



Women helped by FINTRAC agricultural programs gained farming and food production capacity in developing countries. The organization is preparing to close its Virgin Islands business by 2023.

## Global consultant FINTRAC winds down USVI business

By PATRICIA BORNES  
Daily News Staff

Global agricultural consultant FINTRAC is winding down its Virgin Islands base of operations and reducing staff as it prepares to close the business by 2023, its president Claire Starkey announced at a V.I. Economic Development Commission board meeting Tuesday.

In business for 30 years and a participant in the territory's Economic Development Commission Tax Incentive Program since 2005, FINTRAC analyzes agriculture markets in developing countries for the United States Agency for International Development and other clients.

It has never before requested a waiver of its EDC obligations, Starkey said, and exceeded its employment requirement for more than decade.

But with five USAID contracts closing out in 2022 and no more planned, Starkey requested a certificate termination and a waiver of FINTRAC's employment quota for 2021 and 2022, starting with a reduction from 16 to 10 employees.

Her staff is aware, Starkey said, and will be given one week of severance pay for every year worked

along with outplacement services. The firm based in Charlotte Amalie has already eliminated two local positions and two employees have resigned, she said.

The firm plans to downsize to three employees in July 2022, and to one in December 2022.

"We said when we started that we hoped to be a model for a different kind of EDC company, and now we hope we can be a model for how to gracefully and responsibly exit," Starkey told the board.

She and husband, Tom Klotzbach, who is also the company's CEO, plan to remain in the Virgin Islands and will continue the firm's charitable contributions to the territory, she said.

### Lotus Holdings

Ann Kirkland is requesting an EDC certificate for a hybrid fashion design and investment business.

A V.I. resident with her husband and investment partner John Kirkland since 2014, Kirkland proposes to merge two companies, using income from her investment company, Lotus Family Office, to fund a fashion start-up that will design Virgin Islands-themed resort wear for women and men and market it

internationally. Kirkland studied business in Taiwan but followed her passion for art to California where she studied fashion and textile design. Her training led to lucrative work designing for manufacturers, she said.

Her fashion business will design island-themed textiles and apparel for manufacture in Vietnam.

"If we do it right, it is very likely to become a successful business," said Kirkland, showing the board some concept drawings of her work.

The Lotus Holdings application proposes to hire five employees within a year, not including Kirkland. Kirkland said she will mentor her design employees and sponsor and pay for their training to learn textile design.

On the financial investment side, Kirkland said they would recommend online classes for "self study and improvement."

The merger of the two businesses raised questions about how each would be treated for tax purposes, how many employees each would hire and when. A request for more information about the company's growth and permanent employment plans was taken offline to address outside the public meeting.

## St. John man shot by cops was wielding pellet gun

By SUZANNE CARLSON  
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A man who assaulted two women on St. John was wielding a BB gun when police shot and injured him Friday, according to court records, and a judge has ordered him to undergo a psychiatric evaluation.

Alex Louis Camsel, 46, of Estate Pastory, was released from Schneider Hospital on Tuesday after undergoing surgery and charged with disturbance of the peace, three counts of disturbance of the peace by threats, four counts of third-degree assault and damaging or tampering with a vehicle.

He was jailed on \$100,000 bond and appeared in court via video conference for his advice-of-rights hearing Wednesday.

The affidavit filed by V.I. Police sheds additional light on the circumstances that led up to the shooting.

Police interviewed three victims, who explained that the incident began Friday morning when a woman was walking from her home in Pastory into town.

Camsel approached and "told her to go back inside," and when she continued walking Camsel "swung a crow-bar type tool after her that struck her backpack," according to the affidavit.

The victim said she went into her home and called her mother for help, and her mother had a coworker drive her home to her daughter.

The coworker said that as they were driving through Pastory, Camsel "began to threaten to kill them for no known reason and stated that he wanted blood on his hands," according to the affidavit.

The coworker told police that "they ignored the defendant because they know that is how he is and continued to drive away," but Camsel began pelting the vehicle with rocks and her left hand and the back of her head were struck, according to the affidavit.

The mother confirmed the account, and explained that despite the injuries, her coworker was able to continue driving to the police station in Cruz Bay, where they sought help.

Police brought the coworker to Myrah Keating Smith clinic for treatment, and picked up the daughter and brought her and her mother to the clinic to check on the coworker, according to the affidavit. As they were traveling to the clinic with officers, the women "saw the defendant in the roadway pointing a rifle type gun towards them

as they drove by in the police vehicle." They told the officers it was the same man who'd thrown rocks.

Police brought the victims to the clinic and called for backup, according to the affidavit, which does not include any information about the subsequent standoff with police.

In an interview with investigators, Camsel admitted to assaulting the women with a garden tool and rocks, and "admitted he did have a rifle-type pellet gun in his possession however he did not point it at anyone," according to the affidavit. "The defendant concluded by stating that he did not threaten to kill anyone and that he yelled out that the gun was a bb gun prior to him getting shot."

None of the officers who responded to the scene Friday were equipped with body cameras, and none of the cruisers had dashboard cameras. No video of the shooting exists, according to police.

Police have not identified the officer involved, and V.I. Police spokesman Toby Derima said in an email Sunday that "as per the collective bargaining agreement with the government of the Virgin Islands, the requested information cannot be divulged."

Camsel appeared in court Wednesday, where Territorial Public Defender Frederick Johnson and Assistant V.I. Attorney General Brenda Scales debated which crimes Camsel should be charged with — given the fact that he was not carrying a real firearm at the time he was shot.

Magistrate Judge Henry Carr III ultimately found probable cause for the charges filed against Camsel, but said two charges of third-degree assault that are related to his aiming of the bb gun at the mother and daughter "just barely" met the threshold.

Scales said Camsel has a previous arrest for first-degree assault in 1996, and Johnson said he was charged in November with simple assault, vehicle tampering, and disturbance of the peace.

That case remains pending, and Johnson said that Camsel has been living in a home in Estate Pastory that has not had electricity since the 2017 hurricanes, and would be unable to post even a small amount of cash as bail.

Johnson also asked that his client undergo a psychiatric examination as "it looks like there might be an underlying mental health issue."

Carr reduced bond from \$100,000 to \$10,000 and said Camsel may post 10%, or \$1,000 cash to be released. But Carr said he would also need to find someone willing to serve as a third-party custodian while he awaits trial, and ordered him to submit to a mental health examination before he can be released from jail.



Alex Louis Camsel