

THE WAVERLEY SERIES

SAINT-MARTIN

An Insight of Investment, Trade and Economy

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For Advisory & Partnership

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SAINT-MARTIN — AT A GLANCE

Capital	Marigot
Population	≈ 35,000 on the French side, across 53 km ²
Defining context	Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 storm that struck in September 2017, destroyed 95% of infrastructure on the French side; seven years on, reconstruction is well advanced but remains an active, ongoing process
Tourism	The Beach Hôtel reopened in 2025 as The Whimsy Hotel & Spa (165 rooms, including 40 suites), the first Accor MGallery Collection property on the island (€32 million investment); high-end cruise tourism continues developing, and a 'staycation' scheme relaunched in 2024 aims to build tourism demand among residents themselves
Port infrastructure	The Port of Galisbay, the French side's strategic maritime infrastructure, has received €3.2 million to rehabilitate its logistics platform and is preparing a major expansion programme estimated at €143 million for 2026-2028
Shipping disruption	CMA-CGM's discontinuation of its direct Le Havre-Philipsburg shipping line has lengthened supply delivery times, a specific, current logistics headwind
Fiscal position	The Collectivité recorded an operating surplus of €35.939 million for fiscal year 2025; the Territorial Council approved allocating this surplus on 10 September 2026, including over €17 million toward the 2025 investment section to cover a €16.6 million financing need
Tax incentive extension	An amendment extends the 53.55% investment tax rate for hotel renovation projects to Saint-Martin, aligning it with the rate already available in France's overseas departments
Development financing	The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) is supporting multiple ongoing projects under its 'Trois Océans' framework, spanning financial systems, water and sanitation, and sustainable urban infrastructure
Governing framework	A French overseas collectivity (COM) with greater fiscal and administrative autonomy than the overseas departments, sharing the island of Saint Martin with the separately governed Dutch constituent country of Sint Maarten; President Louis Mussington leads the Collectivité, with Alain Richardson serving as First Vice-President for economic development

Seven years after Hurricane Irma destroyed 95% of its infrastructure, the French side of Saint-Martin continues a genuinely advanced but still-active reconstruction, anchored this year by the reopening of a flagship hotel under Accor's MGallery brand and a planned €143 million expansion of the Port of Galisbay. The Collectivité posted a healthy €35.9 million operating surplus for 2025, and a tax-rate extension now brings hotel-renovation incentives into line with mainland France's overseas departments. Set against this progress, a specific shipping-line discontinuation has lengthened supply delivery times, a concrete reminder of the logistics fragility facing this small, twin-nation island. Investors should read Saint-Martin as a territory in genuine, sustained post-disaster recovery, with real institutional and private capital now flowing into its tourism and port infrastructure.

1. INVESTMENT & FDI

A specific tax-rate extension for hotel renovation investment brings Saint-Martin into fiscal alignment with France's overseas departments, directly supporting the territory's tourism-led reconstruction.

An amendment now allows hotel renovation investment in Saint-Martin to benefit from the 53.55% investment tax rate, aligning the territory with the departments that already offer this rate for hospitality renovation projects specifically. The Collectivité's own stated objective is to maintain and increase attractiveness through effective support for local initiatives. First Vice-President Alain Richardson, who also serves as head of SEMSA, the territory's semi-public development company, has directly highlighted the strategic reasons for investing on the island.

- **A specific, quantified fiscal incentive directly targeting hospitality reconstruction:** the 53.55% hotel renovation tax rate extension represents a concrete, measurable investment incentive rather than a general statement of openness to capital.
- **A deliberate fiscal-parity alignment with mainland French overseas departments:** bringing Saint-Martin's incentive structure into line with departments such as Guadeloupe and Martinique reduces a specific competitive disadvantage the territory previously faced in attracting hospitality-sector investment.
- **Direct institutional leadership engagement on investment strategy:** Richardson's dual role overseeing both the Collectivité's economic development portfolio and SEMSA provides a concentrated point of institutional accountability for translating investment strategy into concrete projects.

2. TRADE & BUSINESS

A flagship hotel reopening under a major international brand illustrates genuine post-Irma tourism recovery, even as a specific shipping-line discontinuation has directly lengthened the territory's supply chain.

Tourism, the driving force of the local economy, is strengthening with the 2025 reopening of the Beach Hôtel, rebranded The Whimsy Hotel & Spa, a 165-room property including 40 suites and the first Accor MGallery Collection establishment on the island, representing a €32 million investment; high-end cruise tourism continues developing in parallel, while a 'staycation' scheme relaunched in 2024 demonstrates a deliberate effort to build tourism demand among residents themselves. However, CMA-CGM's discontinuation of its direct Le Havre-Philipsburg shipping line has lengthened supply delivery times, a concrete logistics setback for a small, import-dependent island economy.

- **A genuine, branded flagship hospitality investment:** the Whimsy Hotel & Spa's status as the first Accor MGallery property on the island represents concrete, verifiable international hospitality-brand investment rather than a generic hotel reopening.
- **A deliberate resident-focused tourism diversification effort:** the staycation scheme's specific targeting of local demand reflects a broader strategy to diversify Saint-Martin's tourism revenue base beyond international visitors alone.
- **A specific, current supply-chain vulnerability directly affecting import costs and timing:** the CMA-CGM route discontinuation represents a concrete, named logistics disruption with direct implications for the cost and predictability of goods reaching the island.

3. MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

A healthy operating surplus and continued Paris-level engagement on overseas-territory adaptation define Saint-Martin's current governance and fiscal trajectory, seven years into its post-Irma recovery.

The Collectivité de Saint-Martin recorded an operating surplus of €35.939 million for fiscal year 2025; at a Territorial Council session on 10 September 2026, elected officials approved allocating this surplus by a vote of 15 in favour, 4 against and 3 abstentions, directing over €17 million toward the 2025 investment section to cover a €16.6 million financing need, with further allocations agreed alongside. President Louis Mussington travelled to Paris for working meetings, including sessions tied to the Comité Interministériel des Outre-Mer (CIOM), focused on adaptations and differentiation measures developed in consultation with locally elected officials. The Collectivité has separately signed a convention with Guadeloupe's Établissement Public Foncier (EPF) for support in managing its land holdings, reflecting continued institutional cooperation with a neighbouring French overseas territory on a specific technical matter.

- **A genuinely healthy fiscal surplus reflecting sustained recovery:** the €35.9 million operating surplus for 2025 represents real, verified fiscal health seven years after a disaster that destroyed 95% of the territory's infrastructure.
- **A contested but ultimately approved budget allocation process:** the recorded 15-4-3 vote split indicates genuine political debate over the surplus's allocation, reflecting an active, functioning local democratic process rather than unanimous rubber-stamping.
- **Direct engagement with the specific national framework governing overseas-territory differentiation:** Mussington's participation in CIOM-linked discussions on adaptations and differentiation represents concrete engagement with the specific French institutional mechanism most relevant to Saint-Martin's evolving autonomy and policy flexibility.
- **A specific, technical inter-territorial cooperation agreement:** the EPF Guadeloupe convention represents a concrete, narrowly-scoped cooperation mechanism addressing land management specifically, distinct from broader political or economic partnership arrangements.

4. MAJOR PROJECTS & INFRASTRUCTURE

A major, multi-year expansion of the Port of Galisbay represents Saint-Martin's most significant current infrastructure commitment, directly addressing the territory's strategic maritime logistics capacity.

- **Port of Galisbay expansion:** following an initial €3.2 million logistics-platform rehabilitation, the port is preparing a major expansion programme estimated at €143 million for 2026-2028, representing Saint-Martin's largest current infrastructure investment commitment.
- **AFD 'Trois Océans' framework projects:** ongoing AFD-supported initiatives span financial systems (2025-2037), water and sanitation (2025-2029, €3 million), and sustainable urban infrastructure (2019-2026), together representing substantial, multi-year development financing across several sectors.
- **Post-Irma infrastructure reconstruction:** continued rebuilding, now seven years post-disaster, remains an active, ongoing process across multiple sectors of the territory's built environment.

5. CONFERENCES, FORUMS & EXHIBITIONS

No significant standalone investment conferences or forums specific to this period were identified; Saint-Martin's economic reporting operates primarily through IEDOM's annual economic report and the Collectivité's own institutional communications described elsewhere in this briefing.

6. BUSINESS & INVESTMENT EVENTS

The Territorial Council's September 2026 budget session represented this year's most significant direct fiscal-policy decision-making event.

- **Territorial Council session, 10 September 2026:** this 17-item agenda session, described in Section 3, addressed the allocation of the Collectivité's 2025 operating surplus and represented the year's central budgetary decision-making event.

7. GOVERNMENT & INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Continued engagement with the French state through CIOM and substantial AFD development financing define Saint-Martin's most consequential current institutional relationships.

- **France (via CIOM):** President Mussington's direct Paris engagement on overseas-territory adaptation and differentiation measures represents Saint-Martin's central relationship with the French state on matters of evolving territorial autonomy.
- **Agence Française de Développement (AFD):** the multiple ongoing 'Trois Océans' framework projects described in Section 4 represent substantial, sustained French development-financing engagement across several sectors.
- **Guadeloupe (EPF):** the land-management cooperation convention represents a specific, technical partnership with a neighbouring French overseas territory.
- **Accor:** the Whimsy Hotel & Spa's status as the first MGallery Collection property on the island represents a significant international hospitality-brand relationship directly tied to the territory's tourism reconstruction.

8. SME & PRIVATE-SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

The Collectivité's stated commitment to supporting local economic initiatives, combined with continued European Social Fund-backed training programmes, underpins Saint-Martin's private-sector development approach.

The Collectivité de Saint-Martin has stated its objective of maintaining and increasing the territory's attractiveness through effective support for local initiatives specifically. Training organisations and residents seeking skills development have benefited from programmes offered by the Collectivité in partnership with the European Social Fund (FSE), providing a broad panel of training options directly on Saint-Martin's territory.

- **A directly stated local-initiative support objective:** the Collectivité's explicit attractiveness and local-support framing reflects a deliberate policy orientation toward nurturing domestic entrepreneurship alongside external investment attraction.
- **Concrete, EU-backed workforce training infrastructure:** the European Social Fund partnership provides a specific, funded mechanism for skills development directly relevant to strengthening the local private-sector labour pool.

9. NEW INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES / PROJECTS ANNOUNCED

Port expansion, hotel renovation under the newly extended tax incentive, and continued high-end tourism development define Saint-Martin's most concretely promoted new investment channels.

- **Port of Galisbay expansion:** the planned €143 million programme for 2026-2028, described in Section 4, represents Saint-Martin's largest and most concrete current infrastructure investment opportunity.
- **Hotel renovation under the extended 53.55% tax rate:** this specific fiscal incentive, described in Section 1, offers a concrete, quantified investment opportunity for hospitality-sector developers and investors.
- **High-end cruise tourism development:** continued growth in this segment offers further investment potential building on the Whimsy Hotel & Spa's establishment as a flagship reconstruction project.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

Seven years after Hurricane Irma destroyed 95% of its infrastructure, the French side of Saint-Martin continues a genuinely advanced but still-active reconstruction, anchored this year by the reopening of a flagship hotel under Accor's MGallery brand and a planned €143 million expansion of the Port of Galisbay. The Collectivité posted a healthy €35.9 million operating surplus for 2025, and a tax-rate extension now brings hotel-renovation incentives into line with mainland France's overseas departments.

Set against this progress, a specific shipping-line discontinuation has lengthened supply delivery times, a concrete reminder of the logistics fragility facing this small, twin-nation island. Investors should read Saint-Martin as a territory in genuine, sustained post-disaster recovery, with real institutional and private capital now flowing into its tourism and port infrastructure, operating under a distinct collectivity status that affords it greater fiscal and administrative flexibility than France's standard overseas departments.