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WASHINGTON, December 16, 2009 – The World Bank today approved a US\$2.3 million zero-interest credit for the Commonwealth of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to implement an Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) regional e-government integration program.

"This initiative reflects the Government's commitment to regional integration by taking advantage of economies of scale," said Yvonne Tsikata, World Bank Director for the Caribbean. "An integrated e-government program, such as this one, can reduce the cost of doing business and improve the efficiency, quality and transparency of public services," she added.

The OECS E-Government for Regional Integration Program will help harmonize regional e-government frameworks and applications by automating and pooling resources across the region, resulting in time- and cost-savings for governments, businesses and private citizens.

Specifically, the program will support the following activities:

1. Harmonize national and regional e-government information and communication technologies (ICT) platforms and frameworks. This component will expand public administration services by helping to connect regional and national policy, strategy, legislation and related legal and regulatory frameworks.

2. Improve key e-government systems, including:

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- Public financial management to integrate existing budgeting, accounting and reporting systems and develop a web-based public information system to provide easily understandable information on government finances.
- Tax administration to develop an on-line registration and electronic tax filing subsystem to complement the tax management system.
- Customs to create a regional customs information sharing network within the context of the upcoming OECS Economic Union.
- Government procurement to create a regional electronic procurement platform that will initially allow for the online publication of notices and contract awards, while eventually moving to a transactional system for competitive tendering.
- Health and other social sectors to implement a regional pilot project in health management information systems.
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines now joins the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada and St. Lucia, which received a total of US\$7.2 million from the World Bank in May 2008 to implement the same program.

The program is open to other OECS countries, including Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis.

The US\$2.3 million zero-interest credit from the International Development Association (IDA) is repayable in 35 years, including a 10-year grace period.

For more information on this project, please click [here](#) .

For more information on the World Bank's work in the OECS, please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/oecs>

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