

INFRASTRUCTURAL Comments:

WEB

Although some larger companies on Bonaire supply their own water and / or electricity, WEB is the island provider of water and electricity for SME. Water quality is of a very high standard and the delivery is reliable.

Electricity is delivered in 110 Volt and can be transformed to 220 Volt in the switch cupboard of the end user. The 110 Volt is transformed to 2-faze 220 Volt.

The electricity is delivered in 50 cycles.

The delivery is not very reliable. The island has to deal with a lot of power interruptions sometimes for many hours.

The sudden cut in power supply and the unforeseeable reconnection can cause a lot of damage to equipment.

The 110 Volt is more expensive than 220 Volt because the end user is charged on the uses amperage. Fundamentally the amperage of 110 Volt is higher than the amperage of 220 Volt, so the overall price of electricity is higher.

Most of the electrical powered machines and equipment imported from the U.S. and Europe have problems operating the 2 faze 220 Volt in stead of the 1-fraze 220 Volt they were built for.

A lot of damage is caused by the difference in cycles: 50 cycles on Bonaire while electric equipment from Europe runs on 60 cycles.

The quality of the electricity is not 100%. The voltage is not very stable and there is a lot of surge on the net. All kinds of equipment, such as electric motors, coolers, freezers, computers, modems et cetera have to be supplied with surge protectors and equalizers to prevent serious (and often fatal) damage.

Improvement and review of the standards and quality of the power plant products will be necessary to interest foreign investors and will save money for all companies including SME on the island.

The accessibility of modern equipment will be improved and damage will be reduced.

The small industry advises to change the electrical system to 220 Volt 50 cycles.

Communication

Telbo delivers many services to SME. Main products for SME are telephone and internet (E-mail) services.

Although the system still works with the outdated analog system, providing very slow connections and a very low baud rate, the service is reliable.

An other product can be found in a helpdesk for computer users with a Telbo internet connection.

In general the helpdesk functions well although the attainableness sometimes is corrupted by long waiting times.

An other problem occurring regularly is found in the opening hours of the help desk: the regular office hours.

Many SME computer users use their internet connection in the evening hours. If a problem occurs, the help desk is closed and the entrepreneur has to wait for the next day and then trying to find the time to solve the problem in cooperation with the helpdesk.

Telbo is working hard to introduce digital telephone and internet processing (ASDL).

New broad band lines and digital products can be expected within short time, making telephone calls easier and quicker and speeding up computer data and e-mail transmission in a substantial way.

Telbo is also working on the helpdesk problem and within short the helpdesk is expected to be open until 09.00 P.M.

It is important to note that telbo has acquired 50% of the communication capacity on the Amerigo Vespucci telecommunication cable. This can be seen as a major breakthrough for Bonaire with regard to telecommunication.

Postal Services

The service of the post office seems to be of good standard.

The only problem can be found in receiving postal packages from abroad. In general the addressee receives a message from the post office that a package has arrived and how to gather it.

Most of the time the package already is opened in advance by a customs officer and "resealed" with tape. Although the system seems to be efficient because the customs officer already determined the import tax, many SME's find this an infringement of their privacy.

When receiving a container from abroad for instance, the container will not be opened before the receiver is on the spot to prevent violation of privacy and eventual legal and other problems.

To prevent legal problems and to maintain privacy rights of SME, the packages should only be opened in their presence.