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PRESS RELEASE

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Saint Lucia to Launch Citizen-Driven Climate Data Initiative

Castries, Saint Lucia — Saint Lucia is strengthening its ability to plan for and respond to climate change through a new initiative that supports real-time data collection, citizen science, and education to enable smarter, more resilient decision-making.

A new project aimed at enhancing the island's climate change resilience efforts is officially underway. Known as SALUT, Saint Lucia Training for Climate Change Resilience using Citizen Science Data and Technologies, the initiative brings together international and local partners in a collaborative effort to improve climate monitoring, data utilization, and national capacity building.

SALUT is a partnership involving two European institutions, KU Leuven University and the GISIG Association of Italy alongside three local entities: the National Integrated Planning and Programme Unit (NIPP), the Department of Physical Planning, and the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC).

The project is being led by Danny Vandenbrouke of KU Leuven University, who underscored the growing importance of sensor data in understanding and monitoring climate change.

“In this case, we will focus on the procurement and installation of weather stations, very affordable ones, rather than full-fledged stations, which are extremely expensive. Today, you can obtain stations for less than 300 Euros, making this approach feasible. We will procure 20 units and install them across Saint Lucia, primarily in schools.”

While the Saint Lucia Meteorological Services already operates several sensors, the integration of sensor data with spatial and geospatial technologies remains relatively new. Data collected through SALUT will therefore serve a dual-purpose supporting climate monitoring while providing hands-on, practical learning opportunities for students and professionals.

“We want to train people from NIPP, the Department of Planning, and the College first. They will then work with schools where the sensors are installed, engaging students in applied projects so young people understand what a weather station is, what these sensors do, and what we can learn from them in the context of climate change,” Vandenbrouke explained.

Haward Wells, Director of the National Integrated Planning and Programme Unit (NIPP), views SALUT as a critical enhancement to NIPP's ongoing work in sustainable development and spatial data management.

“Data is collected daily across various sectors of the Government of Saint Lucia. With this new mandate, all of this information can be brought together within a single portal, allowing data to be cross-referenced and used holistically for national planning and decision-making.”

A central pillar of the SALUT project is citizen science, which encourages schools and communities to actively participate in climate data collection. Wells believes that engaging young people is essential to achieving long-term impact.



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“We operate in an environment that is constantly under threat from climate change. If you cannot measure it, it becomes difficult to demonstrate its importance. For us to have any real impact, we must involve the youth. Citizen science, using sensors and data capture, is designed to encourage schools and communities to actively participate and take ownership of climate action.”

Adrian D’Auvergne, Dean of Engineering at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, noted that SALUT will help generate critical datasets to support long-term national planning.

“We will first play the role of students ourselves, learning how to install, maintain, collect, and analyse data for informed decision-making. We will then transfer the knowledge and skills gained through this project to the wider Saint Lucian public.”

The three-year SALUT project is grant-funded to the tune of 400,000 Euros, with no direct cost to the Government of Saint Lucia. While the financial investment is modest, stakeholders believe the long-term benefits particularly in education, planning, and climate resilience could be transformational for the country.

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