Service providers should participate in SLCSI's Export Training Programme, which supports providers in developing an export plan and touches on topics such as establishing credibility and online marketing – often areas of weakness for professionals.</p> <p>Seek certification (CMC) from the Caribbean Institute of Certified Management Consultants (CICMC), which meets international standards of conduct. The CMC is an internationally recognized designation. This will serve to enhance credibility/recognition.</p> <p>Architects and engineers and accountants should also become actively involved at the regional level and where relevant join industry associations in target markets (promote membership in international associations)</p>	<p>Individual professionals.</p> <p>Management Consultants.</p>

	<p>Consider a strategic alliance with someone in the target market who can monitor opportunities in the sector.</p> <p>Seek information on potential niche markets, including for specialized products that would primarily interest men or women.</p>	
International Business Plan	Develop an international business plan. SLCSI can assist via the Services Go Global programme. TEPA may also be a source of support.	All professionals and their companies.
Market Entry Strategies	<p>Professional services are often delivered via a combination of Mode 1 (cross-border supply) and Mode 4 (temporary presence overseas). This is a useful market for the region, where oftentimes short personal visits to the market are required.</p> <p>Pursuing Mode 4 strategies outside the region can often be a costly venture but outsourced work is a viable option.</p>	
Best Practices/Success Stories	<p>Dr. Vasantha Chase and Dr. Claudius Preville are regionally-known management consultants.</p> <p>There are also international accounting firms in Saint Lucia such as KPMG.</p>	
Tasks for associations	<p>All professions and business-related services providers should be organized in associations. Associations should be structured as economic entities rather than a social grouping for like-minded persons.</p> <p>The associations should serve multiple purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulation & standard-setting • Information exchange • Business training and continuing professional development (CPD) programmes • Mentorship programmes • Networking (B2B collaboration), including through collaboration with other associations, nationally, regionally and internationally • Awareness raising & advocacy vis-à-vis GOSL 	<p>Professional associations should actively encourage their members to pursue export strategies and should support efforts through the development of databases, association-to-association collaboration initiatives, recognition programmes, etc.</p> <p>Collaborate with TEPA and/or SLCSI in organizing training programmes for association members.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion (marketing) of their sector, including export promotion • Development of sector databases & collation of sector statistics • Development of sector strategies (in collaboration with the SLCSI/Government) • Associations should support mutual recognition of qualifications and regional harmonization efforts. • Introduce award programmes <p>There are functioning or semi-functioning associations in Saint Lucia (see above). However, none of these appear to yet conceive of itself as a pro-active business promotion organization, let alone export promotion body, with the exception of the CICMC and possibly other regional initiatives. Professionals/businesses should work with their associations to add/revive this function.</p> <p>The Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Eastern Caribbean (ICAEC) should work with their counterparts and government bodies in CARICOM to ensure that the necessary regulatory and administrative provisions are made for growth of intra-regional trade in accounting services. This may require that the domestic rules in some countries be changed to allow for accountants and related professionals from anywhere in CARICOM to provide accounting and related services to clients in the national market through temporary entry and cross-border modes of supply.</p> <p>The APESL should work with the Caribbean Council of Engineering Organizations (CCEO) to arrive at mutual recognition of engineering qualifications in CARICOM in order to ensure that Saint Lucian engineers have effective access to the engineering market in the Single Market (CSME). The APESL should also participate in any similar initiatives towards negotiating MRAs with European or North American engineering associations. Similarly, APESL should participate actively in discussions of the Caribbean Accreditation Council for Engineering and Technology (CACET) to promote and secure the interests of local engineers.</p>	<p>Collaborate with SLCSI on this.</p> <p>Collaborate with SLCSI on this.</p> <p>Collaborate with SLCSI on this.</p>
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	<u>Resources for these initiatives can be sought from regional agencies such as the Caribbean Development Bank and Caribbean Export Development Agency, among others. TradeCom II PMU in Brussels might be interested in this kind of project</u>	
B2B cooperation	B2B cooperation is limited. Inter-sector cooperation should be expanded regionally. Cross sector collaborations should be developed nationally and regionally.	
ACTION PLAN FOR BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS		
	Action to be Taken	Responsible Entities
	<p>Provide information to professionals regarding market access commitments/requirements under the EPA and movement of people/rights to establishment in CARICOM.</p> <p>Provide market research and market intelligence. This includes providing easy access to research already undertaken (create a database of useful information).</p> <p>Collect and utilize sex-disaggregated data wherever possible. This includes information on: membership; to develop a professional sector profile, and information on potential niche marketing opportunities towards male and female customers.</p> <p>Undertake sector research. It is easy to serve a sector if you are familiar with international trends and opportunities.</p> <p>Implement an export awards programme (in collaboration with sector associations) to assist firms in boosting credibility.</p> <p>Organize trade missions.</p> <p>Host training – business development, procurement, online marketing, export training and support associations in hosting profession development training.</p>	TEPA, professional associations.

	Collect data (in collaboration with sector associations). Analyze the data and provide this to Government agencies and other business support organizations. Data may include trends, growth patterns, export statistics.	
Advocacy	<p>Present and promote Saint Lucia as a location for business-related services investments,</p> <p>Equally, undertake internal promotion of the professional services sector as an export industry (awareness raising).</p> <p>Undertake regular meetings with sector associations and support the associations in the advocacy efforts.</p>	Invest Saint Lucia, SLCSI, TEPA, Professional associations
Training/Education	<p>International education/capacity building opportunities (such as scholarships provided by foreign countries) should be actively promoted to professionals, with an invitation to upgrade their staff's capabilities.</p> <p>BSOs should offer business and export training and support associations in professional training initiatives.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>SLCSI, TEPA, Small Business Development Centre (SBDC)</p>
Promotion & Communication	<p>There are several databases of professionals in Saint Lucia, but none of these serve any purpose beyond "a listing". Databases should communicate service offerings, areas of expertise, experience, qualifications – and be used as a marketing tool.</p> <p>Efforts should be made to match local service providers to investment initiatives.</p> <p>BSOs should, on their websites, identify priority sectors or sectors of competence and provide information on these sectors.</p> <p>BSOs should support professionals in identifying opportunities (IFI, donor, procurement).</p> <p>BSOs and trade officers abroad should also promote the capabilities of service providers. The capabilities of national service providers should also be promoted during inbound missions and investment missions, etc.</p>	TEPA, Professional Associations, SLCSI

Public-Private Partnerships	SLCSI has a particularly important role in this regard as a voice for the services sector. It would be useful to have regular meetings with the sector associations to ensure that their needs and concerns are well known and equally, regular meetings with the government to ensure that these needs and concerns are communicated.	What is the relevance of the PPP Framework that was announced by the GOSL?
Best Practices/Success Stories		
ACTION PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT		
	Action to be Taken	Responsible Entities
Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic plans for the professional services sector (exploring cross-sector linkages) as well as specific subsectors should be developed in collaboration with sector associations and the SLCSI.</p> <p>An export plan for professional services should also be developed for Saint Lucia.</p>	<p>Professional associations, SLCSI, Ministry of Commerce</p> <p>TEPA, Professional associations</p>
Market Access	<p>Secure high levels of market access for professionals and business-related services businesses (especially as “contractual service providers” / “independent professionals” in mode 4) to trade partners’ markets (e.g. Canada); secure facilitated recognition of qualifications, where applicable (all trade fora including WTO, CARICOM-Canada).</p> <p>Assist Saint Lucian professionals to make use of corresponding opportunities in Europe already secured under the EPA (Article 83)</p> <p>Ensure full and effective implementation of free movement provisions in OECS and CARICOM treaties, including full recognition and/or harmonization of professional qualifications, non-discriminatory access to professional registers, licensing etc. on equal terms.</p> <p>Importation of professional services into Saint Lucia is currently largely unregulated. Some professionals lament the lack of reciprocity, as foreign professionals sometimes enjoy better</p>	<p>Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation, Ministry of Commerce</p> <p>OECS Commission?</p>

	<p>market access to Saint Lucia than Saint Lucian professionals enjoy in the respective home countries. This must be addressed.</p> <p>Generally speaking there is interest in upgrading the overall quality of the professional services sector. This suggests that there is least generally a strong interest in attracting high-quality professionals to work in Saint Lucia (transfer of know-how, professional practices and standards, etc.). International firms undertaking projects in Saint Lucia should be strongly encouraged to collaborate with local professionals to ensure transfer of knowledge and experience.</p> <p>The collation of statistics on the representation of men and women in professional services will enable efforts towards gender equality in developing market opportunities.</p>	
<p>Business and Regulatory Environment</p>	<p>The Engineers Registration Act is 30 years old and should be modernized to meet international standards and best practices. There has been concern raised by engineers that the assessment of applications submitted to the Engineer Registration Board is not transparent. The evaluation methods and criteria should be made public.</p> <p>The Architecture Registration Act should be enacted into law with accompanying regulations to introduce a proper, regulatory regime for the profession in St Lucia.</p> <p>There is also need for a proper regulatory framework to govern the accounting and auditing profession in Saint Lucia. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of St. Lucia Act of 1985 was repealed in 2003; and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Eastern Caribbean Agreement Act of 2008 has not yet been implemented. Under the ICAEC Act, there should be detailed regulations on certification, on the requirements for educational attainment, relevant degree, practical training and required number of years' experience, as well as provisions on auditing. Independent accountants should have professional indemnity insurance. There should also be a Code of Conduct and accountants should be subject to a quality assurance system</p>	<p>Ministry of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Physical Development, Housing and Urban Renewal, relevant professional associations.</p> <p>This should be addressed in the legislative agenda by mid-2017.</p>

	based on peer review. These requirements, if instituted, will bring accountants in the region closer to the standards of their North American counterparts.	
Human resource development	<p>Enrollment quotas/projections for fields of study at the University of the West Indies that are linked to government financial support should be developed. This would result in high demand-low supply areas receiving significantly higher levels of government support than low-demand-high supply areas.</p> <p>GOSL should encourage all professional associations in Saint Lucia to adopt requirements and initiatives regarding continuing professional development (CPD).</p>	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Commerce
Finance & Incentives	An incentive system can be set up to give greater weight (in terms of points) to international firms who include local service providers in their bids for public procurement tenders.	<p>Ministry of Finance, Central Tenders Board</p> <p>Assistance can be sought from the International Trade Centre/UNCTAD. Or TradeCom II PMU in Brussels.</p>
Capacity-building of SMEs	<p>Work with and build the capacity of the BSOs and associations to continue to collect data on the sectors, which will result in better designed/targeted policies. Include sex-disaggregated data on suppliers and customers to assist in gender equality and in developing gender-sensitive marketing opportunities.</p> <p>Continue to support the SLCSI's efforts to build the capacity of services SMEs through various training programs.</p>	<p>SLCSI, TEPA, Ministry of Commerce</p> <p>OECS-CBU should be able to access funding for this activity.</p>
Promotion Initiatives	<p>A procurement database should be developed – OECS, ideally CARICOM in scope.</p> <p>The Government should encourage the use of local consultants and international collaborations in all projects executed in Saint Lucia - across sectors. This can be achieved through bonus points in tender evaluations. What must be avoided is bypassing of the local professional architects and engineers in preference to foreign based ones since there are many competent</p>	<p>Ministry of Finance (Central Tenders Board),</p> <p>Central Tenders Board and Tender Departments in all Ministries and Statutory Bodies and Government Corporations.</p>

	<p>Saint Lucian professionals. Globally, most countries do not allow foreign architects/engineers to enter and work in their territories except under the auspices of a local architect.</p> <p>Invest Saint Lucia and TEPA should market the services of local service providers to potential investors and encourage offshore institutions to utilize these services.</p>	
Policy Coherence	<p>There is a historical implementation deficit in Saint Lucia, where policies and strategies are prepared but not implemented. A stronger emphasis should be made with respect to implementation of initiatives for professional and other service sectors.</p> <p>There is also a noted deficit with respect to public-private dialogue. This should be addressed through regular liaison between government officials and sector associations.</p>	<p>Ministry of Commerce in collaboration with other relevant government entities.</p>
Public-Private Partnerships	<p>It is recommended that the office of Contractor General be established as outlined in the manifesto of the Saint Lucia Labour Party. It should consist of an independent body comprised of public and private sector representation or oversight to ensure transparency, consistency and accountability in public works projects involving the purchase of both services and goods by the state and government bodies or entities.</p> <p>The government of St Lucia should set up a simple online mechanism (perhaps on the Ministry of Finance website) to publicly inform the engineering/construction/architecture industry of procurement opportunities in the rest of the OECS and if possible, all other CARICOM states. This can be done in collaboration with the APESL, the Institute of Architects and the Association of Management Consultants (AMCS). The government site should be mirrored on the websites of the professional associations. <u>This facility should not cost more than US\$40,000 to set up and can be done before the end of 2016.</u></p>	<p>Ministry of Physical Development, Housing and Urban Renewal, Ministry of Finance. The OECS-CBU intends to launch MKIS that may have similar/related regional perspective. Caribbean Export was also considering some kind of platform. They should be consulted.</p> <p>Ministry of Physical Development, Housing and Urban Renewal, Ministry of Finance APESL, AMCS, SLIA,</p> <p>This should be established before the end of 2016. Resources may be available from CSME Standby Facility at CDB or Caribbean Export.</p>

