



# Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands



November 2021

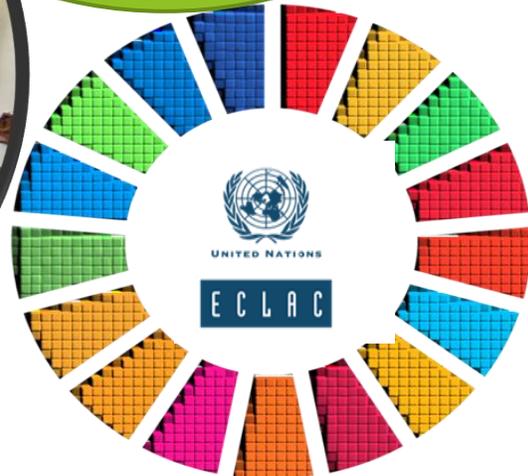


Robinson O'Neal Memorial Primary School, Virgin Gorda

The National Sustainable Development Plan of the Virgin Islands is based on more than 70 sets of consultations conducted with a diverse group of citizens on their dreams and aspirations for the future of these small land masses with large marine resources. Emphasis was placed on the youth of country and their vision for the plan which they would be living. This Plan was supported the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).



Claudia Creque Educational Centre, Anegada



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The Althea Scatliffe Primary School, Roadtown, Tortola

# Our Vision

## Building an Inclusive Society



Jost Van Dyke Primary School

“Enhancing and Protecting our Precious Land with the National Sustainable Development Plan”



- 🇧🇧 National Vision Statement
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## National Vision Statement

The Virgin Islands embracing beauty and serenity, balanced development, and abundance with us and for us all

### OVERALL VISION

A well-balanced, people-centred Virgin Islands built on spirituality, social justice and equality; nurtured by trust, cultural knowledge and participatory governance; strengthened by economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

***Our Islanders Recalling*** that that a distinct cultural identity has evolved over centuries of struggle and asserting a right to freedom and self -determination, see preservation of our uniqueness at the heart of our sustainable development. Our oral and written history must be uttered by all so that our character, the ***who we are*** can be ingrained in our ***Islanders***, present and future.

***Our Constitution expresses our*** moral, spiritual and democratic values, as well as, our belief in God, the dignity of the human person, the freedom of the individual and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and the rule of law;

***Our Citizens believe in the*** principles of equality, democracy and diversity and have confidence in our public services, leaders and institutions,

***We Endeavour and Aspire*** to ensure that our pristine marine environment, inextricably at the heart of our identity as ***Islanders***, must be preserved, regenerated and restored for generations of ***Islanders***.

***We Place our People at the centre of our Sustainable Development*** by ensuring enabling date that places emphasis on the building of resilience of vulnerable groups like youth, women, the poor and on sectors disadvantaged by climate related disasters and by COVID 19.

***Our Development is Inclusive*** as each of our settled islands offer opportunities for diversity, diversification and widespread progress while ensuring the consolidation and completeness of our distinctiveness.

***Our Development is Inclusive*** to ensure that we provide a welcoming atmosphere to all who visit, work and contribute to all of our sustainable development.

***Our Development is Inclusive and bipartisan*** so that the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of our National Sustainable Development Plan will be supported by all for all.

## THE VISION OF OUR YOUTH



Claudia Creque Educational Centre, Anegada

*Empowered Youth encouraged by the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of a balanced life.*

*Our Youth* will live this Plan and will be given the chance to participate in its evolution and successful implementation through dialogue and feedback mechanisms including youth clubs, sports teams, youth ambassadorial programmes and environmental activities.

*Our Youth's creativity* will be supported by an understanding of their history, culture and identity while being nurtured by an education system and curricular that gives voice to individuality and the good of the collective.

*Our Youth* are actively engaged in the economic, social, environmental and political growth of their country. They will be leaders in their communities and will be involved in shaping the strategies for their sustainable development of the entire country.

*Our Youth* are protectors of their environment. As *Islanders* they advocate for climate action and become climate activists supporting the preservation of our marine life, be at the forefront of calls for the use of renewable energy and reinforce restoring and revitalisation.

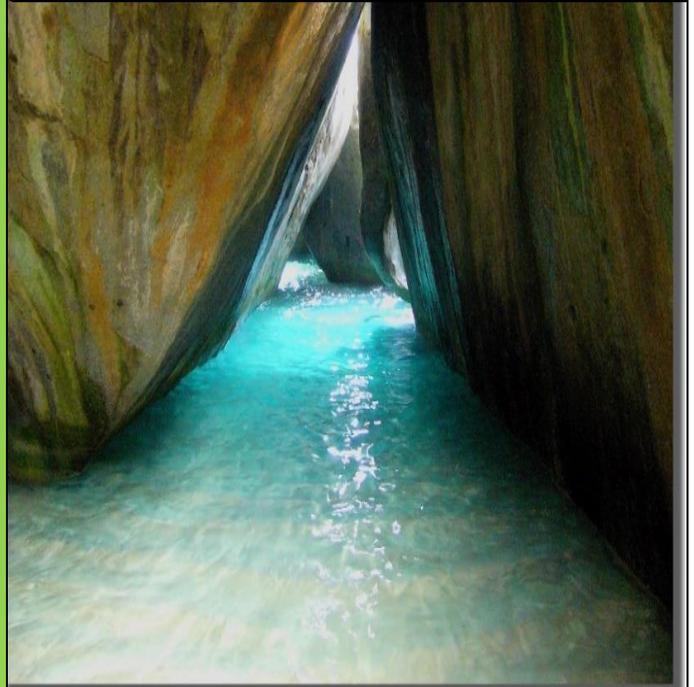
*Our Youth* will mature and positively support each other, raise families and grow communities that strengthen the fabric of our *Islandness*.

*Our Youth* will be free to leave our shore, ready to face the world, become global citizens and live with the optimism that no matter where they roam in the world, their country will always be home.

## *The Territorial Song of the Virgin Islands*

*Out of the huts of history's pain  
Our ancestors bled and died!  
But with strength and willpower we  
overcame  
To restore Virgin Islands pride!  
To preserve our beauty, we devised a plan  
To obtain ownership of your precious  
lands!  
Educating our people is the golden key  
To maintain the success of this Territory!  
We shall protect your bountiful shores  
And uphold your dignity!  
We shall fight to preserve your culture  
Your splendour and integrity!  
And we shall never fail to understand  
How blessed we are to possess this land!  
So, we shall unite standing proud and tall  
Let none divide us, lest we fall!*

*To Preserve Our Beauty,  
We Devised a Plan*



### *Chorus*

*Oh how radiant are your daughters!  
And how wealthy are your sons!  
Your beaches boast your beauty!  
And your success is second to none!  
Green and brilliant are your hillsides!  
They replenish our hopes and pride!  
Oh Beautiful Virgin Islands!  
Your qualities can never be denied!*

*May God richly bless this territory!  
May we ask three things of thee...  
Courage for our great leaders  
That they may rule our destiny!  
We ask for wisdom for our people  
That we may live in harmony!  
And understanding for children  
So they may cherish this legacy!*

**MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER**



**MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**



## PREFACE

The main purpose of the project is the creation of an overarching National Sustainable Development Plan [NSDP] for the Virgin Islands that spans a period of fifteen (15) years. Numerous public consultations were undertaken during the process to firstly engage in comprehensive education on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and then to ensure citizen participation in setting the priorities and articulating an aspirational vision for the country in its sustainability and resilience endeavours. The result has been a people centred achieved integrated roadmap based on a unique vision for the country. Some of the important issues discussed include providing opportunity for the youth; preserving the environment while developing the blue economy; managing diversity while maintaining customs and traditions; sustainable infrastructure given the ravages of recent hurricanes; restarting the economy given the climate risks and COVID 19; and the preparation and movement towards more autonomy and the implications of such governance advancements.

The majority of the approximately thirty thousand (30,000) inhabitants of the Virgin Islands reside on the four (4) main islands of Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada and Jost Van Dyke. There are some privately owned islands, which also affect the sustainable development of these large ocean states. According to The Virgin Islands: Strategic Blue Economy Roadmap, the territory “has jurisdiction over a maritime area that is significantly larger than its land area and is, therefore, dependent to a large extent on ocean resources and the sectors they support.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, the total land area of 151-154 square kilometers or 59 square miles while the territorial sea covers a much larger area of 1,489 square kilometers or 575 square miles. It should also be noted that the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extends 322 kilometers (200 miles) north and northeast and up to 80 kilometers (50 miles) southeast from the islands’ coasts. Awareness of this fact has therefore ensured in more recent times, a sustainable approach to maritime matters reflected in priorities in distinct policies and legislation related to environmental management and biodiversity conservation, as well as, integrated coastal zone and ocean management. These are articulated under SDGs 13: Climate Action, 14: Life below Water and 15: Life on Land and were viewed at the centre of the sustainable development of the country.

In 2017, the Virgin Islands (VI) was seriously impacted by a series of natural disasters with the most powerful and destructive being Hurricane Irma on 6th September. There was widespread damage to roads, homes and other buildings, electricity and telecommunications networks, cargo and passenger ports as well as significant losses in the tourism, marine, agriculture and fishing sectors. Not only have individual livelihoods been negatively impacted but the BVI economy has been disrupted. The country is highly dependent on tourism and both the leadership and the people spoke to the need to broaden the economic base, in a country that is so vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The narrow economic base was also highlighted. For these reasons SDG 9: Innovation and Infrastructure and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities were deemed as priorities for resilience building and quick recovery. They are part of the national outcomes on Economic Infrastructure, Making industry structures internationally competitive and Hazard Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change

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<sup>1</sup> The Virgin Islands: Strategic Blue Economy Roadmap Executive Summary (1)

The planning process for the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) commenced in early December 2019 with a strategic visioning mission conducted by ECLAC in collaboration with the GOVIs. The objective was to sensitize the Premier and members of the House of Assembly about the planning process and articulate the Government's development vision and some preliminary developmental priorities. Discussions with various stakeholder groups also ascertained some of the socio-economic challenges facing the Territory and possible solutions. It was then agreed that the next phase of the recovery should focus on building resilience and moving the country towards sustainability. This phase of the project commenced in December 2020

The National Sustainable Development Plan is based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are considered as fundamental human rights of people globally. During the intense consultations in all four of the main territories to build awareness on the SDGs it was clear that knowledge, except within the public sector, was limited, but students soon became engaged and clearly articulated that they wanted a focus on preservation of the marine environment and diversity of species, while creating opportunities for economic growth and focusing on distribution mechanisms that created equity and equality. The Consultation Report in Appendix A highlights the voices of the people.

Focus was also placed on recovery after COVID 19. According to the ECLAC Report Caribbean Outlook: Forging a People-Centered Approach to Sustainable Development Post-COVID-19, "the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and inequalities"<sup>2</sup> The National Sustainable Development Plan has therefore taken into consideration continued recovery from Hurricanes Irma and Maria, as well as, reenergising and reimagining the Territory after the pandemic.

The constitutional evolution of the territory was also been given due consideration as a Commission of Inquiry commenced simultaneously with the public consultations on the NSDP. Needless to say, the people voiced their opinions within the context of SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. Pertinent to this Plan is the United Nations C24 and its implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence of Colonial Countries and Peoples, which advocates decolonisation and the rights to self-determination and the pursuit of economic, social and cultural. National outcomes focused on Culture, Governance – Government Efficiency and Effectiveness, Justice, Rule of Law, Constitutional Advancement, Partnerships and Peace and Security are aligned to these SDGs.

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<sup>2</sup> Report Caribbean Outlook: Forging a People-Centred Approach to Sustainable Development Post-COVID-19 [ECLAC December 2020 (5)]

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Deepest appreciation must be extended to the Government of the Virgin Islands and the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), especially the Trinidad Office, for their commitment to the development of the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP). Their obligation led to the participation of many individuals, schools, community leaders, organisations, the Private Sector, Public Servants, Government Ministries, District Representatives, institutions and Virgin Islanders in the Diaspora who provided valuable input and support in the development of the Plan. The Government Information Service (GIS), and local media also played a great role in spreading the message during this time of COVID 19 analysis and deliberations were greatly informed by the national consultations.

Sincere gratitude is also extended for the dedication of the ECLAC Team which undertook approximately seventy (70) consultations on Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada and Jost Van Duke during the COVID 19 pandemic. The Team was cognizant to include VI diaspora in its consultations. They brought the SDGs to the people and worked with many technical teams to produce this document. Those who translated these conversations into a written document must also be commended for their efforts. These include June Soomer (Head Consultant), Patlian Johnson, Elizabeth Emanuel, Emery Che Pemberton, and Marietta Headley (Administrative Assistant).

The National Sustainable Development Plan will guide the country for the next fifteen years (15) and has a built in review every three (3) years which is supported by implementation and monitoring and evaluation frameworks that will ensure reporting, transparency and accountability.

Special thanks to the Members of the House of Assembly who have committed to the implementation of the NSDP. All contributions and support received are gratefully acknowledged and warmly appreciated.

**The National Sustainable Development Team**



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment
C24	The Special Committee on Decolonisation established by the United Nations General Assembly
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECC	Early Childhood Centres
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GOVI	Government of the Virgin Islands
HLSCC	Hamilton Lavity Stoutt Community College
IBC	International Business Company
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
MTDS	Medium-Term Development Strategy
MTFP	Medium-Term Fiscal Plan
NCDs	Non Communicable Diseases
NHIS	National Health Insurance System
NIDS	National Integrated Development Strategy
NPDP	National Physical Development Plan
NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
PFM	Public Financial Management
PWD	Person with Disabilities
RDA	Recovery Duration Adjuster
SDD	Social Development Department
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEED	Social, Economic, Environmental and Direction/Governance
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SP	Social Protection
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
STI	Science Technology and Innovation
UN	United Nations
UWI	University of the West Indies
VI	Virgin Islands sometimes referred to as the British Virgin Islands (BVI)
VITVI	Virgin Islands Technical Vocational Institute
3Rs	Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
5 Ps	People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Virgin Islands National Sustainable Development Plan, spanning the period from 2021-2036, is the overarching national long range framework for the investment in the people of the country. It is based on the vision expressed in broad based public consultations, in depth interviews and in responses to a survey. It is therefore informed by the voices of the people. Almost sixty (70) sets of consultations [Appendix B: List of Consultations] were conducted in the context of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and citizens voiced the important objectives of widespread equity and equality through infrastructural development, opportunity and job creation and circulating wealth widely.

This is not the first integrated plan developed for the Virgin Islands. In 2000 the National Integrated Development Strategy (NIDS) was prepared by Mr. Otto O’Neal, Head, Planning Unit, Ministry of Finance, and its objective was to put the country on a path of sustainable development. It highlighted past isolated attempts at improving the economic, social and environmental situation of the British Virgin and lamented the lack of an integrated and balanced approach to development planning as most initiatives concentrated mostly on economic planning. This according to the Strategy, meant that there was need for balancing economic development with social cohesion in all communities, while ensuring the development of community networks, enhancing opportunity and recognizing diversity. In the context of a high human development index and little evidence of poverty, it recognized some of the shortcomings, challenges and limitations such as the topography; an under developed **environmental management framework**; a diffused legal agenda with weak implementation and enforcement; imbalanced emphasis on economic development and a siloed approach to planning. So even before the SDGs there was the NIDS which articulated a wholistic approach to sustainable development in the Virgin Islands. The National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) therefore has its genesis in the NIDS and utilizes the SDGs as the foundation of the integrated approach that will be the basis of both the Implementation Framework and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework that will accompany the NSDP.

Since the development of the NIDS there has been some refinement of policies, policy frameworks and institutional structures that have addressed some of the concerns. The Medium-Term Development Strategy is the related prioritised action plan, spanning a three- year period and encompassing all areas of government activity. It sets development goals and priorities and is linked with the country’s budget. In this regard, emphasis was placed on how the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP)<sup>3</sup> has provided the opportunity for incorporating the SDGs within the Social, Economic, Environmental and Direction/Governance (SEED) themes, which articulates how the GOVI aims to accomplish socioeconomic development. The MTFP has set the foundation for long term planning, as well as, providing for a monitoring and evaluation framework that assesses the fiscal and macroeconomic performance of the Virgin Islands, alongside GOVI’s development and fiscal objectives over three-year intervals.

Deeper engagement and integration into the global economy necessitates that the NSDP clearly articulates the immediate, short, medium and long- term its path towards a sustainable and inclusive development. It will also give development partners a means of ensuring aligning of

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bvi.gov.vg/medium-term-fiscal-plan#:~:text=Medium%20Term%20Fiscal%20Plan%20On%2023rd%20April%202012%2C,management%2C%20and%20accountability%20as%20outlined%20in%20the%20Protocols.>

their programmes to the national vision, goals and policy objectives in this plan. While the SDGs will give a framework for monitoring and evaluation, it will be complemented by the existing and new public policies and planning, results based budgeting and frameworks for inclusion of the private sector and non-governmental groups.

The NSDP is grounded in a vision espoused by the people of the country for their future. It is sustained by an implementation strategy to which the House of Assembly has sanctioned. The country is committed to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and to reporting on its progress. Success, however, will be dependent on collective ownership of the plan and collaborative partnerships between the people, government, community leaders, businesses and civil

A series of goals of four goals have been prioritized and each goal will advance one of the key pillars of sustainable development namely people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnerships in order to ensure a focus on the achievement on the national vision. These goals: 1. Islanders are empowered for a Sustainable Future in an Inclusive Vibrant Society, Living Fulfilling Lives; 2. The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Internationally - Competitive Economy; 3. The Virgin Islands has Good Governance, An Accountable Government, Citizen Participation and a Safe and Secure Society; and 4. The Virgin Islands Embraces Environmental Sustainability for Sustainable Islands' Development; will guide the sustainable development of the country and will give direction with regard to the budget and projects to be undertaken during the lifespan of the plan. They will also serve as the baseline, as well as, the measurement of the progress as they are tied to the outputs of the Plan.

**EACH OF THE 4 GOALS ARE MUTUALLY REINFORCING AND SYNERGISTIC, ENSURING THAT THERE IS INTEGRATION OF THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS OF THE COUNTRY**

## Our Children Support Our Culture

Figure I: Children Participating in Cultural Activities



# Background and Introduction

## Uniquely Many, But One Virgin Islands



Robinson O'Neal Primary School,  
Virgin Gorda

“Enhancing and Protecting our Precious Land with the National Sustainable Development Plan”

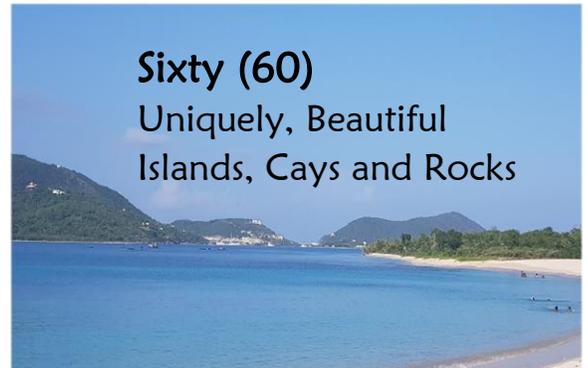


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## Background and Introduction

The Virgin Islands situated between the waters of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands and the Lesser Antilles form the border between the Caribbean Sea in the west and the north Atlantic Ocean lies to the east of the islands, in the northern part of the Eastern Caribbean. It is noted that the Virgin Islands form the border between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The archipelago is separated from the Lesser Antilles by the Anegada Passage and from the main island of Puerto Rico by the Virgin Passage.

The location of this elongated expanse of water, covering an area of approximately 153 square kilometers has strategically informed and impacted its partnerships and relationships with the United States Virgin Islands, the Associate States of European countries and with the independent Caribbean Countries. The archipelago is made up of approximately sixty (60) islands, with most of the population living and working on the four, Anegada, Jost Van Dyke, Tortola and Virgin Gorda. There are private islands that are answerable to the laws administered from Roadtown. While the others, most protected from human settlements by size and accessibility are sustained in their pristine isolation.



The Territory also has a history that has its own peculiarities that contribute to its own sense of “*Virgin Islandness*”. Considered as not economically and politically viable by the Spanish, Dutch and by the British Planter Class, its periods of success and downturn has bred a resilient and independent thinking people. “*Virgin Islanders*” express a strong sense of their distinctiveness, manifested in the serenity of the environment, their sense of ownership and their determination to craft their own destiny. Much pride is taken in a sense of self which entails never taking wholesale or adopting in its entirety what is developed outside the Territory. Instead, local inferences, sensibilities and positions are developed and incorporated to ensure that the end product is identifiable as something that commands recognition and ownership.

From its location to its history, the Virgin Islands have a serene ambiance and vivid topography that moves you from sailing home between islands from work or school in the evening sunset to dancing to the rhythms of Fungi bands; waking to the sunrise tramp during festivals and celebrations, idiosyncratic in their enjoyment. This cultural innovation which evolved from emancipation to the present has reinforced the creativity of a group of people that will say that they created their present and will build their own future.

## Our Country and its Uniqueness

From our flora and our fauna to our festivals and our foods, we recognize and revel in our uniqueness. The NSDP captures the country's vision and overarching policy framework for achieving sustainability the next fifteen years, and in doing so sets out our national goals, priorities and context for the implementation of the new global Sustainable Development Goals over the same period. The national vision and the framework for action outlined in this plan have been informed by the priorities voiced by our people, their community and elected representatives, the private sector and civil society over a consultation programme undertaken across the whole country. The citizens have articulated what was want for themselves, their children, future generations and the various islands that make up the country.

### Our Physical Uniqueness



- We have more ocean water than land.
- We have a wide range of unique species of flora and fauna, especially reptiles that live in our ghuts, saltponds, seagrass beds, mangroves and sandy beaches
- We have more than 10, 000 acres of seagrass and is compared to a rain forest under the sea.
- Our healthy coral reef and seagrass beds- a living breathing ecosystem- host more than 340 marine species providing sustenance and security.

- Our marine conservation area is one of the best places for spotting colourful fish and sunken ships. Our reef assets cover 300,000 acres. We ensure that we monitor and safeguard this fragile ecosystem for the future enjoyment of our generations.



Horseshoe Reef: At 18 miles long, this marine conservation area, is the fourth largest barrier coral reef in the world and is the largest reef in the Eastern Caribbean

## Our Cultural Uniqueness: Flora, Fauna, Festivals And Foods



- Our festivals represent our identity, our heritage, our autonomy and our history.
  - We commenced our emancipation celebrations in 1835 and they have taken on the flavour of our districts. Ours is three days of holidays and more than two weeks of festivities.
  - We celebrate our food and music - scratch bands, fungi competitions and folk dance troupes - can be found in our Festival Village, where our families, friends and visitors revel in community and unity.
- Our idioms are unique and reflective of our experiences.

### Taking Pride in Our National Identity

We have taken pride in developing our own symbols of national identity. From our unique flag to our Territorial Song, all the emblems reflect our pride. Virgin Islanders point proudly to the fact that the majority of BVI land remains in British Virgin Islanders' hands. The acquisition of land commenced before emancipation when the enslaved manumitted themselves and families or were granted freedom by planters who abandoned unprofitable plantations. They bought those lands and commenced a peasantry to ensure survival. The independent character would translate into a strong economy.

Although we have adopted the US dollar as our legal tender in 1967, we have refused amalgamation with the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) and other British federations. Nonetheless, our relationship with the USVI and the rest of the Caribbean remains strong because of historical bonds, familial ties and vibrant trading. We are proud Virgin Islanders.

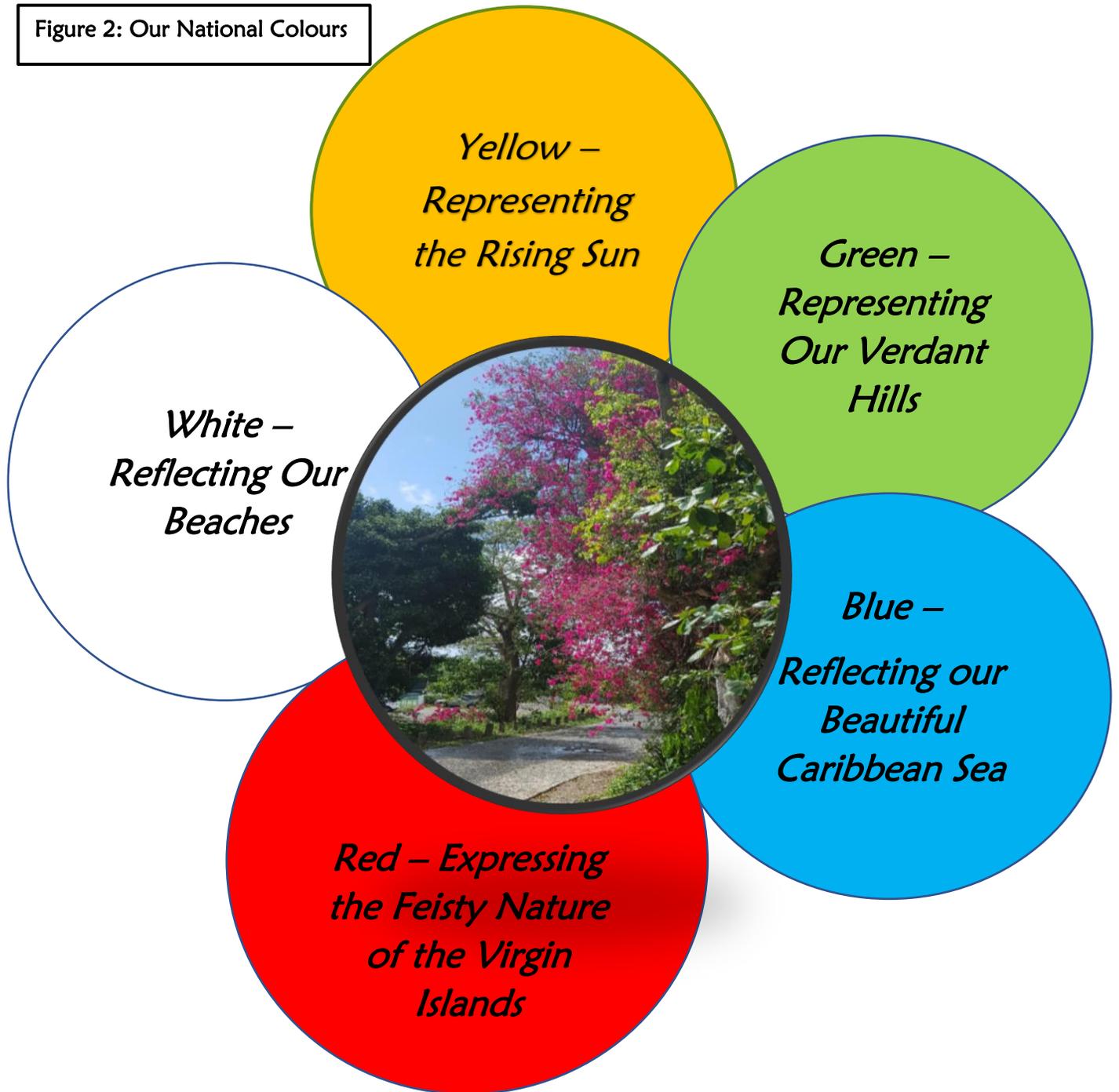
We have marched for our constitutional advancement. We were established as a British dependent territory in 1967, with a locally elected legislature and Chief Minister. Our political autonomy and our economic autonomy has grown together. Through partnerships we developed a successful tourism economy, and two decades later we began an offshore financial services sector. We have made strategic investments in infrastructure, human resources and institutions that we intend to grow and innovate to ensure the transformation we need. We remain resolute as Virgin Islanders.

**“Had - a- know is always behind the back door”- If one had known the outcome they would have acted differently**

**“What’s the good of ship on dry land” -  
What’s the use of having the most valuable thing  
if it is in a place where it cannot be of use.**

*Painting Our Own Futures:  
Our Future is Coloured by Our Nature and Our People*

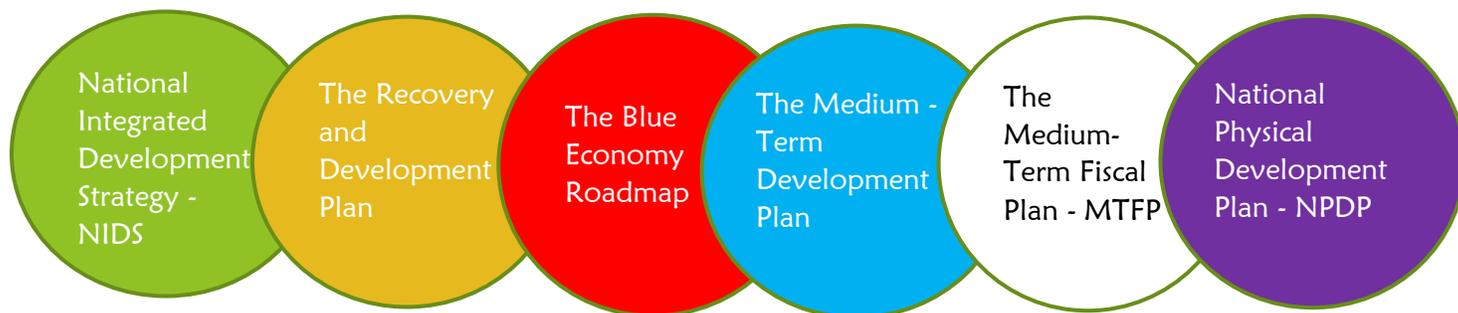
Figure 2: Our National Colours



## History on Past Planning/Plans in the Virgin Islands – SEED, Results Based Budgeting

The NSDP will be the overarching development plan for the Territory. It will facilitate the integration of the foundational work that has already commenced and will be informed by previous national development processes and plans. National planning is not new to the British Virgin Islands (BVI). The National Integrated Development Strategy (NIDS) identified a broad vision and goals for the Territory and set out the main development objectives and challenges, along with the optimal policy framework for promoting development for the five-year period 1999-2003. According to the author of the Plan, Mr. Otto O’Neal, the then Head, Planning Unit, Ministry of Finance, British Virgin Islands, “The formulation of a **NIDS** has its genesis in the concern of the Government for improving the quality of life of BV islanders, and maximizing their development and welfare. It is in support of the overall goal of improvement of the quality of life and sustainable development.”

The NIDS was followed by various sectoral plans and more recently planning work has been completed. These plans have formed part of the foundation for the NSDP and thus value inputs into the planning process:



- **The SEED**

Emphasis was placed on how the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) has provided the opportunity for incorporating the SDGs within the Social, Economic, Environmental and Direction/Governance (SEED) themes, and articulates how the GOVI aims to accomplish socioeconomic development. The commitment to the MTFP has set the foundation for long term planning, as well as, providing for a monitoring and evaluation framework that assesses the fiscal and macroeconomic performance of the Virgin Islands, alongside GOVI’s development and fiscal objectives over three-year intervals.

- **Rationale for the Development of the Plan**

The energies of the Territory have focused on strategically rebuilding lives and livelihoods since the devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 and governments have resolved to returning to a position where the Sustainable Development Goals and the national ambitions could be realised according to the priorities of the circumstances. The entire world has committed through the United Nations, has placed emphasis on an integrated

approach to development and all its components, namely economic, social, physical and environmental.

In order to fulfil commitments made to the citizens, as well as, to more effectively engage at the regional and international levels it was agreed that the country embarks on the establishment of a National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP). The alignment of national development priorities with the SDGs is an indication of the national ownership of the global agenda and will fulfil international monitoring and evaluation standards while allowing the government to be accountable to the People of these Virgin Islands.

The development of the NSDP must, moreover, be viewed as a continuation of the various stages of moving towards sustainability. The planning process for this phase of development commenced in early December 2019 with a strategic visioning mission conducted by the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in collaboration with the GOVIs. Engagement was at the highest level in the House of Assembly, as well as, with stakeholders throughout the Territory.

The NSDP will provide the BVI with an opportunity for significant national innovation and transformation. The Plan will be firmly grounded in not only the realities of the people but also on their hopes and aspirations. We want citizens to see yourself in the plan and to assist the government in ensuring the success of the plan. Most importantly, the youth of the country will be engaged to ensure that they have input into a Plan that they will live.

In the long run, this will be more than a plan, it will be an expression of resilience building that promotes consultation and consciousness and will focus on ensuring the intertwining of the “5 Ps” that shape the SDGs: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships. The emphasis will be not only on the measuring of the progress of this framework but on the advancement of the people which it reflects. No one will be left behind.

- **Our Vision for Our Future... Our Voices – A Snapshot of the Visioning and Planning process**

Intense consultations were conducted from February 2021 and continued till January 2022. Given the limitations of COVID 19 protocols, only small group consultations were held with the Public Sector. The quality of the engagements has resulted in good information for the Situation Analysis, the Consultation Report and the NSDP. The support for the Plan within this sector has been outstanding and all have expressed support for the direction that it will give to the country. They have identified coordination and inefficiencies as a major concern and asked for better alignment of Ministries, more feedback and more communication between Ministries as critical situations for inclusion. They also noted that plans for public sector reform to be put on hold until the Plan is completed and passed by the HOA.

Entrenching the SDGs into the conversations has also increased the number of the consultations that were undertaken. Many of the school Principals had not even heard of them and the schools have not undertaken any education programmes in this regard. Some of the Public Servants were not familiar with all of the goals although they had heard about them, despite the MTFP which maps the goals into the Ministries.

The Process was presented under the following headings:

- The Mandates, Establishment and Credibility of the NSDP Team.

Under this item the team/Working Planning Group (WPG), and its credentials was introduced. This group was sanctioned by the Cabinet which agreed that “The WPG would be led by the UNECLAC consultant and made up of a compliment of persons from various Government agencies with access to key resource persons.”<sup>4</sup> It was expected to undertake the following:

- Develop all preliminary planning material required for development of the NSDP;
- Integrate existing sector plans, policies etc. into the NSDP;
- Ensure that the necessary linkages to the SDGs are accomplished;
- Organise and facilitate stakeholder and community consultation meetings;
- Establish expert groupings with persons from various sectors as required to assist in the preparation of the NSDP. Sectors include construction, tourism, real estate, wholesale and retail, financial services, agriculture and fisheries etc.;
- Conduct research as required to supplement information required for the Plan;
- Write briefing materials throughout stages of preparation of the NSDP;
- Write the draft plan and for review by Cabinet; and
- Brief government officials/Cabinet on progress made during the various phases of plan preparation.

All mandates were closely followed to ensure the continued credibility of the process.

- Consultation process

The consultations reinforce that this is a plan for the people and which puts citizens at the heart of the process. Consultations were held with a broad cross section of the public as indicated in **Appendix B**. It should be noted that such engagements took place in all four of the major islands. Schools were targeted in all the islands and there was also the opportunity for public meetings in each island. Again, COVID 19 hindered the numbers who attended the sessions, the discussions were for more than two (2) hours long in each location.

Consultations were also conducted virtually with parts of the public and private sector, Government Representatives and Ministers, Associations and the Diaspora in London and New York. In addition, a presentation was made on the Government’s Facebook Page to the public in a three (3) hour feedback session. The Team also

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<sup>4</sup> Cabinet Paper: No. /2021 entitled National Sustainable Development Plan - Institutional Framework and Budget, Article 6 (1).

made many television appearances and fielded questions in radio interviews (See Appendix C)

- **Methodology**

Both assumptions and risks were presented to the Premier. It was recognized that Government commitment and was essential but that this meant access to different levels of access to the Cabinet and the House of Assembly (HOA). At the time of presentation, no contact had been made to the HOA because of the extensive legislative agenda of the territory, however, the Team met with the HOA as arranged by the Premier.

Risks were also presented including the challenges of data. It should be noted that the Team had already met with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) on two occasions before making the presentation. COVID 19 was also identified as a major risk because of the inability to meet large groups. Consequently, smaller groups were engaged but it meant that many more meetings had to be tabled for each government Ministry. During the meeting, ways of mitigating the risks were discussed and the Premier recommitted to the methodology.

The challenges with knowledge of the SDGs was also tabled as it meant that this had to be undertaken during the public education sessions, in the schools and in the consultations. It was essential to make the foundation of the Plan more visible especially in the schools and with the Principals of schools.

## **Explaining the Foundations**

The basis of the NSDP was explained under the following heading which explained

- The SDGs and the SDGs+ - All SDGs are explained and priorities are identified. In addition, if targets are already met discussions are held on BVI specific targets.
- The uniqueness of the Plan – The discussions are around making the plan BVI specific with an emphasis on the youth and their vision.
- The CARICOM process – The targets are compared with the CARICOM set which examines the priorities for the region. An analysis of additional priorities outside of the CARICOM set will be undertaken using the global set.
- The Targets and Indicators – These are currently identified within the budget but further analysis would be undertaken during the mapping exercise.
- Data Collection – Two meetings were held with the CSO to discuss the ability to produce data and how to identify where the data is located. Additional meetings were held during the writing phase.
- Review of the existing plans, policies and legislation
- The Situation Analysis – This was a critical foundation exercise and is included in the Plan.
- Voluntary Reporting the UN- All have seen this requirement as a means of ensuring involvement of other sectors of the society in monitoring and evaluation. It is also seen as an important mechanism for giving feedback on progress to the Territory.

## Explaining the Outputs

- The Situation Analysis (Included in Chapter I)– It was agreed that this was needed to ensure that the NSDP would be built on the correct internal and external analysis. Given the time since the NIDS plan was developed, Hurricanes Maria and IRMA and COVID 19 such an analysis was necessary especially as citizens were focused on immediate needs and not a vision for the future.
- The Consultation Report (Appendix A) – The COVID 19 limitations also provided an opportunity for more intimate consultations which yielded many stories and perceptions.
- The Implementation Framework (Included as Chapter 4) – There are calls for such a framework, as well as, implementation mechanisms to follow-up and ensure entrenchment.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Included as Chapter 5) – The need to recognise success, as well as setbacks are very important to the citizens and the Public Service who want to know about the impact of policies and government spending
- The NSDP – There is much excitement around such a Plan and all agreed that it was necessary moving forward.
- Mapping the SDGs- This process had already commenced with the MTFP and work was undertaken with Ministries in order to set priorities and to report on results. With new policy documents such as the National Physical Development Plan and new legislation like the Environmental Management and Climate Resilience Bill, under consideration by the Cabinet, the aim is to review and ensure that the SDGs are mapped before the documents are adopted. In addition, the Team agreed that the Plan should advocate for a mapping exercise with other policies already operating in departments. It is also the intention to undertake this exercise with the Private Sector to ensure that they also undertake the mapping exercise so that they better understand how they are contributing to the NSDP.
- Identification of Gaps – This will be undertaken with the mapping exercise so that there is a more comprehensive accounting for the SDGs.

## Promoting the Images and the Branding

All presentations included the SDGs, the VI logo and the ECLAC. These three symbols are at the heart of the imaging and branding. These can be seen in the attached presentation and on the t-shirts worn by the Team, as well as teaching materials. (see below).



In addition, the Team undertook two competitions. The first was a slogan competition now used in the promotion. A student who submitted, “Enhancing and protecting our precious land with the National Sustainable Development Plan” was the winner. The second was an Essay Competition which was not as successful as entries were limited.

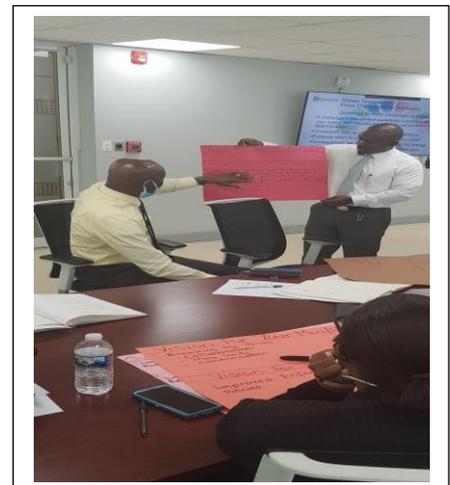
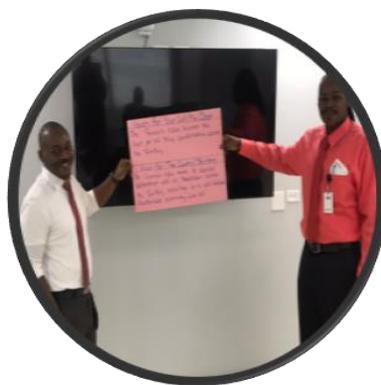
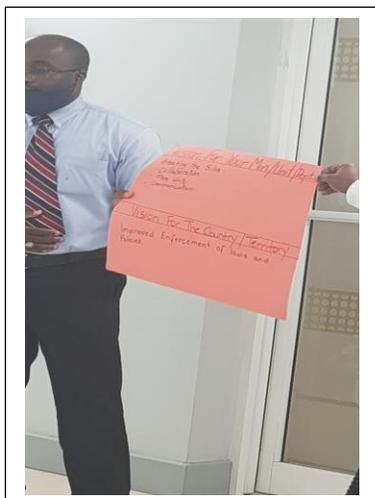
## The Visioning

During the consultations time is spent on participants putting together statements, words or sentences in the vision for their sector/Ministry and for the Territory. These statements were collated in an excel sheet and returned to groups so that they could add to what they submitted. They also had the opportunity to submit to the Team on their own individual thoughts as the work in the consultations is undertaken groups.

**Figure 3: Examples of Key Words and Phrasing used at the Visioning Exercise**

- Participation/collaboration at all levels (Private/public)
- Resilient, accommodating, adaptive
- Customer service that we would all be proud of.
  - o **Beautiful** (clean- sight/smell – environment)
  - o **Visionary** (infrastructure, internet, proper y) of our people)
  - o **Innovative** (adaptable to changes worldwide and locally)
- Regulated development plan
- Emphasis on food security for the territory by developing or adopting advanced technologies. (Exportation of produce throughout the region and worldwide).
- Promotion of local industries for exportation of products.
- Protection of land and sea borders
- Reliable and safe supply of water/ reliable sewerage system
- Dependable, cost effective and fast internet/telecom. (Hybrid system)
- Reliable intermodal transportations system (land sea air
- Road network (bridges) – International standard construction

Most of the key words were focused on setting of standards, resilience, reliability, internal development, participation and innovation/adaptation. The Team spent time collating these ideas in order to synthesise the Vision for the Territory.

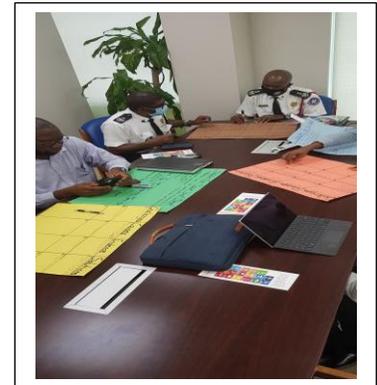
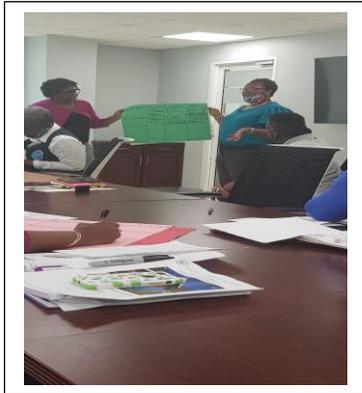


## We Consulted with the Citizens



## From Challenges to Solutions

During this exercise the participants are asked to work through challenges/problems, the causes for such, the evidence they may have and possible solutions. Then they work through consequences if the solutions are not adopted. This helped to drill down on what real challenges faced without focusing on money and training.



## Trends

The trends can be divided into two main headings, hope and concern, which summarise the views expressed at the consultations.

### HOPE

1. There is need for an overarching plan.
2. No one should be left behind,
3. We will be champions for the Plan
4. The NDSP will help us to focus on priorities and results.
5. Government cannot do everything. Other sectors must step up
6. We must focus on impact.
7. We must preserve our environment.
8. We can do this together.
9. There must be more emphasis on impact
10. We need feed back

### CONCERN

1. The politicians will not stick to the Plan.
2. We have no identity.
3. We do not place emphasis on planning.
4. We have done plans before.
5. We do not get buy-in from the politicians.
6. Haphazard development with no focus on preserving our environment.
7. Spending has no impact.
8. Ministries are not aligned
9. No emphasis on data.
10. Youth is disillusioned

The feelings of citizens are ambivalent as they note the lack of continuity as administrations change and plans are put on hold without careful analysis, sometimes due to lack of data, without giving feedback or reasons for changes, and sometimes without consulting with public servants. At the same time, they hoped that with a plan, especially one that prevents working in silos, would ensure more efficiencies.

# Chapter 1: Context for Our Vision for Sustainable Development

Building on our Past to Sustain our Future



Jost Van Dyke Primary

“Enhancing and Protecting our Precious Land with the National Sustainable Development Plan”



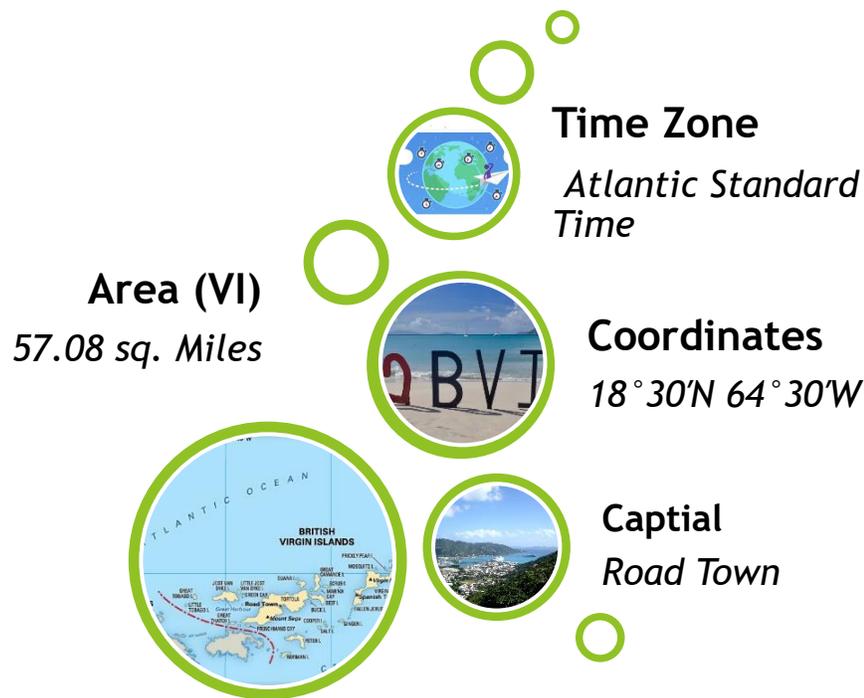
- ✚ Current Situational Analysis
- ✚ National SWOT- Our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- ✚ Global Context, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- ✚ Binding Constraints to Our Development
- ✚ Guiding Principles
- ✚ Determining our National Priorities – Our National Goals and Our National Outcomes

# Situation Analysis



## INTRODUCTION – ABOUT THE VI

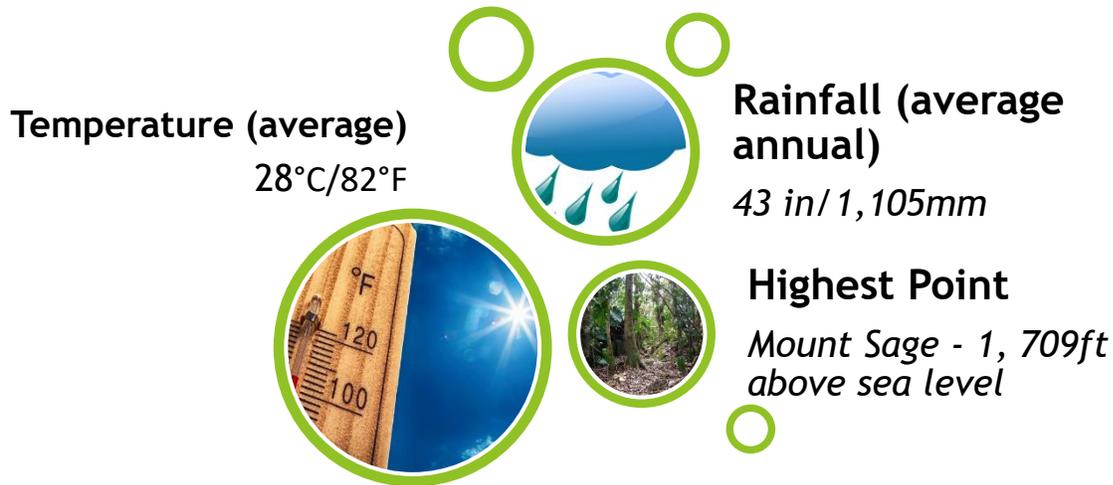
- Location



The Virgin Islands are a series of small islands and cays located a few miles east of the US Virgin Islands and about 95 km (59 miles) east of Puerto Rico. It is part of the Leeward Islands in the Lesser Antilles. The North Atlantic Ocean lies to the east of the islands, and the Caribbean Sea lies to the west.

Tortola where the main airport and the capital Road Town are located is the largest island. Other main islands include Virgin Gorda, Anegada, and Jost Van Dyke which can be accessed from Tortola by ferry, private boat and airplane (with the exception of Jost Van Dyke).

## GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE



The Virgin Islands comprises of around 60 islands. With the exception of Anegada which is flat and composed of limestone and coral, most of the islands are volcanic in origin and have a hilly, rugged terrain. The highest point is Mount Sage at 521 metres (1,709 ft) above sea level located on Tortola.

The VI has a tropical climate with year-round trade winds and average temperatures of about 28°C. Rainfall averages about 1,105 mm (43 in) per year with the wettest months on average September to November and the driest months on average are February and March. The islands are in the hurricane belt with the hurricane season running from June to November usually peaking in August, September, and October.

## GOVERNMENT

The VI is self-governing overseas Territory of the United Kingdom with the Queen as the Head of State represented locally by the Governor. The Governor is responsible for external affairs, defence and internal security, the Public Service and administration of the Courts. The ministerial system of government is led by an elected Premier, a Cabinet of Ministers and the House of Assembly. The Cabinet consists of the Premier, four other Ministers and Attorney General as an *ex officio* member. The Cabinet is responsible for formulating and implementing policy. The House of Assembly consists of 13 elected members of which nine are tied to electoral districts and four "at large" seats.

## LEGAL SYSTEM

The VI has an independent legal and judicial system based on a combination of English Common Law and local statutes, orders and civil procedure rules. Lower-level disputes and petty crimes are resolved in the Magistrates' Court. More serious matters are dealt with in the Supreme Court (officially known as the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court of which the BVI is a member state). Appeals from the Supreme Court lie to the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeal and the final appeal lies to the Privy Council.

The Virgin Islands hosts the **Commercial Court** of the East Caribbean Supreme Court which serves the expanding needs of commercial litigation in the Territory and the Eastern Caribbean. The court specialises exclusively in domestic and cross-border commercial and insolvency matters. It hears such matters from nine Caribbean nations and territories.

The VI is a centre for the resolution of domestic and international disputes. The British Virgin Islands' Arbitration Act 2013 came into force on October 1st, 2014 making provisions for a modern arbitration centre. **The BVI International Arbitration Centre** provides neutral, efficient and reliable dispute resolution services. The state-of-the-art facilities offers a variety of rooms for hearings and meetings, video and audio conferencing, interpretation and translation services and concierge services.

## Economy



Sources: Central Statistics Office, Macro Fiscal Unit

\*2019 estimates, ^2020 estimates

## Overview and Trends

The VI economy is based on two distinct pillars, Tourism and Financial Services, which constitute for most of the growth of the economy. The tourism sector contributes approximately 33% to GDP (\$459 million) while the financial services industry is estimated to make up 17%<sup>5</sup> of overall output. Tourism is also the biggest employer accounting for one in four jobs. On the contrary financial services contributes significantly more to government receipts than tourism (56% and 3% respectively<sup>6</sup>). Positive developments in the two pillars have resulted in expansion of ancillary sectors including construction (both private (residential and commercial) and public), real estate sector (residential and commercial) and the wholesale and retail which made up 25% of national output (see Figure 4). Agriculture and fishing make up only about 1.6% of GDP and are done on a small scale supplementing a small component of local demand.

The VI's economy is one of the strongest in the Caribbean with a per capital income of approximately \$48,000<sup>7</sup> and the most recent estimates (2018) place real GDP at just over \$1.3 billion with 2.9% average growth between 2010 and 2018. Inflation has also remained low averaging 2% over the last decade.

As a small open economy, the BVI imports almost all the goods it consumes from its principal trading partner, the United States including Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Imports in 2014<sup>8</sup> were valued at approximately half a billion dollars. The BVI is not a major exporter of goods but has significant service exports.

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<sup>5</sup> 2013 estimate. 2015 PWC Report - Economic Impact Development of Terrance B. Lett some International Airport

<sup>6</sup> 2019 revenue figures - Macro Fiscal Unit (Ministry of Finance)

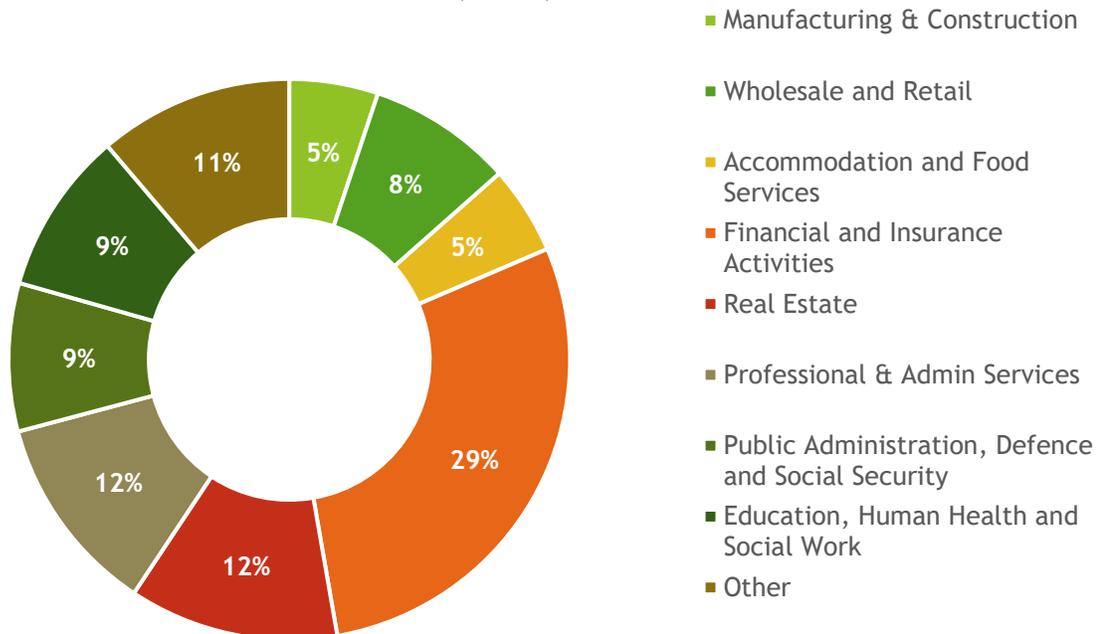
<sup>7</sup> UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women, British Virgin Islands COVID-19 HEAT Report - Human and Economic Assessment of Impact, 2020.

<sup>8</sup>

<https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/WLD/Year/2014/TradeFlow/Import/Partner/VGB/Product/All-Groups>.

Figure 4

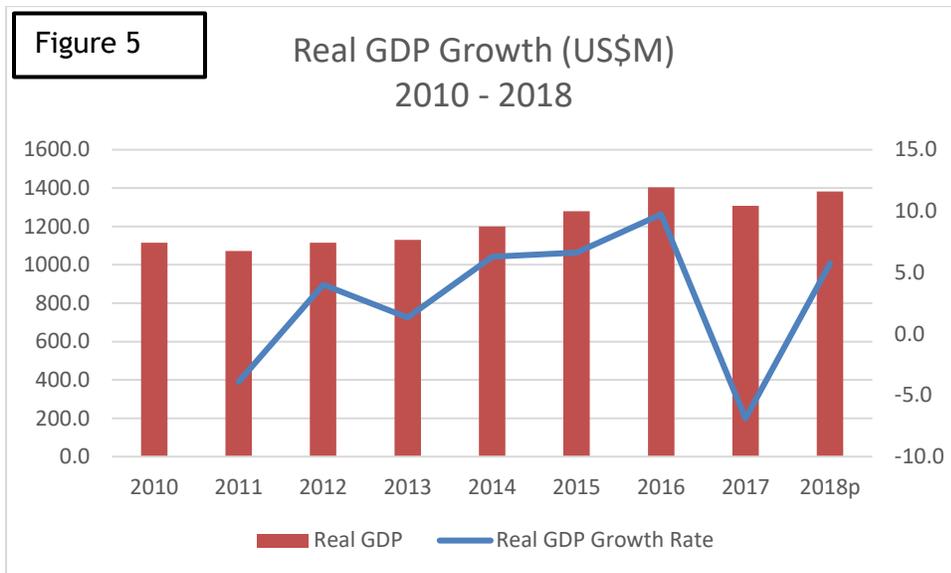
### Contribution to GDP by Sector (2018)



Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 and more recently the COVID-19 global crisis significantly impacted the economy in particular the tourism sector. In 2017 the economy contracted by 6.9% and any recovery gains in 2018 and 2019 were completely erased in 2020 by the COVID-19 crisis.

The 2018 and 2019 preliminary real GDP estimates showed growth as the VI embarked on its path to economic recovery post hurricanes. This was led primarily by the re-emergence of the tourism sector, a historically large national infrastructure recovery and redevelopment programme (public and private sector) and the financial services sector remaining relatively stable. However, necessary policy decisions to curtail the spread of COVID-19 (including border closures, curfews, and lockdowns) resulted in the suspension of tourist arrivals for the majority of 2020 and curtailment of internal commerce. Consequently, in 2020 the BVI entered its worst recessionary period with an estimated decline in nominal GDP of close to 10% (see Figure 5<sup>9</sup>). In addition to rising unemployment (disproportionally affecting women and immigrants), economic stimulus and social protection policies coupled with increased health sector expenditure health policies have put significant strain on already stretched fiscal resources. The economy is expected to recover slightly in 2021 as global travel resumes and internal restrictions are lifted but it is anticipated to be a slow recovery given the ongoing global threat of COVID-19.

<sup>9</sup> Medium Term Fiscal Plan 2022-2024.



## Major Challenges

### **Resilience to External Shocks and Disaster Funding**

The VI's main productive sectors like most small states are highly susceptible to external shocks such as hurricanes and financial and economic crises. The overall cost of losses and damages from Hurricanes Irma and Maria for instance were more than double the Territory's GDP and direct and indirect costs of COVID-19 are still being deduced. Recovery can therefore be long and difficult. The country's ineligibility to access most global disaster relief grants given its status as a UK overseas Territory and high GDP per capita further retards the rate of recovery from any crisis.

Policymakers are challenged with how to factor in these uncertainties about externally driven impacts into their decision making and will need to critically consider what policies going forward can improve the resilience of the economy.

### **Economic Diversification, Foreign Direct Investment and Ease of Doing Business**

The VI's ability to diversify its economy is hindered somewhat by its small size and limited resources. Steps have been considered to expand the offerings within the financial services sphere to create more economic opportunities within the sector and broaden the value it adds to economic growth. Plans have been developed but the lack of coordination and funding have affected the successful implementation of various strategies. Incentives to mobilise the private sector to engage in technology driven industries are essential in building a more diverse and resilient economy. Small and medium size businesses are the backbone of the economy but to flourish they need assistance and guidance in accessing financing and domestic and foreign markets for their goods and services.

Foreign direct investment in the VI has been sporadic and this is particularly evident in the tourism sector. Apart from recovery efforts new resort development has been slow especially when

compared to other competitors in the region. Any new trade and investment policies must balance the need for critical investment in the sector with preserving the uniqueness of the VI's tourism product.

Although the VI is recognised as a leading financial centre the local corporate and business culture may be difficult to navigate hereby negatively impacting business efficiency and by extension increasing the cost of doing business. There is a need for a review to ensure that reported bottlenecks, anomalies and archaic policies are eliminated and replaced with a modern system that facilitates the 'ease of doing business'.

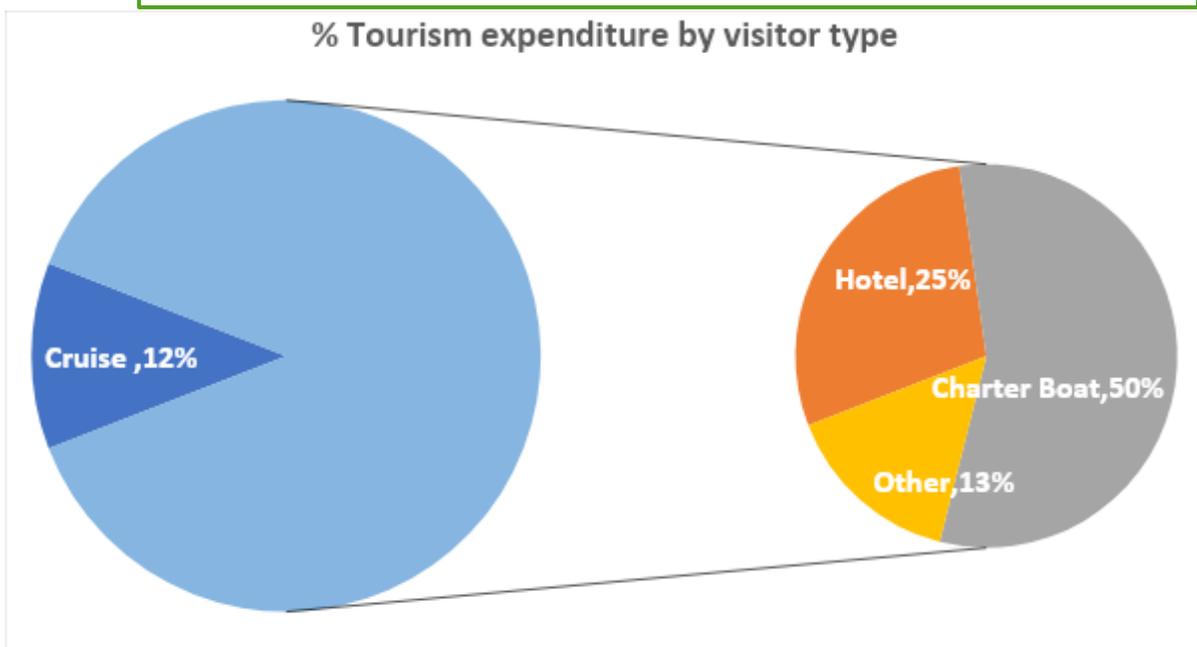
## Tourism

### Overview and Trends

Tourism is the main economic sector of the VI's economy. It also is the main driver for the many other parts of the economy including wholesale and retail business, hotels, restaurants, and land and sea transportation.

The VI is known as the 'sailing capital of the world' which affords visitors the opportunity to explore by sea the numerous inlets and cays which make up the archipelago of islands. The charter boat/yachting sector has a sizable fleet of vessels along with supporting infrastructure including large marinas and dock yards. This sub-sector is a significant part of the industry since it accounts for approximately 50% (approximately \$261 million annually<sup>10</sup>) of overall visitor expenditure (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Percentage of Contributions of the Various Tourism Products



<sup>10</sup> Based on 2016 tourism expenditure survey conducted by the CSO.

Land-based tourism is concentrated on the outer islands of Virgin Gorda, Anegada and Jost Van Dyke. Large resorts are absent but instead the room inventory is made up of villas, cottages, and medium size luxury resorts. The majority of tourists originate from the United States although marketing efforts are also active in Europe and South America.

Like other tourism destinations within the region the tourism infrastructure and services have expanded to meet the needs of the growing cruise tourism industry. The largest public investment to date was a multi-million-dollar landside and berthing development opened in 2016 to accommodate larger cruise ships with more passengers. Tourism numbers peaked in 2016 with a record 1.1 million visitors driven by an increase in cruise passenger arrivals (3:2 ratio of cruise to overnighters passengers in 2016 compared to 1:1 ratio in 2013 and 2014). Although growth in cruise tourism has provided additional opportunities for taxi drivers, tour operators and vendors historically overnight tourism contributes greater to GDP. Overnight tourism expenditure was 88% (\$457 million) of total tourism expenditure compared to 12% (\$63 million) by cruise passengers.<sup>11</sup>

Tourism arrivals reached record lows in 2018 and 2020 because of hurricane Irma and the COVID-19 crisis respectively. The destruction caused by the hurricanes to the tourism industry was substantial. There was extensive damage to both land-based and sea-based infrastructure. Major hotels, villas, guest houses and restaurants were destroyed or severely damaged. Many of the tourist facilities are close to the sea; so, in addition to wind damages they were exposed to the ravages of the storm surge. The damage to yachts was the most significant, with several vessels capsized, sunk or ending up on the land. The total cost the hurricanes to the tourism sector was approximately US\$1.1 billion equivalent to the Territory's annual output.

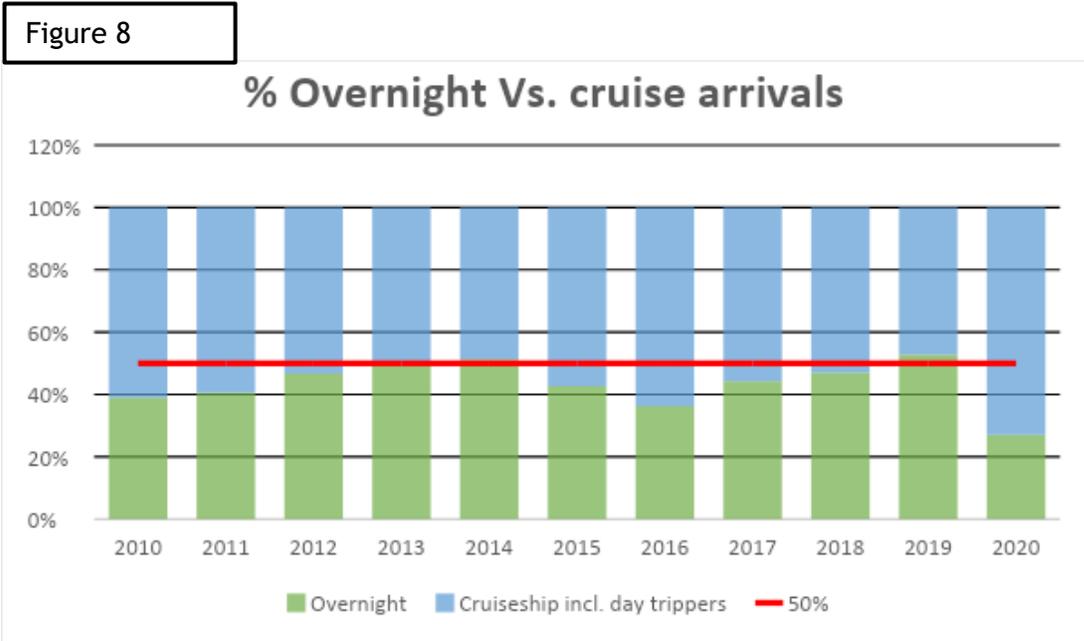
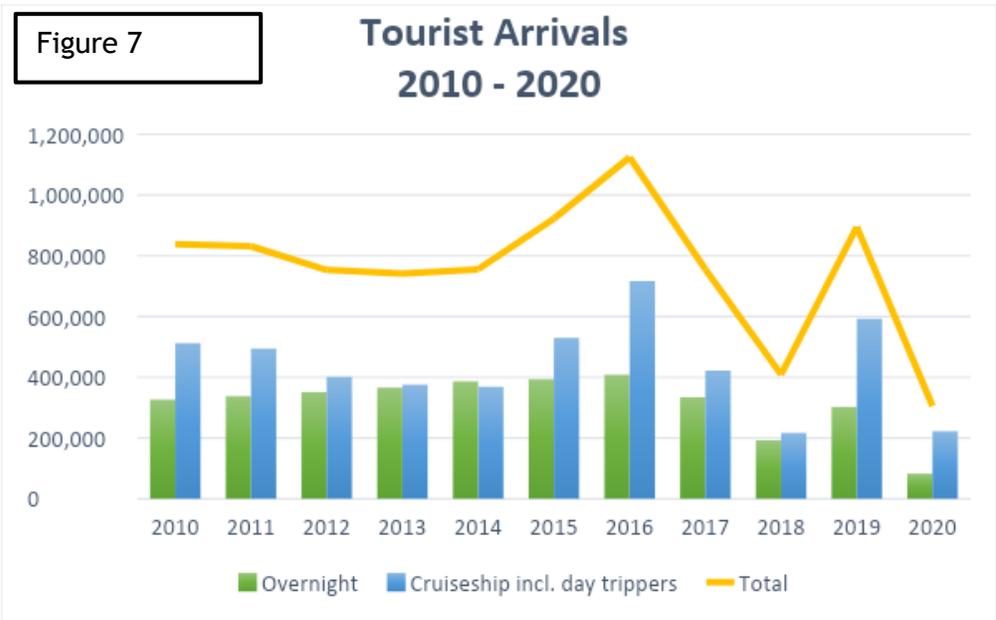
The Territory closed its borders in March 2020 until December of the same year to curb the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the burden on the fragile health system. Tourist arrivals in 2020 were only 34% of 2019 and estimated losses in tourism revenue for 2020 were in the region of \$450 million<sup>12</sup> around 35% of GDP<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Based on information compiled from a 2016 visitor expenditure survey (CSO).

<sup>12</sup> 2021 Mid-Year Macro Fiscal Report.

<sup>13</sup> Based on 2018 real GDP preliminary estimates



**Major Challenges**

**Direct air access** to the BVI is one of the potential factors restraining the growth and diversification of the tourism industry including the ability to attract major foreign investment and encourage niche areas such as sports and medical tourism. The main airport accommodates small private jets and smaller commuter flights which funnel visitors from nearby international hubs including Puerto Rico, St. Maarten, and Antigua. This accounts for approximately 20% of visitor arrivals annually with the remaining 80% arriving via the various seaports. Commercial

ferries and private water taxi's transport visitors between the United States Virgin Islands (which provides a direct link to the US mainland) to the various international ports of entry in the VI. Relying largely on the USVI as the major port of entry and the difficulty in getting to the VI has its own inherent risks most significantly loss of market share to competitors.

The lack of **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** has limited the growth potential of the tourism industry. Room inventory for example is much lower than other competing jurisdictions thereby limiting the ability to host major events such as conferences and sporting activities.

**Deteriorating public infrastructure** including ports, roads, water transportation and water & sewerage has made it difficult to support the tourism industry to the standard that is expected from a luxury destination. Investment in public goods needs to be ramped up to meet the needs of a growing population and the BVI's niche tourism market.

Absence of a **comprehensive long term tourism strategy** to guide the development of the industry for the next 10 – 20 years could lead to an unstructured approach to its sustainability and growth.

**Managing environmental impacts** of increased tourist activity and climate change are especially challenging. Sea warming caused by rising global temperatures and surface run-off caused by deforestation and severe weather events have affected the VI's costal landscapes and marine ecosystems. Increased traffic to already fragile tourism sites with the pivot to mass cruise tourism needs to be critically managed. Therefore, understanding the carrying load of various natural attractions and controlling tourist numbers is essential for the preservation of the environment that attracts the tourists to the shores of the country.

## Financial Services

### Overview and Trends

The financial services industry is the second largest contributor to GDP and the main contributor to government revenue. About 56% <sup>14</sup>of government receipts originate from the incorporation of companies and ancillary regulatory fees.

The BVI is a leading offshore financial centre and one of the world's largest jurisdictions for the incorporation of companies. The growth of the financial services sector in the VI was mainly due to the success of the International Business Company (IBC) (now known as the BVI Business Company after the enactment of new incorporation legislation – BVI Business Company Act, 2004) first unveiled in 1984. BVI Business Companies are used worldwide to facilitate cross-border trade and investment transactions and play an important role in enabling international capital flows. To facilitate the provision of flexible corporate structures the VI has developed a modern and innovative legal environment and robust regulatory environment which complies with international standards for transparency, tax information exchange, anti-money laundering and measures to combat the financing of terrorism. The jurisdiction is also the home to specialist financial, legal and accounting firms which have created opportunities for local employment.

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<sup>14</sup> Based on 2019 revenue figures from the Macro Fiscal Unit – Ministry of Finance.

In 2017 the VI commissioned a study to understand and quantify its contribution to global finance. The Capital Economics Report “Creating Value: The BVI’s Global Contribution” presented some conclusions:

- Major companies worldwide use VI Business Companies to manage their cross-border activities. The VI is home to part of the group structure of over 140 major businesses listed on the London, New York or Hong Kong main stock exchanges.
- The assets held by VI corporate vehicles have an estimated worldwide value of US\$1½ trillion.
- The VI was the ninth largest recipient of foreign direct investment, and the seventh largest source of outward flows in 2015 (according to the United Nations).
- Roughly two-fifths of active companies originate from Asia.

Over the last decade annual company incorporations have been declining and this has impacted the number of active companies on the register which is the underlying source of Government revenue (see Figures 9 & 10). Between 2011 and 2020 the number of active companies declined by 24%. The 2018 fee increase however, helped to dampen the impact of reduced volume of annual incorporations and active companies. Government revenue from financial services reached a record high \$230 million in 2018 (a 32% increase from 2017) and has managed to remain above \$200 million in 2020 despite the slowdown in global economic activity during COVID-19. The industry also displayed remarkable resilience following the 2017 disasters because of its robust business continuity planning and advanced virtual licensing systems thereby limiting disruption to business activity.

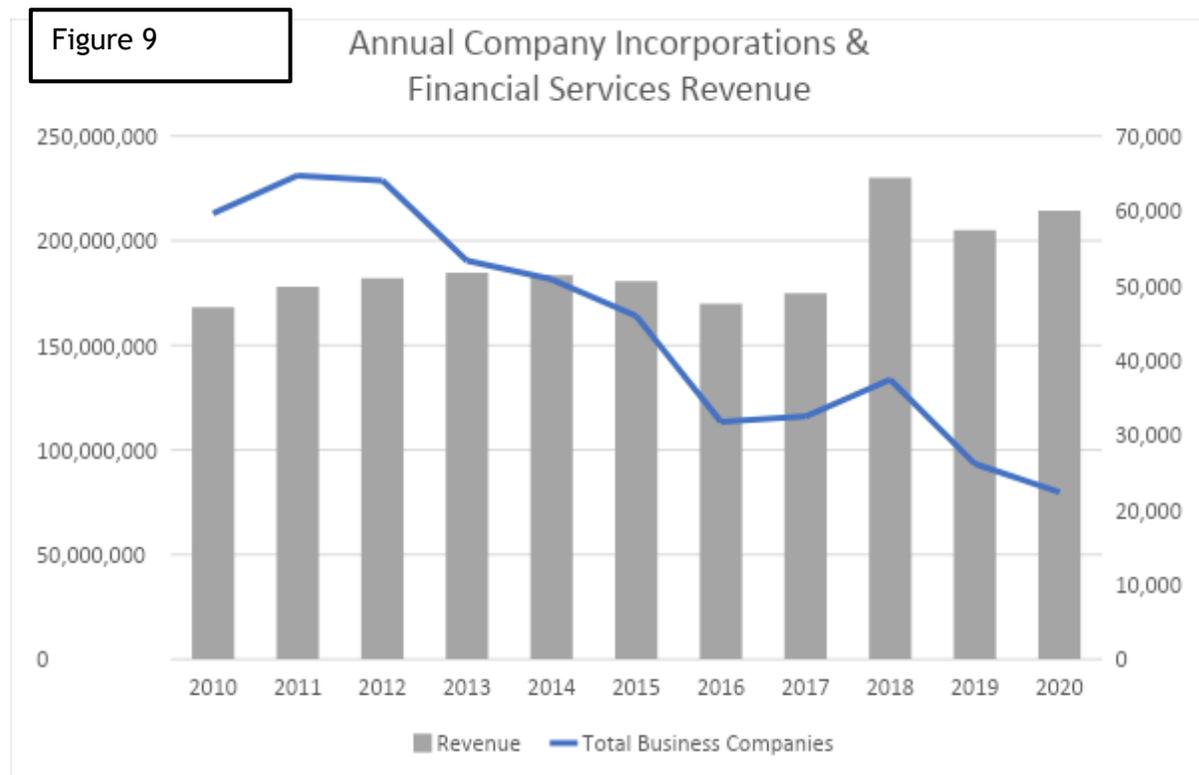
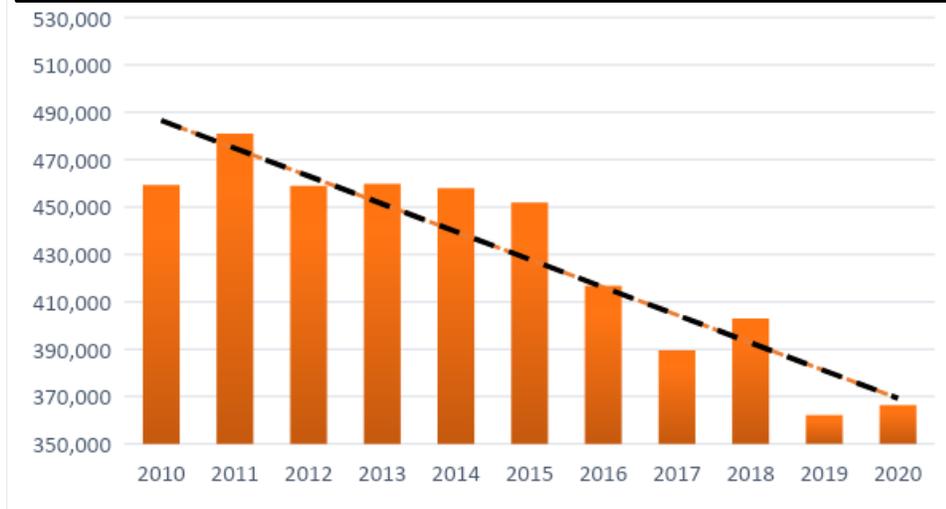


Figure 10: Contribution of Financial Services to Government Revenue 2010 - 2020



## Challenges

Despite the success of the industry over the last 30-plus years the last decade has been particularly challenging. Ongoing international initiatives and pressures and geo-political occurrences threaten to undermine confidence in the sector and/or inhibit its growth potential. These include:

- Implications of implementation of registers of beneficial ownership and resulting impact on the industry and other related sectors;
- Mitigating the trending decline in annual incorporations and active companies;
- Getting greater clarity behind the requirements for economic substance and creating an enabling environment to reap the benefits while managing any potential risks;
- Managing the regulatory risk of the digital economy including FinTech and digital currencies including retooling and reorganisation of regulatory infrastructure to better manage more complex financial instruments;
- Empowering the industry to rotate to more value-added service offerings;
- Navigating through the various international initiatives including the OECD digital tax initiative and the global minimum tax initiative and understanding the impacts on the industry; and
- De-risking of the banking sector which has resulted in high regulatory and compliance costs within local banking establishments.

## Agriculture and Fishing

### Overview and Trends

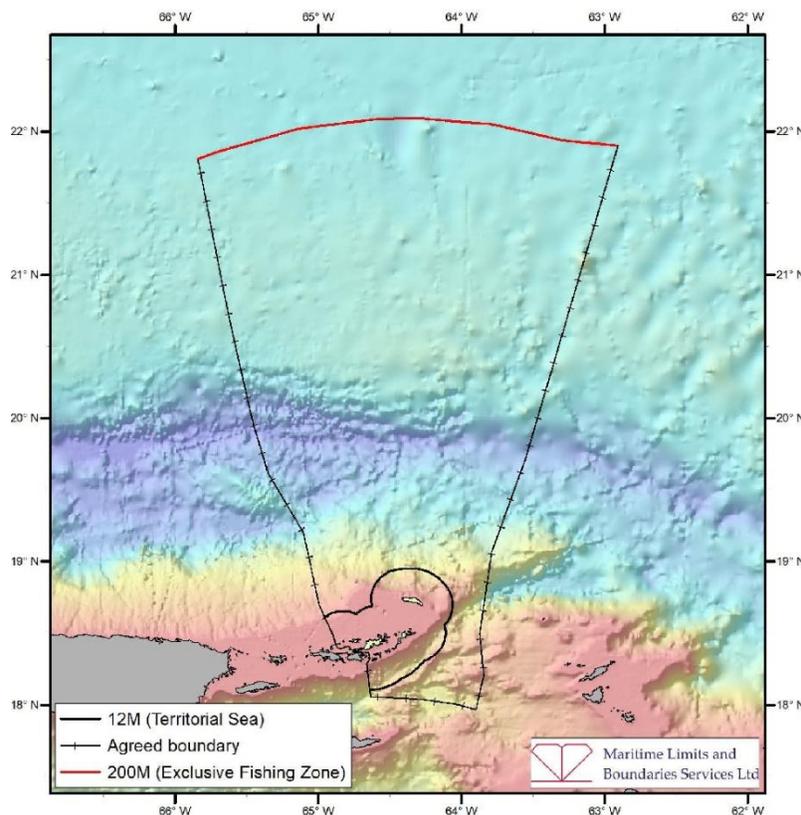
Prior to the 1960's agriculture and fisheries were the main economic activities in the Virgin Islands supplying domestic needs and those of the neighbouring United States Virgin Islands. Today however, over 90% of food is imported and in 2017 the Territory's food import bill exceeded \$35

million. Meat, poultry and dairy products accounted for approximately 28% of food imports in 2017 and fruits and vegetables 24%. Fish represented only made up 6% of food imports.

Most of the farmers are part-time and operate on a small-scale. Similarly, most of the commercial fishers are also part-time with some of them also involved in agriculture. There are however a cadre of about 200 persons <sup>15</sup>(mostly male) dedicated to fishing activities. There is one large-scale poultry farm, which has an annual output of approximately 185,000 pounds of chicken. Both sectors were severely affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria with the loss of equipment, structures, crops, livestock and other inputs. The Government’s Greenhouse Project which was an initial attempt to introduce advanced technology to farming on a larger scale and help improve food security was totally destroyed before commissioned.

Although agriculture and fishing contribute less than 2 percent currently to overall economic output successive Governments have identified these industries as developmental priorities given their importance to food security and sustainability, reducing the Territory’s food import bill as well as promoting healthy living.

The fishing industry in particular has the potential to grow sustainably into a formidable sector that satisfies both local demand and supports an export market. Under international law the Virgin Islands has rights and responsibilities over approximately 84,000 square kilometers of maritime space. Currently most fishing takes place within three to sixty miles of the shoreline.



**Figure 11: The Virgin Islands’ Maritime Space**

<sup>15</sup> Based on 2019 revenue figures from the Macro Fiscal Unit – Ministry of Finance.

Poultry and pig farming are viewed as two possible industries the Territory could pursue on a larger scale, provided that any potential environmental implications on the islands ecosystem is managed. The aim is for agriculture and fisheries to play an integral role in the diversification of the Virgin Islands' economy

### Major Challenges

The main issues plaguing agriculture in the BVI are access to arable land and adequate and reliability water supplies affecting crop diversity and yields. These are compounded with high import costs associated with farming materials and access to seedlings and animal feed. The absence of organised markets matching merchants to customers has resulted in challenges on both the supply and demand side.

The fishing industry has also suffered from a lack of investment. There is a glaring absence of large commercial vessels, general fishing infrastructure including on-land fishing storage facilities, centralised fish markets and landing sites. Unpredictable fuel prices, high equipment purchasing and maintenance costs and the absence of mechanisms and incentives to promote investment in the sector have also made entrance into this industry prohibitive for local entrepreneurs.

### Fiscal



<sup>^</sup>2020 Estimates

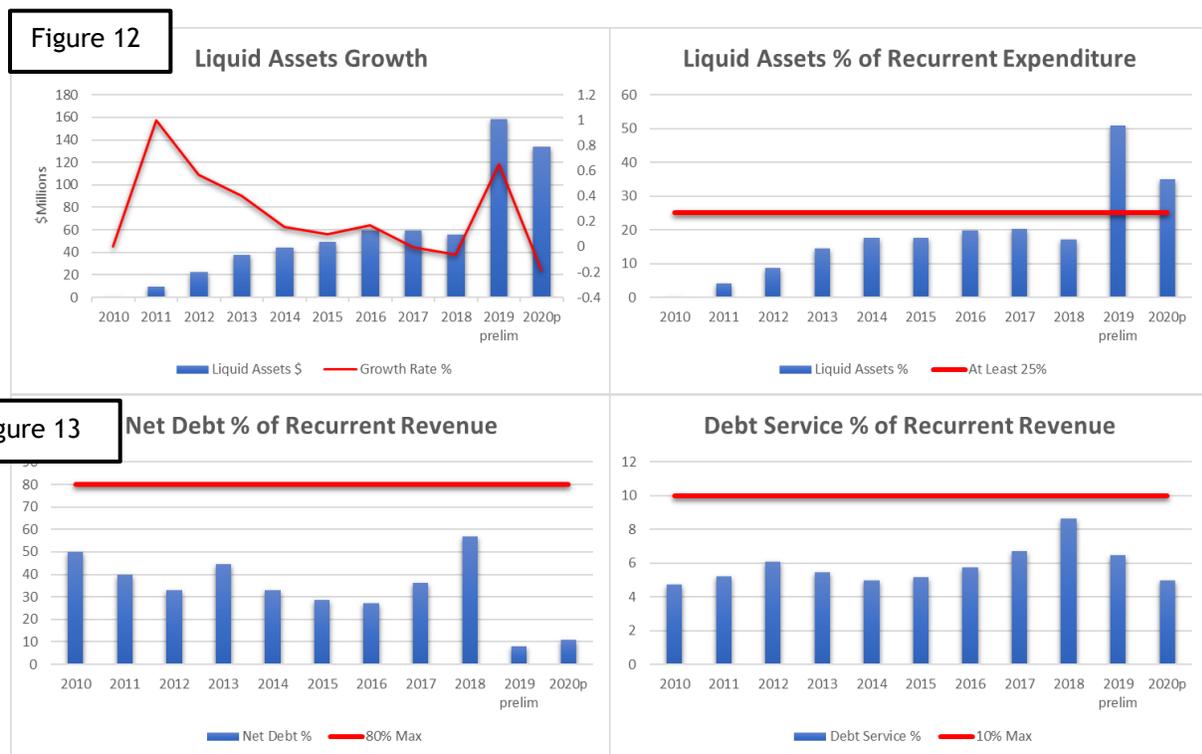
## Overview and Trends

The Virgin Islands has exhibited a strong and relatively stable fiscal position over the last 10 years. Periods of revenue growth coincided with a strong global economy and debt has remained within fiscal limits as set out in the Protocols for Effective Financial Management (section 20):

- Liquid assets remain above 25% of recurrent expenditure;
- Net debt remains within 80% of recurrent revenue; and
- Debt service remains within 10% of recurrent revenue.

Liquid assets (cash reserves) grew to approximately 50% of recurrent expenditure by 2019 able to cover approximately 6 months of government spending. In 2020, reserve funds were used to fund part of the expenditures associated with the COVID-19 crisis (see Figure 12). Borrowing restrictions exist which includes only borrowing for capital projects.

At the end of 2020 total public borrowing stood at \$179.2 million or 12.4% of GDP <sup>16</sup>and well within the borrowing ratios (see Figure 13) providing the Government with additional borrowing capacity in the future to expand its capital investment programme especially since the Territory continues to rebuild following the destruction from hurricanes Irma and Maria.



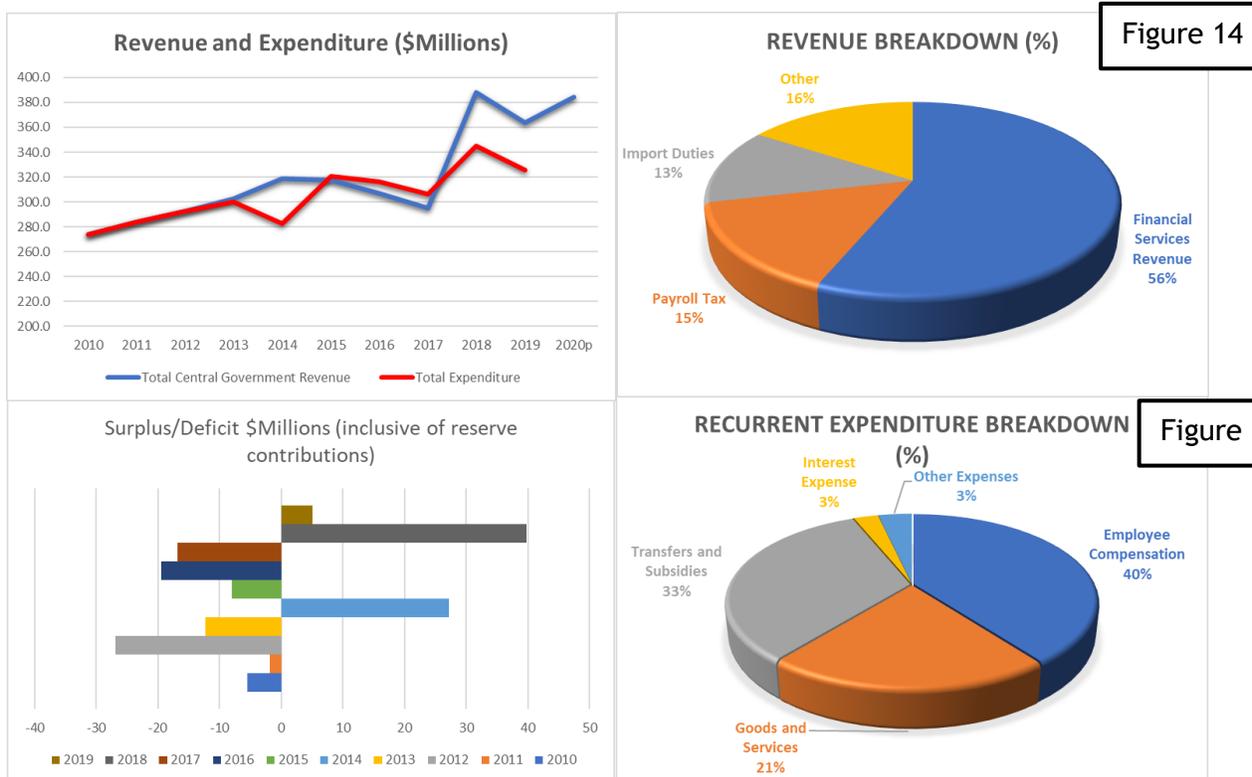
More than half of revenue (56% in 2019) collected by the Government of the Virgin Islands is based on fees from the financial services sector (see Figure 14). The other two main revenue

<sup>16</sup> Associated with investment in major public infrastructure including the construction of the new hospital, expansion of the T.B Lettsome international airport, cruise pier land-based development and berthing facilities and reconstruction and rehabilitation following the passage of hurricanes Irma and Maria.

generators – import duties and payroll tax accounted collectively for 28% of total revenue (see Figure 14). Total revenue peaked in 2018 with \$387.9 million collected. This was associated with an increase in incorporation fees resulting in an overall surplus of approximately \$40 million and allowing a significant contribution to the Government’s reserve fund. Revenue collections have subsequently declined given the decrease in the annual number of incorporations and declining stock of active VI Business Companies.

Recurrent expenditure increases have been driven mainly by the rising wage bill, growing pension liabilities and health care inflation reflected in annual higher contributions to the national health insurance scheme. In 2019 employee compensation and transfers and subsidies made up 73% of total recurrent spending contributing 40% and 33% respectively. Interest payments only made up 3% of recurrent expenditure in 2019 reflecting low debt levels.

Annual capital expenditure over the last 10 years has ranged from a low of 5% to a high of 14% of total expenditure and in most years way below the original budget amount, signaling a lag in the execution of infrastructure projects.



## Major Challenges

### Declining Revenues

The Government’s revenue base is very narrow depending heavily on fees generated from the incorporation of companies. Over the years this revenue source has survived external shocks when others have not, thereby protecting overall revenue numbers. However, there are signs of retrenchment. The number of new company incorporations have been declining annually impacting the stock of active BVI Business Companies. Delays in: diversification of offerings

within the financial services sphere and attracting other revenue streams; broadening of the local tax base; and implementing other revenue generating initiatives could lead to future declines in revenue and recurring deficits on the recurrent side.

### **Implementation of Fiscal Strategies**

Realisation of fiscal strategies geared towards expenditure reduction and management have been slow in implementation including public service and pension reforms. The rising unfunded pension liability will continue to place a significant burden on revenue as well as the growing wage bill. The introduction of universal health care in 2016 has added in excess of \$X million annually (and growing) to Government expenditure therefore making it even more critical to implement revenue generating and expenditure management initiatives.

### **Inadequate Revenue Collection Mechanisms**

Significant leakages within the collection system have negatively impacted annual Government cash flows and have resulted in other tax and fee revenue<sup>17</sup> remaining relatively flat over the years despite economic growth and population increases. Tax compliance can be improved notably by strengthening the mechanisms used for assessment and payment of all government taxes and fees with the introduction of digitisation.

### **Borrowing Options**

The BVI has the fiscal space to increase its borrowing however, but the Government has not been able to diversify its debt portfolio which is comprised of loans from local commercial banks at rates above market and the Caribbean Development Bank and expensive lines of credit. Making use of the sovereign bond rating to access cheaper money and participate in more sophisticated debt instruments should be an essential component of the Government's Debt Strategy.

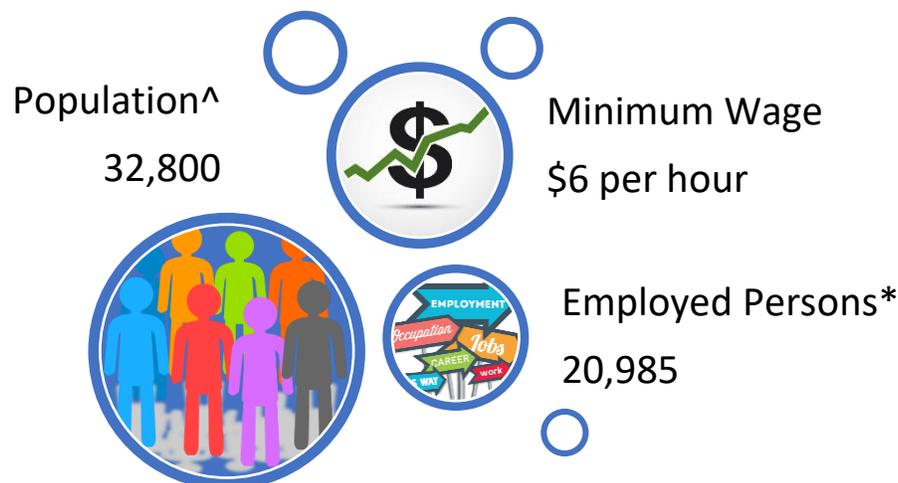
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<sup>17</sup> That is other than financial services fees.

# SWOT Analysis



## Social Situation Analysis



Sources: Central Statistics Office and World Bank

<sup>^</sup>2017 estimate, <sup>\*</sup>2020 estimate

### Overview and Trends

Over the last three (3) decades population growth in the VI has been driven by immigration as the economy evolved from fishing and agriculture to service-oriented (tourism and financial services). Essentially, the country transitioned from a net exporter of labour in the 1940's – 1970's to a net importer of labour subsequently. The population increased by approximately 50% between 1980 and 1990 coinciding with expansion of the financial services and tourism sectors. As a result, today more than half of the adult population are migrants. Data from the 2010 census<sup>18</sup> showed that 61% of the population was born outside of the VI with the majority of immigrants/expatriates originating from other Caribbean islands. The majority of the population resides on Tortola where the capital Road Town is located and 30% of the 10,830 households identified in 2010 census were single headed.

The latest sex ratio from the 2010 census was 97 (97 males for every 100 females) indicating a nominally higher proportion of the population are female. A reversal from the 1980's and 1990's when the population consisted of more males (105 sex ratio). The majority of persons are of Afro-

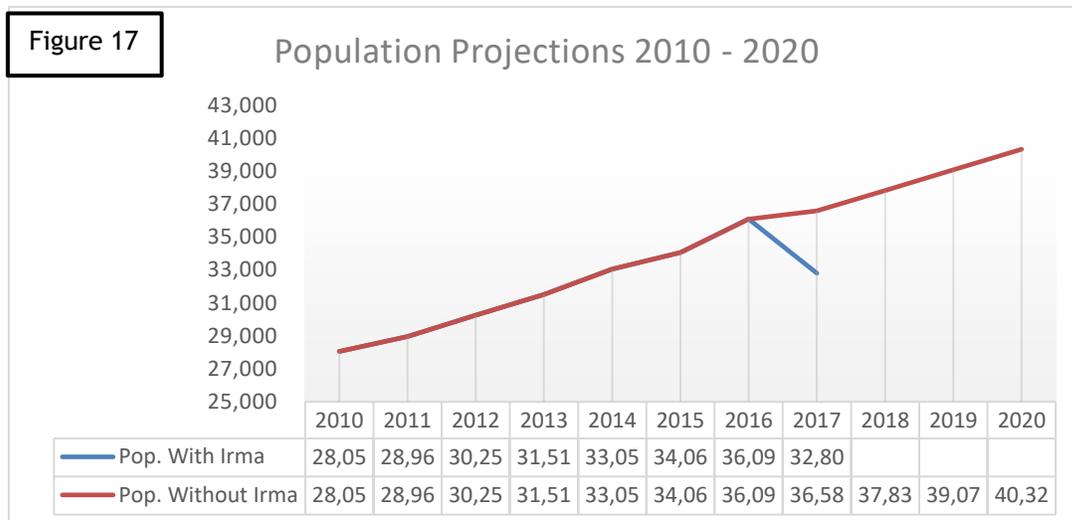
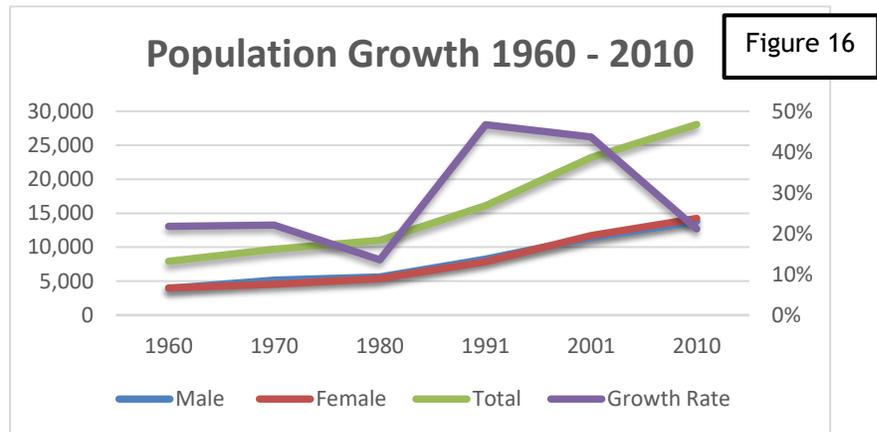
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<sup>18</sup> 2020 Household and Population Census has been delayed because of COVID-19 therefore the latest population statistics are derived from the 2010 Household and Population Census.

Caribbean decent. Minority ethnicities include Caucasians, East Indians, Middle Eastern, and Asian.

Population growth continues to be fuelled by immigration and to a lesser extent natural growth. The Virgin Islands demographic profile is also characterised by having high life expectancy levels with average life expectancy estimated at 77 years with fertility rates historically low at 0.86<sup>19</sup>.

Between 2010 and 2016 the population grew by 29% about 4% annually. However, the population decreased by approximately 9% in 2017 as persons left the Territory after hurricane’s Irma and Maria. It is



unclear how many persons returned or how many persons entered the Territory to assist with the rebuilding effort and more recently the impact of COVID-19 on population numbers. Following the Population projections placed the BVI’s population at just over 40,000 persons in 2020 however this did not take into consideration the effects of any of these occurrences therefore the next Census (slated for 2022) is critical to get a better understanding of the impact of these events on population demographics.

The population is highly concentrated in the active age group (15-65 years) consistent with high immigration flows for employment. Approximately 72% of the population is within this

<sup>19</sup> Rates are under-stated due to the inability to capture births that occur outside of the Territory.

grouping based on the 2010 census information. Just over 22% of the population is between the ages of 0 and 14 years while the elderly population (>65 years) represented 6% of the population.

Table I

**Demographic Profile of the British Virgin Islands 2007 - 2017**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Population <sup>1</sup>	27,007	28,084	28,020	28,054	28,960	30,254	31,516	33,054	34,064	36,092	32,800
Population Density (sq km)	175.4	182.4	182.0	182.1	188.1	196.5	204.6	214.6	221.2	234.4	212.9
Male Population	13,335	13,857	13,835	13,820	14,186	14,862	15,605	16,426	16,883	18,061	16,328
Female Population	13,627	14,217	14,185	14,234	14,774	15,392	15,911	16,628	17,181	18,031	16,472
Sex Ratio <sup>2</sup>	97.86	97.54	97.53	97.09	96.02	96.56	98.08	98.79	98.27	100.17	99.13
Nationals	10,715	11,142	11,117	10,975	11,209	11,373	11,538	11,709	11,839	11,988	12,084
Expatriates	16,292	16,942	16,903	17,079	17,689	18,880	19,916	21,280	21,163	24,042	20,654
Nationality Ratio <sup>3</sup>	39.67	39.67	39.68	39.12	38.71	37.59	36.61	35.42	34.76	33.22	36.84
Totals Births	263	313	323	303	336	288	281	287	267	274	248
Live Births	279	308	323	299	333	286	277	282	266	269	245
Crude Birth Rate	10.33	10.97	11.53	10.66	11.50	9.45	8.79	8.53	7.81	7.45	7.46
Total Fertility Rate <sup>4</sup>	1.51	1.13	1.28	1.31	1.39	1.12	1.07	1.04	0.93	0.91	0.86
Teenage Deliveries as % of all Deliveries	9.54	11.18	11.15	9.24	7.14	11.11	8.90	5.23	8.24	5.47	6.45
Deaths	104	100	109	104	98	122	113	111	136	120	155
Crude Death Rate	3.85	3.56	3.89	3.71	3.38	4.03	3.59	3.36	3.99	3.32	4.72
Infant Mortality Rate	10.75	12.99	6.19	20.07	18.01	3.49	21.66	7.09	11.27	7.43	20.40
Under 5 Mortality Rate	17.92	16.23	6.19	23.41	12.01	...	21.66	7.09	11.27	14.86	24.48
Total Life Expectancy at Birth <sup>5</sup>	73.80	79.55	80.38	81.90	81.37	79.60	80.51	82.24	76.79	82.17	77.37
Male	75.43	77.43	78.76	78.24	79.13	74.44	78.47	79.31	76.14	82.38	72.42
Female	82.44	81.94	82.83	86.61	84.02	86.17	82.65	85.20	83.77	82.47	83.12

<sup>1</sup> Population data for 2000 and 2002 - 2007 are estimates based on the 1991 and 2001 Population and Housing Censuses respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Number of males per 100 females.

<sup>3</sup> Number of nationals per 100 non-nationals.

<sup>4</sup> Number of children a woman is expected to have during her child-bearing years for the specific year. Rates are under-stated due to the inability to capture births that occur outside of the BVI's.

<sup>5</sup> Number of years a person is expected to live at birth. The fluctuations in these numbers are not due to the quality of the health care system but rather to the small number of deaths used in the calculations.

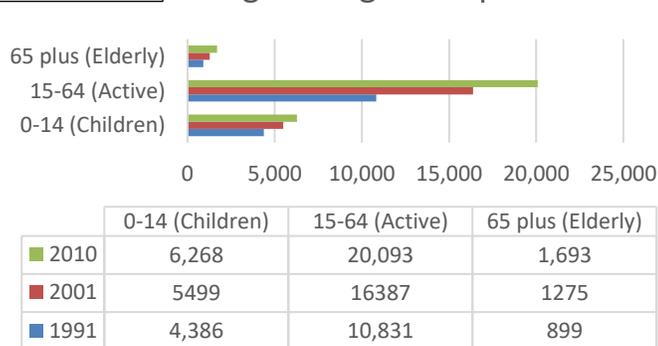
## Major Challenges

### Changing demographics

Persons are living longer. Between 2001 and 2010 the number of persons in the elderly category grew by 33% larger than any other age group. As this trend continues it has implications for pension systems and their sustainability and may place pressures on the healthcare system and premiums as they have to be paid by the 'active' population. Therefore, unemployment trends must be closely monitored by policy makers along with the changing demographics.

Figure 18

Changes in Age Groups



## Preservation of National Identity and Integration of Cultures

Given the composition of the BVI society – over 60% non-nationals – the integration of different cultures and nationalities and the preservation of the “VIlander” national identity becomes a vital input into the socio-cultural development of the country. It is therefore important that there is a clear understanding from a legal, policy and cultural perspective what it means to be a “VIlander” and identify how different cultures and nationalities can be integrated and made to feel a valuable part of the community. Discussions on citizenship and regularization, VI identity, assimilation into the BVI culture and way of life and other immigration and labour issues need to be distilled at the national level<sup>20</sup>.

## Growing Poverty and Inequality in most Vulnerable Categories – Women, children and Immigrants

Despite the prosperity of the country, there are still households living in poverty. Of those who reported in 2010, 29% reported their gross monthly income as being in the bottom two of six income levels, with income below \$1,400/month, the average monthly income is estimated at \$3,500 based on the 2010 census. The Virgin Islands’ most recently completed Country Poverty Assessment in 2003 found that 21% of the population were considered poor, and 29% of children from 0-17 were considered poor.<sup>6</sup> Children accounted for 42% of the poor population. Child poverty was 49% in households with 4+ children compared to 18% in households with 1 or 2 children. The 2010 Census found that 9.9% of the working-age population had incomes below USD\$700.<sup>7</sup> Of these 67% were women, making up 13.3% of the working female population. A further 19.2% of the population had incomes between USD\$700 and USD\$1400, considered low-income by the Government. Of these, 60% were women. Strategies need to be developed to deal with the growing vulnerable population which would have increased after hurricanes Irma and Maria and the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Adequacy of Public Infrastructure and Services to Support Growing Population

With an average annual population growth rate of 4% public infrastructure and services will need to keep up with the growing demands of an increasing population. Under investment in road infrastructure, solid waste disposal, water supply facilities, seaports etc. has meant that infrastructure has lagged behind the needs of the population. Hurricanes Irma and Maria further compounded the problem therefore substantial resources are required to rebuild and develop for the future. Digitisation of government services has commenced but a significant portion still involve a manual paper process and physical contact with a government employee. The use of more technology in the delivery of public services will increase efficiency, reduce unit costs and improve customer satisfaction. Housing is expensive in the BVI and has one of the highest rates of inflation which increased following the reduction in house stock after the hurricanes. The need for affordable decent housing for locals and foreigners is essential.

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<sup>20</sup> ECLAC - Report of the National Sustainable Development Plan Strategic Visioning Mission - British Virgin Islands, 2019

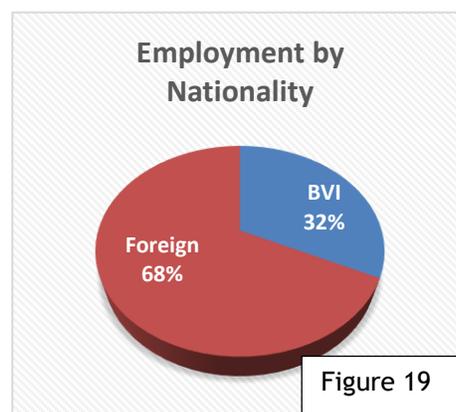
## Labour Force

### Overview and Trends

Labour relations in the BVI are governed by the Labour Code, 2010. This piece of legislation provides for the framework for the settlement of disputes, health and welfare in the workplace, basic conditions of employment including pay, overtime, vacation and sick leave, and benefits. It also sets out the requirements for foreigner employment under the work permit regime.

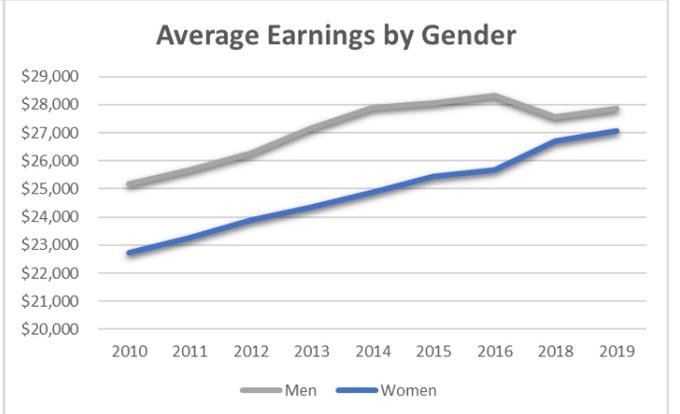
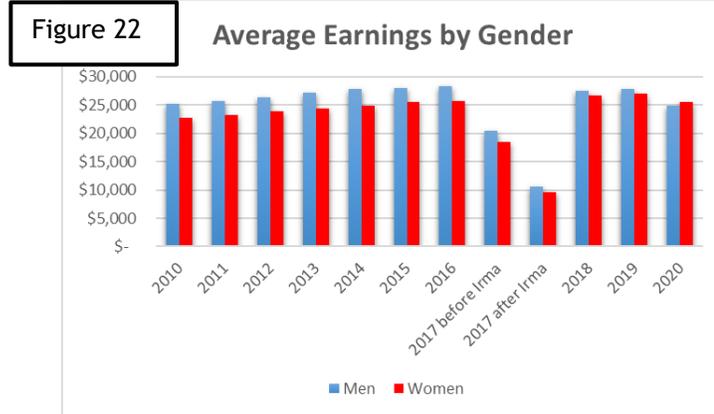
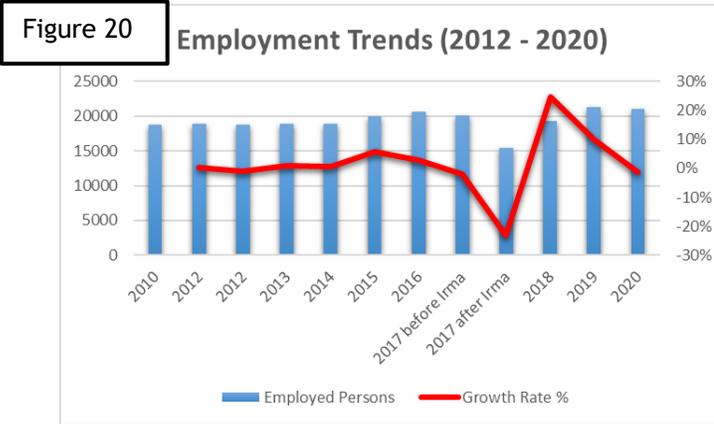
Persons who are non-nationals of the BVI are required to either obtain a Work Permit or be granted a Work Permit exemption in order to work in the Territory. Applications for a work permit are made through the Department of Labour and Work Force Development as well as renewals which are required on an annual basis. Work permit exemptions are granted by the Ministry of Natural Resources Labour and Immigration.

Given the Virgin Island's pattern of immigration for employment purposes the labour force mirrors that of the population composition by nationality. Approximately 68% (based on 2018 employment data) of the employed persons are non-nationals down from 74% in 2010.

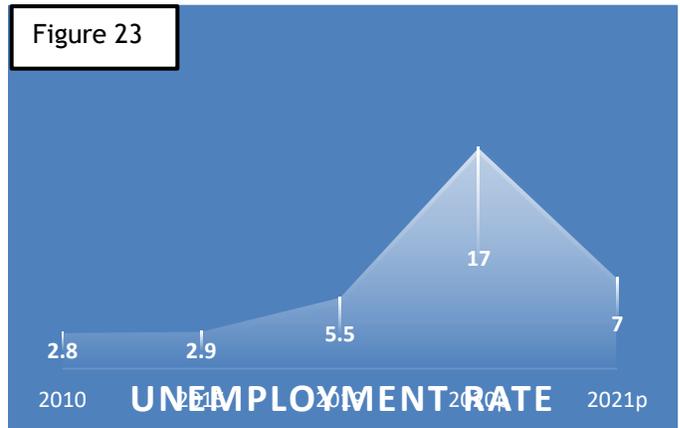


Between 2010 and 2016 employment grew on average 2% per year and women and men made up approximately 50% each of the workforce. Men made on average 10% more than women during that time period and average annual earnings were about \$25,908. However, over the last 10 years average earnings earning between men and women converged.

The massive infrastructural rebuilding efforts post Irma increased the demand for jobs in the construction sector which saw an influx of mainly foreign male workers thus changing the proportion of male to female workers – 53% :47%. In 2020 construction replaced accommodations and food services as the second largest employer (17% of total employed) after the public sector which accounts for about 27% of the workforce. As of the end of 2020 employment within the accommodation and food service sector lagged behind pre-Irma employment figures as major resorts still remained closed.



Historically the BVI has had low rates of unemployment. The 2015 Labour Force Survey estimated a national unemployment rate of 2.8%. This however rose to 5.5% in 2019<sup>21</sup>. The survey also discovered that females are more likely to be unemployed than males 4.1% compared to 1.5% for men. Tourism workers were the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic since the impact on the tourism sector is expected to be deeper and last for a longer period of time, and the recovery is expected to be less gradual spilling over into 2022 and 2023. Unemployment was projected to reach between 12% and 17% nationally in 2020 with borders remaining closed to visitors up to December 2020. With an ease on restrictions that rate is expected to decrease to 7% in 2021 but still remains at a historic high<sup>22</sup>. This ratio has most likely increased since the COVID-19 crisis had a



<sup>21</sup> Survey of Living Conditions

<sup>22</sup> HEAT Report

disproportionate impact expected on female workers who make up a larger percentage of the workers in the tourism industry.

## Major Challenges

### Local participation in the labour market

Although the ratio of local to foreign works has improved there is still the need to engender greater local participation in the labour market especially in tourism related areas which rely heavily on foreign labour. This will require ensuring that the local population possess the necessary skills to productively participate in existing sectors as well as new opportunities in the blue, green and orange economies. Understanding future population demographics and labour demands along with where skills gaps is a prerequisite for developing future policy to create a more participatory economy.

### Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment (ages 15-29) was estimated at 10.5% in the 2015 Labour Force Survey, the highest of any age grouping and 8% above the national unemployment rate. Youth engagement and empowerment were also flagged as important areas during stakeholder meetings and community engagements since it was communicated that the youth have ‘lost their way’. A comprehensive community-based approach harnessing the potential of the youth could reap benefits. Additionally, focussing on reforms in the education system including a wider curriculum that prepares young persons for the workplace and/or higher education pursuits. Curriculum advancement at a minimum should incorporate civics, life-long learning skills, job training, culture and heritage.

### Vulnerability of Women the Labour Force

This was even more evident after hurricanes Irma and during 2020 with lockdowns during COVID-19. Both events disproportionately impacted women since they work in the services sector which was most heavily impacted. Women most often the head of single households and also are paid less although the disparity between men and women’s wages is narrowing.

## HEALTH

### **Overview and Trends**

All residents in the BVI have access to universal health care through the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme which came into effect in January 2016. It is a contributory scheme which is funded through beneficiary premiums from the employed and Government’s annual contributions in the region of \$40 million. The youth, elderly, indigent and unemployed are subsidised by the Government. Primary health care is provided by the main public hospital located on Tortola and community health centres/clinics on Tortola and the outer islands – Virgin Gorda, Anegada and

Jost Van Dyke. Medical treatment that is outside the scope of the health clinics requires evacuation to Tortola via helicopter or ferry.

A small private hospital and several private medical clinics also provide care to patients. Patients requiring treatment services beyond the scope of the health facilities are referred overseas to countries including Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Jamaica, Barbados and mainland United States.

The BVI Health Services Authority (BVIHSA) established under the BVI Health Services Authority Act, 2004 is responsible for managing the public health care service throughout the Territory including the general administration and functioning the main Hospital on Tortola and the various public clinics including the recruitment and training of health care professionals.

A profile of the health situation in the BVI reveals Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (CNCDs) as among the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the country, with cancer being the leading cause of deaths followed by Hypertension and Diabetes Mellitus. This pattern is driven by a series of risk factors including inadequate physical activity, unhealthy diet, obesity and abuse of alcohol.<sup>23</sup> By the end of December 2016, a total of 129 cases of HIV/AIDS were reported. Between 1985 and 2014 38 AIDS-related deaths have occurred within the Territory<sup>24</sup>.

## Challenges

### NHI Funding

The high cost of health care, the growth in the number of subsidised persons (the elderly) and the funding mix has implications for the affordability of the NHI scheme. A funding policy should be developed identifying all the possible funding mechanisms for the scheme including potential additional revenue options.

High incidence of CNCD especially among young people puts an additional strain on the health care system. Additional resources should be allocated to community health programmes promoting a healthy lifestyle.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Overview and Trends**

Publicly provided education is free at the primary and secondary school levels in the BVI regardless of a child's immigration status. However, first preference given to local children. Free tuition is offered to British Virgin Islanders who attend the Territory's only Tertiary institution. Early education centres are privately owned, and tuition and fees are however, not subsidised by Government.

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<sup>23</sup> National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and Other STIs for the British Virgin Islands (2015-2019)

<sup>24</sup> <https://bvi.gov.vg/media-centre/new-cases-hiv-aids-lowest-2007>



privately owned and operated only 5% of the 2019 budget was allocated to ECCs. The GER<sup>27</sup> is approximately 50% and since 2014 the number of females enrolled has steadily increased. In the 2019/2020 academic year 52% of the students were female and 48% male.

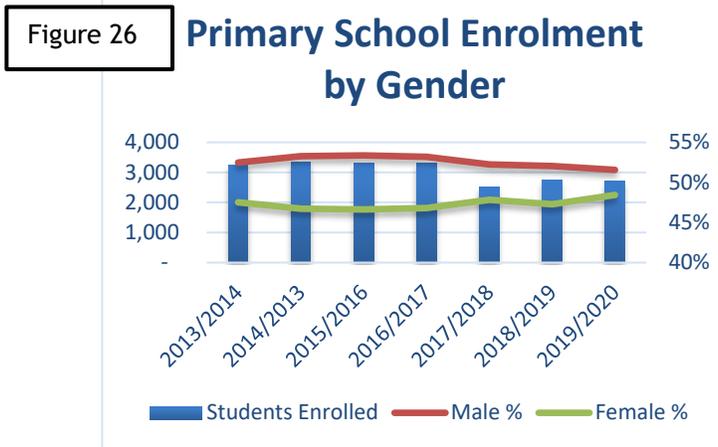
### Primary Schools

There are 24 primary school facilities all located on all 4 main islands. By contrast to ECCs the majority of primary schools are public – with 70% of students attending public school in 2019.

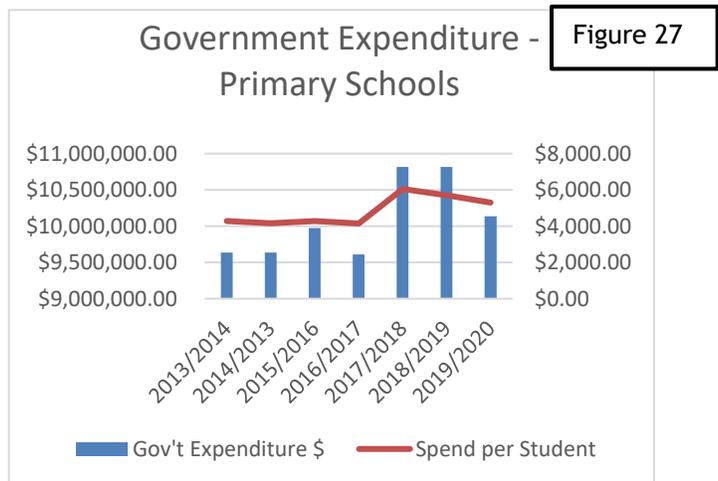
As part of the Government’s commitment to universal education and no student left behind the

primary 5 examination (also known as the common entrance exam) was discontinued in 2014. It has been replaced by a system of continuous assessment at key stages of their development. Therefore, once students meet a standard level of competency that is expected at their age and level of development, they are guaranteed placement in a public secondary school.

Enrolment in 2019 increased to 2,715 following a dip by 24 percent in 2018



following hurricane Irma. The male population in primary school has been greater than females. In 2019 52 percent of the student body was males. The national average pupil teacher ratio is 12:1 with it being lower in private schools and in 2010<sup>28</sup> the GER was 100%. 93% of classroom teachers within the public and private primary system are trained and 63% are graduates. The Government spends on average \$10 million annually on the public primary schools. This represents X% of the annual education



budget and equates to about \$5,000 spend per student. Primary school education expenditure increased by about \$1.2 million post Irma as a result of damages experienced in the school system.

<sup>27</sup> Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) =

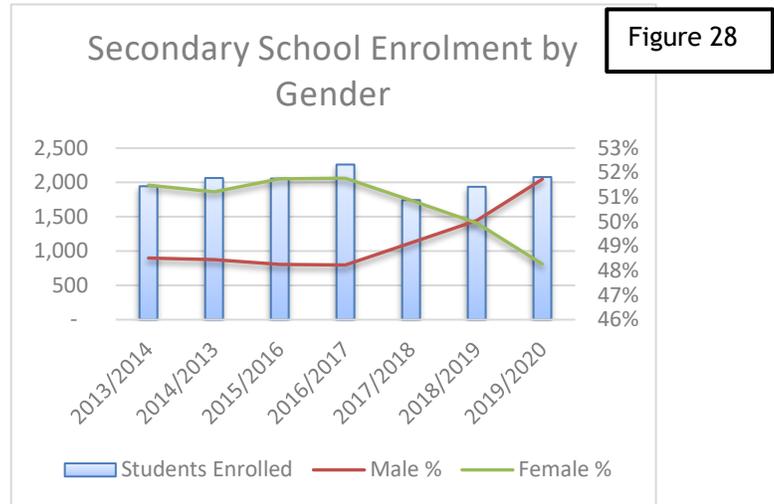
<sup>28</sup> Most recent data with actual population data. Later estimates utilise outdated population statistics therefore reducing the accuracy of the indicator.

## Special Needs

There is one special needs school in the Virgin Islands (located on Tortola) which caters to differently abled students of primary and secondary school age. The curriculum currently consists of a blend of academics and skills-based instruction and 12 students were enrolled (2 females and 10 males) for the 2019/2020 academic year. The pupil to student ratio is 3:1.

## Secondary Schools

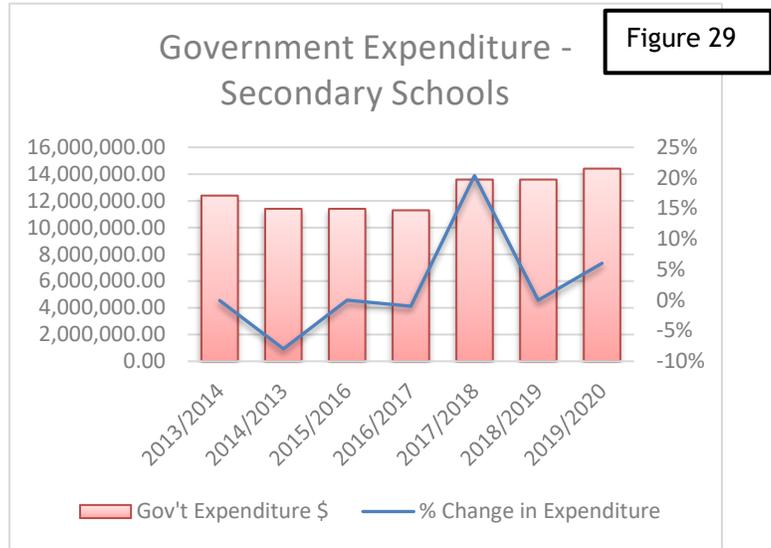
There are a total of 8 secondary schools evenly split between public and private however, 76% of secondary students are enrolled in the public school system. With the exception of Jost Van Dyke secondary schools are located on each of the other 3 main islands. Students from JVD either commute daily via ferry to Tortola to attend secondary school or board with family and friends on during the school semester. Following the hurricanes of 2017, the number of males enrolled increased overtaking the number of females attending secondary school. In 2019/2020 school 52% of students were male and 48% female whereas in 2017 the numbers were reversed.



GER was 96.7% in 2010. Based on 2019/2020 statistics approximately 73% of the classroom teachers were trained and 81% were graduates. The national student to teacher ratio has been 8:1 and the education budget for secondary schools was \$14 million representing \$9,000 spend per pupil. The budget increased by 20% in 2018 after the hurricanes reflecting additional funds allocated to rehabilitation of schools.

In 2016 a decision was made to add an extra year to the secondary school curriculum to improve education outcomes. Evidence showed that 50% of students graduating from high school (from 11th grade at the time) had to complete remedial classes in preparation for college-level courses at the HLSCC and in some cases struggled at the first year of university. Additionally, secondary school students were not receiving the recommended minimum hours for CXC preparation and those who chose to immediately enter the workforce were lacking pertinent skills. However, in 2020 amendments were made to that decision citing a review of the initiative. It is no longer mandatory and will be based on student's grades (in Grade 10) since the more advanced students did not benefit from the programme.

Table 2 summarises the CSEC pass rates for the last 4 years which have been declining from 2017. In 2020 28% of eligible students sat at least 5 subjects a decline from 39% in 2017. Similarly, the percentage of students passing at least 5 subjects dropped from 80% in 2017 to 62% in 2020. This can be attributed to the impacts on the education system post Irma – displaced students, destroyed schools, lost class time and reduced school hours.



**Table II**

Year	% Sitting at least 5 Subjects			No. students achieving 5 CSEC subject passes			Pass Rate		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2017	36%	40%	39%	50	94	144	79%	80%	80%
2018	31%	37%	34%	37	64	101	90%	89%	90%
2019	38%	41%	40%	29	56	85	59%	67%	64%
2020	36%	24%	28%	28	35	63	58%	66%	62%

Secondary school students who want to pursue the trades can opt to attend the Virgin Islands Technical Vocational Institute (VITVI) which is designed to enable students to achieve higher levels of proficiency in Technical Vocational Educational Training (TVET) and the option to obtain a general secondary education certification and on-the-job and apprenticeship training. As of 2019/2020 school year the three-year programme had 80 students enrolled – 48 males and 32 females with a student teacher ratio of 5:1.

The Ministry of Education also has invested in an Alternative Secondary Education Programme (ASEP) which allows persons 18 years or older to obtain a school leaving certificate which increases their ability to find employment or pursue tertiary education. In 2019/20 35 students were enrolled - 11 males and 24 females.

Subjects being taught in the three-year programme include English Language, Mathematics, Social Science, Science, Information Technology Customer Service, Entrepreneurship and Vocation. There will also be apprenticeship training at various agencies.

## Tertiary Institutions

The Territory has one public two-year community college named after the first Chief Minister of the Virgin Islands and founder. The Hamilton Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC) was established in 1990 under the College Act is an accredited institution<sup>29</sup>. The main campus is located on Tortola with a satellite campus on Virgin Gorda. It offers a series of associate degrees and certificate programmes and delivers specialist training in marine studies, culinary arts and financial services thus catering to the needs of the main economic drivers of the economy. It also partners with overseas universities to offer graduate degree programmes in the United States and the United Kingdom. The University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus offers distance learning opportunities and a select number of degree programmes to students in the Virgin Islands. There is an opportunity to increase the offering especially as more students are opting to remain at home during the COVID period.



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Attendance to the HLSCC increased following the initial introduction of the tuition assistance programme<sup>30</sup> in the 2006/2007 academic year. The Government also offers every year a series of scholarships to overseas

universities in areas of national priority. In 2020, 32 scholarships were awarded after a three-year hiatus following the 2017 hurricanes. This was part of the Government's plan to provide greater access to tertiary education to VI Islanders.

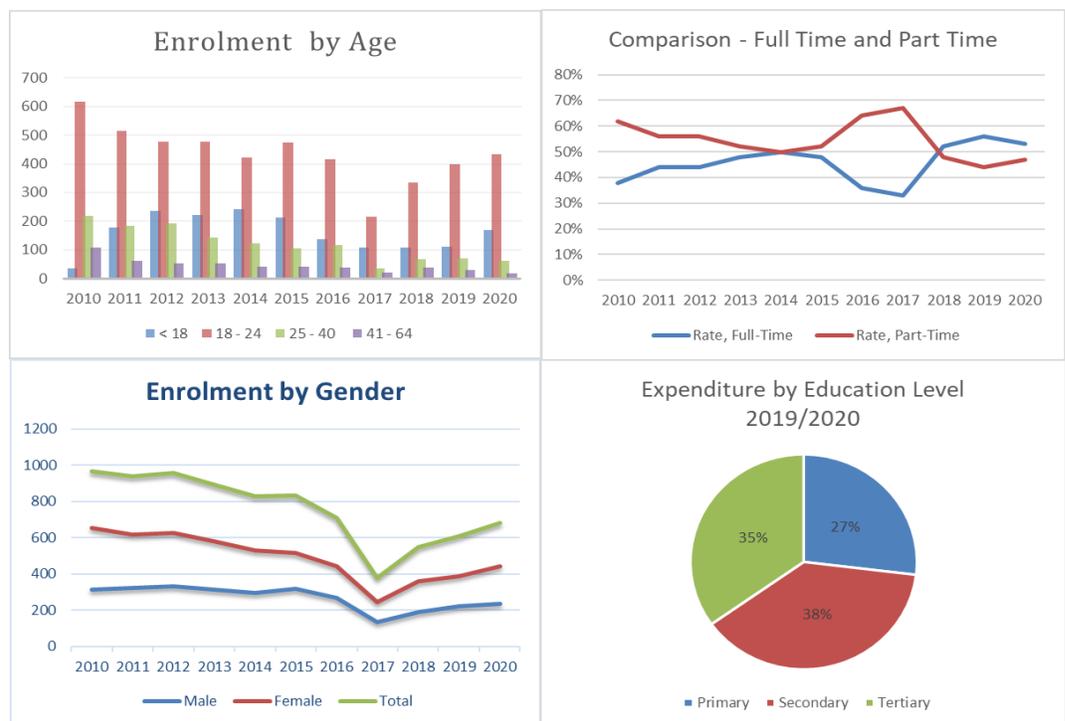


Figure 30: Tertiary Education Statistics – 2019/2020 Academic Year

<sup>29</sup> Accredited by Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

<sup>30</sup> Students are still responsible for paying fees and book costs, summer school tuition and for repeated courses.

The highest level of enrolment numbers at HLSCC are between the age of 18-24 (64% of the student population in 2020).

Females outnumber men 2:1 signalling drop-off of men from the education system after secondary school. The number of full-time students overtook part-time students after 2017 (See Figure 30).

## **Major Issues and Challenges**

### Public School Infrastructure

The already compromised public-school infrastructure suffered a significant setback following the passage of hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017. Estimated damages and losses totalled \$60 million<sup>31</sup>. Although the majority of public schools have been built back and repaired (with the exception of the public high school damage which suffered the most damage) schools are still plagued with issues such as mould, poor air quality, dilapidated furniture and lack basic school supplies. The school maintenance budget needs to be revisited and there needs to be a comprehensive assessment of all public-school facilities.

### Curriculum

The current curriculum is still outdated despite attempts at curriculum reform. The curriculum at all education levels needs to be critically assessed and revamped to reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century learning outcomes equipping students to contribute positively to their communities.

## **CRIME AND JUSTICE**

### **Overview and Trends**

Levels of crime in the British Virgin Islands are relatively low and have been decreased since 2011 apart from assaults which after a dip in 2017 began to rise. Burglary and theft account for the majority of criminal activity per year and the number of homicides fluctuates from year to year. In 2017 the homicide rate was 33.5 per 100,000 people<sup>32</sup> (higher than that of Trinidad and Tobago) compared to 8.6<sup>33</sup> per 100,000 of the population in 2020. It is speculated that the majority of these murders are drug trade related. Quite a few of murders remain unsolved owing to the difficulty in witnesses coming forward to give evidence as well as the challenges associated with Domestic violence predominately targeting women is another area of criminality that is of concern to the Territory.

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<sup>31</sup> ECLAC Report – Assessment of the Effects and Impacts of Hurricane Irma (British Virgin Islands)

<sup>32</sup> Rough estimate - 11 murders based on a population estimate of 32,800 2017 from the CSO.

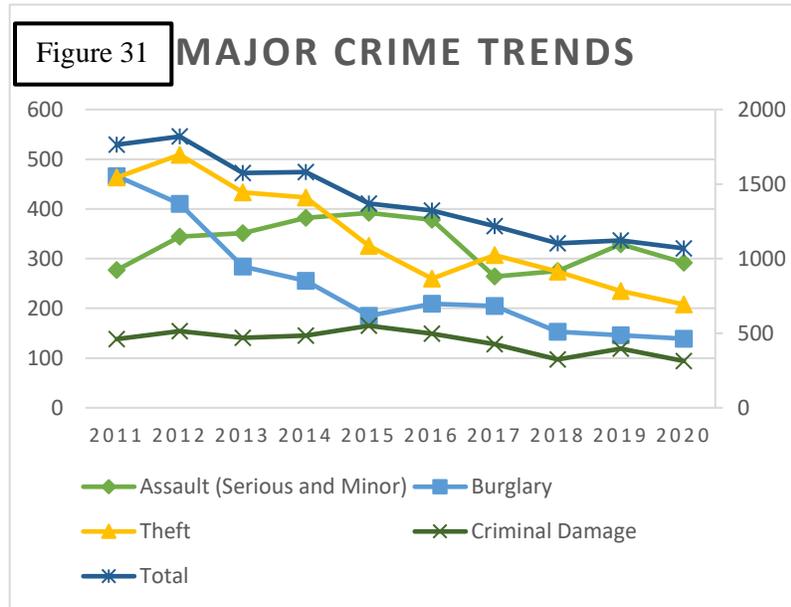
<sup>33</sup> Rough estimate – 3 murders baes on a population estimate of 35,800 in 2020.

Between January 2014 and April 2019 767 domestic violence cases were reported to the authorities with 70.8% being female victims. In 2016 there were 131 domestic violent incidences involving women compared to 54 male cases<sup>34</sup>. These statistics clearly signal that female are much more likely to be victims of domestic violence than men and violent acts against women are not decreasing.

Whereas the Virgin Islands does not have a worrying drug abuse culture (drug related offenses only made up 7% of all reported crimes in 2020) the islands are a major transshipment point for narcotics originating from South America enroute to the mainland United States. The Territory with its proximity to the US Virgin Islands and its

porous borders given the many inlets and cays make it ideal for drug smuggling facilitated by local “agents” on the ground. The law enforcement and border control agencies in both countries work closely together to patrol the surrounding waters. This collaboration has led to some significant drug busts involving locals and foreigners in the trade over the last few years, but many shipments still escape the authorities making it to the United States. The largest drug bust (2,353 kilograms of cocaine) to date (November 2020) had a street value of \$250 million (quarter of the Territory’s GDP). Local law enforcement personnel have been implicated in some of the seizures suggesting that illegal activity has infiltrated certain arms of law enforcement and border control and an element of organised crime has engulfed society.

Human trafficking is a matter of concern for both the United States Virgin Islands and “British” Virgin Islands given the proximity of the two islands. Human smugglers who are ultimately aiming to illegally bring persons to the USVI quite often deliberately or mistakenly land persons in the BVI instead. The Government does not have the facilities to deal with an influx of persons who enter the country illegally neither the legal framework to guide the process for those you seek asylum. The practice thus far has been to house them in local hotels and provide for their basic needs (food, water, and clothing) until they can either be repatriated (at the expense of the Government) or processed by officials from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Pronouncements have been made to amend the Immigration and Passport Act



<sup>34</sup> Statistics provided by the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF) as reported by BVI News: <https://bvinews.com/over-750-domestic-violence-cases-in-last-5-years-47-already-reported-for-2019/>

to include a section titled “Applications for Asylum”<sup>35</sup> to provide the necessary legal framework but the this has not happened yet.

The judicial system of the Virgin Islands is based on the judiciary of the United Kingdom and has a long history of fair and equitable dispensation of the law and justice. The Magistrates Court, the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands<sup>36</sup>, the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeal, and the Privy Council make up the four levels of the judicial system. While the Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands exercise their responsibilities locally, the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeal, is headquartered in Saint Lucia; and the Privy Council, is based in the United Kingdom.



Despite the strong history of judicial prudence and some improvements that have been made to modernise the system it still faces many challenges including inadequate court infrastructure and facilities, limited, and overstretched human resources, outdated technology, absence of case management benchmarks and standards and an insurmountable case backlog. If not rectified the totality of these issues could impede law enforcement, the timely adjudication of cases and overall dispensation of justice.

## **Major Issues and Challenges**

### **Porosity of the Border**

Securing the border is important to deal with the issues of drug and human trafficking. This was made ever more evident during the various lockdowns and border closures at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 where there was an increase in illegal activity. Investments need to be made in procuring modern radar equipment to monitor activity over the seas and securing high speed boats that will be able to intercept traffickers. Ongoing training for officers involved in border control, recruitment of additional officers to meet human resource shortages, greater collaboration between local counterparts and enhanced collaboration between the USVI and the BVI are necessary priorities.

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<sup>35</sup> Contained in the 2016 Speech from the Throne delivered by the then Governor John Duncan.

<sup>36</sup> The BVI is a member of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and the Commercial Division of the Supreme Court also sits in the British Virgin Islands.

### Confidence in the Police Force Community Policing

There is mistrust of the police force in the community and this has often been mentioned as a reason for witnesses not coming forward to provide evidence on various criminal matters within the society especially murders. Attempts to build confidence in reporting through confidential avenues have been unsuccessful – the crime stoppers hotline was eventually suspended due to lack of utilisation. Building relationships and trust between the community and the police is important and work has commenced on initiating better community engagement programmes including targeting young men.

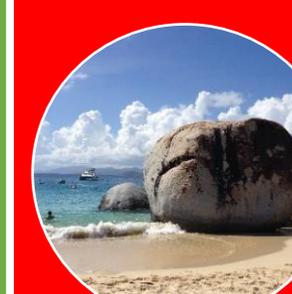
### Growing Violence against women

Domestic violence against women escalated during the pandemic overwhelming the NGO's that offer assistance and support. The Domestic Violence Act, 2011 provides a framework for dealing with perpetrators but more work needs to be done on preventative interventions to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in the first place. Additional support is required for the NGO's who provide counselling sessions, temporary housing, and food to victims.

## *Our Guiding Principles*

Our Guiding Principles are a reflection of the values we hold together as *Islanders*. ***We cherish human life; we treasure our pristine environment and we advocate for equality and prosperity for improving the quality of life of our People.***

Our Consultations revealed the synergies of our ideals and the need to integrate strategies for the sustainability of principles:

<i>Tortola</i>	<i>Anegada</i>	<i>Virgin Gorda</i>	<i>Jost Van Dyke</i>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Place more emphasis on giving access to good health, better drinking water, disposal of waste.</li> <li>- Strengthen Government institutions to develop better service and emphasise customer service and good statistics.</li> <li>- Invest more renewable energy.</li> <li>- The quality and availability of employment is key to opportunities.</li> <li>- Provide training and capacity building in schools and outside of schools.</li> <li>- Build partnerships with the private sector</li> <li>- Teach our children our values and culture.</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintaining a pristine environment</li> <li>- Protecting, regenerating and sustaining the marine ecosystem.</li> <li>- More opportunities for the youth.</li> <li>- Development of the infrastructure that will assist development.</li> <li>- Put more resources into the development of sports.</li> <li>- Give us the opportunities so that we can return when we leave.</li> <li>- Legislation must be enacted to prevent plastics and waste from being dumped into the ocean.</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More emphasis on diversification in order to create more opportunity.</li> <li>- Decentralisation of services to ensure access to health services.</li> <li>- More infrastructure not related to tourism but for the benefit of all.</li> <li>- Maintain better social statistics in order to better direct benefits and support.</li> <li>- More emphasis should be placed on respect and equality for women.</li> <li>- Good health must be emphasised to diminish diabetes and hypertension.</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain the uniqueness of the marine ecosystem.</li> <li>- Preserve and provide more opportunities for local ownership.</li> <li>- Put in place legislation to prevent the removal of natural resources and receive compensation for removal and damage.</li> <li>- Place emphasis on transfer of learning and teach subjects of use to the community.</li> <li>- More investment in health including ensuring there is a resident doctor.</li> <li>- Expand education in the marine sector and invest in the youth who will take that path.</li> </ul>
 <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">Virgin Islanders Watchful over our Shared Future Prosperity</p>			

## Our Priorities

**We have to set our success factors based on the Our Immediate Primary and Short Term requisites, our Medium Term Endeavours and our Long Term Aspirational Goals as we work towards our People - Centred Transformational Futures**

During the consultations around priorities focused firstly on the needs in areas of work life such as information sharing and review of the compensation for public servants to infrastructural development in the post hurricane period. They also included the need for more inclusive development, which would eventually evolve into the wish for more dialogue and feedback from decision makers, as well as, giving citizens more access to opportunities in all sectors. Some of the discussion on the challenges faced by the country also reflected the priorities for citizens and are reflected below. The priorities are further delineated into outputs and timeframes:

Table III: The Priorities of the People

- National identity, cultural integration and heritage – The entire country must focus on nation building that includes spirituality, the teaching of our history and the celebration of our culture and heritage.
- Preservation of the environment and move towards clean energy sources.
- Protection from COVID 19 – There is a need for better health services in all islands.
- Economic participation - All islands and all citizens must be given the opportunity to participate in the prosperity of the country. We do not just want to be workers; we want to be owners and investors.
- Private Sector engagement- The Government and the Private Sector must dialogue on the prosperity of the country to ensure fair wages and working conditions.
- Public Sector inefficiencies. Upgrade the customer service of the Public Servants and improve systems so that the same questions and forms are in an accessible form to all Government Ministries.
- Public infrastructure - The roads should be better maintained and improve those in non-tourist areas. The other islands needs to have more access via airports.
- Youth engagement and empowerment- Create more opportunities for young people especially young men who need skills training.
- Food security- We need to feed ourselves. Give more access to land and facilitate farmers and fishermen in trying to feed the country.
- Human resources – education and skills gaps – We are losing trained people so we must find ways to retain them or make contact after they leave. Also, we need to upgrade the technology and innovations skills.
- Data – We need to make decisions based on sound data

**Immediate and Short Term Priorities – Table IV**

National Goals		Priorities
Goal 1	Islanders are Empowered for a Sustainable Future in an inclusive Vibrant Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the Implementation Framework for the NSDP</li> <li>• Focus on identity building by ensure that the history, national symbols and Territorial Song are entrenched at all levels of the education system.</li> <li>• Strengthen the public health system to give more access to vulnerable groups.</li> <li>• Work with partners on school feeding programmes.</li> <li>• Upgrade the statistics on the impact of social safety and social protection systems.</li> <li>• Strengthen youth entrepreneurship, mentoring and internship programmes</li> <li>• Integrate sports as a tested programme at all levels and improve all sporting facilities.</li> <li>• Work with the Diaspora to create a skills bank</li> </ul>
Goal 2	The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Globally Competitive Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrading and strengthening of an integrated statistical system that provides time sensitive feedback to citizens and to the business community.</li> <li>• Develop inventory lists of government assets: Marine; Land, Ports; Tourism; Fishing; Agricultural; Buildings, Vehicles,</li> <li>• Upgrade the digital space through negotiation of new contracts with service providers</li> <li>• Upgrade capacity building in negotiations, business law and protocol</li> <li>• Convene a meeting with the Private Sector on Government Priorities and the linkages with corporate social and economic responsibilities.</li> </ul>
Goal 3	The Virgin Islands Embraces Good Governance, Accountable Government and Citizen Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and promote the Constitutional Review Commission and commence public education on same.</li> <li>• Promote and report on the Budget with a view to receiving feedback from the citizens.</li> <li>• Report on targets set in the Budget.</li> <li>• Public Sector reform that concentrates on coordination, statistics and integration.</li> <li>• Mapping of SDGs to departmental policies</li> </ul>
Goal 4	Virgin Islanders focused on Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a negotiation team on climate financing.</li> <li>• Approve the Blue Economy Strategy</li> <li>• Promote the establishment of youth environmental groups on all the islands</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of corporate social responsibility for the environment with an award for groups and businesses who assist in developing climate change technology.</li> <li>• Develop a policy on engagement with partners on the sargassum as it relates to use and financing</li> <li>• Launch an innovation competition for youth in the area of environmental sustainability</li> </ul>

## Medium Term Priorities: Table V

National Goals		Priorities
Goal 1	Islanders are Empowered for a Sustainable Future in an inclusive Vibrant Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster identity building by ensure that the history of the territory is enhanced by a monthly lecture series on reparatory justice, with the aim of establishing a National Reparations Committee.</li> <li>• Promote healthy life styles through the establishment and encouragement of organisations and groups that promote these activities for all age groups.</li> <li>• Work with churches and faith based organisations to promote inclusion and encourage ecumenicalism.</li> <li>• Upgrade the statistics on the impact of social safety and social protection systems.</li> <li>• Strengthen youth entrepreneurship, mentoring and internship programmes</li> <li>• Integrate sports as a tested programme at all levels in schools and encourage healthy community competitions while placing emphasis on improving all sporting facilities with the assistance of the private sector.</li> <li>• Provide incentives for the production of non GMO foods</li> </ul>
Goal 2	The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Globally Competitive Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake executive capacity building in results based management, customer service and risk management throughout the public service and with elected representative</li> <li>• Work with farmers and fishermen on food security</li> <li>• Focus on developing global competencies in schools</li> <li>• Promote a business friendly environment</li> <li>• Support infrastructural development like airport expansion and port rehabilitation that are linked to Tourism development and trade expansion</li> </ul>
Goal 3	The Virgin Islands Embraces Good Governance, Accountable Government and Citizen Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put in place an appropriate system of risk oversight and internal controls undertaken by a Risk Management Team.</li> <li>• Ensure an annual consultation with the public on progress made with the NSDP.</li> <li>• Report on the progress of the Constitutional Review Commission.</li> <li>• Progress reports on the increasing efficiency of Government Ministries and Departments</li> <li>• Mapping of SDGs with the work of the Private Sector and Statutory Bodies</li> </ul>
Goal 4	The Islanders focused on Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an assessment of land based pollutants that affect marine life.</li> <li>• Undertake preservation of the 100, 00 acres of Seagrass with the assistance of the Global Climate Fund</li> <li>• Meet with marine officials on the protection of the corals to prevent damage and bleaching.</li> <li>• Upgrade the endangered species list</li> </ul>

## Long Term Aspirations: Table VI

National Goals		Priorities
Goal 1	Islanders are Empowered for a Sustainable Future in an inclusive Vibrant Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Associations of Overseas Nationals and a biennial conference at home</li> <li>• Establish an investment policy for nationals</li> <li>• Host a CARICOM conference on Reparations.</li> <li>• Consolidate Social safety and social protection systems that are responsive and adequately address vulnerability.</li> <li>• Institute an awards programme for youth owned businesses.</li> <li>• More scholarships for students in all subject areas</li> <li>• Establish an Education Review Commission</li> <li>• Upgrade the selection of National Heroes</li> </ul>
Goal 2	The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Globally Competitive Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an incubator system for new businesses</li> <li>• Work with farmers and fishermen on globally established standards for export of products</li> <li>• Establish light manufacturing and innovation industries</li> <li>• Consolidate the linkages between Tourism, Agriculture and Fishing</li> <li>• Attend international trade shows and expos</li> <li>• Consolidate sports Tourism</li> <li>• Consolidate the Creative and Cultural Industries</li> <li>• Consolidate the digital economy</li> </ul>
Goal 3	The Virgin Islands Embraces Good Governance, Accountable Government and Citizen Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Youth Parliament initiative</li> <li>• Promote a Youth Ambassador programme</li> <li>• Improve the Juvenile Justice Programme</li> <li>• Move towards a 50/50 gender balance in the House of Assembly</li> <li>• Complete the work with the UN on decolonisation</li> </ul>
Goal 4	The Islanders focused on Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete infrastructure on protection of the coastline</li> <li>• Participate in Global Conferences on Climate Change</li> </ul>

# Chapter 2: Our National Goals

## Empowered for a Sustainable Future



Bregado Flax Educational Centre  
Virgin Gorda

### “Enhancing and Protecting our Precious Land with the National Sustainable Development Plan”



2021

#### NSDP SLOGAN COMPETITION

Students in both public and private secondary schools are invited to participate in a Slogan Contest for the National Sustainable Development Plan.

- The slogan must include the words “**National Sustainable Development Plan**” and the length should be no longer than one sentence (or phrase).
- The document should be in letter format and should include name and school in the closing section.
- Submission is via email.
- Entries must be submitted via email to [nationalplanbvi@gov.vg](mailto:nationalplanbvi@gov.vg) on or before April 16, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.
- Please include “**National Sustainable Development Plan – Slogan Contest**” in the subject line and your contact details in the body of the e-mail.
- Submissions already received do NOT have to be resubmitted

- 🇧🇻🇮 **Goal 1:** Islanders are empowered for a Sustainable Future in an Inclusive Vibrant Society, Living Fulfilling Lives
- 🇧🇻🇮 **Goal 2:** The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Internationally - Competitive Economy
- 🇧🇻🇮 **Goal 3:** The Virgin Islands Embraces Environmental Sustainability
- 🇧🇻🇮 **Goal 4:** The Virgin Islands Embraces Good Governance, Accountable Government and Citizen Participation

## Chapter 2: Our National Goals

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### Overview of Our National Goals

The key underlying objective of our national development plan is to ensure sustainable and balanced development for all with all citizens being participants in the development processes and beneficiaries of the outputs of that development. Our national development plan is designed not just to secure sustained improvements in the quality of life of all islanders but to transform the BVI into:

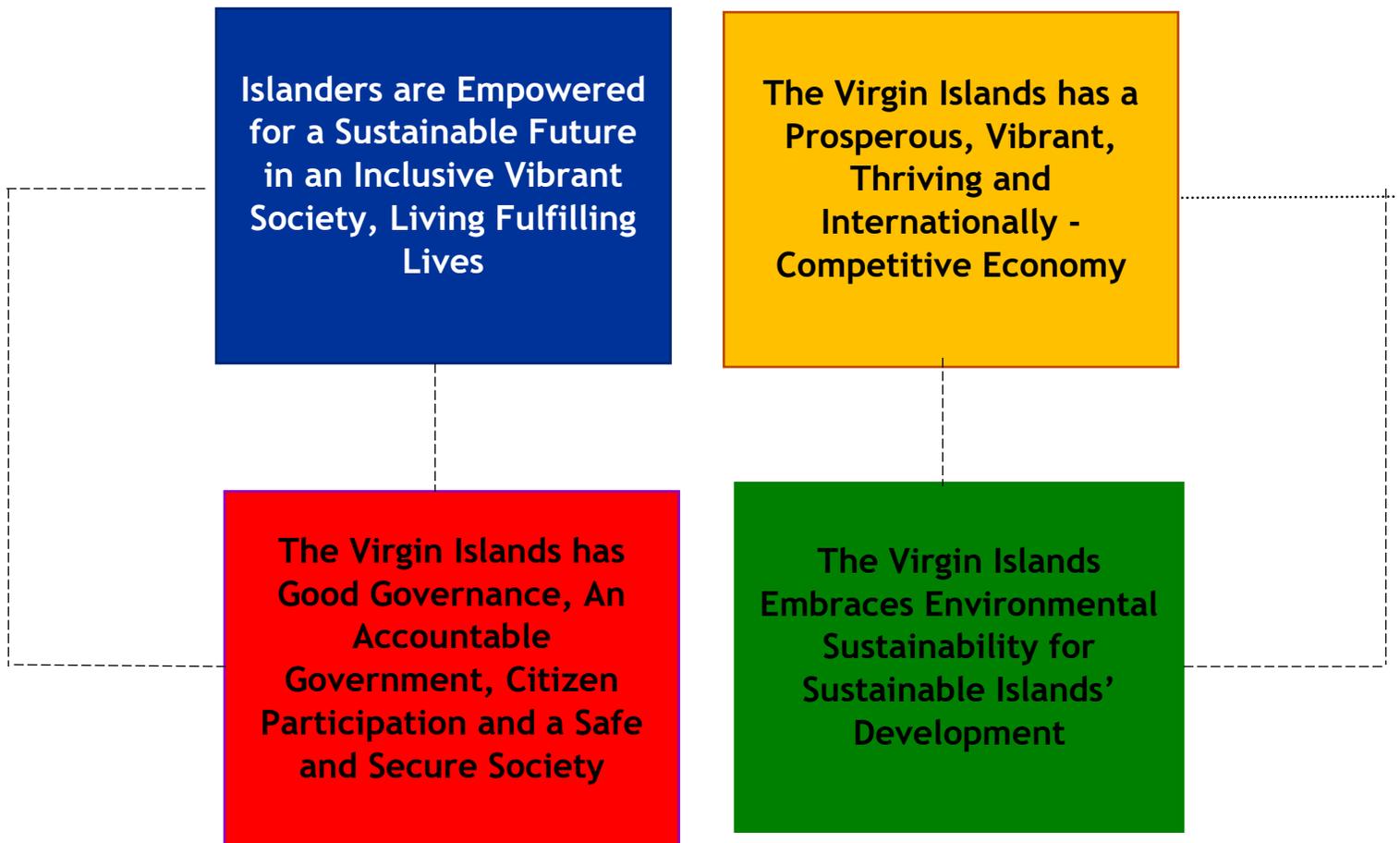
**A well-balanced, people-centred Virgin Islands built on spirituality, social justice and equality; nurtured by trust, cultural knowledge and participatory governance; strengthened by economic, environmental, and social sustainability**

At the heart of our planning is inclusiveness and to ensure that no one will be left behind and as a country we will be able to sustain our own development and provide all our citizens with a high standard of living regardless of island, gender, ethnicity, physical and intellectual capability, and social and economic status for generations to come. It reflects the aspirations of all Islanders and the Government's commitment to create the enabling environment to support the achievement of the vision and goals as set out in the NDP.

In order to realize our vision, the National Development Plan articulates a comprehensive and integrated strategy around four national goals as follows:

- **Goal 1:** Islanders are empowered for a Sustainable Future in an Inclusive Vibrant Society, Living Fulfilling Lives
- **Goal 2:** The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Internationally - Competitive Economy
- **Goal 3:** The Virgin Islands has Good Governance, An Accountable Government, Citizen Participation and a Safe and Secure Society
- **Goal 4:** The Virgin Islands Embraces Environmental Sustainability for Sustainable Islands' Development

Each of the 4 goals will advance one of the key pillars of sustainable development but are mutually reinforcing and synergistic and achieving the national vision will require focus on each of them. While achieving the vision of the BVI, these goals also will contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. To achieve these goals, we will draw on the energies, vision, wisdom, and foresight of the people of BVI, to create the inclusive development that we want.



**Goal 1: Islanders are empowered for a Sustainable Future in an Inclusive Vibrant Society, Living Fulfilling Lives**

Under this goal, focus will be placed on developing and implementing strategies towards enabling all citizens to achieve their fullest potential. At the heart of this goal is inclusive social development, with emphasis placed on:

- The health of population
- Providing quality education and training to create accomplished citizens and an efficient and committed workforce
- Creating a robust, adaptive and shock responsive social protection system
- Gender equality and women empowerment
- Ensuring that all Islanders have access to quality shelter and housing and adequate infrastructure services such as water and sanitation
- Preserving BVI's cultural identity and heritage

Under this goal, emphasis will be placed on securing the gains made in health in BVI on one hand and addressing those areas that require improvements all geared towards further reducing morbidity and ensuring a healthy population. The health status of the population is considered relatively good with Islanders enjoying lower mortality and longer life expectancy. BVI's health model which focuses on primary health care has augured well for the health system but also for the population in general, reducing the burden on secondary health systems but also lowering mortality rates. Notwithstanding, there is need under this goal to create the enabling environment and implement strategies to further enhance the health of the population and create a world class health system that is supported by a dynamic workforce.

In the pursuit of ensuring that Islanders have a high standard of living, this goal will focus on ensuring that the health of all citizens and activities to promote healthy lifestyles are a priority. The goal recognizes the importance of a human-centred approach to health care and creating the opportunities for equal access to high-quality healthcare, overall improvements in the quality of health care and services. The notion of health as a key human value will be pursued under this goal, ensuring that Islanders pay particular attention to the determinants of health and factors that are contributing to the increase in non-communicable diseases and emerging communicable diseases. The goal also recognizes the need for a healthy natural environment and the linkages between human health and environmental degradation both in relation to communicable and non-communicable diseases as well as mental health.

The required investments in health infrastructure and overall health care will be explored under this goal, towards enabling health investments to be on par with world class health systems as part of advancing health outcomes, increasing life expectancy and reducing health morbidity even further, and for delivering quality health services and care. Investments in health information systems to monitor and evaluate the performance of the health sector as well as to support informed and strategic decision making also will be a focus of this goal.

This goal also focuses on families and creating the foundation for having strong families spanning generations. At the root of this is providing support for parenting skills to strengthen core values and ensure emotional and psychological well-being of children among others. This goal recognizes the many benefits of parenting support including reducing the future probability of mental health disorders and learning disorders among children and families overall. Under this goal, emphasis also will be placed on creating the supportive environment enabling all Islanders to be physically and mentally fit island nation with access to healthy and nutritious diets to reduce the incidence of new and emerging diseases.

This goal acknowledges the importance of an educated and highly skilled population to enhancing our islands' human resources to fully participate and support our development efforts. Importantly, we will structure our education and training sector to provide opportunities for all, fostering both inclusiveness and equity. To achieve this, several areas of the education and training sector will be developed to world class standards, with focus from early childhood through to tertiary level education. This goal recognizes that infrastructure and facilities of the education sector must be equipped for our 21<sup>st</sup> century learners and some may need to be retrofitted to meet, and in the case of new infrastructure designed to accommodate all students including those with disabilities, ensuring that no one is left behind. Focus will be placed on ensuring that we have in place quality

teachers and learning administrators who adopt best practices in pedagogy and play a key role in the development of the professional and highly skilled workforce that we need and are desirous of having. This is important for BVI given that the labour force makes up close to 60 per cent of Islanders, with the proportion of children and the elderly comprising smaller shares.

The education and training sectors will be underpinned by lifelong learning and strategic investments in science, technology, and innovation as well as Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The goal also recognizes the importance of curricula and ensuring that all our students from early childhood through to secondary education benefit from STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) curricula, which would be supported by access to modern and cutting-edge ICTs among students, teachers, and educational administrators.

BVI recognizes that investments in science, technology and innovation would be key to advancing a technology-enabled society and further drive the creation of a knowledge-based economy in BVI towards enhancing the islands' overall competitiveness. Creating this forward looking and world class education and training sector also will depend on the involvement of a range of stakeholders in the education and training sectors. Private sector involvement as well as the establishment of public-private partnerships in education and training will be pursued under this goal given the importance of aligning education and training with the needs of labour market as well as to foster training and education in entrepreneurship.

Under this goal, a strong focus will be placed on social protection, poverty reduction and fostering sustainable livelihoods. Like other SIDS, vulnerability and vulnerable populations and the strategies that will need to be pursued to enhance resilience of all groups will be key under this goal. Some vulnerable groups in BVI include persons living in poverty, small scale farmers, fishers, seasonal tourism workers, day labourers, micro and small business owners, women and girls, and persons with disabilities among others. Under this goal, focus will be placed on the risks that the population is exposed recognizing that globally the nature and number of risks are not declining, and also are becoming more complex. Importantly, these risks if not addressed and or anticipated, can lead to unintended consequences such as increasing levels of poverty and unemployment, demographic changes, international migration further exacerbating insecurity and vulnerability. Social protection is integral to the dynamic development of modern, economies and societies.

Under this goal therefore, the social protection system will be redesigned to be more adaptive and responsive to shocks as a means of safeguarding our population. It is recognized that social protection is a fundamental human right and a central element in sustainable poverty reduction, and human dignity and will create the enabling environment to break the “vicious cycle” of poverty and vulnerability. The goal recognizes that the costs of no social protection are borne by society through increasing poverty and vulnerability; productive loss to the economy; loss of human capital as insufficient investment in public benefits and services means a decrease in life expectancy, health, educational outcomes, and a lack of investment in the younger generation, ultimately resulting in the current and future stock of our human capital being diminished.

Under this goal, BVI will ensure that when its new social protection policy is promulgated, it would have benefitted from sound design, costing and fiscal space analysis, as well as inclusive social dialogue taking into account social protection systems, including social protection floors. The social protection policy when promulgated would be both adaptive and shock responsive. This policy will therefore ensure the shock responsiveness of our island-nation social protection system and will extend the types of risks covered to include natural hazards, economic crises, health crises that can happen simultaneously impacting many households and can play a critical role in determining life outcomes.

Tied to social protection is poverty reduction and under this goal, high priority will be placed on ending poverty in all its forms and advancing a comprehensive range of programmes to improve the living conditions of poor and vulnerable groups, recognizing that poverty is a multi-dimensional, complex phenomenon that the BVI will address for achieving social and economic development and where no one is left behind. As such, poverty policies and strategies under this goal will consider, a joined-up approach underpinned by collaboration among public policy makers, civil society, and the private sector to create appropriate solutions for eliminating poverty and creating the enabling environment to increase employment opportunities and entrepreneurship; as well as creating vibrant and economically viable rural communities that support alternative and sustainable livelihoods.

Under this goal, focus will be placed on gender equality and empowerment of women, as it is recognized that promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in all spheres of life is priority for sustained and inclusive development. Focus will be placed on gender mainstreaming to promote the economic, social, cultural and political empowerment of women towards advancing gender equality. The revision of the country National Policy on Gender Equality will be a priority under this goal as is the elimination of gender-based violence in all its forms.

Access to shelter, housing and social infrastructure whilst well advanced in the VI, will be a focus under this goal to ensure that by 2040, housing meets high standards in energy efficiency, construction, safety and other social amenities. Under this goal, focus will be placed on ensuring that housing solutions are built to withstand the effects of a changing climate and houses in informal settlements will be upgraded and built forward stronger. Importantly as well will be the need to ensure that housing solutions are affordable especially for the more vulnerable in the population.

This goal recognizes that Islanders are unique – our culture, our identity and our heritage. Under this goal, the thrust to preserve our culture, identity and heritage will be pursued. We also will pursue the preservation of our cultural heritage by developing our orange economy to take advantage of the promise of an orange future in which we use our cultural heritage and transform it into creative entrepreneurship, to create boundless opportunities for women, MSMEs and youth. The pursuit of the orange economy will represent a new growth sector for the VI but with the promise of preserving our unique cultural heritage. Thus, under this goal, culture, cultural and creative industries will be targeted for investment as well as sport as a means of promoting the islands development prospects.

The Plan will achieve the goal of Islanders are empowered for a Sustainable Future in an Inclusive Vibrant Society, Living Fulfilling Lives through five (5) National Outcomes:

- National Outcome #1 - A Healthy Population with Happy Families
- National Outcome #2- An Educated and Highly Skilled Population, Creating a Dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> Century Labour Market
- National Outcome #3 - Adaptive and Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems, Leaving no one Behind
- National Outcome #4 - Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equality
- National Outcome #5 – Uniquely Us - Our Culture, Our Identity and Our Heritage

## **Goal 2: The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Internationally - Competitive Economy**

This goal focuses on improving the economic well-being and quality of life of the people of the Virgin Islands through the creation of wealth with high levels of productivity that engenders international competitiveness. The Plan focuses on developing economic areas which integrates and balances the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. This involves the efficient allocation and use of limited resources—land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship towards generating sustained and inclusive growth that is green and technology enabled. This form of economic development will support a high standard of living for the citizens of the Virgin Islands without compromising the ability of future generations to meet and exceed their own needs. Focus under this goal will include leveraging the opportunities of the blue, green orange, and silver economies.

This goal recognizes the need for stable and predictable economic conditions which reduces risk and uncertainty for economic agents and supports sustained economic growth and development. Focus will be given to price stability, fiscal and debt sustainability, financial sector stability and an efficient and equitable tax system. This goal also acknowledges the Virgin Islands' vulnerability to natural disasters which threatens development outcomes. Natural disasters generate significant fiscal risk and create major budget volatility. Moreover, climate change has exacerbated this situation as the incidence and severity of natural disasters due to extreme weather events are increasing. To preserve hard earned development gains and entrench economic resilience, focus is given to incorporating disaster risk financing mechanisms to reduce the cost and enhance the timing of meeting post disaster funding needs.

Stable economic conditions will lay the foundation for a competitive and enabling business environment. This supports economic growth and development through the creation of high-valued goods and services which generate profits and create job opportunities which provides income for employed labour. The goal also recognizes the importance of efficient and transparent public institutions in reducing transaction costs for businesses. An enabling business environment provides a clear, transparent and rules-based framework which supports the life cycle of businesses. This ranges from starting a business, accessing finance, day to day operations, and operating in a secure business environment. Under this goal, the Plan addresses the main aspects

of business environment by, among other things, developing and strengthening the policy, legal, regulatory and institutional framework, enhancing the efficiency of markets and streamlining bureaucracy and providing support for MSMEs.

The importance of high quality and resilient economic infrastructures is also recognized as essential for economic development, facilitating the movement of persons, goods, services and information both locally and globally. Transport, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and water supply connects economic activities and contributes to the competitiveness of enterprises and improved standard of living. The world is transitioning from the third industrial revolution, which was characterized by the use of electronics and information technology to automate production, to the fourth industrial revolution which not only builds on the third but embraces digital transformation. This goal places emphasis on accelerating efforts to build the capacity of the BVI, including the skills of the people, to adopt and adapt to new and emerging technologies which serves to catalysed development through the enhancement of connectivity of economic structures across the full gamut of formal economic activities.

The goal also acknowledges the need for sustainable energy and water. Energy is an essential input for modern economies and general way of life. Focus is given to development of a modern, efficient, diversified and environmentally sustainable energy sector which provides affordable and accessible energy supplies and contributes to long-term energy security and international competitiveness. The Plan recognizes that energy which is derived from fossil fuel is unsustainable and harmful to the planet. The further acknowledge that renewable energy solutions are becoming more affordable, reliable and efficient. As such, focus is given to increasing the use of renewable energy. Regarding water, this goal acknowledges the important role of water for economic and social development. Improving access to safe water supply and sanitation services is covered under this goal with emphasis placed on enhancing the infrastructure for storage, treatment, distribution and disposal of water.

It widely understood that. Science Technology and Innovation (STI) is important in the creation of wealth, economic development and in the improvement of the quality of life of people. As such, this goal promotes the deepening of the application of science and technology to benefit all aspects of development. The Plan further recognizes the role of innovation in delivering greater economic, social and environmental benefits. It gives focus to developing a culture of innovation towards finding solution to problems in the society as well as finding new ways to advance development efforts for the benefit of the people of the BVI and by extension the global community.

The goal also covers international competitiveness at the enterprise and industry level. Focus is given to improving the microeconomic conditions for increased productivity for goods and services producing sectors and industries. The main goods and services- producing sectors and industries of the Virgins Islands are Tourism, Financial Services, Agriculture and Fishing. Under this goal efforts will be directed to economic diversification and exploring new and emerging economies, particularly those where there is a comparative advantage. One such area is the Blue Economy. The Blue Economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, social inclusion, improved livelihoods and jobs, while promoting good stewardship of ocean resources. It covers the range of economic activities that use, directly and indirectly, oceanic

resources. The green economy is another area that is covered under this goal, covering low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive economic activities.

The economy of the Virgin Islands is anchored primarily by tourism, financial services, agriculture and fishing industries. Over the years, tourism and financial services has been the main drivers of the economy. The tourism industry is the main source of income for the general society, employing a large segment of the labour force. Tourism is estimated to contribute about 35 per cent of GDP directly and close to 60 per cent when indirect contributions are considered.<sup>37</sup> Considering both direct and indirect contributions, the sector is also estimated to contribute about 66 per cent of employment. Tourism income is mainly generated from the yacht chartering industry. Relative to other tourism centres in the Caribbean, the Territory has relatively few large hotels. Also, a large portion of the businesses in the tourist industry as well as some that are considered highly tourism-dependent, are locally owned. The tourism product boasts of:

- National parks, rich in biodiversity, home to some rare plants and wildlife such as the world's smallest lizard.
- Beaches uniquely located with features that attract both secluded oriented visitors to those that enjoy sports, snorkelling and other water related activities.
- A Maritime Park—Rhone National Maritime Park & RMS Rhone Shipwreck—which showcases the remnants of a shipwreck from the 1800s

In 2017, it was estimated that financial services contributed about 24 per cent to real GDP.<sup>38</sup> The sector also generates significant revenue for the government with about 52 per cent of the government's revenue coming from licence fee for offshore companies. Revenue is also generated, directly and indirectly from payroll taxes of the salaries of the trust industry sector. The industry traces its root to the 1970s with the introduction of the offshore finance industry. In the 1980s, the government began offering offshore registration to companies to incorporate in the islands. The BVI also promotes several regulated financial services products with the most prominent being the formation and regulation of offshore investment funds.

Relative the other main economic sectors, agriculture is considered small with the raising of livestock being the most prominent. Less than 0.6 per cent of the labour force is estimated to work in the sector. Poor soils hamper the islands' ability to produce sufficient domestic crops to meet domestic food requirements. Therefore, the island is heavily reliant on imports to meet local demand for food.

The VI and its surrounding waters is home to hundreds of different species of fish, invertebrates and plants which facilitate fishing. Recreational fishing is divided into pleasure, fishing and sport

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/barbados/docs/heat-reports/covid-19-heat-report/COVID-19%20HEAT%20Report%20-%20Human%20and%20Economic%20Assessment%20of%20Impact%20-%20British%20Virgin%20Islands.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/barbados/docs/heat-reports/covid-19-heat-report/COVID-19%20HEAT%20Report%20-%20Human%20and%20Economic%20Assessment%20of%20Impact%20-%20British%20Virgin%20Islands.pdf>

fishing. Licences are provided for the various categories of fishing including Fishing, commercial, pleasure, sport and temporary.

The Plan will achieve the goal of a prosperous, vibrant, thriving and internationally competitive economy through seven (7) National Outcomes:

- National Outcome #6 - Fiscal Strength and Sustainability
- National Outcome #7- An Enabling Business Environment
- National Outcome #8- Strong and Resilient Economic Infrastructure
- National Outcome #9 -Sustainable Energy and Water
- National Outcome #10 – Science, Technology and Innovation
- National Outcome #11 – Globally Competitive Industries
- National Outcome #12 – A Resilient and Sustainable Economy that is Diversified and Supports New Pillars.

### **Goal 3: The Virgin Islands has Good Governance, An Accountable Government, Citizen Participation and a Safe and Secure Society**

Under this goal, emphasis will be placed on the pursuit of good governance, deepening democracy, creating a modern, efficient and effective public sector that is guided by the principles of accountability, transparency and trust. The role and importance of citizen participation in governance and the development of national policies through consultation will be pursued. Ultimately this goal will be structured to accelerate progress towards building a more inclusive society in BVI.

The goal acknowledges that Islanders have a right to expect their government to deliver high quality goods and services and to hold the public sector accountable for their actions. As such, this goal places focus on streamlining government processes and procedures to facilitate better decision-making, reducing red tape and bureaucracy while at the same time fostering transparency and accountability and control of corruption. Under this goal, the government will pursue a range of strategies to improve its overall performance and delivery of services including, taking steps to improve the ease of doing business in BVI as well as adopting more efficient, green and gender inclusive public procurement policies.

The goal proposes that citizen participation in governance processes be a key pillar of the country's development planning and recognizes that social trust is a key resource to advance inclusive and sustainable development and is integral for democracy and good governance. The thrust under this goal therefore would be to ensure that public governance becomes more open, efficient and effective, creating increased satisfaction trust in public administration and the rule of law by Islanders. To ensure effective participation in governance processes, under this goal, the enabling environment will be created to ensure that citizens especially youth are provided with ample opportunities for social networking and civic engagement. The goal also will enable the effective participation of civil society organizations in development processes.

Under this goal, safety and security is recognized as being at the core of social stability with a well-managed security sector protecting citizens, visitors and tourists. The goal also will ensure that there is confidence in the fair, equitable and transparent treatment of citizens before the courts to ensure adherence to the rule of law. A just society is envisaged under this goal and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system will be pursued. This goal therefore will ensure that there BVI fosters peace, safety and security.

The Plan will achieve the goal of good Governance, accountable government, citizen participation and a safe and secure society through six (6) National Outcomes as follows:

- National Outcome #13 -Peace, Justice for All, Safety and Security
- National Outcome #14 - Efficiency and effectiveness of government
- National Outcome #15 - Constitutional Advancement
- National Outcome #16 - Transparency and Accountability
- National Outcome #17 - Voice, Feedback and Social Dialogue
- National Outcome #18 - Strengthened Foreign Relations

#### **Goal 4: The Virgin Islands Embraces Environmental Sustainability for Sustainable Islands' Development**

Under this goal the importance of the natural environment to advancing growth and sustainability prospects will be highlighted. To this end, this goal will provide support for the sustainable management and use of natural resources and ecosystems and also will place focus on sustainable consumption and production patterns. The latter implies the responsibility for environmental protection will be shared among all stakeholders, citizens and communities recognizing the critical role they need to play in protecting the islands' natural heritage and the importance of all sectors, industries and government in reducing their ecological footprint. This is also key to the country's efforts to accelerate its economic transformation.

By enabling all Islanders to pursue sustainable livelihoods through more sustainable consumption and production patterns, focus will be placed on fostering resource efficiency, waste prevention and management, and innovation in production processes, use of cleaner technologies and service delivery. These will support the diversification of the economy and enable the country's economic sectors and industries to become more competitive.

This goal will ensure that the VI places emphasis on the green and blue economies and will ensure that focus is placed on strategic investments both for their management and use as well as their protection and sustainability.



The VI is exposed to both natural and manmade hazards. Hurricanes and earthquakes are the natural hazards that are considered to be the greatest threat. Seismic research indicates that the north eastern Caribbean in which VI is located has the potential to experience an earthquake of between 7.5 to 8.5 magnitude on the Richter Scale.

As an island state, BVI also is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change – particularly tropical cyclones which includes hurricanes and storms, and excess rainfall. Under this goal, the importance of resilience building as a key developmental priority is recognized towards reducing current and future vulnerabilities of the population and infrastructure. Accordingly, much focus will be placed under this goal on accelerating implementation of the islands National Climate Change Adaptation Policy. Developing appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks for proper environmental and ecosystems management, and institutional systems for responding to and mitigating against the effects of climate change also will be a key focus, given for example the importance of ecosystems and ecosystems-based services in reducing vulnerability.

The role of ecosystems and ecosystem-based solutions also will be stressed as key to reducing the vulnerability of this 16-island nation. Focus also will be placed on climate change adaptation, paying particular attention to climate proofing economic sectors such as tourism and social sectors such as health and education. This would be supported by placing emphasis on improving knowledge on climate vulnerability of the major economic sectors – e.g., agriculture, fisheries, forestry, health, and disaster management and possible adaptation pathways; including consideration of climate change impacts within all sector policies.

Investments in infrastructure will therefore take into account building forward stronger. The linkages between climate change adaptation and the industries would be further explored by investigating the feasibility of establishing micro- and medium-credit facilities to support innovation and climate adaptation measures particularly for small businesses and groups in the agriculture and fishing industries farmers and fisherfolk among others working in those industries.

This goal also recognizes the need for the development of each of our 16 islands in a sustainable way to achieve balanced growth but also to maintain the uniqueness of each island. Accordingly, under this goal focus will be placed on sustainable urban, rural and community development within the context of island economies. Focus also will be placed on increasing the potential of each of the islands of BVI, reducing inequalities and economic disparities and focusing on strengthening their comparative advantages and competitiveness.

The Plan will achieve the goal of environmental sustainability through two (2) National Outcomes as follows:

- National Outcome #19 -Environmental Sustainability – Sustainable Management and Use of Environmental and Natural Resources
- National Outcome #20 – Developing the Blue Economy
- National Outcome #21 - Hazard risk reduction and adaptation to climate change

## **From Goals and National Outcomes and Strategies**

The Vision of transforming the VI into: “A well-balanced, people-centred Virgin Islands built on spirituality, social justice and equality; nurtured by trust, cultural knowledge and participatory governance; strengthened by economic, environmental, and social sustainability”, is the end state of what we will see by 2036. The 4 National Goals represent the ultimate desired state that we want to achieve across the 4 spheres of sustainable development. When these 4 goals have been achieved, we will realize our vision. These goals will be pursued through twenty (20) national outcomes which represent the intermediate results, and which will feed up into the national goals. Our national outcomes will be operationalized through strategies and actions.

Acknowledging that the society of the Virgin Islands is based upon certain moral, spiritual and democratic values including a belief in God, the dignity of the human person, the freedom of the individual and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and the rule of law;

**The Virgin Islands Constitution 2007**

Table VII: Alignment of Our National Goals and Outcomes with the SDGs - Goals and National Outcomes with the SDGs

National Goals	National Outcomes	Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals
<p><b>Islanders are empowered for a Sustainable Future in an Inclusive Vibrant Society, Living Fulfilling Lives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Outcome #1 - A Healthy Population with Happy Families</li> <li>• National Outcome #2- An Educated and Highly Skilled Population, Creating a Dynamic 21st Century Labour Market</li> <li>• National Outcome #3 - Adaptive and Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems, Leaving no one Behind</li> <li>• National Outcome #4 - Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equality</li> <li>• National Outcome #5 - Uniquely Us - Our Culture, Our Identity and Our Heritage</li> </ul>	 <p>SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities</p>
<p><b>The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Internationally - Competitive Economy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Outcome #6 -Fiscal Strength and Sustainability</li> <li>• National Outcome #7 - An Enabling Business Environment</li> <li>• National Outcome #8 -Strong and Resilient Economic infrastructure</li> <li>• National Outcome #9 -Sustainable Energy and Water</li> <li>• National Outcome #10 - Science, Technology and Innovation</li> <li>• National Outcome #11 - Globally Competitive Industries</li> <li>• National Outcome #12 -A Resilient and Sustainable Economy that is Diversified and Supports New Economic Pillars</li> </ul>	 <p>SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 14: Life Below Water</p>

National Goals	National Outcomes	Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals
<p>The Virgin Islands has Good Governance, An Accountable Government, Citizen Participation and a Safe and Secure Society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Outcome #13 -Peace, Justice for All, Safety and Security</li> <li>National Outcome #14 -Efficiency and effectiveness of government</li> <li>National Outcome #15- Constitutional Advancement</li> <li>National Outcome #16 -Transparency Accountability, and Fiscal Responsibility</li> <li>National Outcome #17 -Voice, Feedback and Social Dialogue</li> <li>National Outcome #18 - Strengthened Foreign Relations</li> </ul>	
<p>The Virgin Islands Embraces Environmental Sustainability for Sustainable Islands' Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Outcome #19 -Environmental Sustainability - Sustainable Management and Use of Environmental and Natural Resources</li> <li>National Outcome 20- Developing the Blue Economy</li> <li>National Outcome #21 - Hazard Risk Reduction and Sustainable Adaptation to Climate Change</li> </ul>	

# Chapter 3: From Goals to National Outcomes

Ready to Work on Achieving Our Future



“Enhancing and Protecting our Precious Land with the National Sustainable Development Plan”



- **A focus on the meaning of each National Outcome**
  - ✚ The national strategies to be pursued under each national outcome and their descriptions,
  - ✚ Quick wins under each national outcome;
  - ✚ Alignment of each National Outcome

## Chapter 3: Our National Outcomes

Table VIII: National Goals and their National Outcomes

**Goal 1: *Islanders are empowered for a Sustainable Future in an Inclusive Vibrant Society, Living Fulfilling Lives***

- National Outcome #1 - A Healthy Population with Happy Families
- National Outcome #2- An Educated and Highly Skilled Population, Creating a Dynamic 21st Century Labour Market
- National Outcome #3 - Adaptive and Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems, Leaving no one Behind
- National Outcome #4 - Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equality
- National Outcome #5 - Uniquely Us - Our Culture, Our Identity and Our Heritage

**Goal 2: *The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Internationally - Competitive Economy***

- National Outcome #6 - Sustainable Economic Environment
- National Outcome #7 - An Enabling Business Environment
- National Outcome #8 - Strong and Resilient Economic infrastructure
- National Outcome #9 - Sustainable Energy and Water
- National Outcome #10 – Science, Technology and Innovation
- National Outcome #11 – Globally Competitive Industries
- National Outcome #12 – A Resilient and Sustainable Economy that is Diversified and Supports New Economic Pillars

**Goal 3: *The Virgin Islands has Good Governance, An Accountable Government, Citizen Participation and a Safe and Secure Society***

- National Outcome #13 - Peace, Justice for All Safety and Security
- National Outcome #14 - Efficiency and effectiveness of government
- National Outcome #15 - Constitutional Advancement
- National Outcome #16 - Transparency and Accountability
- National Outcome #17 - Voice, Accountability and Social Dialogue
- National Outcome #18 - Strengthened Foreign Relations

**Goal 4: *The Virgin Islands Embraces Environmental Sustainability for Sustainable Islands' Development***

- National Outcome #19 -Environmental Sustainability – Sustainable Management and Use of Environmental and Natural Resources
- National Outcome #20 – Developing the Blue Economy
- National Outcome #20 - Hazard risk reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change

# National Goal I: Islanders are Empowered for a Sustainable Future in an Inclusive Vibrant Society, Living Fulfilling Lives

Under National Goal 1 there are five (5) National Outcomes as follows:

Figure 32: National Goal 1 and Five National Outcomes



# National Outcome #1 - A Healthy Population with Fulfilled Youth and Happy Families



*By 2036 BVI will have a fully inclusive health system working for all Islanders and in which we all take collective responsibility for improving our health and happiness*

## Overview

The Government of the VI is committed to the territory's national health policy goals which is focused on improving the quality of life and standard of living of the residents of the territory, with “all inhabitants ... able to maximize their opportunities for health and well-being as key resources for life and development”.

The population of the VI was estimated to be 30,616 in 2012 and based on the country's population pyramid, the population structure is consistent with global trends and reflects an aging population based on the percentage of the population that is 65 years or older and a corresponding lower pace of growth of the 0 – 14 age group. Strategies for addressing the aging population takes on critical importance as chronic diseases becomes the main cause of death and also results in increasing morbidity or overall, a process known as the epidemiological transition. In 2015, the crude birth rate was estimated at 9.1 births per 1,000 population and the crude death rate at 4.7 deaths per 1,000 population. Estimated life expectancy in 2015 was 79.8 years

The health status of the population is considered relatively good with Islanders enjoying lower mortality and longer life expectancy. Notwithstanding, the health profile of the VI shows that chronic non communicable diseases are among the leading causes of morbidity and mortality, with cancer being the leading cause of deaths followed by hypertension and diabetes mellitus. This pattern is driven by a series of risk factors including inadequate physical activity, unhealthy diet, obesity and abuse of alcohol. This requires ensuring that Islanders pay particular attention to the determinants of health and factors that are contributing to the increase in non-communicable diseases and emerging communicable diseases. Focus also will be placed on reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

Healthcare for residents of the Virgin Islands is mainly provided through the National Health Insurance System (NHIS). The benefits of National Health Insurance are accessible by the unemployed, self-employed, and indigent poor. The Government provides subsidized healthcare for the indigent, elderly and youth. There is a single public hospital with a capacity of 120 beds. There is also a private hospital with significant additional bed capacity, which the majority can afford due to the NHIS. There also is a focus in the VI on health reform which has included the establishment of the British Virgin Islands Health Services Authority (BVIHSA) in 2005 and the commissioning of the National Health Insurance system in January 2016.

National Outcome #1 also focuses on families and creating the foundation for having strong families spanning generations. At the root of this is providing support for parenting skills to strengthen core values and ensure emotional and psychological well-being of children among others. This goal recognizes the many benefits of parenting support including reducing the future probability of mental health disorders and learning disorders among children and families overall.

### **Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals**

National Outcome #1 – A Healthy Population with Happy Families is aligned with SDG #3 towards achieving universal health coverage, that seeks equitable access of healthcare services for all men, women boys and girls. It proposes to end the preventable death of new-borns, infants and children under five (child mortality) and end epidemics. Good health is essential to sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda. The NDP will lead to BVI's achievement of the following SDG targets under SDG #3

**Table IX: National Outcome 1 and Targets**

Goals	Targets
3.3	By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
3.4	By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
3.5	Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
3.6	Halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
3.7	By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
3.8	Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.
3.c	Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.
3.d	Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.



**The National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) of The British Virgin Islands**



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.



**10 Important Points**

- 1 The National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) will be based on the global targets and indicators established for the 2030 global agenda.
- 2 The NSDP will be specific to the Territory and will be the overarching development plan.
- 3 The NSDP will provide the BVI with an opportunity for significant national innovation and transformation.
- 4 The Plan will ensure the intertwining of the "5 Ps" that shape the SDGs: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships.
- 5 The plan is long term and will guide the sustainable development of the Territory for 15 years.
- 6 There will be Territory wide consultations so that ALL can have an input.
- 7 The Plan will have an Implementation Framework.
- 8 The Plan will have a monitoring and evaluation framework.
- 9 The Plan will be firmly grounded in not only the realities of the people but also on their hopes and aspirations.
- 10 There will be opportunities to ask for progress on the implementation of the Plan.

# National Strategies to 2036... Towards a Healthy and Happy Population

The national strategies have been designed to ensure that the health of the population is a key human value and will guide the development of appropriate policies, plans and investments over the next 15 years. The ultimate outcome of this goal would be to increase life expectancy, reduce health morbidity even further, and deliver quality health services and care for all.

Table X: National Strategies for National Outcome 1

Ensure adequate financing and investment in inclusive health

Create world-class health infrastructure

Make healthy lifestyles a priority

Reduce the disease burden especially for non-communicable, emerging communicable and mental health diseases

Ensure equal access to high-quality healthcare, and overall improvements in the quality of health care and services by all including persons with disabilities

Enhance existing investments in health information systems to better monitor and evaluate the performance of the health sector

Strengthen the linkages between human health and the environment

Strengthen BVI’s Health Systems to become Climate Resilient

Capitalize on the Silver Economy

Strengthen parenting skills to create the next generation of supportive and happy families

1. **Ensure adequate financing and investment in inclusive health.** A mix of financing approaches including use of innovative financing instruments will be explored to ensure that the VI has sustainable financing mechanisms to meet the needs of its population. The National Health Insurance System is already proactive. Government allocations to the health sector would be consistent with world class standards for percentage of GDP allocations to the health sector. Consideration for use of microinsurance for health will be explored especially under social protection.
2. **Create world-class health infrastructure** by expanding and upgrading public health facilities and designing health infrastructure for long-term sustainability and also making infrastructure more resilient to climate and other natural hazards such as seismic hazards. Health infrastructure also will take into account the needs of PWDs as well as the ageing population, including among others, the use of ramps etc.
3. **Make healthy lifestyles a priority**, by ensuring that focus is placed on the social determinants of health and promoting healthy behaviours and lifestyles. Diet-related non-communicable ailments such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease is continuing to account for a large proportion of the disease burden in the VI, not dissimilar to other Caribbean countries.
4. **Reduce the disease burden especially for non-communicable, emerging communicable and mental health diseases.** Promoting health and wellness is key to preventing and managing lifestyle diseases, in particular non-communicable diseases such as those of the circulatory system (e.g., diabetes), and cancers among others. Promoting health and wellness will begin early in the school curriculum as well as through national awareness programmes and activities such as “VI Moves” to encourage and facilitate national exercise as one key factor to reduce the disease burden. The idea behind promotion will be to create a culture of awareness around good health and well-being.
5. **Ensure equal access to high-quality healthcare, and overall improvements in the quality of health care and services by all including persons with disabilities.** This would involve ensuring that the health sector is equipped with the required human capacity - health managers, doctors, specialists, nurses and community health workers - in adequate numbers, to support the health needs of the population. It would be important to align the training of current and future health professionals to future diseases, especially new and emerging non-communicable diseases as well as re-emerging communicable diseases. The National Health Insurance System is key here and will need to continue to be resourced to ensure that all Islanders must have access to an equal standard of health care, regardless of their income. To ensure equal access to high quality health care, focus also will be placed on the most vulnerable Islanders and also ensuring the needs of the elderly are met.
6. **Enhance existing investments in health information systems to better monitor and evaluate the performance of the health sector.** This would involve strengthening and enhancing the current health information system with tools, standards, and guidelines to

enhance capacity to collect accurate, timely, and reliable data, utilize health data more efficiently, and effectively communicate risk and health knowledge to relevant stakeholders.

7. It would also include implementation of capacity building in knowledge management methodologies, and development of an electronic integrated data repository/management system that will combine data from different sources including the private sector which would allow for both collection and management of information and enable wide distribution of data.
8. **Strengthen the linkages between human health and the environment.** Environmental degradation can result in increases in communicable and non-communicable diseases as well as mental health. The natural environment when degraded can affect individuals through polluted air and water and can also contribute to non-communicable diseases based on lifetime exposures to harmful chemicals and pollutants.
9. **Strengthen BVI's Health Systems to become Climate Resilient.** Recognition is given to the fact that during times of disasters, health care systems are needed more than ever and are at the frontline in protecting lives, but these systems are oftentimes themselves vulnerable to many hazards, such as hydrometeorological hazards and climate change. These hazards threaten the capacity of health systems to manage and protect population health, for example through the reliability of its infrastructure or critical services. Under this strategy, the VI's health systems would be strengthened so that they can continue to be operational and responsive in the face of natural disasters. Ideas such as future-proof hospital and health delivery models will be explored.
10. **Capitalize on the Silver Economy** by placing focus on the health and well-being of persons over 50 towards advancing the silver economy. The silver economy is associated with the demographic shift brought about by population aging. This national strategy will place focus on the needs of older persons in the population, including pensions, health services, and long-term care. While it will appear that ensuring there is sufficient capacity and resources to meet these growing demands, this national strategy recognizes the many possibilities of an aging population as it relates to economic development, new business ventures, and job opportunities as older persons tend to have both high incomes compared to younger cohorts and high need, such as medical and specialized care, making them major consumers.
11. **Strengthen parenting skills to create the next generation of supportive and happy families.** This strategy will place focus on the role of parents in the education, healthcare and overall development of their children to enable them to achieve their fullest potential. Under this national strategy, support will be provided through the islands to enhance parenting skills and strengthen core values towards ensuring emotional and psychological well-being of children. The many benefits of providing parenting support will be recognized and activities designed and implemented under this national strategy will be geared toward reducing the future probability of mental health disorders and learning disorders among children.

## National Outcome #2- An Educated and Highly Skilled Population, Creating a Dynamic 21st Century Labour Market



*By 2036 the VI will have an educated and highly skilled population, able to effectively participate in the dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market towards advancing the country's sustainable development prospects*

### Overview

This outcome places emphasis on improving access to education services, improving the performance of children and building the capacity of service providers, including our teachers. Specifically, efforts will be made to increase and maintain higher enrolment and attendance rates, ensuring that all children, regardless of location, are able to access education services for the full duration of the compulsory age range and up to tertiary level.

Education in the Virgin Islands is largely free and is a requirement for children ages 5 to 17. The VI recognizes the importance of an educated and highly skilled population to ensuring that its citizens can fully participate and support the country's development efforts. Education is guided by the Education Act 2004 and Education (Amendment) Act 2014.

The Virgin Islands Education Act Division The Virgin Islands Education Act 2004 Division 3 Section 28:1 states; "Every child shall attend school from the first day of the school calendar in the school year following that in which he attains the lower age of the compulsory school age until the last day of the school calendar in the school year in which he attains sixteen years of age or at the end of which he obtains a school leaving certificate or diploma whichever occurs first." The Act further states in the Preliminary Section 2 that; "Compulsory school age means from five years of age to sixteen years of age."

In 2015, close to 15 per cent of the national budget was allocated to education<sup>39</sup> and Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) stood at 6.32 in 2015<sup>40</sup>. In 2010, the literacy rate for people aged 15 or older was 97.7 per cent. School attendance is compulsory for children ages 5-17 years, and public school, including higher education, is free<sup>41</sup>. The public school system consists of 15 primary schools, 4 secondary schools, and a technical and vocational school. The University of the West Indies also operates an open campus site in BVI, and undertakes a range of continuing education programming. In addition, there are 10 private primary schools and 3 private secondary schools.

Expected years of schooling (years) is 12.6 and the net enrolment ratio in primary education (%) was 76.53 in 2016. The Gross Enrolment rate for primary school for the 2013/14 school year was 84 per cent and the net enrolment rate was 51 per cent. Student performance has been good with about 85% of student passing the Primary 5 Exam with Grades I or II. As part of the Government's thrust for advancing science and technology, all schools, since 2015, have been outfitted with free internet access. The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in the secondary schools ranged from a low of less than 2 to 1 in the Technical Vocational School to as much as 11 to 1 in one other secondary school. The average PTR in secondary schools was 7.7 students to 1 teacher.

Several schools in the BVI were damaged during 2017, due the passage of two category 5 hurricanes, Irma and Maria. Six of the eighteen public schools were totally destroyed and were rendered unusable with the remainder experiencing mild to moderate damage to roof, windows. Following these unprecedented events, the rebuilding of school infrastructure was focused on

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<sup>39</sup> Uk Aid, UNICEF. 2017. Early Childhood Development Data Snapshot: Government of the BVI

<sup>40</sup> UNESCO. 2019. UNESCO and British Virgin Islands, Key Facts and Figures

<sup>41</sup> PAHO. 2017. Health in the Americas+ 2017 Edition.

building back better, incorporating safe and school standards and guidelines focused on reducing impacts of future risks. These smart school guidelines to be incorporated in the construction and retrofitting of all schools represents the use of ‘sustainable, mitigation, adaptation, and resilient techniques’ to ensure schools are safe and resilient to natural hazards.



*School under construction following 2017 Hurricanes Irma and Maria.*

Over the period 2010 – 2014, the labour force participation rate was 89.9 per cent. The unemployment rate up to 2016 was 2.8 per cent<sup>42</sup>. Based on the Labour Force Survey, 2015, unemployment rates among females are higher than that of males. To address labour force participation particularly among youth, the government has created programmes including curricula reform at the School of Technical Studies so that graduates are better aligned with the needs of the labour market thereby ensuring that graduates are better equipped with skills for the current job market. One programme, YEP connects unemployed youth between ages 16 and 30 with job opportunities. The programme also prepares youth for employment by recommending skill development through training or formal education.

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<sup>42</sup> CDB. 2019. “British Virgin Islands Economic Brief 2018”.

This national outcome acknowledges the role of training to equip individuals with the skills required to effectively participate in the labour market. It further recognizes that the rapidly changing demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market requires a dynamic training system which is aligned to current and emerging needs. As such, under this national outcome, strategic focus is given to producing a well-trained workforce to deliver sustainable and inclusive prosperity and international competitiveness. Our training system will be deliberate, targeted and focus, recognizing that we must leverage our competitive advantages. This approach will promote efficient use of our resources and engender confidence in the output of the training system towards meeting the needs of the labour market.

## **National Strategies to 2036... Towards an Educated and Highly Skilled Population**

The national strategies under Outcome #2 are structured to ensure that BVI's education and training sector will provide opportunities for all, fostering both inclusiveness and equity towards creating a highly educated and skilled population who are able to operate in a dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market.

To achieve this, several areas of the education and training sector will be developed to world class standards, with focus from early childhood through to tertiary level education. BVI recognizes that quality education is critical for addressing poverty, vulnerability and achieving sustainable human development.

This goal recognizes that infrastructure and facilities of the education sector must be equipped for our 21<sup>st</sup> century learners and some may need to be retrofitted to meet, and in the case of new infrastructure designed to accommodate all students including those with disabilities, ensuring that no one is left behind. Focus will be placed on ensuring that we have in place quality teachers and learning administrators who adopt best practices in pedagogy and play a key role in the development of the professional and highly skilled workforce that we need and are desirous of having. This is important for BVI given that the labour force makes up close to 60 per cent of Islanders, with the proportion of children and the elderly comprising smaller shares.

The education and training sectors will be underpinned by lifelong learning and strategic investments in science, technology, and innovation as well as Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The goal also recognizes the importance of curricula and ensuring that all our students from early childhood through to secondary education benefit from STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) curricula, which would be supported by access to modern and cutting-edge ICTs among students, teachers, and educational administrators.

The VI recognizes that investments in science, technology and innovation would be key to advancing a technology-enabled society and further drive the creation of a knowledge-based economy in BVI towards enhancing the islands' overall competitiveness. Creating this forward

looking and world class education and training sector also will depend on the involvement of a range of stakeholders in the education and training sectors. Private sector involvement as well as the establishment of public-private partnerships in education and training will be pursued under this goal given the importance of aligning education and training with the needs of labour market as well as to foster training and education in entrepreneurship.

**The National Strategies to be addressed under National Outcome #2 are:**

Table XI: National Strategies for National Outcome 2

Advance a knowledge-based economy to drive competitiveness	Provide educational opportunities for all with a focus on lifelong learning and inclusiveness
Focus on early childhood education	Invest in world-class education infrastructure and facilities, to meet the needs of 21 <sup>st</sup> century learners
Advance STEAM education from early childhood to secondary education	Increase investments in science, technology and innovation
Align the education and training with the needs of the labour market	Foster entrepreneurship
Strengthen the labour market integration pathway	Provide world-class training opportunities

1. **Advance a knowledge-based economy to drive competitiveness.** There are several facets to achieving a knowledge-based society but importantly, quality education must be provided for all. Importantly, the Government will seek to expand access to tertiary education, encouraging students to move from secondary education into tertiary level education as a strategy to increase the pool of skilled professionals and technicians. In pursuing the advancement of a knowledge-based economy, the following sector strategies will be pursued: increasing attainment levels in education; raising the bar on the quality of education; and improving the prestige of technical and vocational education and training. The latter would diversify the overall education systems by reducing the emphasis on degree programmes only but recognize and include technical qualifications as part of the national qualifications framework.
2. **Provide educational opportunities for all with a focus on lifelong learning and inclusiveness.** Universal access to education at all levels will be maintained where it exists and scaled up in areas such as early childhood education with a focus on improving the overall quality of education. Focus also will be placed on increase the number of well-trained, world-class teaching professionals as well as improving the teaching and learning environment towards and overall enhancement of the quality and effectiveness of the education system. There is one Special Needs School in the Virgin Islands which is operated by the government and is included at the primary level. To ensure inclusiveness, we will expand the coverage of our special needs institution to ensure that students have the same access to higher levels of education including secondary and tertiary. For tertiary level education, there is one institution in the BVI, the Hamilton Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC). Focus will be given to expanding the education services offered at this level which currently offers programmes in workforce training, certificate programmes and associate degree programmes.
3. **Focus on early childhood education.** The emphasis of education in early childhood focuses on the holistic approach to child development – developed geared towards all aspects of the growth and development of children. Early childhood education has many benefits to the child including the development of the brain and the realization of key developmental milestones such as the ability to speak and play within the social environment. Early childhood education also is believed to contribute to positive outcomes in health, education, employment and participation in society later on in life. The number of early childhood institutions increased from 19 in 2002/03 to 32 in 2013/14. This is consistent with an increase in enrolment which increased to 1508 from 1047. For 2013/14, the average pupil teacher/caregiver ratio was 8 to 1. However, only about 48% of the teachers/caregivers were trained. The national strategy importance of early childhood education (ECE) will be strengthened and improved, ensuring alignment between ECE centres and primary school curricula and increased participation of younger children in education in formal ECE centres/institutions. Under this National Strategy, the regulations related to ECE will be fully adhered to including areas such as registration of ECE centres, registration of young children in ECEs and educational programming, curricula and assessments.

4. **Invest in world-class education infrastructure and facilities, to meet the needs of 21st century learners.** Investments in school infrastructure and the physical conditions for learning are not a luxury but a need. Infrastructure also will be designed to ensure inclusiveness and cater to the needs of PWDs, to ensure that no one is left behind. Importantly, the safe and SMART schools' concept will continue to be deployed in the construction of new schools as well as in the retrofitting or renovation of existing schools to ensure that they are resilient to natural and manmade hazards with considerations for other factors such as air and water pollutants taken into account. Learning spaces also will be designed to ensure that they can accommodate new and emerging technologies and ICTs.
5. **Advance STEAM education from early childhood to secondary education.** The curriculum for primary and secondary schools will be reviewed to support acceleration of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) curricula to facilitate transforming the VI to accommodate creative and active learning and to develop entrepreneurial skills, learning by doing, and effective peer learning and to prepare learners for the changes in the 21st century. This holistic approach will incorporate enhanced parental engagement to support learning.
6. **Increase investments in science, technology and innovation.** The school system will continue to enable ICT-based education pedagogy and delivery. Integrating ICT in education will be a powerful tool to further enhance improvements in quality, relevance, equity, and transformational pedagogy. The enabling environment also will be created to foster and advance the technology needs of Generation Z and Generation Alpha – the new generations of students and integrate technology accordingly into the school curricula and overall learning environment. Generation Z for example are those students born between 1995 and 2009 who cannot perceive life without the internet, and use technologies such as smartphones, iPads, smartboards and other devices which also needs to be made available and incorporated throughout their schooling. These students also referred to as the "digital natives" of today's world learn in completely new ways that blend different modalities and institutional settings.
7. **Align the education and training with the needs of the labour market.** The focus of this national strategy would be to make the education system more responsive to labour market needs which in turn will help to support the employability of new graduates, minimize skills imbalances and improve the resilience of the workforce to future changes in labour market demand. This National Strategy would require BVI undertaking periodic labour market assessments to obtain information about current and future employment opportunities, new and emerging jobs and skills and will serve as a basis for analysing the areas of the economy that generate the most jobs.
8. **Foster entrepreneurship.** Under this national strategy focus will be placed on entrepreneurship in education and promoting entrepreneurial training as a clear path to enhancing innovation, creativity and self-confidence of young people. Fostering

entrepreneurship will require entrepreneurial training and education to be infused in the national curriculum from primary school to higher education such as The UWI Open Campus. The role of the private sector in helping to support curricula design would be key.

9. **Strengthen the labour market integration pathway**, by improving employment support to the most vulnerable groups including determining the labour market obstacles they face and to develop strategies and actions to ensure that these groups needs are met as it relates to education and training are met and that these new capacities could be matched to the labour market. Actions will be developed and implemented to identify Islanders who are marginally attached to the labour market and whose labour market situation could be improved as well as those who should be supported with social, health or education services first.
10. **Provide world-class training opportunities**. Under this national strategy focus will be given to addressing issues and challenges which include: inadequate access to training programmes; weak alignment of training programmes with labour market demand; inadequate promotion of entrepreneurship; and the need to develop stronger partnerships between the public and private sectors.

### Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #2 – An Educated and Highly Skilled Population, Creating a Dynamic 21st Century Labour Market is aligned with SDG #4 - ***Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*** thereby reaffirming that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for advancing a country’s sustainable development prospects, key to eliminating gender and wealth disparities, and achieve universal access to a quality higher education. The NDP will lead to BVI’s achievement of the following SDG targets under SDG #4.

**Table XII: National Outcome 2 and SDG Targets**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Targets</b>
4.1	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
4.2	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
4.3	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
4.5	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
4.7	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
4.a	Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.
4.c	By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

## National Outcome #3 – Adaptive Social Protection... Leaving no One Behind



*By 2036 BVI will have a modern and dynamic social protection system – including legislation, policy and a digital social registry*

### Overview

Social protection is a human right as enshrined in various international Conventions and is a social and economic necessity and importantly a fundamental human right and central to sustainable poverty reduction, and human dignity. Dynamic social protection policies create the enabling environment to break the “vicious cycle” of poverty and vulnerability. The costs of no social protection or neglecting social protection are borne by society through increasing poverty and vulnerability. The national strategies proposed under this goal will ensure that the social protection system is redesigned to be more adaptive and responsive to shocks as a means of safeguarding our population against exogenous shocks, given the multi-hazard environment in which we exist. For

example, each year between June and November, we are at risk of tropical cyclones including storms and hurricanes which result in damage and loss and increase poverty and vulnerability oftentimes affecting socioeconomic and other developmental gains. For example, in the 2017 Hurricane Season BVI was affected by two category 5 hurricanes – Irma and Maria – which affected 18,000 persons<sup>43</sup> with an estimated \$3.6 billion in damages and losses to the Territory, constituting more than 3.5 times the size of the economy at the end of 2016<sup>44</sup>.

Tied to social protection is poverty reduction and under this National Outcome priority will be placed on ending poverty and advancing a comprehensive range of programmes to improve the living conditions of poor and vulnerable groups, recognizing that poverty is a multi-dimensional, complex phenomenon. While BVI is considered a high-income country with a GDP per capita in 2020 of approximately US\$28,000, the poverty rate is 22 per cent<sup>45</sup>, with no indigence as indicated in the last Country Poverty Assessment conducted in 2003. The last CPA also indicated that about 16 per cent of households were in poverty. Child poverty in the VI is the lowest in the Eastern Caribbean. About 1.5 per cent of the poor being covered by social assistance programmes<sup>46</sup>.

It is important to note that the VI does not hold traditional characteristics of poverty whereby, even amongst poorer households, there are favourable social indicators – for example, access to safe water, electricity and sanitation is universal, school enrolment for the 5-17-year old age group is compulsory and approaches 100%, life expectancy is high, infant mortality is low, malnutrition is relatively non-existent (although over-nutrition is an issue), infectious diseases and other medical conditions commonly associated with poverty are almost non-existent.

Currently, social protection in the VI is covered through a variety of programmes. The six divisions of the Social Development Department (SDD) are responsible for providing the following services: public assistance, day care assistance, skills building, child protection and permanency planning including adoption and foster care, counselling, case management, probation and restitution, disability and rehabilitation, community development and other community-based programmes such as the elderly/senior recreational programmes, non-medical homecare programme, mentorship, and early intervention for children (birth to five years). The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHI) which was established in 2016 and covers approximately 98 per cent of the population.

To better address social protection and issues related to vulnerability, the Government commenced in 2018, a comprehensive Country Assessment of Living Conditions that when completed will include: a combined Survey of Living Conditions and Household Budget Survey covering one

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<sup>43</sup> 2020. OCHA. British Virgin Islands Overseas Territory Profile

<sup>44</sup> 2020. Government of BVI. Medium Term Fiscal Plan 2018-2020

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Maya Faisal and Christina Dankmeyer, UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area. “Shock-Responsive Social Protection: Scaling up Social Assistance to Mitigate Secondary Impact of COVID-19 on Children”.

thousand randomly selected households; a Participatory Poverty Assessment in four (4) communities; a Macro Social and Economic Assessment to examine key political, economic and social trends; and an Institutional Assessment covering a range of government institutions and civil society organizations that provide services which are designed to improve living conditions.

The fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in interruptions in the tourism sector which is expected to trigger a four or five-fold increase in unemployment, which will disproportionately affect women and migrants and possibly impact poverty levels<sup>47</sup>.

Poverty policies and strategies under this National Outcome will consider, a joined-up approach underpinned by collaboration among public policy makers, civil society, and the private sector to create appropriate solutions for eliminating poverty and creating the enabling environment to increase employment opportunities and entrepreneurship; as well as creating vibrant and economically viable rural communities that support alternative and sustainable livelihoods; and ensuring that there is adequate shelter, housing and social infrastructure for all.

## **National Strategies to 2036... Towards Leaving No One Behind in the Development Space**

Globally it is recognized that social protection is key to addressing the multiple dimensions of poverty and vulnerability and is an accelerator in achieving results across sectors and SDGs and provides a foundation to ensure no one is left behind. This national outcome is based on the fact that poverty has various dimensions and reducing and eliminating poverty can be achieved by enhancing opportunities and capabilities. The strategies under this national outcome are designed to address the inter-linked dimensions of poverty and vulnerability including access to quality services such as health care, education and housing. The National Strategies to be addressed under National Outcome #3 are:

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<sup>47</sup> 2020. OCHA. British Virgin Islands Overseas Territory Profile

**Table XIII: National Strategies for Outcome 3**

<b>Eliminate poverty and vulnerability</b>	<b>Foster inclusive social development</b>
<b>Design and develop the policy and legislative framework for social protection, including the development of a shock-responsive social protection policy</b>	<b>Create vibrant and economically viable rural communities across the Islands</b>
<b>Advance Sustainable Livelihoods</b>	<b>Ensure adequate shelter, housing and social infrastructure for all</b>

1. **Eliminate poverty and vulnerability.** The country is currently in the process of conducting a new Country Poverty Assessment (CPA). Also, in pursuing this national strategy, the Government will be guided by the United Nations System Social Protection Floor Initiative, which will help BVI to better define nationally defined the sets of basic social security guarantees that ensure access to: essential health care; adequate cash transfers for those in need including children; benefits and support for people of working age in cases of maternity, disability, work injury, or for those without jobs; and pensions for all older persons. Under this national strategy instruments such as social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services, public works programmes, and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security will be explored. Among the many strategies that countries can employ in expanding their social protection programmes and systems, the Social Protection Floor approach stands out for its promotion of universal and rights-based social protection coverage.
2. **Design and develop the policy and legislative framework for social protection, including the development of a shock-responsive social protection policy.** Currently, there are plans in the BVI for the development and promulgation of a national social protection policy. Focus will be placed on the development of a Social Protection Act, development of operational and targeting tools for social assistance as well as digitization of the country’s social registry. This national strategy will support these actions. Under this goal, BVI will ensure that when its new social protection policy is promulgated, it would

have benefitted from sound design, costing and fiscal space analysis, as well as inclusive social dialogue considering social protection systems, including social protection floors.

3. **The social protection policy** when promulgated would be both adaptive and shock responsive. This policy will therefore ensure the shock responsiveness of our island-nation social protection system and will extend the types of risks covered to include natural hazards, economic crises, health crises that can happen simultaneously impacting many households and can play a critical role in determining life outcomes.
4. **Foster inclusive social development**, ensuring that where economic and social vulnerability exists, it is addressed and support is provided to all that needs it across their life course, as the key to the country's social policy and development.
5. **Create vibrant and economically viable rural communities across the Islands**, towards advancing sustainable livelihoods and enabling the islands to also develop smartly. The intent will be to develop policies and strategies to strengthen the economies of the Islands, provide better quality of life, and build on local assets such as those in the blue economy. The NDP recognizes the challenges that many of our islands face, and with this in mind, focus also will be placed on developing unique local level or Island Development Plans to foster sustainability, enabling each of our Islands to achieve their goals for growth and development, while maintaining their distinctive and unique island character and culture. It would be important in advancing the development of the Islands that consideration be given to the sustainable management and use of natural resources and ecosystems as well as cultural heritage. Advancing the development of the Islands also ensure that focus is placed on the green, blue, orange and circular economies as well as digital transitions.
6. **Advance Sustainable Livelihoods**, by ensuring that all persons have the capabilities, assets and means for living and importantly, all people and communities will be able to prepare for, cope, adapt and recover from stressors and shocks such as natural disasters, or economic or health shocks such as COVID-19 in the shortest possible time. Strategies and actions will be put in place to drive economic development, reduce poverty and improve natural resource management especially in the Islands. The Government also will create the enabling environment to ensure that livelihoods can be protected following exogenous shocks such as natural disasters or health disasters such as COVID-19 or other economic shocks.
7. **Ensure adequate shelter, housing and social infrastructure for all**. Under this national strategy, emphasis will be placed on affordability of housing and importantly ensuring that houses and communities are designed, rebuilt and retrofitted to withstand natural disasters such as earthquake and hurricane.

## Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #3 – Adaptive Social Protection... Leaving no One Behind is aligned with SDG #1 – **No Poverty** which is a bold commitment to end poverty in all forms and dimensions by 2030.

While SDG #1 has focus on targeting those living in vulnerable situations, increasing access to basic resources and services, there is also recognition of how climate-related disasters can lead to poverty and the importance of a sustainably managed environment as a prerequisite for socio-economic development and poverty reduction. The NDP will lead to BVI’s achievement of the following SDG targets under SDG #1.

<b>Table XIV: National Outcome 3 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Targets</b>
1.2	By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
1.3	Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
1.4	By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
1.5	By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
1.b	Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

## National Outcome #4 – Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equality



A Section of the Bregado Flax Brass Ensemble

*By 2036, we will be providing equality of opportunity for our citizens so that our current youth will be living in a society where participation in all dimensions of our sustainable development will not be hindered by gender, race and class*

### Overview

From 1990 an office known as the Woman's Desk, a part of the Office of the Chief Minister, was established in order to provide "educational and intervention programs" that handle issues related to "women's health and domestic violence. This function is now located within the Ministry of Health and Social Development. The Virgin Islands maintains that over the years there has been the removal of discrimination against women and that today women can be found within the helm of every facet of life within the territory. Further that there are no hindrances to access to education and that more than fifty percent of most graduating classes are female.

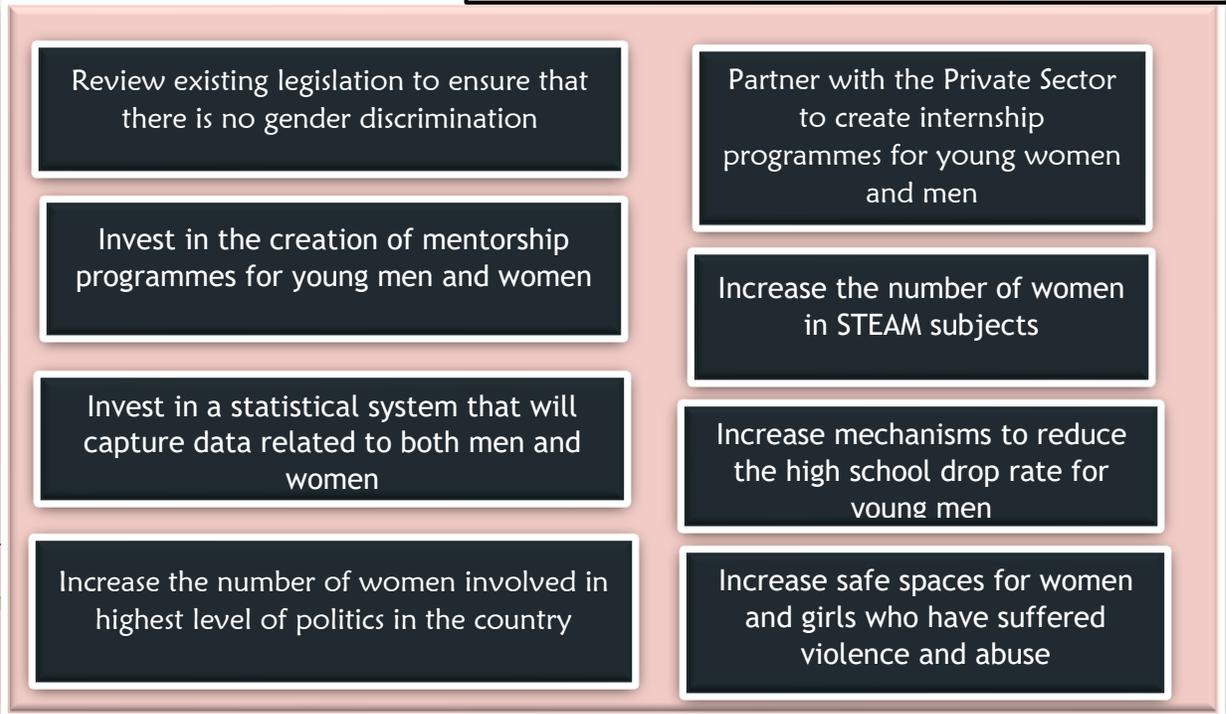
The country made the conscious effort to honour the community builders in a “Heroes’ and Foreparents Day.” This annual holiday recognizes the men and women who built the Virgin Islands and made contributions to the creation of the Virgin Islands. It celebrates pioneers and outstanding community servants in fisheries and agriculture, boat building, health, business, politics, public administration, the arts and religion. This profound statement of honouring the nation builders articulates the sentiment of equality. Nevertheless, there are still key undertakings that will be important in ensuring the removal of “the many root causes of discrimination that still curtail women’s rights in private and public spheres.”<sup>48</sup> There is still violence against women and girls which must be addressed through education, the provision of safe spaces and legislation.

Our consultations with the youth and the diaspora of the country revealed the perceptions that:

- Women are very visible in the various economic activities but that this did not translate to equal opportunities for them.
- Young men were dropping out of school and were not utilizing the opportunities within such institutions.
- More young men are involved in criminal activities.
- Not enough women are involved in science and technology.

**National Strategies to 2036...**

**Table XV: National Strategies for National Outcome 4**



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- Review existing legislation to ensure that there is no gender discrimination- Unless there is a conscious effort to ensure non-discrimination, it should be noted that legislation is not gender neutral. Women must have equality before the law and there are social and economic circumstances that may hinder access to the legal system. The UN notes that some laws have discriminatory effects in practice, even though not in intent. Efforts must be made to guarantee equality between women and men and that these are effectively applied to ensure the advancement of women.
- Partner with the Private Sector to create internship programmes for young women and men. Opportunities must be provided to create invaluable learning experience. The Ministry of Education must work towards increasing the number of students who are afforded these prospects. It should be noted that these internships can be secured through international organisations who work with private sectors in other countries. The Public sector can also be involved in providing on the job training for students in their last two years of high school, as well as, in tertiary institutions.
- Invest in the creation of mentorship programmes for young men and women- Guidance and support are necessary systems that must be put in place to ensure that the youth get the best advice for the future. Such a programme can foster knowledge building, goal setting, accountability, encouragement and networking. This is a free service that can be organised with partners in the community. The young mentees can benefit from lessons about the negative and positive experiences of their mentors and can learn how to face challenges.
- Increase the number of women in STEM subjects – Globally, it has been recognised that there are not many females in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. There must be an attempt prevent the skewing of woman away from these areas which can provide opportunities for women in developing countries. The UN Report on women in STEM shows that in Latin American and the Caribbean only 35% of women are involved in these areas at the tertiary level. The challenge occurs with the choice of subjects as early as the third form in secondary schools. It should be noted that “STEM careers are often referred to as the jobs of the future; jobs that will foster sustainable development and that will drive innovation, social wellbeing, and inclusive growth.”<sup>49</sup> We have to secure the future of women in sustainable development.
- Increase mechanisms to reduce the high school drop rate for young men – It has been noted that there are more young men drop out of high school than young females. An additional concern is that although the graduation rate is almost the same, more females pursue tertiary education. This has raised the issue of male marginalisation in the Country.

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<sup>49</sup> UN Women, Women In Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (Stem) In The Latin America and The Caribbean Region. [Montevideo, 2020] 12.

- Invest in a statistical system that will capture data related to both men and women— Every effort must be made to ensure that there is reliable, timely and disaggregated data on women. This ensures that there is a realistic assessment on the progress that is being made by women. That there is no evidence base to monitor progress prevents timely decision making and interventions to ensure that women are included and have access to the resources that will affect their lives and livelihoods. For the Country, gender equality is a priority.
- Increase the number of women involved in highest level of politics in the country- The large number of women in the current government is commendable as there are currently four women who sit in the House of Assembly, three as elected members and one as Attorney General. The fact that more young women are stepping forward to serve politically augers



well for the country. It is the first time since the restoration of the Legislative Council in 1950 that so many women have served in the House of Assembly. While there is seemingly no restriction

- Provide safe spaces for women and girls who have suffered violence and abuse - Part of the Mission of The Ministry of Health and Social Development is to provide a safe environment as a positive resource for living and sustainable development. In this regard it has to deliver a wide range of social protection programmes and services, including social safety net programmes targeting the most vulnerable members of the population. Women and girls are a distinctive group who might have to be removed from situations in which they face

danger. COVID 19 restrictions have unfortunately created a situation where members this group might have to live in close proximity with abusers. This means that more anonymous safe spaces must be established to guarantee safe abode.

### Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #4 – *Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equality is aligned with SDG #5 and SDG # 8 all of which recognise that providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large." Moreover, that in SIDS, especially those with a colonial history, where race and glass also affect access, that all human resources are necessary for sustainable development.*

<b>Table XVI: National Outcome 4 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Targets</b>
4.1	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
4.3	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
5.1	End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
5.2	Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
5.4	Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
5.5	Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
5.6	Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
5.A	Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

## National Outcome #5 – Uniquely Us - Our Culture, Our Identity and Our Heritage



*By 2036, we will celebrate our culture, uniqueness and spirituality as the foundation of our sustainable development. We understand that these values underpin the attainment of many of the SDGs. It will ensure a future that is safe, peaceful, inclusive, green, sustainable cities, and focused on preserving the land and marine environment.*

### Overview

The Department of Culture, is strategically located within the Ministry of Education and is responsible for ensuring the development and articulation of culture, in order to create a vibrant society for the enrichment of the lives of all residents. Over the years the evolution of our civilization has enabled both the celebration of our spirit, as well as, the preservation of our heritage as Virgin Islanders. The annual commemoration of cultural activities remind our children that we are unique people who value expressions of our creativity.

Our heritage, acquired through years of inheritance and legacy, reinforce traditions we have cherished from the struggles of our ancestors which have been passed down through generations. It is a constant reminder of who we are as a people and reinforce our identity. From our sayings, cuisine, way of life, art, music to our practices and customs we express ourselves with confidence as a people.

The country is known for its religious tolerance as our focus is on spirituality. This value has found written expression in our constitution. We openly worship, celebrate and rejoice as a united people. There was an insistence during our consultations that the NSDP be based on a strong spiritual foundation and the belief that this strong society will always be preserved.

**National Strategies to 2036...**

There is no SDG which specifically targets issues related to identity, history, and way of life. Instead, culture is a cross cutting theme that should permeate in all dimensions of sustainable development. The national strategies are therefore designed to ensure that culture is fully integrated into all aspects of life and that there will be a continued emphasis on preservation of heritage, on revitalizing neighborhoods around heritage and pride through investment, celebration and inclusiveness.

**The National Strategies to be addressed under National Outcome #5 are.**

Table XVII: National Strategies for National Outcome 5	
	Preservation of Culture and Heritage
Engage in the teaching of history through cultural activities	Integrate culture with the economic development of the country
Making strategic monetary investments in cultural activities and institutions	Engaging people in neighbourhood revitalization and innovations through the Tourist Industry
Showcasing our literary, performance, visual and culinary arts at CARIFESTA festivals	Promote the talent of Islanders by facilitating engagement between younger and more experienced artists

Placing culture at the heart of development policies is the only way to ensure a human-centred, inclusive and equitable development.”<sup>50</sup> Our innate and primary reaction is the sheer joy evoked by years of crafting our uniqueness and pride, while consolidating our identity. We want to showcase our culture, at the same time ensuring that we preserve and protect our heritage. There are flora, fauna and environments that we must safeguard as part of our cultural heritage.

1. **Preservation of Culture and Heritage** – The objective of the preservation of culture and heritage is to ensure continuity and authenticity. The values that are passed from generation to generation must form part of the school system assist in the consolidation of identity. At the same time, investment must be made in the maintenance of cultural sites, old buildings, and landmarks of cultural and historical significance. An upgrading of the inventory of such cultural sites will be part of the development of cultural industries.

The deepening of the partnerships with non-governmental and other community groups will include citizens in the preservation of the cultural assets like national parks and will ensure that these environments are maintained while being accessed for recreation and quality of life’

2. **Integrate culture with the economic development of the country-** In an attempt to

Whereas the people of the territory of the Virgin Islands have over centuries evolved with a distinct cultural identity which is the essence of a Virgin Islander;

**The Virgin Islands Constitution 2007**

ensure that culture is integrated into economic development, many countries have placed emphasis on the development of cultural tourism as part of their tourism product. It is estimated that cultural tourism accounts for 40 % of world tourism revenues. UNESCO recommends that this can be linked with decent work and economic growth. From the development of museums, cultural tours, and community heritage building, there is a basis for attracting tourism investment in a sustainable way.

The development of cultural and creative industries will be at the heart of this integration. These will ensure that as we develop patrimony our people will be the primary beneficiaries of their imagination. Emphasis will be placed on patents and trademarks. Capacity building will be a major focus so that our people are involved in all aspects of the process from the creation of the works, to production, to sale, and distribution. We will ensure that our valuable resources will be the foundation of the livelihoods and recognition will be given to those employed in culture sector activities especially women and the vulnerable.

3. **Engage in the teaching of history through cultural activities** - The youth of the Country must be involved in preserving the identity of the people who came before them. This can only be undertaken through quality education, that places emphasis on History that is taught in cultural context. Students must be able to identify themselves in the content that is taught and the way in which it is taught. An integrated education strategy is essential today to express the value of cultural heritage so that by 2030 all will be aware of the way in which this country's history and developed. They should be encouraged to preserve cultural heritage preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
4. **Engaging people in neighbourhood revitalization and innovations through the Tourist Industry-** Village and neighbourhood tourism is aimed at the inclusion of all citizens in preservation of villages and communities, natural talents, biodiversity, and heritages. It can play a significant role in diversifying the tourism product, while at the same time providing employment for people who are located far away from hotels and seaports. Visitors can be engaged in the process of the production of local goods and services that will broaden their visitor experience. There are local models that demonstrate the value of this approach to family and community tourism.



5. **Making strategic monetary investments in cultural activities and institutions-** Nation building through the awareness of a sense of real and tangible pride must be ensured through investment and education. Cultural institutions, individuals and groups cannot shape the cultural messaging, maintenance and display of cultural assets without partnership agreements with the Department responsible for culture and heritage.
6. **Showcasing our literary, performance, visual and culinary arts at CARIFESTA festivals-** The country has participated in CARIFESTA festival but this has been inconsistent. There must be a commitment to the poets, graphic designers, painters, dancers, fashion designers, film makers, photographers and storytellers who increase the visibility of the Country regionally and internationally. This expression of Caribbean unity and integration occurs every two years and preparations should be continuous, building on the local Arts Festivals that promote heritage and culture.

7. Promote the talent of Islanders by facilitating engagement between younger and more experienced artists – In order to safeguard the heritage of the country, a project to safeguard intangible heritage through trained craftspeople must be undertaken with the youth, so that skills can be passed on to generations. These crafts persons can be part of the mentorship programme.

### Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

**National Outcome #5 – Uniquely Us - Our Culture, Our Identity and Our Heritage** *is aligned with SDG # 4, SGD# 11 and SDG #12*, but is the foundation of the attainment of all the Goals. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) contends that “**Culture is who we are, and what shapes our identity.**”

Table XVIII: Outcome 5 and SDG Targets	
Goal	Targets
4.7	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.
11.4	Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage.
12.2	By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.
12.B	Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
14.1	By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
14.4	By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics
14.7	By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism
14.B	Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets
16.7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

## National Goal 2: The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Internationally - Competitive Economy

Under National Goal 2 there are 7 National Outcomes as follows:

### Figure 33: National Goal 2 and 7 National Outcomes

- National Outcome #6 – Fiscal Strength and Sustainability
- National Outcome #7 - An Enabling Business Environment
- National Outcome #8 -Strong and Resilient Economic infrastructure
- National Outcome #9 -Sustainable Energy and Water
- National Outcome #10 – Science, Technology and Innovation
- National Outcome #11 - Globally Competitive Industries
- National Outcome #12 – A Resilient and Sustainable Economy that is Diversified and Supports New Pillars.

## National Outcome #6 – Fiscal Strength and Sustainability



*By 2036 the VI achieves balanced economic growth and development while maintaining fiscal sustainability*

### *Overview*

Over forty years ago the VI ended its financial dependence on the United Kingdom. By 1978, the Government independently closed the budget deficit and ended the year with a budget surplus of \$1.3 million. This eliminated the need for further financial assistance from Britain and officially brought an end to grant-in-aid in the territory more than two decades after the BVI became a British colony.

Notwithstanding, several negative impacts from economic externalities and natural disasters over the last decade the VI's fiscal position has remained relatively strong. However, it is showing signs of systemic weakening. The main source of Government revenue – fees from financial services has plateaued and the decline in annual incorporations and active companies as well as

the ongoing international initiatives and pressures could impact total revenue contributions from this sector. Correspondingly, existing revenue sources such as payroll tax and import duties have not filled the gap and have also declined more notably during external shocks/occurrences like the pandemic.

Prior medium-term fiscal strategies have recognised the need for revenue diversification within existing revenue sources as well as identified new revenue initiatives. Unfortunately, these have not materialised into significant increases in revenue or broadening of the revenue base. Meanwhile, expenditure continues to rise placing further pressure on fiscal balances. This has implications for contributions to capital investment and debt levels.

Unlike its Caribbean neighbours and fellow SIDs the VI is not plagued with high debt levels (13% of GDP in 2020) and debt service obligations (about 6% of recurrent revenue) and debt ratios are within the limits set in the Protocols for Effective Financial Management. However, debt levels can escalate very quickly during a crisis especially given the disproportionate impacts climate change and extreme weather events and other external shocks (higher commodity prices, financial and health crises) can have on weak revenue bases and tourism-intensive economies like the VI.

Additionally, the need for increased investment in public infrastructure after a disaster to induce longer-term economic growth can affect fiscal sustainability especially during times of slow global economic growth and accumulation of debt. Accessing appropriate resources for financing development is also a challenge in the Virgin Islands. Borrowing currently is limited to domestic commercial banks and the Social Security Board at high interest rates and development banks. Additionally, domestic resources are limited and difficult to mobilise given narrow tax bases, high recurrent expenditure, low savings rates, and small domestic credit markets. Ineligibility for a majority external/foreign resource facilities and assistance given our status as a UK Overseas Territory and high GDP per capita is another obstacle. The inability to leverage climate and environmental funds to support adaptation and mitigation projects despite the VI's vulnerability to climate change further compounds resource availability challenges.

Having strong public financial management (PFM) systems are a necessity to make optimal use of scarce resources especially while navigating the world of uncertainties. Over the last 10 years the Government has worked on enhancing and strengthen its PFM regime through various reforms focused on:

- medium-term planning around fiscal and economic matters;
- aligning planning, budgeting and results programmes;
- financial risk mitigation;
- promoting accountability and transparency through reporting on fiscal and financial related matters (); and
- maintaining fiscal limits and prescriptions to “ensure that the level of debt is affordable and consistent with the delivery of macroeconomic and fiscal sustainability and financial stability in the short, medium and long term.”.

However, despite these efforts additional enhancements are needed to ensure that the policy measures are adequately informed to handle changing circumstances. Moreover, building on reforms such as results-based budgeting and medium-term fiscal planning is essential to ensure that they are institutionalised and thus have a tangible impact on the culture promoting good practices throughout the public sector.

National Outcome #6 therefore focuses on supporting economic growth and infrastructural development with a robust fiscal sustainability and financial stability approach that aims to capitalise on the VI's relatively strong fiscal position while recognising its vulnerability to shocks. This goal recognises the significance of proper debt management and monitoring and the importance of an integrated approach to public financial management that emphasises people, institutions and systems. It also addresses the challenges faced by inadequate resource mobilisation and access to affordable financing.

## **National Strategies to 2036... Towards Fiscal Strength and Sustainability**

1. **Public Financial Management Transformation.** This strategy will build on PFM reforms that have been made over the last 10 years with the goal of achieving a modern financial management system that is robust, transparent and provides for an efficient use of public resources.

A comprehensive PFM reform strategy and action plan will be developed based on an evaluation of current systems against the Public Expenditure Financial Accountability (PEFA) framework which provides a benchmark for assessing and reporting on the strengths and weaknesses of PFM systems using quantitative indicators to measure performance. The reform programme will look closely for instance at improving the budget monitoring and reporting, treasury operations, the timeliness of financial statements and reports, procurement and value for money, debt management and reporting and the audit function.

People and technology will be at the center of the reforms. Building institutional capacity at all levels will be a priority and training programmes will leverage existing expertise and broaden support for reforms which will be integrated into daily work plans.

The integrated financial information system (IFMS) will be updated and modernised along with auxiliary tax administration and debt management systems to facilitate more efficient and effective management, collection and allocation of fiscal resources. This will greatly enhance the budgeting process, improve the availability of timely and accurate data for forecasting fiscal policy formulation, harmonise and regularise revenue collections and assessment of gaps, provide for better management of cash and improve monitoring and reporting of fiscal balances to the policy makers and citizens of the Virgin Islands.

The new PFM Act which has been drafted incorporates modern financial management prescriptions and best practices and once enacted will solidify the Virgin Islands as a well

governed jurisdiction which prioritises transparency and accountability in the managing of its fiscal affairs. Ultimately, these reforms will lead to better decision making based on reliable and timely information and evidence.

- 2. Assessment of Fiscal Rules.** The borrowing ratios/fiscal rules contained in the Protocols for Effective Financial Management set upward limits on the level of debt and debt servicing and lower limits on liquid reserves for the Virgin Islands. These limits were developed within the context of an overall approach to promote fiscal sustainability in the UK overseas Territories by refining financial management practices.

The 10-year anniversary in 2022 provides an opportunity to revisit the entire agreement based on the improvements made in PFM to date and ongoing reforms. As well as critically assessing the fiscal rules to determine whether they are optimal and provide a balanced approach to economic stability and long-term fiscal sustainability. An independent assessment will be commissioned as part of this strategy. The assessment will look for instance at the current level of the existing debt ratios and whether they have restricted the size of capital investment which is a pre-requisite for economic growth and whether they should incorporate some flexibility during a prolonged economic crisis which may require an expansionary fiscal policy approach. Consideration will also be given to other fiscal rules for example on the budget balances and expenditure which will assist to further enshrine fiscal discipline in all decision making.

- 3. Implement Sustainable Financing for Development.** Identifying appropriate financing mechanisms outside the traditional sources of development finance is critical as the Territory continues along the journey of rehabilitation, reconstruction and economic recovery and as it moves towards longer-term development and Agenda 2030 as outlined in this NSDP. Despite the challenges of accessing financing for development this strategy presents the following options for the Virgin Islands.

- i. The Caribbean Resilience Fund (CRF) was borne out of the necessity to access long-term low-cost development financing for the Caribbean region considering the negative impacts the COVID-19 pandemic had on fiscal sustainability. CRF will channel resources to:
- a. Resilience Building that is investment in climate adaptation and mitigation projects;
  - b. Investment projects that promote growth and economic recovery therefore increasing the region's competitiveness; and
  - c. Reduce debt burdens and increase liquidity.

Although discussions are still ongoing with regards to the operationalisation of the CRF the Territory will position itself to benefit from this facility for funding aspects of its development agenda in the near future.

- ii. The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) is rethinking how concessional financing is accessed by SIDS by introducing the Recovery Duration Adjuster (RDA) – a resilience-adjusted Gross National Income (GNI) which takes a holistic view of the elements that determine a country’s vulnerability and how long a country takes to recovery from an external shock. By moving away from the traditional GNI per capita measure of eligibility concessional rates can be accessed by middle- and higher-income Caribbean countries (including the Virgin Islands) who have demonstrated high levels of vulnerability to crises.
- iii. The Virgin Islands can continue to benefit from the United Nations Joint SDG Fund which aims to close the funding gap to achieve the SDGs in Small Island Developing States by providing funding to actionable proposals being developed in SIDS. Under this facility the Virgin Island is eligible for funds and technical assistance for digital transformation of the economy including the public service, skills development in traditional and new sectors, economic diversification, building climate change resilience and strengthening social protections systems.
- iv. Public-Private Partnerships can be considered as an alternative to fund larger infrastructural projects provided that the potential risks associated with this form of financing are analysed and the necessary expertise sought since it is not available locally.
- v. The Government of the Virgin Islands has not concluded negotiations with the United Kingdom government as it relates to the £300m loan guarantee offer to support the Territory’s recovery and development following the hurricanes of 2017. By the UK Government underwriting loans from private institutions, they will be able to offer better financing terms including lower interest rates. This has the potential of contributing to significant savings in debt service.
- vi. Obtaining a sovereign credit rating from one of the top three (3) credit rating agencies will assist in negotiating better financing terms and allow the Territory to explore floating its own bond instrument to raise funds for its capital investment programme. This will also facilitate the Virgin Islands venturing out into novel forms of debt financing such as blue bonds which support investments in healthy oceans and blue economies and green bonds which cover projects such as renewable energy, water and waste management that have environmental and climate impacts.

A comprehensive debt management and sustainability strategy will be developed that considers the most appropriate type and level of funding based on the projects and programmes contained in the NSDP and the Government’s commitment to achieving SDGs by 2030.

4. **Strengthen Domestic Resource Allocation.** Non-financial services related revenue composed mainly of payroll tax and import duties only makes up about one-third of overall revenue collected in the Virgin Islands. New revenue measures been slow to implement and have not added to revenue growth in a significant way. Current tax and fee levels are outdated

and have negative yields that is the revenue collected does not cover the cost of collection. Additionally, tax compliance has waned owing to inefficient tax collection systems and non-enforcement of tax laws.

Revenue from financial services has plateaued and is forecasted to decline in the coming years therefore the urgency of revenue reform is evident. Unless this potential gap is filled there are implications for the Government’s ability to fund public services such as education and health care. Consequently, Government will develop and implement a revenue reform plan which:

- a. Thoroughly assesses the current revenue system;
- b. Validates existing taxes and fees to determine whether the cost of collection outweighs the value of the revenue collected;
  - c. Identifies what rates should be adjusted and which taxes and fees could be eliminated;
- d. Modernises assessment, collection of taxes and fees using technology;
- e. Updates enforcement powers and penalties for non-compliance;
- f. Harmonises tax and fee collection; and
- g. Educates the public.

### Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #6 – Fiscal Strength and Sustainability is aligned with SDGs # 8, and 17.

<b>Table IX: National Outcome 6 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Target</b>
8.1	Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.
17.1	Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
17.2	Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries
17.3	Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources
17.4	Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress

## National Outcome #7

### Sustainable Economic and Enabling Business Environment



#### Overview

The Virgin Islands economy has proven to be strong over the years with heavy reliance on the Financial Services and the Tourism Sectors. The need to develop other industries has been proven as negative external shocks can result in a strong negative impact. We see a Virgin Islands that allows for more industries to grow and mature. Strong involvement of the youth and women in the economy business environment is also necessary.

An enabling business environment will be conducive to investors, entrepreneurs and workers. Allowing for acceleration in investment, innovation and increasing formalised business and decreasing the informal business sector.

#### National Strategies to 2036

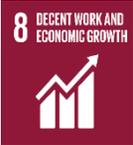
1. Promote and enhance the use of information and communications technologies for, inter alia, education, the creation of employment, in particular youth employment.
2. Support national, regional and international initiatives that develop and increase the capacity and development impact of the financial services industry in small island developing states.

3. Enhance international cooperation, exchanges and investments in formal and non-formal education and training
4. Enhance the enabling environment at the national and regional level to attract more public and private investment in building and maintaining appropriate infrastructure.
5. Promoting and enhancing gender equality and women’s equal participation, including in policies and programmes in the public and private sectors in SIDS
6. Setting national regulatory and policy frameworks, as appropriate, that enables business and industry to advance sustainable development initiatives

### Alignment with SDGs

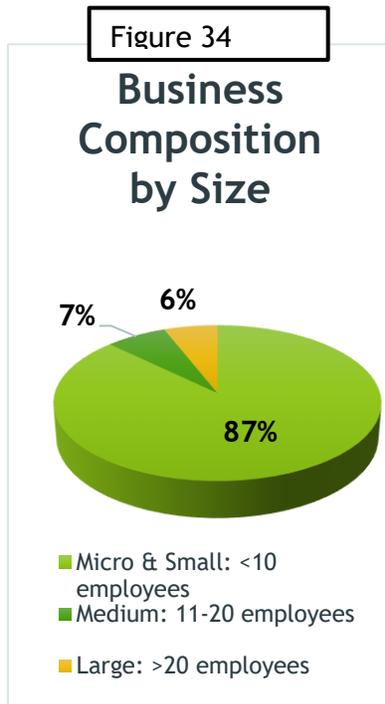
<b>Table XX: National Outcome 7 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Targets</b>
8.1	Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product per growth per annum in the least develop countries
8.2	Achieve higher level of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added labour-intensive sectors
8.3	Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
8.5	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
8.6	By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
8.7	Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worse forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.
8.8	Protect labour right and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular woman migrants, and those in precarious employment.
10.1	By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher that the national average.
10.2	By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic other status.
10.4	Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage, and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.
10.b	Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes

# National Outcome #8 – An Enabling Business Environment that Supports Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Entrepreneurship



*By 2036 BVI will have a thriving Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector that is innovative and contributes significantly to job creation, economic growth and a better standard of living*

## Overview



Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the cornerstone of the VI economy. The local business environment is made up mainly of micro and small enterprises (87%) that have grown to support the two (2) main pillars – tourism and financial services. These range from tour operators, creatives, and farm to table restaurants to support the tourism sector to web designers, human resource firms to support the financial services sector. More recently the new businesses have been formed to support a more circular economy utilising local inputs and recycling and reusing end of life products.

Estimates for 2020 indicated an active business population of approximately 3,800 with the majority having 10 or less employees. Entrepreneurship activity has increased over the years (evidenced by an increase in trade license applications/approvals from X% to Y%) and has been supported by private and public sector initiatives as well as assistance from development partners offering business development training

and small grants. These have included various trade expositions showcasing BVI products and “buy local” campaigns, grant programmes, incubation centres to harness ideas, and training seminars to guide start-ups and existing MSME owners in certain aspects of business development including marketing and sales, accounting/bookkeeping etc.

Despite these attempts to create an environment that will engender business development the sector still faces some challenges. These include:

- small domestic markets;
- limited access to finance (domestic lenders are risk adverse) as a result of the mismatch between the needs/demands of MSME’s and the supply of financial services;
- high lending risks on the supply side making lending costs higher;
- difficulties in accessing regional and international markets;
- high business costs – rent, wages, electricity, shipping and transportation and finance costs;
- limited use of technology;
- local skills gaps which make recruitment difficult; local skills gaps which make recruitment difficult;
- cumbersome licensing processes, laws, policy and regulations governing the business environment; and
- vulnerability to external shocks – global financial and economic crises, fluctuations of global commodity prices, as well as shifts in global demand for sectors such as tourism.

- cumbersome licensing processes, laws, policy and regulations governing the business environment; and
- vulnerability to external shocks – global financial and economic crises, fluctuations of global commodity prices, as well as shifts in global demand for sectors such as tourism.

Most recently, the local business sector/economy was significantly impacted in 2020 by the COVID-19 crisis thus highlighting how vulnerable the sector is to external shocks. A business survey conducted in April 2020 highlighted the extent of this impact at the early onset of the pandemic. “Most businesses (97%) indicated that they were already affected by the slowdown in economic activity caused by closure of the borders and the 24-hour lockdown of the Territory”. The main impacts were on employment and income disproportionately in the tourism sector. Average monthly losses were \$50,000 in the yachting and charter boat sub-sector and bars and restaurants laid off more than half of their employees.

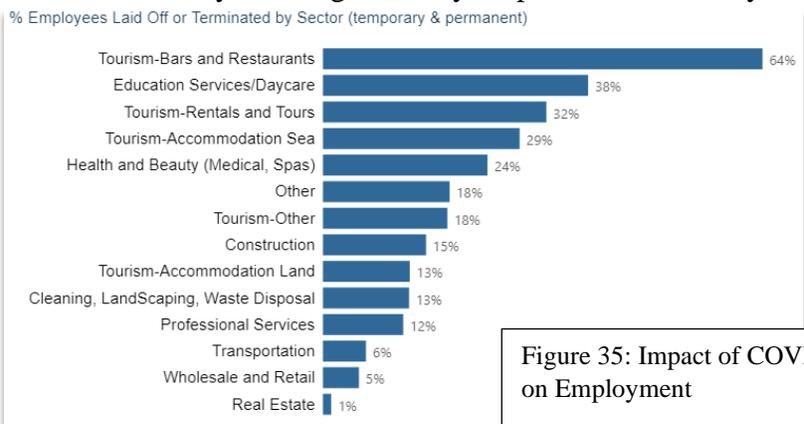


Figure 35: Impact of COVID 19 on Employment

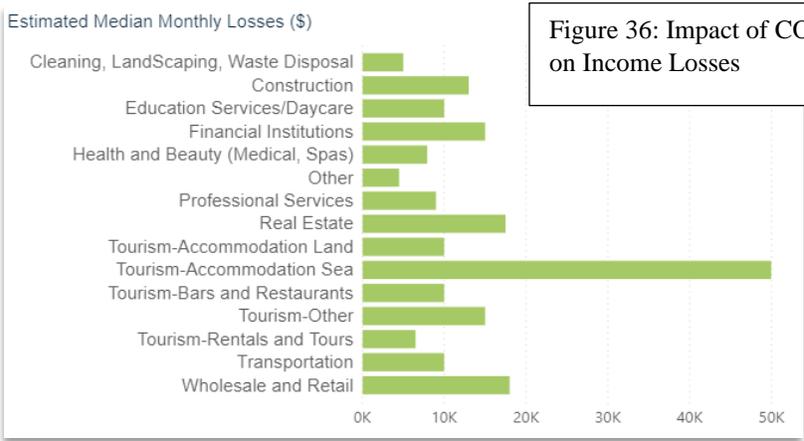


Figure 36: Impact of COVID 19 on Income Losses

National Outcome #8 focuses on creating an enabling environment that will encourage innovative business start-ups and new entrepreneurs allowing them to grow and thrive creating opportunities for job creation, boosting economic growth and raising living standards. Creating a policy and regulatory environment and culture that is business and environmentally friendly and eliminates obstacles to business entrants is a central component of this outcome as well as creating new opportunities for the youth, women and other marginalised groups.

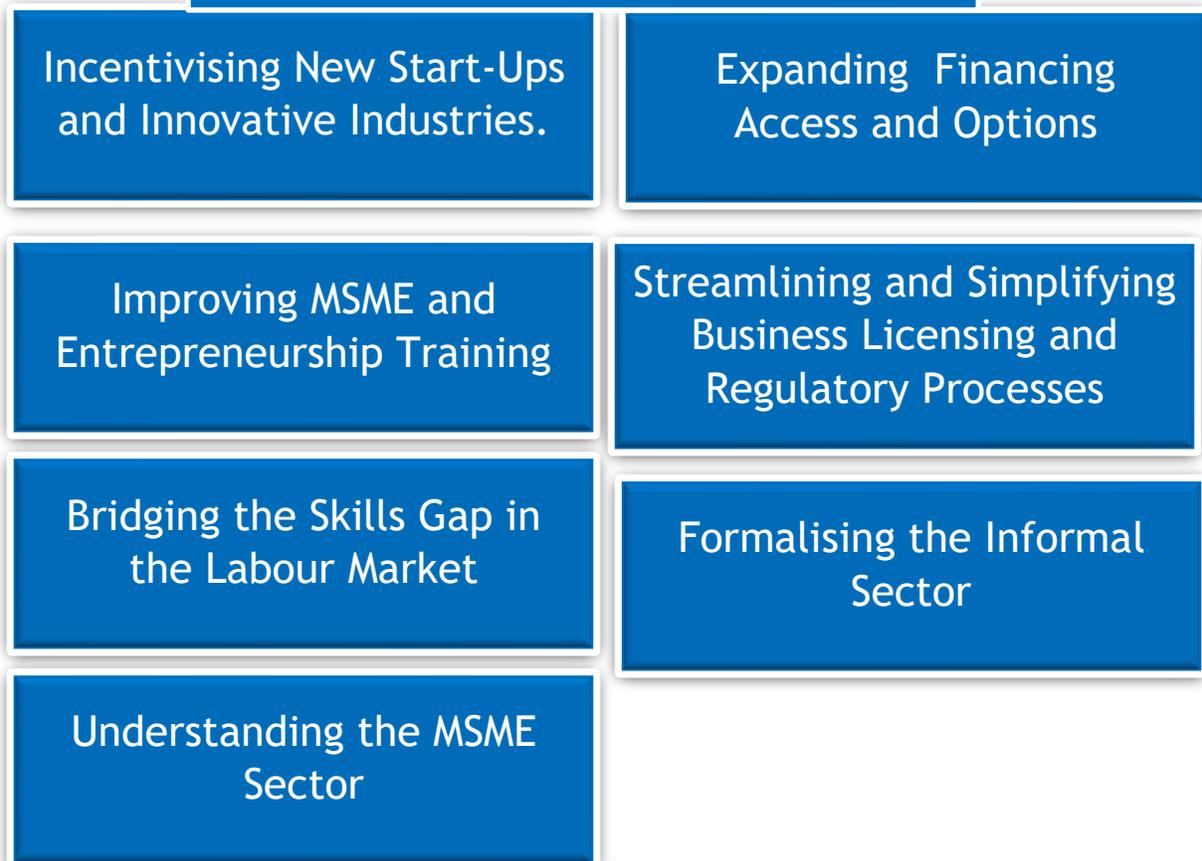
**National Strategies to 2036...** recognises that the Government plays a major role in creating an enabling environment to address the challenges, engender public private partnerships and establish and enforce the appropriate regulatory and institutional frameworks. MSME and entrepreneurship policies will only work if they are underpinned by a supportive economic policy framework that promotes economic growth and stability.

**National Trade Policy of the Virgin Islands (draft), 2018:**

*“The Government of the Virgin Islands remains committed to building a system of market economy in which free enterprise can flourish; where the Government assumes its role as a regulator and facilitator of economic development; where transparency, fair competition and equality of treatment are guaranteed; where there is stability in society and where all people receive the opportunity to realize their maximum potentials.”*

The National Strategies to be addressed under National Outcome #8 are:

Table XXI: National Strategies for National Outcome 8



**1. Understanding the MSME Sector** is critical in developing MSME and entrepreneurship policies that will target specific problems, identify specific needs and highlight specific opportunities. Consequently, a comprehensive study of the MSME sector will be undertaken as an essential step under this strategy and will answer some pertinent questions:

- What does the MSME sector look like (main characteristics)?
- How much does the sector contribute to economic growth, government revenue and job creation?
- What percentage of MSMEs are women and youth owned?
- What is their success and/or failure rate?
- How do they contribute to “better” society?
- What are the main constraints to starting and running a business in the BVI?
- Who are the vulnerable groups such as women, youth, elderly and disabled and are they disproportionately affected by existing policies?
- What is the size and composition of the informal sector?
- Where are the market and business opportunities?
- What sectors are saturated?
- What are the “real” drivers of business costs?

A comprehensive strategic plan will be developed subsequently to outline a feasible path forward to the advancement of the MSME sector elaborating on some of the strategies highlighted in the NSDP. This process will involve extensive engagement with the private sector through open, honest dialogue thus engendering stronger partnerships, greater collaboration and free exchange of information.

**2. Expanding Financing Access and Options** for new start-ups and existing businesses can lead to an increase in investments, expanded operations, increased employment opportunities, private sector growth and expansion and greater economic empowerment. Unavailability of adequate financing, high financing costs, absence of a diverse set of financing options and the inadequacy of MSMEs to access available funding are limiting factors to business growth and development.

This strategy therefore focuses on understanding the demand and supply side problems within the financial system and designing policy interventions that will emphasise innovative mechanisms to increase the availability of financing to the sector that is affordable and meets their needs.

Possible actions include partnering with financial institutions to develop new financial products to suit MSME’s, channelling more funding to MSMEs, investigating non-traditional asset types that could be used as collateral for loans, crating ways to link venture

capitalists and other private investors to innovative business ideas, training and capacity building to improve the financial literacy of MSME's and entrepreneurs so that they are prepared to take advantage of new financial products and relationships.

- 3. Improving MSME and Entrepreneurship Training.** Targeted, high-quality, and well-executed business support programmes and services can assist MSMEs to overcome various challenges and barriers given the positive correlation between training and MSME performance.

This strategy therefore emphasizes capacity building beyond traditional training, which is currently fragmented. It suggests streamlined, comprehensive programmes that meet the specific needs of the sector and provide support throughout the business life cycle understanding that the type and level of training differs by industry and stage of development of a business. Knowledge-based and results-oriented approaches will be developed to provide support in collaboration with industry leaders, the Chamber of Commerce, educational institutions, and development partners. Guidelines will be developed to ensure quality and consistency of design and delivery within the MSME support network building on public and private sector initiatives already in motion including incubators and knowledge centres. A structured partnership for training will also reduce duplications and ensure optimal use of limited financial and human resources.

The modern and progressive SME programmes appreciate that the nascent stage of business development is critical to success therefore training will assist entrepreneurs at the business concept and business preparation stages incorporating how to translate an idea into a profitable venture with the objective of increasing the probability of business success. Other areas of concentration will include supporting entrepreneurs on how to identify high demand and growth enterprises and assisting with scalability as well as specialised technical assistance in accounting, legal, finance and business advise through mentorship.

The Virgin Islands has a history of entrepreneurship spirit which needs to be honed at a young age therefore this strategy includes the introduction of entrepreneurship studies as part of the school curriculum at all stages – primary, secondary and tertiary.

- 4. Streamlining and simplifying business licensing and regulatory processes.** Complex and cumbersome policy, legal, institutional and regulatory requirements can create barriers to business activity and increase costs. This strategy therefore focuses on simplifying government procedures and minimising transaction costs for new start-ups and existing enterprises. The current licensing and regulatory environment will be simplified by revisiting registration and licensing procedures and processing times and streamlining administration and fee payment processes with the use of technology.

A critical analysis of current labour laws including the work permit regime will be undertaken to ensure that the process is fair and consistent and best serves the needs of the business community and the advancement of the local population. Flexibility will be built into the labour model to deal with crisis events to solve temporary displacement of the labour force and short-term labour shortages as they occur.

A more efficient licensing and regulatory platform where access to information is universal results in decreased compliance costs which could be channeled to more productive uses such as additional investment and employment generation.

5. **Bridging the skills gap in the labour market.** A mismatch between the skills of the local workforce and labour demand is a significant constraint for MSME's. It can lead to additional business-related expenses including training and costs associated with recruiting foreign labour. This strategy believes in reducing the demand for foreign labour by ensuring that the local population is equipped to provide the expertise needed by the labour market. In particular it focuses on ways to empower the youth to be active participants in the economy and breakdown the gender stereotypes that exist in certain industries.

Skills development programmes covering basic education, technical and transferable skills, targeted training by sector and industry and lifelong learning will ensure that persons transitioning into the workplace have necessary skill set to actively participate in the labour market and command better jobs.

The Workforce Training Division of the H.L Stoutt Community College, the private sector and the workforce arm of the Department of Labour are critical partners and will work in unison with other important players to garner a better understanding of the labour needs of MSMEs. This critical information will be used to develop and execute skills development programmes and assist in matching qualified locals to employers.

6. **Incentivising new start-ups and innovative industries.** Policies to encourage new industries is the cornerstone of this strategy since a dynamic and growing MSME sector needs new market entrants. An initial first step will be to review and assess the current pioneer status regime, which was implemented since the 1960's, looking closely at its effectiveness in encouraging novel businesses and the efficacy of its incentive structure.

Taxes can be a potential constraint for MSMEs and thus have substantial effects on investment and the entry of new businesses. Consequently, as part of this strategy the current payroll tax system will be reviewed to understand whether the tax bands place an undue burden on self-employed persons and small businesses and thus needs to be revised.

The ultimate goal is to introduce an incentive programme that creates the right balance between encouraging new and innovative entrants and the potential the costs of doing so (such as foregone tax revenue).

- 7. Formalising the informal sector.** Although the size of the informal sector is not known a glimpse into its extent was unveiled during assessing the eligibility of businesses for the government’s COVID-19 relief package. Certain businesses and hence their employees were not eligible because they were not registered with Social Security, the Business Licensing Authority, and the Tax Authority among other bodies.

This strategy initially focuses on understanding the various dimensions of the informal sector including the barriers to formalisation such as prohibitive costs, and complicated and time-consuming registration and payment processes. Attention will be given to encouraging businesses to formalise by having them understand the benefits of formalisation including access to benefit programmes and grants and being able to participate in MSME targeted exercises. Consideration will be given to a suite of policies which include incentives, amnesty, and sanctions for non-compliance with the overall objective of reducing the number of businesses that are outside the formal establishment thereby increasing their ability to be successful enterprises.

### Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

**National Outcome #8 – An Enabling Business Environment that Supports Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Entrepreneurship is aligned with SDGs # 4, 8, and 10.**

<b>Table XXII: National Strategies for National Outcome 8</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Target</b>
4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
8.2	Achieve higher level of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added labour-intensive sectors
8.3	Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
8.5	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
8.6	By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
10.1	By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.
10.2	By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic other status.

## National Outcome #9 – Sustainable Energy and Water



### Overview

In the Virgin Islands energy is heavily reliant on imported fuel for energy. It is part of our main strategy to lower reliance on imported, and otherwise, less clean energy and introduce more renewable types of energy. It is also important for safe and consistent energy distribution among all of the islands and develop the capacity to distribute the load efficiently. The British Virgin Islands Electricity Corporation is being guided by a 10-year energy plan that will be implemented in phases.

Improvements in offering reliable and consistent water distribution is very important. Currently there are still households that rely solely on independent sources for water, such as cistern or water delivery. It is necessary to have all persons connected to clean sanitary water at all times. Priority will also be needed to be given to the proper treatment of wastewater for either recycling or proper disposal.

### Energy

1. Develop a strategy and targeted measures to promote energy efficiency and foster sustainable energy systems based on all energy sources, in particular renewable energy sources, such as wind, sustainable biomass, solar, hydroelectric, biofuel and geothermal.
2. Facilitate access to existing mechanisms to increase capital flows for the implementation of sustainable energy projects on renewable energy and energy efficiency.
3. Support investment in initiatives of renewable energy and energy efficiency and conservation projects, as well as in the areas of capacity-building.
4. Access existing mechanisms, to encourage the establishment of user friendly, accurate and comprehensive data repositories as online databases on energy, and to conduct technical studies and gather information on grid stability and management, including maximizing the integration of renewable energy and innovative storage mechanisms.
5. Develop and integrate approach to establish and strengthen innovative energy roadmaps with detailed resource planning, which takes into account social, environmental and economic considerations, as well as access to energy for the poor and people in remote areas.

### Water

1. Provide and operate appropriate facilities and infrastructure for safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management systems, including the exploration of desalination technology where economically and environmentally feasible.
2. Facilitate the expansion of wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse in the context of sustainable and efficient use of water resources.
3. Improve water-use efficiency and work towards eliminating over-extraction, especially ground water, and to mitigate the effects of saltwater intrusion.
4. Develop institutional and human capacities for the effective, inclusive and sustainable implementation of the integrated management of water resources and related ecosystems, including supporting women's engagement in water management systems.



<b>Table XXIII: National Outcome 9 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Targets</b>
6.1	By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.
6.2	By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.
6.3	By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and material, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.
6.4	By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people
6.5	By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.
6.6	By 2030, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
6.a	By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
7.1	By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
7.2	By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.
7.3	By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

# National Outcome #10- Science, Technology and Innovation

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



*By 2036, our use of STI will help us to achieve the future we want and it would have enabled us to unleash our dynamism and enhance our international competitiveness within and across our social and economic structures generating higher levels of employment and income*

## Overview

Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) is an important component for achieving **Goal 2: “The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Internationally - Competitive Economy”**, since STI are critical elements needed to facilitate the creation of wealth, economic development, and the improvement of the quality of life for all its citizens. Driving productivity and competitiveness requires STI – they generate employment and well-being through innovation and commercialization of new products and services; help reduce poverty, improve education, health, nutrition, and trade.

The VI recognizes the importance of science, technology, and innovation (STI) in achieving and advancing sustainable and inclusive development and economic growth. Under this national outcome, focus will be placed on deepening the integration of STIs in all aspects of national development in order to achieve and sustain a high standard of living for all citizens and enhance overall economic growth prospects. The country's economic structures will be enhanced to produce knowledge intensive and higher value-added goods and services which supports and drive economic growth, competitiveness and the creation of wealth. This will be balanced by our development efforts aimed at building our human capital through, inter alia, education and training which seeks to ensure that the capacity of our citizens is built to fully embrace and use STI for broad-based and inclusive development.

Given our small size and limited resources, promoting shared prosperity and eliminating poverty and vulnerability is inextricably linked to our ability to harness our untapped potential and leverage our comparative advantage. This will enable our country to use STI to boost our collective contribution to national development and increase the value for all Islanders. This approach also applies to the achievement of our social and environmental development objectives which increasingly requires innovative and technologically driven methods to address development obstacles. Advancing STIs will support, among other things, transformative change in health, education, and social protection where technology and innovation will enable higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of goods and services in industries such as tourism and agriculture.

Under this national outcome we will encourage and promote a culture of innovation to improve and build on our lower forms of capital such as our natural resources and seek to harness our higher forms of capital including knowledge, human and cultural. This approach will be driven by collaboration between the public and private sector, academia and other stakeholders.

In order to fully realize the potential of new and emerging economic pillars and advance diversification, this outcome will also give focus to using and building STI capacity to develop and drive these areas, for example in the blue, green and orange economies. While these areas hold great potential for sustainable development, efforts geared towards harnessing their full potential must be counterbalanced by efforts to safeguard development gains made in other areas.

Governments across the globe are facing unprecedented economic and societal challenges due to COVID-19 but also due to other shocks such as climate related and other natural hazards and consider science and innovation as part of the response to absorb and adapt.

Like other small islands developing states, fiscal constraints and competing policy priorities weigh on governments' capacity to maintain their financial commitment to develop STI policies.

Notwithstanding, the government has identified development projects that will support innovation, as highlighted in the 2021 budget statement. The COVID-10 pandemic has shown how a modern, performance-driven Government can make optimal use of technology, that increases its efficiency of delivering services to the public; making data collection, processing, management, and analysis easier for its ministries/agencies; and providing much desired convenience to clients – irrespective of location.

### National Strategies to 2036...

National strategies for science, technology, and innovation (STI) will become a major pillar of our growth strategies and serve several functions in government policy making and setting priorities for public investment in STI, as well as identifying the focus of government reforms – which could mobilize stakeholders around specific goals, such as energy, environmental or health issues, and can help steer the investments of private sector and autonomous entities towards priority areas or technologies. The National Strategies, an elaboration of each and some selected sector strategies are listed below:

Table XXIV: National Strategies for National Outcome 10

Enhance strategic public/private partnerships	Develop system innovation for competitiveness and inclusive development
Enhance public engagement in STI	Encourage public sector innovation

1. **Enhance strategic public/private partnership.** Public-private partnerships (PPPs) in science, technology, and innovation (STI) will enable our make research and innovation policy to be more responsive to the changing nature of innovation and to social and global challenges. We anticipate that our private sector partner with us to use research as a key element for solving problems, developing new markets and generating higher levels of value through co-operation and co-production. As a government we hope to use these PPPs as key instruments in addressing areas such as climate change, green growth, blue growth and energy efficiency.

2. **Develop system innovation for competitiveness and inclusive development.** Our interest in system innovation is motivated by the realization that system-wide changes are
3. necessary to make our economy socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. This also will require the integration and mainstreaming of STI in all sectors – ranging from economic sectors through to social sectors, leveraging STI to enhance both competitiveness and inclusive development. Through this NDP we are putting sustainability and green growth objectives at the centre of our economic development strategies, and we realize that achieving this will require wide-ranging changes in how we use science, technology and innovation – and they must form the basis for our underlying economic, technological, and social systems, from water and energy systems to modes of consumption and waste management.
4. **Enhance public engagement in STI,** to broaden the knowledge base of all stakeholders and build a more scientifically literate, supportive and engaged citizenry for meaningful participation in developing STI policy and mainstreaming STI in their areas of influence
5. **Encourage Public Sector Innovation,** by making significant improvements in the services that government provides, including those delivered by third parties and contractors. As a government we will use research and innovation for example to improve how we supply services to the population. Our civil servants and public employees will be key stakeholders in the achievement of this strategy and core to devising new ideas and approaches to achieve better service delivery for all.

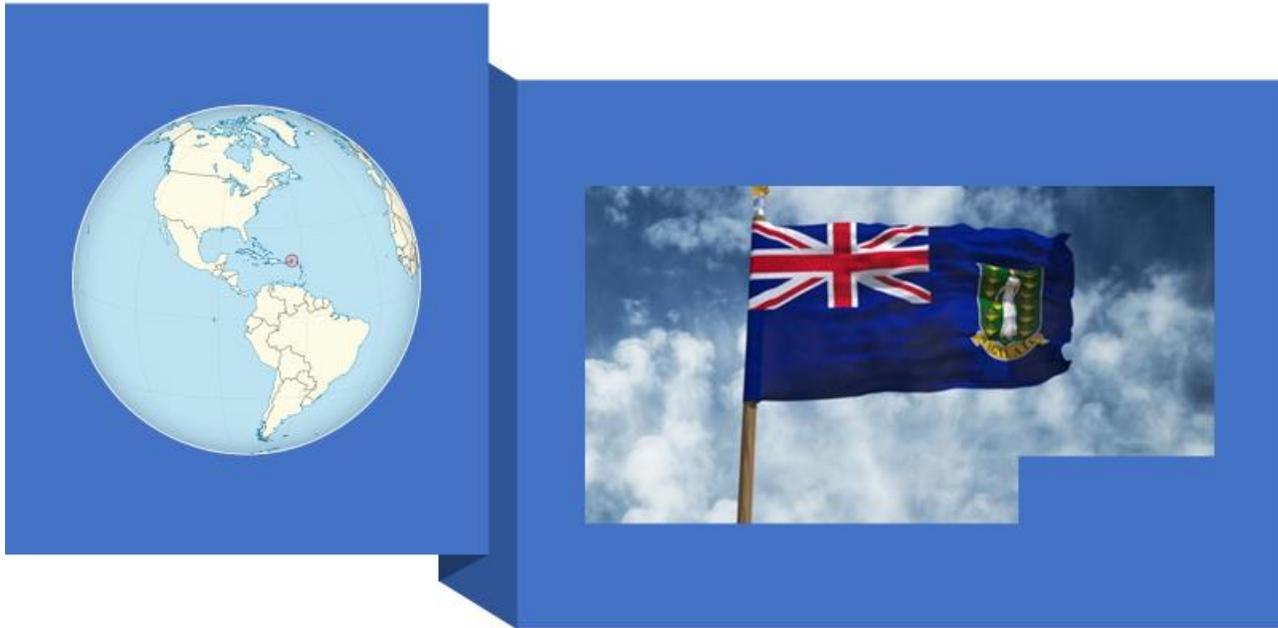
## Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #11 – Science, Technology and Innovation is aligned with SDG #9 – ***Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization and Foster Innovation***. SDG #9 recognizes that inclusive and sustainable industrialization combined with innovation and infrastructure is key to realizing the future we want. It enables the unleashing of dynamism and high levels of competitiveness within and across economic structures that have potential for generating higher levels of employment and income. It promotes new innovative sustainable technologies and enabling the efficient use of resources, while ensuring equal and universal access to information and markets. The NDP will lead to BVI’s advancement of the following SDG targets under SDG #9 noting that this goal encapsulates development areas that extend beyond this national outcome.

**Table XXV: National Outcome 10 and SDG Targets**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Targets</b>
9.1	Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
9.2	Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries
9.3	Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets
9.4	By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities
9.5	Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending
9.a	Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
9.b	Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities
9.c	Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2030

## National Outcome #11 – Diversified Economy and Globally Competitive Industries



*By 2036 BVI main industries will be competing successfully nationally, regionally and internationally and new industries will be established and thriving.*

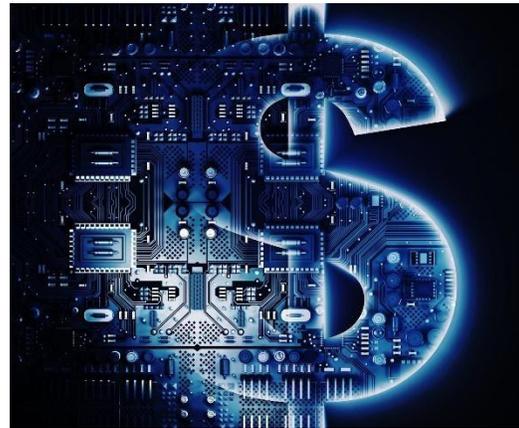
### Overview

Small Island Development States (SIDS) like the Virgin Islands do possess some inherent characteristics that limit them from entering and competing in certain markets and hence limiting the range of sustainable industries that make up output and the contributions they can potentially make. These limitations include: small internal market size, ability to access external markets, restricted pool of resources, persistent skills migration. This has implications for longer-term sustainable development and growth and improving the standard of living for future generations.

This outcome acknowledges these constraints to growth, development and diversification and suggests strategies that could be implemented so that the Virgin Islands can continue to thrive in legacy industries namely **financial services** and **tourism** while seeking potential growth opportunities in other established industries that are underdeveloped like **agriculture, construction, and fisheries** while exploring new opportunities in the **creative arts and the ICT/Technology** sector. The development of globally competitive industries and diversification into other sub-sectors and new areas will lead to increased productivity and job creation. **Please note that opportunities within the fishing industries are summarized under National Outcome 13 – Developing the Blue Economy.**

**National Strategies to 2036...** recognise the importance of the environment in achieving sustainable development therefore the strategies will have at their core environmental protection thereby minimising negative impacts to the environment that unchecked development can cause.

1. **Create an enabling environment to support the fintech industry.** Fintech or finance and technology is a term for any technology that is used to enhance or automate traditional financial services and processes. It is used widely by banks, investment companies for example to better serve customers. Transferring money to a friend's bank account, using bitcoin (a cryptocurrency) to purchase goods or services, using Uber and paying for the service with a stored credit card through a mobile phone are all examples of fintech applications/transactions.



The fintech industry is rapidly growing and evolving and BVI has positioned itself as a welcoming jurisdiction for attracting fintech businesses to incorporate in the Territory. Innovation usually moves ahead of regulation and some of the new fintech business ideas may fall outside of any regulatory framework. The Financial Services Commission (FSC) therefore launched a regulatory sandbox in 2020. Market participants benefit from utilising new fintech services that operate within a regulated environment, fintech businesses can develop new technology and products can test their business model, while the FSC learns about the best modalities for regulating such entities. These interactions will help to forge the necessary balance between innovation and regulation and place the BVI at the forefront of regulating and attracting fintech business – a billion-dollar global industry.

While fintech businesses exists largely in a digital environment, BVI has the potential of leveraging the opportunities that fintech businesses incorporated in the jurisdiction bring, by creating and providing niche value added services to these businesses. For example, as global regulatory and compliance standards evolve and are required to be adopted by fintech businesses, local compliance firms could extend services to those businesses. Equally, with the increasing need for fintech business to establish and demonstrate accurate and transparent financial soundness, opportunities exist for accounting and auditing firms to prepare financial reviews and audits of Fintech businesses such as crypto exchanges.

Other opportunities exist in areas such as the establishment of customer services centers of excellence to answer and provide support for traders and potential customers of these platforms. These new niche services could create employment opportunities for adequately trained professionals.

To capitalise on these potential opportunities, education and training of locals would be imperative and therefore the skills required to service this emerging job market must be developed through a revamp of the national education curriculum and building focused professional training courses through national institutions such as the Robert Mathavious Financial Services Institute.

This strategy recommends that further studies be done on how the BVI can benefit from having a fintech accommodating regime, complete with an enabling regulatory framework which accounts for the complexity of the associated risks, as well a business incentivisation strategy to attract market participants. A skills and training development strategy and framework is essential to ensure adequacy of human resources for the industry.

- Navigate the complexities of the Financial Services industry and capitalise on the opportunities.** The COVID-19 pandemic as well as changing regulatory requirements has added more complexity to the financial services industry. For the BVI to survive as an offshore jurisdiction it must be able to continue to build on its reputation as a well-regulated, client friendly, stable jurisdiction that is flexible enough to adapt to the changing demands of the industry. From a global economic vantage point, the Vistra 2030 report suggests that recent events such as BREXIT, the US-China trade war and COVID-19 pandemic may result in a retrenchment of globalisation as “major powers adapt a more protectionist stance” which could impact capital flows, one of the reasons BVI structures are used. However, the neutrality that offshore centres like the BVI offer to private clients in the time of heightened geo-political tensions is a definite opportunity/strength. The BVI must also carefully monitor other existential threats including the future impacts of public registers and the and economic substance requirements which have the potential of eroding some of the cost and privacy elements of doing business in the BVI.



It is therefore paramount that the jurisdiction remains relevant and competitive why navigating the external pressures. This strategy will include putting in place a Financial Services Advisory and Strategy Group that the monitors the global financial services environment to ensure that the jurisdiction keeps pace with global developments, manages any risk that may transpire and identifies key market opportunities.

- Develop a resilient and sustainable tourism industry.** The tourism sector has contributed immensely to job creation, infrastructural development, economic growth, and a greater focus on environmental protection. Despite its success and development, the industry is overwhelmingly susceptible to external shocks both natural and man-made. The impetus to create a more sustainable tourism model is a priority of policymakers. This strategy therefore focusses on sustainable tourism which has at its core promotion of cultural heritage,

community empowerment, MSME participation, inclusive growth, product enhancement and differentiation while minimising the possible adverse impacts on the environment, local communities and cultural assets.

This strategy includes as priority the development of a 5–10-year master plan for the tourism sector which incorporates comprehensive stakeholder engagement. The plan will consider through an integrated policy and strategy approach:

- Support required for recovery of the sector from COVID-19 and the building of a tourism resilience fund to help finance recovery from future shocks
- Mechanisms to engender stronger partnerships between the private and public sector
- Expanding local participation in tourism sector with a focus on education by enhancing the national curriculum and utilising the HLSCC as the main training platform supporting the labour needs of the industry
- Preparing MSMEs to reap greater economic benefits from the sector through knowledge, capacity building, support and guidance in areas for example relating to using technology to build more sustainable business models, environmental protection, accessing financing opportunities and developing partnerships
- Showcasing BVI heritage and culture throughout every aspect of the tourism experience
- Promoting and enforcing environmental protection policies and legislation
- Providing incentives that will improve the competitiveness of land-based and marine-based tourism, attract responsible investment and foster innovation
- Adding greater value in marine tourism the mainstay of the industry through developing facilities and services that would cater to lucrative mega-yacht sub-sector, developing marinas as full-service operations leveraging decades of expertise in ship building, repairs and maintenance and promotion of shipping registration providing incentives for local domestic registration
- Venturing into other the market areas including sport, medical and heritage tourism
- Remedying impediments to access to the BVI by air and by sea including expanding airport capacity to achieve direct flights from the mainland United States and improving the ferry service between the islands
- Creating a sustainable balance between cruise tourism and overnight tourism

4. **Improve the efficiency and competitiveness of traditional industries.** This strategy will build on the synergies already existing in the agriculture, fisheries and construction industries. and incentivise the development of new business opportunities in the creative arts and technology industries.

a. **Agriculture**

Although the agriculture sector is small the Government is committed to expanding the industry so that it can contribute to food security and reduce the level of food imports. Emphasis will be placed on education, incentives, building local expertise, community

involvement and technology to increase the quantity and quality of agriculture outputs and local competitiveness of the industry. This will be accomplished by:

- Building on works already started by NGOs in the primary schools to educate the students about “regenerative agriculture with enriched education and hands-on farming activities”. Similar programmes will be extended to the secondary schools along with integrating agricultural studies into the school curriculum. At the tertiary level students will be able to specialize in agriculture studies once the course offerings are revamped. Training programmes will be introduced through the Workforce Training Division for farmers once the needs of the sector are assessed. The overall objective is to increase the involvement of the population in particular the youth in agriculture and develop the expertise of existing farmers.
- Introducing technology to enhance traditional agriculture practices including planting, harvesting and irrigation with the objective of increasing yields and the quality of produce and reducing the negative impacts on the environment.
- Incentivising the private sector to use organic material (for example food water, paper and sargassum) to develop fertilizer for farms which will provide an avenue for recycling organic material in the Territory.
- Introducing guidelines and standards and so that local farmers can produce organically certified products.
- Introduce micro-insurance programmes to assist farmers in protecting their assets against man-made and natural disasters.
- Improve regulation of the agriculture sector, including reviewing the laws and regulations around importation of pesticides and agricultural products, use of genetically modified seeds and plants, and plant quarantine methods



#### b. Construction

The construction industry in the BVI contributes approximately 4% directly to GDP and expanded in 2018 and 2019 in response to the massive reconstruction efforts to rebuild post hurricanes Irma and Maria. The construction industry has a strong history spawning a field of local contractors involved in home building and small Government contracts for works and full-service local construction companies commanding major commercial and public infrastructural projects. Local expertise has been gained in the areas of marine construction – piling and dock building, marine salvaging, road reconstruction, and building construction – commercial (including resorts), public and residential. Although most of the construction companies are locally owned most of workers are foreign mainly from other Caribbean Islands.

This strategy is focused on growing the industry so that it makes a larger contribution to the overall economic development of the Territory within a framework of proper land use and spatial planning, disaster risk management and stronger building and environmental protection codes and standards. Additionally



implement actions that will attract more local labour, reduce the gender disparity in the workforce, continue to build local expertise for participation in regional and international markets, and promote the utilisation of modern construction technologies. Some specific actions will include:

- Implementing the National Physical Development Plan which from a land use perspective sets out a wide range of laws and policies that promote management of physical development by understanding natural hazard risks (as well as climate change), population growth trends and densities and the needs of society;
- Enhancement of the curriculum and apprentice programme at the trade school and develop methods to showcase the career possibilities within the construction industry with an emphasis on attracting local young men and women to the field;
- Further development of the construction programme at the HLSCC to offer degree programmes and special certifications and on ongoing skills training;
- Develop policies that encourage the reduction of waste generated during construction and recycling of construction materials.

## 5. **Diversifying the economy by creating new industries**

### a. Creative Arts

The BVI has a vibrant and growing music and literary arts culture and over the years this has translated into economic opportunities both domestically, regionally and internationally for some artists. The extensive cadre of local musicians is a result of the comprehensive music programme at the public secondary school where all students have the opportunity to play and excel at any instrument. Numerous Virgin Islanders have also published their literary works and there are local opportunities to showcase their material.

In the area of art and crafts micro businesses have popped up and entrepreneurs have been able to benefit economically through trade of their products. Through the culinary arts programme at the HLSCC the hospitality industry has benefitted from having a steady flow of local talent.



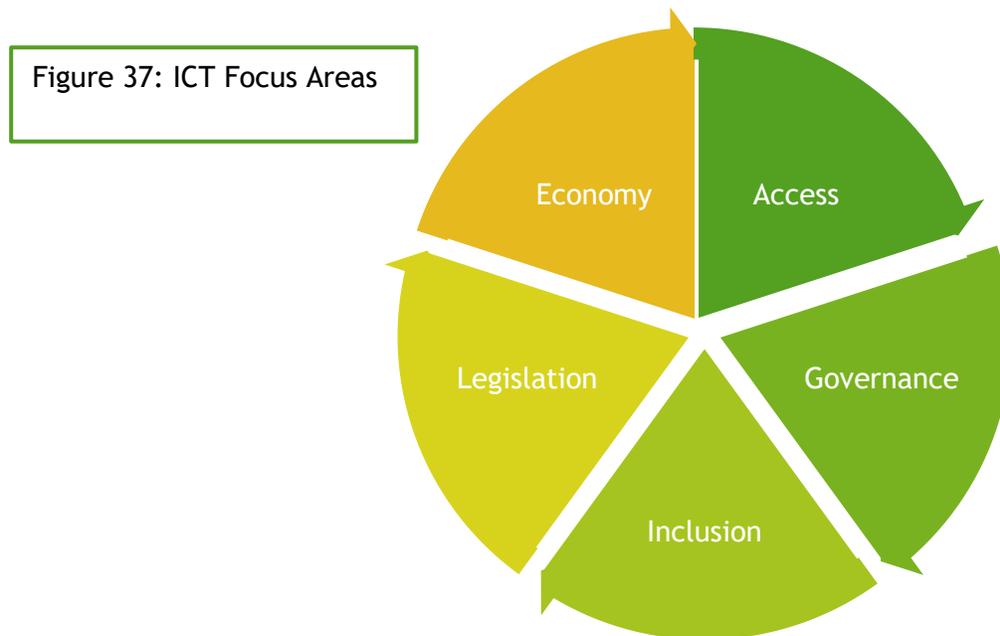
Despite some exposure and development, the creative arts industry which includes culinary, music, design, fashion, film, animation, photography, performance is largely untapped. The visual and performing arts for example, remain largely dormant and music and literary arts undeveloped. Consequently, the BVI has the potential to expand its cultural and creative arts industry internally as well as beyond its borders thereby creating more viable job opportunities and propelling the creative arts industry into a significant contributor to economic growth. The NSDP will therefore focus on the BVI realising its true potential in the creative arts industry, ensuring it is a visible part of its tourism product and exporting it to the world.

The Government has restructured and retooled its Department of Culture as the driving force behind the creatives: “To coordinate the identification, preservation, development and promotion of Virgin Islands’ culture, cultural arts and heritage whilst facilitating cultural education”. In addition to the departments current programme of education and training and providing more opportunities for local artists to showcase their works this strategy highlights some initiatives that will contribute to realising the vision for the creative arts industry. These include:

- Developing policies to encourage the development of the creative arts industry
- Providing opportunities for direct financial support to entrepreneurs and MSME’s in the industry and new entrants
- Expanding the curriculum at the secondary school and community college exposing practitioners to the business aspect of the creative arts industry and the career possibilities
- Expand and improve the infrastructure for the creative and the performing arts industry
- Facilitate deeper partnerships and collaboration between the public and private sector

## b. Information and Communication Technology

The VI Government recognises the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as an essential enabler in achieving sustainable growth and development and Agenda 2030. IN particular the focus on building new business opportunities within the MSME space offering services using ICT. In 2019 the Government developed a comprehensive 5-year ICT strategy through which the “BVI can better leverage ICT to improve the lives and livelihood of its citizens, to foster innovation, and to diversify and strengthen its economy”. The ICT strategy provides a holistic solution to achieving this vision realising that growing the ICT as a viable economy sector will include addressing governance, legislation and access. The ICT strategy therefore outlines therefore comprises of 5 areas of focus:



The policy actions suggested take into consideration the challenges and constraints the current ICT sector faces. These include:

- the vulnerability of the infrastructure to natural disasters
- deficiencies in the current legislative framework to be able to provide the “enabling environment to support national ICT initiatives”
- national shortcomings that could hinder economic diversification utilising ICT such as limited trained labour force, high cost of doing business and accessibility restrictions both air and sea and financing.

The ICT plan also includes an implementation framework to achieve the broad policy objectives presented below.

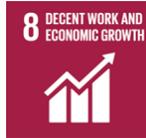
Table XXVI: Strategic Thrust for ICT	
National ICT Focus Area	Strategic Thrust
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable universal deployment of robust, resilient, domestic and international broadband and other appropriate ICT infrastructure</li> <li>• Promote quality and affordability of ICT services</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster effective national coordination of ICT initiatives</li> <li>• Support and expedite the ICT-based platform and skills development for 21st Century Government</li> <li>• Enhance accessibility and engagement between Government and its local and external clients</li> </ul>
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively apply ICT to enhance service delivery and growth in all sectors and strengthen national cohesiveness</li> <li>• Make the benefits of ICT services accessible and available to all</li> </ul>
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalise appropriate policy governance systems and procedures for policy development and implementation</li> <li>• Establish an appropriate, robust, legal and regulatory framework that fosters the continued development and delivery of quality telecommunications and ICT services in the Territory</li> <li>• Establish an appropriate, robust, legal and regulatory framework that facilitates ease of doing business, protects the environment and fosters public confidence in the use of ICTs</li> </ul>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Leverage ICT as a catalyst for enhancing key sectors and fostering economic diversification and growth</b></li> <li>• <b>Promote and grow ICT entrepreneurship and an ICT-enabled business sector in the Territory</b></li> <li>• <b>Establish the VI as a smart territory while seizing opportunities for local entrepreneurship</b></li> </ul>

Using ICT to achieve economic growth and development cannot occur without the proper governance, legislative and institution structures. Therefore, with the implementation of the ICT strategy the BVI will be poised to exploit fully the benefits that a truly digitally based economy can bring. These include operational efficiencies, growth of new innovative business streams, increased productivity, attracting new venture capital and greater participation of the population in economic growth activities.

**Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals**  
**National Outcome #11 – Diversified Economy and Globally Competitive Industries is aligned with SDGs # 8, 12 and 14.**

<b>Table XXVII: National Outcome 11 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Target</b>
8.1	Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.
8.2	Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.
8.3	Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
8.9	By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
12.b	Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
14.7	By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

# National Outcome #12 – Developing a Green and Circular Economy



*By 2036 the BVI's reliance on fossil fuels has been reduced, industries use more sustainable sources of energy, and less waste is generated.*

## Overview

The movement towards a green economy is seen as a critical pathway to achieving sustainable development. It is an opportunity for investments in green industries, job creation, usage of renewable energy resources, preservation of the environment and reduction in carbon emissions and pollution. In order to achieve those objectives, it is vital that the enabling conditions are provided to generate and stimulate both public and private partnerships and broader actions to support the sustainable growth of the Territory and the protection of natural resources. The NSDP 'green' strategies once implemented will assist the BVI in achieving its goal of 60% of energy consumption using renewable sources by 2030.

**National Strategies to 2036... developing a green and circular economy** focusses on promoting environmentally conscious industry practices which can create

opportunities for MSMEs and local entrepreneurs, reduce waste and transitioning to renewable sources of producing energy.

## 1. Greening existing industries.

### a. Tourism

The tourism industry is a major contributor to economic growth but also places great demands on the BVI's natural resources like beaches, coral reefs, other coastal and marine ecosystems, and national parks. The tourism industry is a major consumer of both energy and water due to the large number of persons transported to the destination and the great demands for water to meet the needs of visitors. Additionally, waste from the industry adds to an already overwhelmed waste management and disposal system along with other environmental impacts such as oil spills and toxic chemicals used in the marine industry.

Given the tourism industry's economic importance and environmental impacts it is a prime industry for incorporating green initiatives. Green initiatives that in addition to protecting the environment can generate new business opportunities and jobs for the local communities. However, greening tourism requires a complete commitment by all land-based and marine-based entities to policies and programmes that will be advanced and implemented to focus on the conservation of natural resources, reduced waste generation and water consumption and utilisation of renewable energy sources.

This strategy recommends the following steps towards transitioning to an inclusive, sustainable green economy:

- Include in the tourism plan (see outcome 11) policies for greening of the tourism industry including increasing public investment in green economy activities, developing financing instruments that leverage commitments to protecting the environment, revising legislative and regulatory frameworks, and enhancing institutional capacity.
- Reduce the burdens on the already stretched and expensive energy and water supplies by incentivising the hotel and the marine sectors to invest in renewable energy and water production technology and other technologies that will reduce their reliance on fossil fuels thereby reducing their carbon outputs.
- Provide support in the form of financial resources and capacity building for MSME's involved in the tourism industry so that they can have access to the latest information and technologies to better adapt to green initiatives. The Government will leverage additional support from development partners and private sector.
- Develop methods for measuring environmental impacts and level of carbon emission of the sector and offer incentives for achieving certain benchmarks.
- Develop polices to guide the use of chemicals in the marine industry for example those used as cleaning agents.
- Incorporate in new and existing legislation stiff penalties and enforcement mechanisms for practices that can be detrimental to the fragile ecosystems.

## b. Water Production

Water plays a critical role in supporting economic development, public health and livelihoods. The BVI's water supply is a combination of expensive 'public' water supply produced through desalination and rainwater harvesting via cisterns and other rainwater storage tanks done mainly at the household level. As a result of climate change dry spells are longer and the rainy season is littered with torrential occurrences thus reducing the reliability of rainwater supplies. Greening strategies will address water resource issues and encourage more environmentally friending practices in the production of water on the supply side and control the consumption of water on the demand side. These include:

- Investing in public infrastructure that will facilitate the capturing and storing of rainwater thus reducing the reliance on the more expensively produced and energy reliant desalinated water.
- Improve the water distribution network to reduce the incidence of leakages which result in a sizeable percentage of water loss.
- Revisit the billing structure for 'public' water considering the implementation of a more progressive billing system where households and commercial entities get a discounted rate if they use low volumes of water will the rate increasing as more water is consumed.
- Investigate financing opportunities that are available to support fund the integration of 'green' technologies into the water production and consumption.
- Develop community-based water management programmes including water conservation campaigns within the schools and also targeting households and capacity building to MSME's as it relates to the use of water conservation technologies within their operations.

## c. Fisheries

The fishing industry is a major component of food security and has the potential to grow into an export industry in the BVI. Preservation of the marine ecosystem and balancing the livelihoods of fisher folk is essential in the managed development of the industry. A "green" fishery sector is one that is ecologically sustainable, provides a higher level of economic goods and services at lower environmental costs and equitably distributes those benefits. Transitioning to a green economy will therefore require introducing specific measures for policy planning and institutional reform, sustainable financing, investment in technology and building public awareness.

Since the fisheries sector is still at its embryonic stage of development strategies for greening can be incorporated into policies, legislation and regulations that are being developed to facilitate the expansion of the sector. These include the following:

- Develop the aquaculture industry (see outcome 13) as a sustainable fish harvesting option ensuring that the operations are guided by standards that minimises impact on the environment, the use of safe feed and quality water for instance.

- Create data collection and monitoring systems that can account for fish stocks and other marine life, ocean conditions such as temperatures, sargassum concentrations and pollution.
- Develop a stronger framework for management of the fisheries industry incorporating international standards like the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- Ensure that coastal development practices include policies for protection of the coast since landside developments can impact marine life.
- Invest in capacity building that will teach sustainable fishing practices and invest in fishing technology such as energy efficient storage and refrigeration technologies and energy efficient fishing vessels.

#### d. Transportation

The transportation sector in the BVI is highly dependent on fossil fuel. Only a handful of cars are electric, and the inter-island ferry service is run by diesel-powered ferries. Similarly, a notable segment of the yachting and power boat industry uses non-renewable sources of energy. Greening the transportation sector is an important aspect of this strategy and encompasses the following:

- In addition to the one (1) year duty free option extended for electric and hybrid cars other incentives will be considered to accelerate the use of renewable energy in private, commercial and public transport.
- Develops methods products especially targeting vulnerable households to ensure that they can also participate in the green revolution.
- Provide incentives for the marine sector to utilise solar, wind, electricity, biofuel as alternatives to fossil fuel in powering their vessels.
- The Government will lead by example by incrementally switching out its current vehicle fleet to electric and hybrid vehicles.

## 2. **Transition to Sustainable Energy.**

One significant way of “greening” the economy is transition from fossil fuels to more sustainable energy sources. Currently the majority of BVIs energy supply is reliant on imported fossil fuels which are highly volatile in price. This impacts the BVI’s energy security, the cost of doing business, cost of goods and services and household energy costs and the environment will the emission of greenhouse gases. The BVIs 2016 Energy Policy indicated that 99% of electricity was generated using fossil fuels and less than 3% with renewable energy sources.



The following strides have been made towards meeting our energy goals:

- Amendments to the BVI Electricity Corporation Act and the enactment of the Renewable Energy Regulations 2018 provides the legal framework that supports the advancement of renewable energy in the BVI. Provisions have been made for consumer generation (households and businesses) of renewable energy process for supplying to the electricity grid, fee structure and licensing of producers of renewable energy. To date 300 kilowatts are being generated by customers with a percentage supplied to the electricity grid.
- An Energy Policy developed in 2016 “addresses current energy issues and trends in BVI’s leading industries and aims to accommodate BVI’s growing energy demand, while maintaining environmental stewardship, reliability, and affordability”. The Policy sets out ambitious targets including by 2023 30% of the Territory’s energy needs would be provided by renewables.
- Training programmes to build local expertise within the renewable energy sphere commenced through the HLSCC which has graduated its first cohort of certified solar technicians.
- Incentives to encourage residents to transition to renewable energy include zero tax on importation of clean energy equipment into 2022.
- Anegada Hybrid Renewable Energy and Battery Energy Storage System Project which once completed will see 95% of electricity being provided by solar energy.

Although some advancement has been made in the transition to more sustainable energy sources, the VI will need to be more aggressive to reach its energy targets. This strategy recommends:

- Review and update the 2016 Energy Policy to take into consideration additional challenges that may have occurred post hurricanes Irma and Maria, revisit energy targets and update

- of the actions and activities required to achieve the outcomes in the policy. Treat this document as the main guiding framework for transitioning to renewable energy sources.
- Set up a multi-disciplinary body responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Energy Policy to include the BVI Electricity Corporation, public sector, private sector and NGOs.
  - Revisit the current renewable energy incentive scheme and determine whether it is adequate to encourage households and commercial users to utilise renewable energy sources.
  - Launch a comprehensive education programme – community and school based highlighting the importance of switching to renewable sources, impacts of fossil fuels on climate change and business and job opportunities with the “green” economy.
  - Expand the training options to increase the number of local technicians that have the expertise to be involved in the ‘green’ industry.
  - Evaluate the Anegada project and determine to what extent it can be duplicated on other islands.

### **3. Adapt a Circular Economy Model with more sustainable resource use and waste disposal.**

The outcome of this strategy is to create an economy and society where waste generation is reduced, resources are circulated, and nature regenerated. Currently the BVI generates a high volume of waste, with waste prevention or education schemes almost non-existent. Barring some private sector efforts for recycling waste materials this is still on a small scale and only covers a limited number of materials such as plastic, metals, glass and aluminum with the majority being exported. Most of the solid waste therefore ends up either in the incinerator and landfill with the remainder burned openly or illegally dumped in the natural environment. In order to improve the current waste management practices, the Government has developed a draft Waste Management Strategy (WMS) in 2019 which sets out the basic premise for a circular economy. This NSDP strategy will build on objectives of the WMS and strengthen actions towards BVI achieving a circular economy.

A Circular Economy Framework will be developed which will focus on reducing significantly what ends up in the landfills by:

- Introducing legislation that will control the imports of single use products
- Create the enabling environment for ‘green’ businesses – financing, laws and regulations, knowledge sharing and capacity building
- Encourage ‘green’ entrepreneurs to develop scalable business repurposing waste material such as food, electronics, plastics, clothing, metal, pallets etc.
- Encourage no waste primary industries such as agriculture and fishing creating multiple income streams throughout the production process

**Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals  
National Outcome #12 – Developing a Green and Circular Economy is  
aligned with SDGs # 8 and 12.**

<b>Table XXVIII: National Outcome 12 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Target</b>
8.9	By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
12.a	Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.
12.b	Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
12.4	By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.
12.5	By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

# National Goal 3: The Virgin Islands has Good Governance, An Accountable Government, Citizen Participation and a Safe and Secure Society

Under National Goal 3 there are 6 National Outcomes as follows:

Figure 38: Diagram of National Goal 3 and 6 National Outcomes



## National Outcome #13 - Peace, Safety, Security and Justice for All



*By 2036, our use of STI will help us to achieve the future we want and it would have enabled us to unleash our dynamism and enhance our international competitiveness within and across our social and economic structures generating higher levels of employment and income*

### Overview

Achieving national outcome #13, requires good governance as without good governance, the management of our affairs will not be as effective or be handled in a responsible manner; the delivery of public services will not be as efficient; the safety, security and rights of all people will not be protected as we want; and the rule of law will not be upheld.

This national outcome will further enhance the sense of security and safety in our society by reducing the likelihood of crime and violence and promoting core and transformational values. While levels of crime in the BVI are relatively low, there have been incidents that occasionally occur including armed robberies and drug-related gun crimes. The Government recognizes the importance of a reliable and efficient justice system and that public safety inspires stability and confidence.

The Government is committed to building new or improving various law enforcement infrastructure, such as, Halls of Justice, police stations, among as these are essential for improving the level of service offered to the public, whilst ensuring that adequate facilities exist for all facets and functions in law enforcement.

The NDP will support the reform and enhancement of key security and justice institutions, strengthening their capacities to ensure a more efficient, fair, and equitable justice system, and improving our national capacity to implement preventative policies, and deliver services related to citizen security.

Special emphasis will be placed on prevention of violence against women and children, youth violence, and violence against other vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, older persons, people living with AIDS, and LGBT persons. To complement these efforts, attention will focus on strengthening legal and policy frameworks to promote transparency and accountability, including with a view to preventing corruption.

This national outcome will encourage positive change in attitudes, policies, and governance related to security throughout the BVI, and promote greater participation of key stakeholders through stable and open channels. We also will build the capacity of civil society to constructively engage as problem solvers and promote citizens as partners of national agencies and co-producers of security.

### **National Strategies to 2036...**

We recognize that there are many ways to stimulate investment in our economy, but improvements in the adherence to law and maintenance of order, has have high payoffs for investment. The NDP will consider the multiplicity of complex issues surrounding national security and the varying dimensions of crime such as the role of organized crimes, the drugs trade, and border security. Issues such as the reform, modernization and improvement of the operational capacity of law enforcement agencies will be addressed under the NDP. The National Strategies, an elaboration of each and some selected sector strategies are listed below:

Table XXIX: National Strategies for National Outcome 13

<b>Strengthen the capacities of public policy and rule-of law institutions and civil society organizations</b>	<b>Reform and modernize the law enforcement infrastructure</b>
<b>Reinforce equitable access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety</b>	<b>Improve national capacity for evidence-based policymaking</b>

- 1. Strengthen the capacities of public policy and rule-of law institutions and civil society organizations.** Under this strategy, the conditions that promote security will be examined using an integrated approach, to guide the government to reinforce their obligations and roles as duty bearers towards their citizens - the rights holders. The NDP will give greater focus to relevant laws in compliance with international and regional obligations, particularly for the protection of women and children, and will support the BVI to meet its treaty obligations. The NDP will seek to increase institutional and technical capacity to carry out mandates to improve justice and citizen security, and work will be done with citizens to enhance their capacity to demand their right to a fair and inclusive justice system.
- 2. Reform and modernize the law enforcement infrastructure.** Through this strategy the NDP will ensure that law enforcement entities are effective and efficient in the delivery of services and operate at the highest standard of professionalism. This national strategy will result in the improvement of the working environment and arrangements for law enforcement officers to the best international standards and ensure that they operate under an effective management structure, in alignment with a modern model of policing. We will address ethical concerns levelled against law enforcement officers and improve their level of accountability. We recognize that the appropriate framework needs to be developed to address modern crimes such as cyber and intellectual property crimes. Our strategy includes plans for acquiring new equipment, building new accommodations, and refurbishing some existing ones.
- 3. Reinforced equitable access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety** Strategies for equitable access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety will focus on conditions which promote security and rule of law, as well as the root causes that perpetuate violence in the home and the community, including attitudes, vulnerabilities, and access to justice.

4. **Improve national capacity for evidence-based policymaking.** the NSDP will provide the mechanism to build national capacity for evidence-based policymaking by enhancing the capacity of national institutions and civil society to collect and analyse statistical data related to citizen security, and to promote evidence-based decision-making that contributes to the reduction of crime and violence, and increased security. To promote evidence-based interventions, special emphasis will be placed on information systems that can inform public policy for transparency and accountability.

### Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #13 – Peace, Safety, Security & Justice for All is aligned with SDG #16 – *Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for all and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at all Levels*. Peace, stability, human rights and effective governance, based on the rule of law, are central to the realization of citizens’ rights, and a prerequisite for sustainable development. The NSDP will lead to the VI’s achievement of the following SDG targets under SDG #16.

<b>Table XXX: National Outcome 13 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Targets</b>
16.1	Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
16.2	End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
16.3	Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.
16.4	By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime.
16.5	Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
16.6	Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
16.7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
16.8	Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
16.9	By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
16.10	Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
16.a	Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.
16.b	Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

## National Outcome #14 – Effectiveness and Efficiency of Government



### Overview

The Government of the Virgin Islands has to continue to display good governance and implementation of best practices in the use and management of resources. This important to ensure proper implementation on plan initiatives, making intended impacts and meeting intended deadlines.

High levels of effectiveness and efficiency will further increase support and partnership locally, regionally and internationally. As partnership is necessary for the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals, it is necessary that our government continues to build capacity and the confidence of all citizens and partners.

### National Strategies to 2036

Table XXXI: National Strategies for National Outcome 14

Strengthen the availability and accessibility of data

Strengthen the use of domestic polices and financing

Enhance global partnership for development

Work with the Diaspora and International partners on effective remittance systems

Strengthen the availability and accessibility of data

1. Strengthen the use of domestic polices and financing, with due consideration for their respective levels of indebtedness and national capacities.
2. Enhance global partnership for development, adequate provision and mobilization of all mean of implementation and continued international support to achieve internationally agreed goals.
3. Strengthen the availability and accessibility of data and statistical systems, in accordance with national priorities circumstances, and enhance their management of complex data systems, including geospatial data platforms, by launching new partnership initiatives or scaling up existing initiatives.
4. Reduce transfer cost related to remittances while pursuing the international targets and outcome of important international initiatives set by the United Nations system concerning remittance, given their importance for the economic growth of small island developing states.
5. Implement, with the provision of appropriate financial resources, climate change adaptation and mitigation projects.

**Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals National Outcome #14 – Effectiveness and Efficiency of Government is aligned with SDGs # 10, 13, 16 and 17.**

<b>Table XXXII: National Outcome 14 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	<b>Targets</b>
10.c	By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent
13.c	Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible
16.6	Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
16.9	By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
17.1	Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.
17.18	By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries including least developed countries and small island developing states, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.
17.19	By 2030, building on existing initiatives to develop measurement of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity building in developing countries.

## National Outcome #15 – Constitutional Advancement



*By 2036, the vision of a more equitable society must be matched by Constitutional Advancement that is reflective of the “free and independent spirit, ... based on qualities of honesty, integrity, mutual respect, self-reliance and the ownership of the land engendering a strong sense of belonging to and kinship with those Islands;” of our People.*

### Overview

Constitutional advancement for the Virgin Islands has been gradual but consistently progressive as more autonomy has been yielded to the people of the Virgin Islands in its progress to the establishment of a democratic state. Following peaceful protests in 1949 regarding a march through Road Town to protest the gross neglect of the British Empire, the first constitution which gave limited power to a local legislature in 1950. Prior to this system, the BVI was governed via a Presidency under the Leeward Islands colony. Then over the years, our people made their voices

heard for constitutional advancement and representative government. The main purpose of this Constitution was to re-devolve power back to the reformed Legislative Council in the British Virgin Islands away from the Governor of the Leeward Islands. It would be followed in 1967 by a new constitution which established the Ministerial System of Government marking the beginning of self-government for this Territory.

The new Ministerial System would comprise Ministers of Government, representing varying Ministries and subjects. This would reduce the distance between the decision-makers and the electorate. In the election held the same year Lavity Stouff was appointed as the first Chief Minister and first Minister for Education.

The Virgin Islands (Constitution) Order 1976 (as amended) came into Operation 1st June, 1977. Under this new constitution the transfer of control of the public finances from the Governor to the elected Government was achieved under that constitution. At this time constitutional advancement was accompanied by economic advancement. The Chief Minister, Dr Willard Wheatley and his administration, successfully guided the Virgin Islands through a deep recession and with prudent public financial management and sound economic policies brought the country back to economic growth. This resulted in the elimination of the need for financial assistance from the United Kingdom. Grant-in-aid ended in 1978. The country has been funding its budget since that year.

Affirming that the people of the Virgin Islands have generally expressed their desire to become a self-governing people and to exercise the highest degree of control over the affairs of their country at this stage of its development

**The Virgin Islands Constitution 2007**

The 2007 Virgin Islands constitution would delegate the powers to conduct international relations to the elected Government. This has ensured that the Government would deepen relations with the Caribbean regional organisations and many of the institutions of the United Nations.

Any discussion on constitutional advancement must include the 1960's UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples which obligates the United Kingdom's to meaningfully assist its dependent territories with decolonization and the realization of full self-determination. There are 17 Non-Self Governing Territories (NSGTs) and the Virgin Islands is listed as having the inalienable right and option to become a sovereign independent state, have a free association with an independent state or integrate with an independent state. Essentially the people of the Virgin Islands to decide their own political future at a time of their choosing,

### **National Strategies to 2036...**

Almost fifteen years, the time for constitutional review and advancement must be considered. The next steps in this advance will impact the implementation of the NSDP and the consultations have revealed that the populace is making the connection between sustainable development and constitutional advancement. Most agreed that there was need for mass education on the process

to more autonomy and that this would need to commence with some urgency. The national strategies are therefore geared to education of the country and the communication strategy needed in this regard. The following are the strategies that are recommended:

Table XXXIII: National Strategies for National Outcome 15

Establish the Constitutional Review Commission to commence the engagement on Constitutional Review

Establish a feedback mechanism so that there can be constant and sustained engagement with the various publics

Develop a Communication Strategy to ensure that the citizens are fully involved in the discussion on Constitutional Review

- Establish the Constitutional Review Commission to commence the engagement on Constitutional Review- This decision was made at the at Cabinet’s meeting on February 17, 2021, when the overall budget for the establishment of the Constitution Review Commission and associated activities was approved. It was agreed that the associated activities will include a public education campaign to keep the community abreast of the work the commission is undertaking. It had previously been agreed that the Terms of Reference would include a public education campaign which would highlight the current constitution utilising varying forms of media which would include Snap Comms, GIS Previews, Public Eyes, Radio Programmes, Bulletins, Press Releases and Online Quizzes. The establishment of this Commission, must be undertaken with the approval of the Parliament so that there is buy-in when the Commission is finished with its work.
- Develop a Communication Strategy to ensure that the citizens are fully involved in the discussion on Constitutional Review – Consultation with the public with regard to the steps towards more autonomy is a necessary requirement. This should be one of the deliverables of the Commission.
- Establish a feedback mechanism so that there can be constant and sustained engagement with the various publics. Consultations with the public will require a responsive feedback mechanism. This will call for personnel who can provide timely responses especially through social media

## Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #15 – Constitutional Advancement *is aligned with SDG #4 and SDG # 16 which will put emphasis on education of the public, feedback and the development of strong institutions.*

Table XXXIV: National Outcome 15 and SDG Targets	
Goal	Targets
4.1	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
16.7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
16.10	Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Indicator 16.10.2:</b> Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information</li> </ul>
16.a	Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels
16.b	Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

## National Outcome #16 – Transparency and Accountability



*By 2036, we will have accountable, transparent, effective governance and inclusive societies*

### Overview

The Virgin Islands maintains that it is committed to good governance and has passed numerous pieces of legislation over the last few years including the following:

- The Legal Profession Act, 2015 of the Virgin Islands Code of Ethics which regulates the professional practice, etiquette, conduct and discipline of a legal practitioner.
- The Police Act 2019 which changed the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force to the Royal Virgin Islands Police Service. Roles and reporting structures were further clarified.

- The BVI enacted the Securities and investment Business (Amendment) Act and introduced the accompanying Private Investment Funds Regulations, 2019 (the **PIF Regulations**), which legislation introduced for the first time a new regulatory regime for close-ended funds.
- Financial Investigation Agency Act 2020 which provided for the establishment of a body to be known as the Financial Investigation Agency to ensure full disclosure and to facilitate investigations into financial offences.
- Financial Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act 2021
- Whistle Blowers Bill, 2021
- Drug Trafficking Offences (Amendment) Act, 2021 (BILL)

In addition, there have been serious strides made in ensuring compliance with international tax regulations. The Government also fully participated in the recent Commission of Inquiry held in 2021. According to the office of the Attorney General “It has rightly been the aim of the Government of the Virgin Islands, from the start, to co-operate with the Commission of Inquiry thoroughly.”<sup>51</sup> This was done despite the limitations imposed by COVID 19.

Since it was announced in January this year, the COI has received from the Government, the Inquiry Response Unit (IRU) or the Government’s legal advisers:

- Over 10,000 documents, totalling approximately 150,000 pages;
- Responses to 159 COI letters of request for information, documents or affidavits. Of this total, the Government has provided the COI with 67 notarised affidavits;
- Responses to 19 Orders of the Commissioner:
- Written responses to 24 warning letters;
- Responses to 21 witness summons;
- Not less than 29 submissions on legal points and related matters;
- 4 position statements on behalf of ministers and the elected Government;
- Responses to not less than 52 other letters and Emails from the COI which have required a substantive response.

Source: Premier's Office, Attorney General’s Chambers: [Good Governance](#) Release Date: Monday, 29 November 2021

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<sup>51</sup> Premier's Office, Attorney General’s Chambers: [Good Governance](#) Release Date: Monday, 29 November 2021

Research indicates that the Virgin Islands has always attempted to differentiate itself as the group focused on law and order and integrity in public life. It is seen as part of the uniqueness and national identity of the local population. Conversations with citizens during consultations indicated that this remained a priority. There were concerns that there all institutions did not work together for the protection of ordinary citizens, hence there was not equality before the law. While these anecdotal recollections were not supported by statistical evidence, in small societies perceptions can be perpetuated and can affect attitudes to these institutions and individuals.

**National Strategies to 2036...envision transparency and accountability in both the public and private sectors and the inclusion of civil society and citizen groups in decision making and decision implementation.**

Table XXXV: National Strategies for National Outcome 16

Strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders including civil society actors to ensure accountability and review of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Reports	Ensure security and human rights to individuals whose lives and basic freedoms are under threat either due to direct violence or through institutional restrictions to justice
Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime	Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international co-operation, for building capacity at all levels, to prevent violence and combat crime.
Ensure public access to information in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.	Increase the transparency of monitoring and evaluation by ensuring the availability of high-quality, timely, and reliable data disaggregated by income, age, gender, ethnicity and migratory status, geographic location, disability and other characteristics relevant in national context.
Continue to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels.	
<b>Actively combat human trafficking</b>	

- 1. Strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders including civil society actors to ensure accountability and review of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Reports.** The feedback mechanisms should ensure that during implementation stakeholders are engaged. It will assist with ensuring the transparency of the VNR which is presented annually at the level of the United Nations. During the consultations citizens ask for the VNR to be presented to the nation before its final presentation at the UN. Citizens and civil society groups should be made aware of the parameters of monitoring and should be part of the group selected to receive the VNR. Currently the UN has many fora to train Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) so that they can assist in ensuring effective governance.
- 2. Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime.** The location of the VI between the USVI and Puerto Rico makes it vulnerable to the trade of illicit arms and the sale of stolen goods. Partnerships with these two US territories must be strengthened to ensure better policing of the waters. It is also necessary to strengthen laws to deal with penalties that will serve as deterrents to such activities.
- 3. Ensure public access to information in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.** It is also important that public access to information be timely, accessible, user-friendly and as far as possible, free of charge. Countries are urged to put in place a legal or policy framework that protects and promotes access to information. This is because Public access to information helps ensure institutional accountability and transparency. It is important to measure both the existence of such a framework and its implementation, as good laws may exist but they may not be enforced. It helps to identify capacity needs and assists in removal of systematic institutional resistance due to cultural practices. It should be noted that the Department of Information and Public Relations has indicated its commitment to providing the public with timely information on the programmes, policies, projects and activities of the Government of the Virgin Islands. The move towards digitisation needs to be accelerated so as to give more access. It also means that adult education on how to access information must be considered.
- 4. Continue to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels.** There needs to be more efficient and transparent regulations put in place, along with comprehensive and realistic government budgets to secure rule of law. One of the first steps towards protecting individual rights is the implementation of worldwide birth registration and the creation of more independent national human rights institutions around the world. The VI should be one of the advocates of this right. There is legislation that addresses human rights, for example, the Domestic Violence Act, 2011 ensures protection for those subjected to such violence, which supports Section 187 of the Criminal Code and creates a specific clause that offers some form of protection specifically to females and children. The main challenge is the

training of Police in the handling of such cases and the response time in resolving such matters. The legislation on penalties should also be strengthened

5. **Actively combat human trafficking.** The Government of the Virgin Islands has over the years deepened relations with the USVI. with which it shares borders, regarding human trafficking. In 2020, Premier and Minister of Finance, Andrew A. Fahie made it clear that there was zero tolerance to human trafficking into the Territory of the Virgin Islands. A task force for these joint operations was to be established and heavy penalties would be imposed on such activities, Care services are to be made available to victims of trafficking and dependent children accompanying the victims. Taking into account the person's status as a victim of crime, emphasis should also be placed on a victim- centred approach which will include appropriate housing, safe conditions for sleeping, food and personal hygiene; psychological counseling, medical, and legal assistance in a language the victim can understand.
6. **Ensure security and human rights to individuals whose lives and basic freedoms are under threat either due to direct violence or through institutional restrictions to justice.** The office of Gender Affairs is continuing to partner with organisations to educate residents of the Virgin Islands on the Domestic Violence Act, 2011 as part of advocacy activities during this month.
7. **Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international co-operation, for building capacity at all levels, to prevent violence and combat crime.** The resource limitations of the island creates the opportunity for building national capacity, as well as utilizing regional and international resources, both financial and human, to strengthen national institutions. The community policing programme can benefit from these proactive upgrades and the legal and legislative agenda must focus on prevention and remedial modernisations
8. **Increase the transparency of monitoring and evaluation** by ensuring the availability of high-quality, timely, and reliable data disaggregated by income, age, gender, ethnicity and migratory status, geographic location, disability and other characteristics relevant in national context.

### **Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals**

National Outcome #16 – Transparency and Accountability is aligned with SDG #16 and SDG #17 all of which recognise that Good Governance and Partnerships are fundamental to ensuring inclusivity, responsiveness and protection for sustainable development. SDG 16 ensures that both good governance and the rule of law are the foundation of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies and in ensuring sustainable development. While SDG 17 is aimed at strengthening global partnership, capacity building, global finance for SMEs and the promotion of technology, innovation and the benefits of global trade for developing countries and small island developing states.

National Outcome 16 and SDG Targets	
Goal	Targets
16.1	Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere [Indicator 16.1.4: Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live]
16.3	Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all
16.4	By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime
16.6	Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
16.7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
16.10	Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
16.a	Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime
16.b	Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development
17.1	Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
17.3	Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence
17.14	Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
17.17	Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships Data, monitoring and accountability
17.19	By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

During the consultations citizens were vocal about the increase in criminal activity and the inadequacy of the various institutions in ensuring a quality of life which had been present in the Virgin Islands for decades. They lamented the inability to leave doors open and the increasing violence against women and children. In addition, they charged both the public and private sectors with lack of transparency and dealing with all cases in the same manner. The impact on the identity of VIslanders was central to this discussion and the part of the solution was envisioned in international institutions like the UN.

# National Outcome #17 – Voice, Feedback and Social Dialogue



*By 2036, we will be providing equality of opportunity for our citizens so that all are able to dialogue freely and with knowledge on the issues that affect their lives and their livelihoods*

## Overview

The Virgin Islands maintains that citizens have no hindrances or access to free speech and to education and that the consultations that are held in all communities since the 2017 hurricanes so that citizens could discuss issues related to recovery and development. Moreover, the numerous radio shows highlight the challenges that citizens face. It should be noted that the sittings of the Commission of Inquiry were broadcast, nationally, regionally and internationally. In fact, the VI does not have any negative report regarding freedom of speech or human right violations.

However, social dialogue entails listening to people and getting feedback from partners of all sectors to make the best decisions for all. While consultations facilitate this dialogue, there must also be an effort to build trust by providing information supported by good statistics. Recently, there has been discussion regarding protection on social media and cybercrimes. Like all countries there is a balance that must be created to protect citizens, while not curtailing free speech.

**National Strategies to 2036...** Goal 17 which ensures “partnerships for the goals” and contributes to the achievement of all SDGs, most importantly for decent work and inclusive growth (8) as well as reducing inequalities (10).

Strengthen dialogue systems with citizens	Table XXXVII: National Strategies for National Outcome 17
Work with the HLSCC to increase public engagement on relevant and contemporary issues	Work with international community on cyber criminal activity
Foster the development of community groups and associations that support the development of public speaking	Encourage the private sector to increase dialogue within businesses to ensure a focus on descent work

1. **Strengthen dialogue systems with citizens** – Feedback will definitely improve the information sharing that is very active in the territory. Responsiveness replies assist and dialogue assists in fostering trust, especially when supported by reliable data and statistics.
2. **Work with the HLSCC to increase public engagement on relevant and contemporary issues** – Educational institutions like colleges must be at the heart of change and transformation in developing societies. The college must therefore move out of the class room into the communities and island to increase dialogue and provide important information. It can leverage its social capital to attract top national, regional and global speakers to increase the discourse in the country.
3. **Foster the development of community groups and associations that support the development of public speaking** – Confident and competent speakers are also important to increasing social dialogue and it is therefore important to support groups that invest in public speaking and debates. Schools should start debating societies and competitions should be promoted.
4. **Work with the international community on cybercriminal activity** - One of the greatest threats to giving voice is the improper use of social media and the internet. Other countries have developed suites of legislation in this regard and support can be sought in this regard.
5. **Encourage the private sector to increase dialogue within businesses.** This is necessary to increase descent work. Most workers will accept poor working conditions because they do not have a voice or representation. Company health will depend on good relations and this should be encouraged.

## Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #17 Voice, Feedback and Social Dialogue is central to the ensure that globalisation translates into decent work, better quality jobs and more inclusive growth for all. It aligns closely with SDG #4 Quality Education, SDG#8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG#19 Reduced Inequalities and SDG# 17 Partnerships for the Goals.

<b>Table XXXVIII: National Outcome 17 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Targets</b>
4.1	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
4.3	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
4.6	By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
8.5	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
10.2	By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
10.3	Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
10.6	Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions
17.17	Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

## National Outcome #18 – Strengthened External Relations

17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



*By 2036, we will have a well-resourced External Relations Plan and Institutional Structure that promotes the National Sustainable Development Plan [NSDP] and continue to effectively safeguard the well-established reputation, while managing and coordinating the Country's representation in the international arena.*

## Overview

The Government of the British Virgin Islands is currently responsible for the external affairs that fall under the portfolio of the Ministers to the full extent permitted under the Constitution. These matters include economic, social development, health, environment, labour, telecommunications, infrastructural development, culture and education. The coordinating function is however located within the Premier's Office. The Premier is assisted to coordinate this function by the International Affairs Secretariat (IAS).

The Virgin Islands is in the process of constitutional review with the hope of building on the progress made with the four previous constitutions. In this regard there must also be an upgrading of the functioning within the International Affairs Secretariat. This body is currently responsible for the management and coordination of the following matters:

- Deepening the relationship with Caribbean regional organizations/institutions;
- Managing the relationship with the United States Virgin Islands.
- Managing the relationship with other Overseas Territories
- Coordinating the country's involvement in international relations.
- Managing the country's interest with the United Kingdom and the European Union.
- Managing Protocol and Diplomatic Services.
- Coordinating the interests of the country with the London Office and the Asia House.

Changing global interests, related climate change, the exit of Britain from the European Union, the increasing demands of regional and international partners and the call by the Diaspora for more involvement in the sustainable development of their homeland, means that there is a need for reinforcing of the institutional structure that coordinates and manages international affairs.

## National Strategies to 2036...

The National Strategies reflect the advancements that will be necessary for the international relations function to deliver even more on the partnerships that have been established and the new alliances and priorities that the sustainable development of country will foster. As a Small Island Developing State, the Virgin Islands faces the human resources constraints with limited networks, and fewer external representatives making it difficult to attend to the myriad of meetings in which their positions are needed, resulting a reduction of bargaining power and influence. The country must find itself at the table to ensure that it can maximize its opportunities and minimize its vulnerabilities.

Table XXXIX: National Strategies for National Outcome 18

Strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders to ensure effective Virgin Island representation in the international area	Revisit agreements signed with the OECS, the ACS, CARICOM and ECLAC to ensure that the Country receives maximum benefits from engagement
Develop a Diaspora Policy and engagement systems to deepen the involvement of Islanders living in other countries in the development of their homeland	Increase the number and presence of representatives living in countries considered important for the sustainable development of the Country
Focus on capacity building to ensure the development of negotiations, accessing development financing	Increase visibility in international fora on Small Island Development States', Development Financing, Climate Financing, Building Resilience
Increase the capacity to ensure effective implementation and coordination of international agreements across departments and with overseas representatives	Reform the functions of International Relations to accommodate constitutional advancement of the Country

- Strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders to ensure effective Virgin Island representation in the international area – International relations is a very vibrant and dynamic enterprise with new countries and issues gaining prominence or moving off the agenda as quickly as they appear. There are some countries and issues that will retain prominence for the life of the NSDP. It will be up to the country to set priorities and to strengthen alliances and partnerships
- Revisit agreements signed with the OECS, the ACS, CARICOM and ECLAC to ensure that the Country receives maximum benefits from engagement- It is opportune to seize the opportunity to review the benefits of Associate Membership with a view towards upgrading value added. Many regional institutions negotiate benefits on a one size fits all Associates. The uniqueness of the economic independence of the Virgin Islands necessitates different arrangements and deserves a review of the existing agreements.

- Develop a Diaspora Policy and engagement systems to deepen the involvement of Islanders living in other countries in the development of their homeland- The Country has a cadre of resources located outside its borders which has been mobilised after disasters. The aim of proactive engagement is to ensure that the contact will yield mutual benefits. The Diaspora is traditionally envisaged as providing remittances but are a source of investment and a skills pool that can assist in sustainable. A Diaspora Policy will define the engagement and the way in which the relationship will be consolidated.
- Increase the number and presence of representatives living in countries considered important for the sustainable development of the Country- Progress has been within the establishment of a presence in London and in Asia, however for there to be more benefits it is necessary to better staff these two bodies. Further, there might be need to increase the number of locations to capitalise on available resources.
- Focus on capacity building to ensure the development of negotiations, accessing development financing- Many countries and organisations involved in cooperation are ready to engage with countries that are still overseas territories and these possibilities should be fully explored especially within regional organisations where they have associate membership.
- Increase visibility in international fora on Small Island Development States, Development Financing, Climate Financing, Building Resilience – SIDS are currently enjoying visibility on the global agenda because of their vulnerability to climate change. It is necessary to be present at engagements on financing both adaptation and mitigation to ensure resilience building.
- Increase the capacity to ensure effective implementation and coordination of international agreements across departments and with overseas representatives- One of the biggest challenges facing SIDS is the inability to fully execute international agreements. It is necessary to negotiate capacity building mechanisms to ensure effective implementation. It is not enough to sign the agreement, its impact on sustainable development must be assessed.
- Reform the functions of International Relations to accommodate constitutional advancement of the Country- The last constitutional review of the country took place in 2007 and while it is not clear what the new constitutional relationship will be with the United Kingdom, it should be noted that up to this point each successive constitution has achieved some incremental devolution of power, to the local government. The Country should therefore commence its preparation for new functions for which it may gain responsibility.

## Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

Advocacy and alliances locally, regionally and internationally will be at the centre of existing and new partnerships. While the targets under SDG#17 are mainly directed at developed countries, it is still necessary to prepare and align the following targets to the NSDP.

<b>Table XL: National Outcome 18 and SDG Targets</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Targets</b>
17.1	Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
17.3	Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources
17.13	Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence
17.14	Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
17.16	Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries
17.17	Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
17.19	By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

## National Goal 4: The Virgin Islands Embraces Environmental Sustainability for Sustainable Islands' Development

Under National Goal 4 there are 3 National Outcomes as follows:

Figure 39: National Goal 4 and 3 National Outcome



## National Outcome #19 – Sustainable Management and Use of Environmental and Natural Resources



*By 2036 every citizen and resident of BVI will have access to a clean and healthy environment*

### Overview

The natural environment is an important asset to the BVI and this national development plan, provides a valuable opportunity to better align the sustainable management and use of natural resources to sustainable economic growth and development. The importance of healthy ecosystems is also key to reducing vulnerability on one hand but also for providing important services such as protection from storm surge during hurricanes and flood control to name a few. Ecosystems such as coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves are key to the tourism sector and provide recreational opportunities for tourist and the local population alike; but these ecosystems also serve as hurricane shelters for vessels, protect coastal and inland infrastructure, prevent soil and beach erosion and provide research opportunities, among other benefits.

The importance of strategically focusing on the natural environment is written into the BVI Constitution 2007 which states inter alia *“that every person has the right to an environment that is generally not harmful to his or her health or well-being and to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through such laws as may be enacted by the Legislature including laws to prevent pollution and ecological degradation, promote conservation; and secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.*



In terms of the state of the state of the natural environment, local ecosystems face many threats, such as natural hazards, climate change, invasive species, water and terrestrial pollution, land-based sources of pollution, land reclamation and conversion, sand mining and onshore developments<sup>52</sup>. As a result of natural and human induced threats beaches in the BVI have narrowed by an average of one meter, with extreme cases of up to three meters. The BVI has diverse biodiversity both on land and in its EEZ and the territory has a high level of endemism with for example, the BVI being important for Caribbean reptiles as thirty-one indigenous (eight of which are endemic) and six introduced species of amphibian and reptile are

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<sup>52</sup> 2018. Abbott, Joseph Smith. “Implementing and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals in the Caribbean: The Role of the Ocean in the Virgin Islands”.

found in the BVI. Some of the more common threats to biodiversity include habitat loss/fragmentation, sedimentation, anchor damage, marine pollution, increasing sea temperatures and invasive species and some development practices, which leads to the loss of mangroves.

Waste management also is a focus of the Government as waste generation is considered to be high<sup>53</sup>. The recently approved updated waste strategy (2019) seeks to move the Territory towards a modern, resilient, environmentally sustainable and economically viable system for the collection, treatment and disposal of waste. A waste characterization study undertaken in 2019 showed that organic waste, plastics and paper constituted the largest quantities of waste from residential communities<sup>54</sup>. Waste characterization of the BVI also is influenced by the tourism sector.

Under this national outcome, strategies and actions related to separation of waste, collection of waste for export for the purposes of recycling as well as engaging in composting at larger scale will be explored to turn trash into cash and to create new industries based on waste. Also, under the national outcome, the legislative framework needed to support the implementation of this waste management strategy will be undertaken.

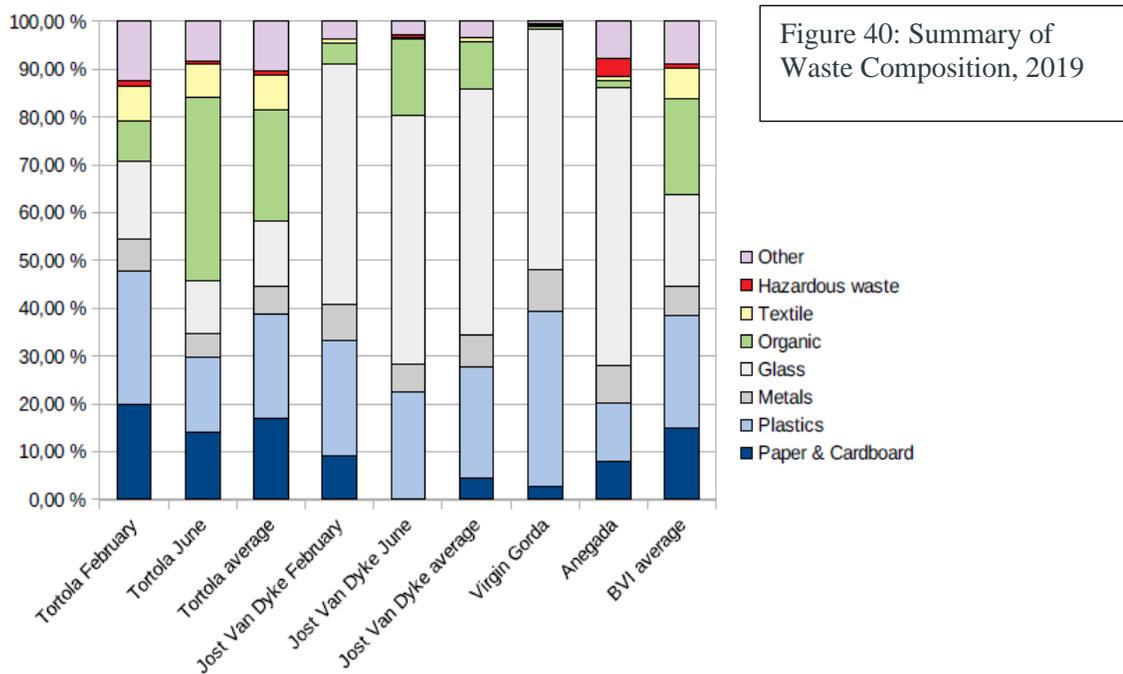


Figure 40: Summary of Waste Composition, 2019

Coupled with better management of waste is the issue of waste disposal. Under this national outcome focused will be placed on ensuring that the dumpsite is better managed in line with the management of a landfill to reduce the risk of spontaneous combustion and release of toxic fumes, resulting in air pollution.

<sup>53</sup> 2019. Department of Waste Management. Waste Management Strategy Report

<sup>54</sup> 2019. Department of Waste Management. “Final Report on Waste Characterization, 2019”.

Over the last few years, several policies related to the environment have been developed, signalling the decisive action that must be taken to advance environmental sustainability for the benefit of all Islanders and industries. For example, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021, the Cabinet approved the Green Paper on the Proposed Environmental Management and Climate Adaptation Bill. The proposed bill outlines Government's approach to the establishment of overarching legislation to safeguard the environment, in keeping with the constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment for every resident of the Virgin Islands. The main focus involves establishing the legal framework of systems to ensure that the natural environment is protected; enhancing residents' knowledge of the natural and physical attributes of the Virgin Islands and ensuring that future generations enjoy the benefits that a clean and healthy environment can contribute towards providing a high standard of living and economic prosperity. Strategies for the development and capitalizing on the green and blue economies also are being explored.

### **National Strategies to 2036: Towards A Clean, Green and Blue Economy Advancing Environmental Sustainability**

Under this national outcome, the importance of the natural environment to advancing growth and sustainability is highlighted through the national strategies. This national outcome provides support for the sustainable management and use of natural resources and ecosystems and places focus on sustainable consumption and production patterns. The latter implies that the responsibility for environmental protection has to be shared among all stakeholders, citizens and communities, including the private sector, recognizing the critical role all need to play in protecting the islands' natural heritage and the importance of all sectors, industries and government in reducing their ecological footprint. This is also key to the country's efforts to accelerate its economic transformation.

Table XLI: National Strategies for National Outcome 19

Enhance the governance framework of institutions, laws and policy to support environmental sustainability	Rehabilitate Degraded Ecosystems
Support natural resource valuation and accounting	Support greening the economy and the introduction of innovative financial instruments for environmental sustainability and ecosystem rehabilitation
Create strategies to capitalize on the blue and green economies within the context of sustainable development	Advance environmental education and awareness and reduce our individual and collective carbon footprints
Foster sustainable consumption and production, including turning trash to cash	Advance sustainable, green accessible and liveable communities

1. **Enhance the governance framework of institutions, laws and policy to support environmental sustainability.** Under this national strategy focus will be placed on strengthening the environmental management framework of legislation and policy and associated networks as well institutions to ensure transformational leadership of environmental institutions both in the public and civil society domains. Some of this work has already stated.,
2. **Rehabilitate Degraded Ecosystems.** The BVI has many economic activities that are dependent on ecosystem services, such as tourism, fisheries, and agriculture. This national strategy will focus on rehabilitating degraded ecosystems, towards enhancing the resilience of BVI on one hand as well as enabling all citizens to benefit from the goods and services provided by ecosystems that are key to socioeconomic development. Climate change also had contributed to ecosystem degradation including reducing the health of coral reefs, land degradation and accelerated the rate of deterioration of both terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Emphasis will be placed on putting in place programmes to identify and take actions against those activities that contribute to environmental degradation. Issues such as land -based sources of pollution also will be addressed.

3. **Support natural resource valuation and accounting** - The valuation and accounting of natural resources is fundamental to government's success in achieving sustainable growth. Without this national strategy, it will be difficult for government obtain data to improve cost-benefit analysis and policy appraisal or quantify the contribution of natural resources to BVI's GDP. In 2016, the tourism sector contributed the equivalent of 52% to the BVI's GDP – without a monetary value, it will be very difficult to compare its impacts with those of other economic activities.
4. **Support greening the economy and the introduction of innovative financial instruments for environmental sustainability and ecosystem rehabilitation** – Under this national strategy, emphasis will be placed on the ensuring that all economic and social sectors, reduce their ecological footprint and engage in activities that would not degrade natural systems, whilst at the same time try to become competitive taking into account resource efficiencies. The government will explore the use of innovative financial instruments to drive growth and development, including exploring the use of green and blue bonds, blended financing and other similar financing for development instruments to support ecosystem rehabilitation and the green and blue growth agendas.
5. **Create strategies to capitalize on the blue and green economies within the context of sustainable development.** BVI already has embarked on a path towards developing and augmenting various aspects of the Blue Economy beyond those which it has traditionally pursued, such as tourism and fishing. Under this national strategy, the benefits of the blue economy would be fully explored in a sustainable manner and will benefit from exploring the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of BVI to derive sustainable benefits. Consideration for the development and promulgation of a blue economy policy and road map will be explored to manage the marine space around the EEZ as well as sustainably use the marine resources therein.
6. **Advance environmental education and awareness and reduce our individual and collective carbon footprints** The BVI government have over the years fostered the development and implementation of environmental education and awareness of its citizens. The government has worked with local stakeholders and international partners in ensuring that its citizens are aware of the critical importance of the environment to their well-being in all aspects, including their health. To advance environmental sustainability, the government will work with the private sector and civil society organizations to develop and implement environmental management programmes, including awareness raising activities in the formal and non-formal education sectors in a cohesive manner.

7. **Foster sustainable consumption and production, including turning trash to cash**, by enabling all Islanders to pursue sustainable livelihoods through more sustainable consumption and production patterns, focus will be placed on fostering resource efficiency, waste prevention and management, and innovation in production processes, use of cleaner technologies and service delivery. These will support the diversification of the economy and enable the country's economic sectors and industries to become more competitive. Under this strategy sustainable consumption and production will be explored across economic sectors and among all citizens. For example, policy and strategy geared towards developing a more sustainable tourism sector and product will be pursued in keeping with sustainable production and consumption practices and for promoting the overall economic viability of the tourism sector, towards achieving the triple bottom line. The notion of turning waste to resources also will be considered to help to avert waste going into landfills, Focus will be placed on determining the feasibility of developing industries that turn waste into resources and also exploring the feasibility of exporting particular categories of waste such as plastics to be used in the manufacture of goods and services. Private sector organizations will be encouraged to adopt the triple bottom line and the public sector will lead the greening of this operations by engaging in the 3Rs at a minimum and implementing environmental stewardship programmes across its ministries and agencies.



*This chair is made by plastics that were diverted from landfills in the British Virgin Islands. It takes about 1000 plastic soda bottles to make a plastic bench*

8. **Advance sustainable, green accessible and liveable communities.** This national strategy recognizes the need for the development of each of our 16 islands in a sustainable way to achieve balanced growth but also to maintain the uniqueness of each island. Accordingly, under this national strategy will focus on sustainable urban, rural and community development within the context of island economies. Focus also will be placed on increasing the potential of each of the islands of BVI, reducing inequalities and economic disparities and focusing on strengthening their comparative advantages and competitiveness. Green infrastructure is an integral component of sustainable communities primarily because it can help communities protect the environment and human health while providing other social and economic benefits. With the projected increase in extreme weather events, the BVI will likely experience increase service disruptions, particularly those near climate-sensitive environmental features like coastline, and rivers.

## Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #19 – Sustainable Management and Use of Environmental and Natural Resources is aligned with SDGs # 6, 11, 12, 14 and 15.

**Table XLII: National Outcome 19 and SDG Targets**

Goal	Targets
6.3	By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.
6.4	By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
6.6	By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
11.2	By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
11.5	By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
11.7	By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
11.a	Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
11.b	By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels
12.1	Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries
12.2	By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
12.4	By 2030, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment
12.5	By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse

**Table XLII: National Outcome 19 and SDG Targets**

Goal	Targets
12.6	Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle
12.7	Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities
12.8	By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature
12.b	Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
14.1	By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
14.2	By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans
14.5	By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information
15.1	By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements
15.2	By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally
15.3	By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world
15.4	By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development
15.5	Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species
15.9	By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts
15.a	Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems

# National Outcome #20 – Developing the Blue



## Economy



*By 2036 the BVI has reaped benefits from the blue economy while simultaneously preserving ocean resources for future generations.*

## Overview

The BVI has a rich, diverse marine environment with an abundance of fish, coral and other marine life. These resources support the local fishing industry and forms the mainstay of the BVI's tourism product. The potential for utilising the ocean resources is immense given the expanse of the BVI's maritime space of approximately 84,000 square kilometers which is about 550 times its land area. As part of the NSDP the Government has prioritised the development of these resources to benefit the People of the BVI but acknowledges that this must be done in a sustainable way. In 2019 a Strategy Blue Economy Roadmap was created to guide the sustainable use and protection of ocean resources for economic growth, create employment and improve livelihoods.

The Roadmap, which will be the focus of this outcome, serves as a means of harmonising the Virgin Island's approach to marine planning and governance and provides an overarching

framework to manage the marine space and associated resources and activities. It also allows for a holistic look at ways of maintaining the diversity and productivity of the marine environment especially in light of the challenges associated with climate change, marine pollution, invasive species and the potential damages that these can cause to marine habitats. Additionally, it also provides the framework that will guide future investment by ensuring that a balance is maintained between development and environmental protection.

**National Strategies to 2036...** will encompass the vision for the Strategic Blue Economy Roadmap

## Vision

To develop the blue economy as a means to promote sustainable economic growth while protecting and enhancing the habitats and resources that underpin that growth through improved environmental governance and stewardship, better education and an improved understanding of our shared marine space.

1. **Strengthen the legislation and regulation in areas of environmental protection.** The importance of comprehensive legislation to address environmental protection and deter adverse activities whether land or sea based which could damage the marine ecosystem. The Ministry of Natural Resources Labour and Immigration has put forward a draft Environmental Management and Climate Change Bill which once implemented will provide the formal regime for marine environmental protection. The Bill and any subsequent regulations will also include appropriate enforcement mechanisms including penalties for unlawful environmental activities.

The Virgin Islands is currently not able to fully realise the opportunities of its maritime space due to the fact that it has not yet declared an exclusive economic zone. To address this, the government will adopt implementing legislation that will allow the EEZ to be declared by the UK government.

Regulation of the maritime industry is also important therefore the Government will develop in collaboration with the private sector (charter yachts, power boat, dive operators, water sports, fisherfolk etc.) appropriate industry standards and codes which will dictate how partitioners perform within the marine environment. The Roadmap suggests that the code should address critical issues within the industry such as appropriate areas for anchoring, pollution control, waste management, fishing areas, rules and limits, carrying capacity at marine sites etc.

2. **Increase the contribution of the fisheries sector to the economy.** Fishing is a major part of the BVI's history and was once one of the main economic activities within many of the coastal villages. Although today the sector contributes marginally to overall economic output based on national statistics locally sourced fish is in high demand. It is a major part of the population's diet and the demand for local fish by restaurants, hotels, charter boats outstrips the supply requiring fish imports to supplement the shortfall. The fisheries sector has been identified as one of the sectors that is ripe for investment and expansion. This will be done by:

- Promoting sustainable commercial fishing practices including implementing quotas based on data of fish stocks to avoid overfishing of certain species, mandating proper disposal of non-biodegradable fishing lines, nets and traps, avoid the use of chemicals and materials that can harm the environment.
- Exploring offshore fishing options and diversify fish catch by scaling up current fishing operations through the investment in larger fishing vessels with adequate storage facilities and training of local fisherfolk on latest fishing practices and technologies
- Encouraging more investment in the offshore sport fishing subsector
- Improving fisheries infrastructure – landing and docking facilities, onshore processing, and storage facilities
- Improving standards for fresh fish and fish processing for the local and exports (identifying possible external markets for fish and fish products)
- Rethinking the business model for fisheries for instance where fish is sold locally regionally and internationally, how it is marketed, pricing, how risk is managed, and public-private collaboration in management of the industry.



3. **Increase local participation in the blue economy.** The development of a more integrated blue economy in the Virgin Islands will depend to a significant extent on the availability of the relevant skills set to respond to the needs of the market. The lack of institutional capacity was a common theme during discussions with marine stakeholders across all blue economy sectors. In order to engender greater participation this strategy will focus on:

- Increasing public awareness through community-based programmes about the importance of the blue economy, opportunities within the sector as well as the necessity to preserve our oceans and coastal environment.

- Conducting a capacity needs assessment to better understand the current and future capacity needs within the blue economy and the gaps that exist. Taking into consideration the needs of new and emerging uses of the blue economy.
- Developing a capacity building strategy which addresses the gaps looking at enhancing the curriculum at all stages of the education system, expand the marine training programme at the HLSCC, include recognised certifications and professional qualifications and introduce an apprenticeship programme in collaboration with the marine industry.

4. **Develop new opportunities within the marine space.** As part of this strategy the Government will ensure that there is an enabling environment to support new and emerging opportunities such as incentives (including duty free options for importation of new equipment and technologies through the pioneer status initiative), accommodating legislative and policy frameworks, financing options, infrastructure etc.

The Roadmap highlights some emerging opportunities that could lead to local job creation, export revenues, preservation of the environment and resilience to climate change once implemented. These include:



- Aquaculture as a new commercial export industry building and expanding on expertise that already exists in lobster farming.
- Coral farming to assist in restoring the reef system which is currently at risk from rising sea temperatures, marine pollution, and sediment run-off.
- Scaling up of the mangrove nursery programme to restore areas that have been depleted, thus providing further protection for the coastline from erosion.
- Making use of the expertise offered under the UNDPs Blue Lab – BVI which was launched in November 2019 with the objective of identifying blue economy innovators in the BVI, provide guidance at the community level on areas related to renewable energy and fisheries, biotechnology and waste management, innovative finance and facilitate continuous dialogue with blue economy stakeholders and

These highlight opportunities are by no means exhaustive therefore this strategy suggests conducting a comprehensive study investigating additional opportunities within the blue economy and mechanisms for financing.

Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals  
 National Outcome #20 – Developing the Blue Economy is aligned with  
 SDGs # 14.

Table XLIII: National Outcome 20 and SDG Targets	
Goal	Target
14.1	By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
14.2	By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans
14.4	By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics
14.5	By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information
14.6	By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation[b]
14.7	By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism
14.b	Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

# National Outcome #21 – Hazard Risk Reduction and Sustainable Adaptation to Climate Change



## Overview



As an island state, BVI is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change – particularly tropical cyclones which includes hurricanes and storms, and excess rainfall. The frequency of natural disasters incidents, especially those from extreme weather events, are more likely to increase due to climate change. Given the far-ranging adverse impacts of climate change, adaptation must be an integral component of an effective strategy to address climate change, along with mitigation. Climate change increases risk, particularly for those who rely on weather patterns, agriculture, water, and other natural resources for their livelihoods. The magnitude, timing, and location of these climate impacts are inherently unpredictable, but the threats are not likely to be new; they will, in most cases, be magnifications of existing threats.

There are many possible effects of climate change on the BVI: weaken some protective ecosystems such as coral reefs, negative impacts on water resources available, negative impacts on livelihoods such as agriculture and fisheries, increased vulnerability to vector-borne diseases, etc. The NDP

will ensure that the BVI plays its part for advocating at international forums for greenhouse gas mitigation, because of the potential for global climate change to increase natural hazards.

The majority of the BVI's critical infrastructure (including for tourism) and settlements are located in the low-lying coastal zone. This, together with the BVI's small size, limited capacity, narrow economic base, and strong dependence on nature-based tourism, built primarily around fragile coastal and marine resources, makes the islands highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Adaptation is about building resilience and reducing vulnerability; hence, national policy response should be anticipatory, not reactive.

While climate change impacts are diverse and costly, they are also manageable to a degree through implementation of best management practices, utilization of new technologies and strengthening legislation, policies, institutions and programmes in impacted sectors. Through climate change adaptation, the Territory can improve its environmental management and the development planning process, reduce our inherent vulnerabilities to natural disasters and external shocks, diversify our tourism and energy portfolios, and ultimately ensure our security and long-term viability.

The unprecedented trio that occurred in 2017 – extreme floods on August 7th, Hurricane Irma on September 6th and Hurricane Maria on September 19th – affected the lives and livelihoods of each and every resident of the British Virgin Islands. These three events resulted in significant damages which exceeded the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the British Virgin Islands, which is estimated in excess of US\$3bn.

Hurricane Irma, the most destructive of the three events, caused widespread damage to the housing stock, road infrastructure, ports, telecommunications, electrical infrastructure and critical facilities. Four lives were lost and 125 persons were injured in the devastation. The hazard events of 2017 have severely arrested the progress and development path that the Virgin Islands had embarked upon over the last few decades.

Under this national outcome, the importance of resilience building as a key developmental priority is recognized towards reducing current and future vulnerabilities of the population and infrastructure. Accordingly, much focus will be placed on accelerating implementation of the BVI National Climate Change Adaptation Policy. Developing appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks for proper environmental and ecosystems management, and institutional systems for responding to and mitigating against the effects of climate change also will be a key focus, given for example the importance of ecosystems and ecosystems-based services in reducing vulnerability.

The role of ecosystems and ecosystem-based solutions also will be stressed as key to reducing the vulnerability of this 16-island nation. Focus also will be placed on climate change adaptation, paying particular attention to climate proofing economic sectors such as tourism and social sectors such as health and education. This would be supported by placing emphasis on improving knowledge on climate vulnerability of the major economic sectors – e.g., agriculture, fisheries, forestry, health, and disaster management and possible adaptation pathways; including consideration of climate change impacts within all sector policies.

Investments in infrastructure will therefore take into account building forward stronger. The linkages between climate change adaptation and the industries would be further explored by investigating the feasibility of establishing micro- and medium-credit facilities to support innovation and climate adaptation measures particularly for small businesses and groups in the agriculture and fishing industries farmers and fisherfolk among others working in those industries.

### National Strategies to 2036

Under this outcome, strategies are needed to reducing hazard risk and adapting to climate change. The NDP will prioritize the required resources on those activities that produce sustained benefits over time. The NDP will highlight risk identification, mitigation, risk transfer, preparedness, emergency response, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. This will provide a

comprehensive integrated approach to hazard risk management that combines the broader issues of climate change, as well as the urgency to advance the mainstreaming of disaster management and climate change into socio-economic decision-making processes.

The National Strategies, an elaboration of each and some selected sector strategies are listed below:

Table XLV: National Strategies for National Outcome 21	
Building a stronger, more resilient BVI	Adopt the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction
Mainstream climate change in all national policies	Approach adaptation finance with both short- and long-term goals

1. **Building a stronger, more resilient BVI.** This would involve looking for new ways of to improve the safety and resilience of communities throughout the BVI. Disaster resilience should be built through collaborative approaches that are coordinated, locally led, and supported with government resources. Greater collaboration and coordination of resilience efforts across the BVI will be guided by the following key principles: local leadership, flexibility and adaptation, shared responsibility and collaboration, prioritization, so that resilience building becomes business as usual.
2. **Adopt the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.** The Sendai Framework will be used as blueprint for the BVI to address disaster risk reduction and the building of resilience to disasters, especially in the context of sustainable development. Using this approach will be effective in the integration of both disaster risk reduction and building resilience into policies, plans, programmes, and budgets for adaptation to climate change.
3. **Mainstream climate change in all national policies.** In order to effectively adapt, national policy responses and national social and economic policies will include climate change issues as a mean of anticipating the adverse effects of climate change, thereby ensuring that climate change is anchored in the country's framework for economic growth and sustainable development. The NDP will develop and implement integrated policies and programmes that build the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of the population, emphasizing preventive local actions, to manage the risks associated with the impacts of climate change.
4. **Approach adaptation finance with both short- and long-term goals.** The costs of adaptation to climate change in countries such as the BVI are substantial. Accordingly, the adaptation finance architecture will take into account and include finance flows and mechanisms from private finance, public finance, as well as resources from development finance institutions, development partners and from insurance and risk pooling mechanisms. Although, many potential funding sources exist, there is oftentimes a challenge to accessing such funding. Focus will be placed on developing capacity to meet the requirements of various climate funds as a means of benefiting from these funds.

## Alignment with Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

National Outcome #22 - Hazard Risk Reduction and Sustainable Adaptation to Climate Change is aligned with SDGs # 11 and 13 - *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.*

**Table XLV1: National Outcome 20 and SDG Targets**

Goal	Targets
11.3	By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
11.5	By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
13.1	Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
13.2	Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
13.3	Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning
13.a	Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible
13.b	Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities * Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

# Chapter 4: Framework for Implementation

## Structures and Policies Working for Us and with US



## “Enhancing and Protecting our Precious Land with the National Sustainable Development Plan”



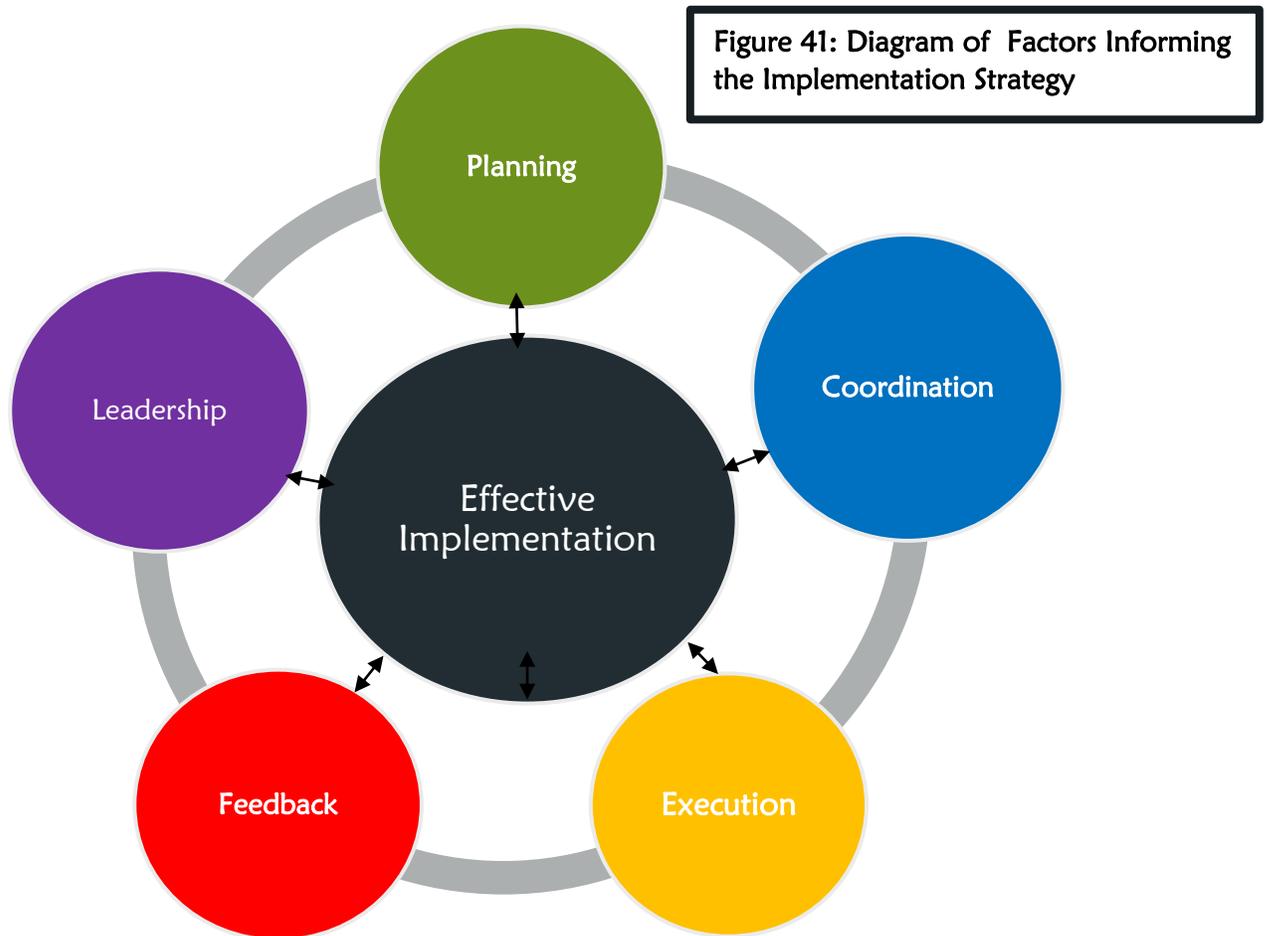
### Structures and Systems

- ✚ Important Institutions.
- ✚ Funding and Financing the NSDP
- ✚ Partnerships and Resource mobilization

## Chapter: Our Implementation Framework

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Implementation will be the key to the achievement of the Vision and the four (4) National Goals articulated above. The implementation framework outlines the strategic actions that will be taken to ensure effective execution and will set the foundation for efficient monitoring of the NSDP. At this stage there are some critical issues that must work in tandem to ensure success. These are articulated in the diagram below and these components will drive the recommendations on institutional structures, partnerships, financing of the NSPD, as well as, resource identification and mobilisation.



- **Planning** – This is the part of the implementation process that allows for adaptation in the face of challenges to the execution of the Plan. It assists in the identification of gaps

and the strategic manner in which these gaps can be filled. Moreover, planning is the most effective entry point for leaders to have input and to give direction. It is the place where policies are articulated and where the linkages are made and aligned. In the VI the planning function is currently decentralized and it is therefore necessary that this decentralization is coordinated by an overarching policy framework located at the highest level of leadership. The creation of an adequately resourced Policy and National Sustainable Development Planning Unit within the Office of the Premier will give the NSDP the visibility and authority needed for coordinating implementation across all Government Ministries, while giving these entities the opportunity to have buy-in, awareness of their responsibilities, as well as an understanding of the consequences of not meeting them. Finally, planning will ensure the creation of a framework that guides decisions, the smaller steps to be taken, defining and deciding on the timeline, the teams and the resources that will be needed.

- **Leadership** is essential for giving strategic direction and assisting in putting the NSDP in place. It is necessary to have layers of leadership at all levels to ensure it rolls out successfully. Leadership should build a roadmap for achieving those goals and assist in setting expectations among the team, and clearly communicate the implementation plan to avoid confusion. The role of the House of Assembly in ensuring effective operationalisation will be essential. Bipartisan decisions with regard to the support for financing of the Plan, endorsement of structures and approval of legislation in this regard will reinforce the commitment to the NSDP by the citizens of the country.

Given the existing administrative structure the identified leaders must be very cognisant of the NSDP and its various integrated dimensions. The recommendation is therefore for the establishment of an intergovernmental team comprised of Permanent Secretaries and their deputies, which will be headed and coordinated by the Head of the Policy Unit. Integration could also be deepened by the formation of thematic groups focused on each National Goal.

- **Coordination** will be central to the implementation process to ensure that the reliance on the previous mechanisms do not override new initiatives. It will also have to ensure that internal domain differences or personal disputes will not hinder proper implementation of the NSDP. All must understand the benefits of coordination and in this regard, there will be need for an effective communication strategy which gives voice to the benefits of this approach.

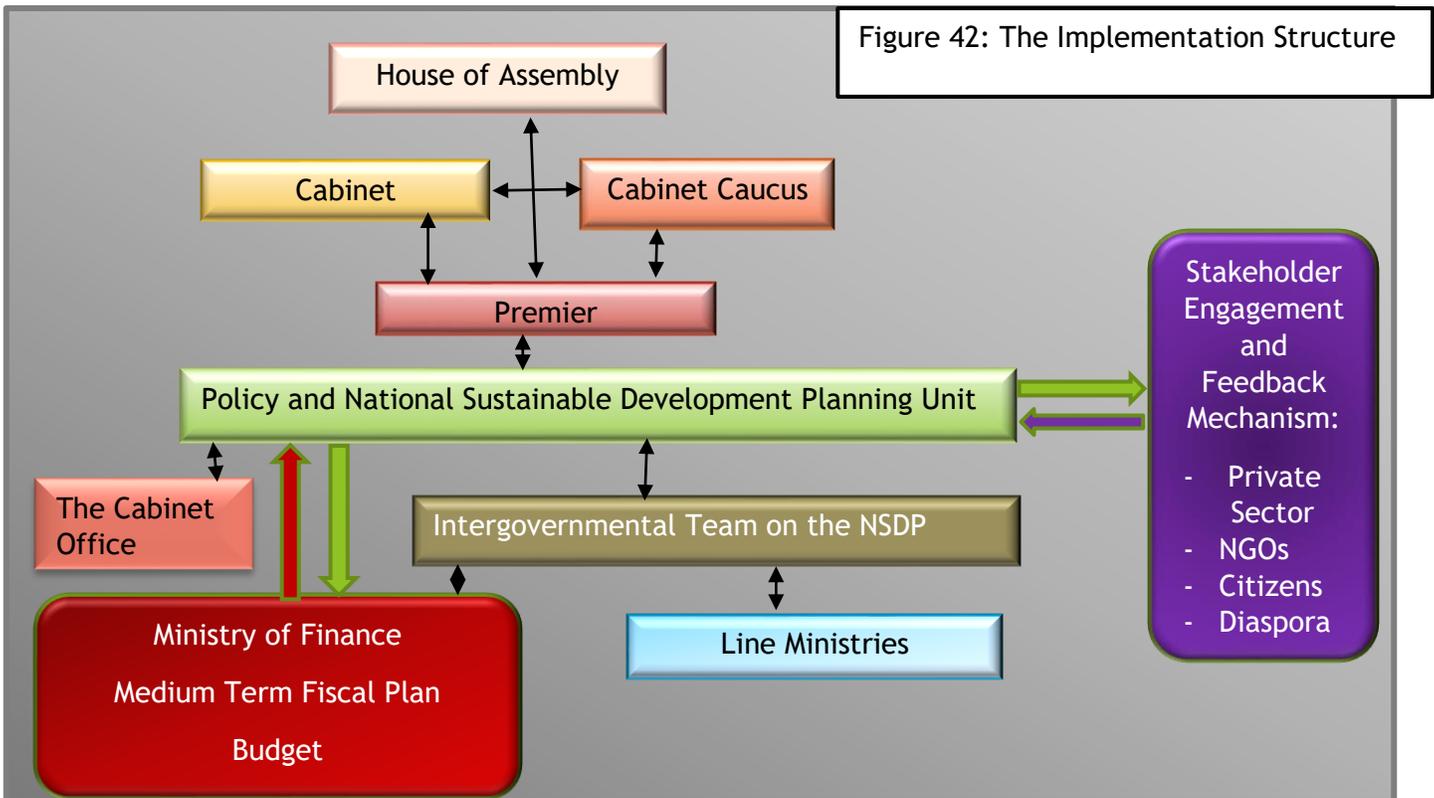
There will also be a need for coordination with the Private Sector and NGOs. Currently Government policy and expenditure in terms of the Budget and MTFP is the primary source of funding towards the achievement of the four National Goals. This must be complemented by alignment with the goals and other inputs of these stakeholders in the sustainable development process. The consultations revealed that the public wanted a more transparent input into development by the private sector and that the granting of licenses to foreign companies must entail a sustainable developmental component to ensure development of local human resources and protection of the environment. The

Policy and Sustainable Development Plan Unit will be expected to prepare a work plan to ensure that the contributions made by these sectors towards Vision 2036 are carefully negotiated, detailed and reported on annually. The Unit must therefore be involved in the review of renewed contracts and the negotiation of new contracts while maintaining dialogue amongst the sectors

- *Execution* refers to the decisions made and activities performed throughout the NSDP, with the objective of meeting the National Goals outlined. This is a requirement for the Policy Unit. In this phase and in the process, it can be helpful to document all of the resources available, including the employees, teams, and departments that will be involved. Outline a clear picture of what each resource is responsible for achieving, and establish a communication process that everyone should adhere to.
- *Feedback* on the progress of the implementation of the NSDP was a repeated appeal made by the citizens during the consultations. Citizens wanted continuous interface, to give suggestions and recommendations. For feedback to be effective there must be a common understanding of the issues within the NSDP; it must be continuous and strategic; there must be a way of communicating that the feedback was received and is being considered. Information technology tools will be essential in this endeavour. It is therefore imperative that Policy and National Sustainable Development Plan Unit establishes a website and social media platforms that serve the purpose of dissemination and feedback. Decision making will be affected by the nature of the feedback received; projects must be clearly communicated and milestones as well as shortcomings must be communicated.

The following Implementation Structure emerges from the effective implementation fundamentals

Figure 42: The Implementation Structure



**Figure 42: Proposed Responsibilities of the Policy and National Sustainable Development Plan Unit**

The Policy and National Sustainable Development will be responsible for the overall implementation and review of the National Sustainable Development Plan. It will also be responsible for coordinating the resources need for the effective functioning of the Unit. Its will be authorised to undertake the following activities:

1. Translate the broad objectives into actionable deliverables.
2. Co-ordinate the Monitoring and Evaluation of the NSDP with the Ministry of Finance
3. Create and coordinate statistical requirements with the CSO
4. Work with the Ministries in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that both SDG alignment and monitoring are incorporated into the deliverables of their work programme and plans.
5. Prepare the Terms of Reference the Intergovernmental Team (IGT) on the NSDP
6. Make recommendations on the composition of the Intergovernmental Team on the NSDP
7. Create a Communication and Marketing Plan
  - a. Create a website.
  - b. Create social media accounts
  - c. Create dialogue mechanisms with civil society and the Private Sector
  - d. Create and coordinate dialogue with the citizens of the country on the progress of the NSDP,
8. Coordinate the National Voluntary Report to the United Nations.
9. Preparation of the Resource Mobilisation Strategy
10. Preparation of a Diaspora Engagement Plan

### **Financing Development through the NSDP**

Since 1978 the Virgin Islands has been at the centre of financing its own development through government revenue, strategic partnerships and investments, diversification of the economy and through successfully negotiated co=operation. This is as a result of the end to the British Grant-in-Aid programme and the end to British control of public finances. Up until 1971 there was a deficit which hindered development until the portfolio for finance was taken over by the local Ministerial Government and under the new Minister of Finance, Honourable Willard Wheatley, the country commenced its path to sustainable economic development.

By 1978, the government independently closed the budget deficit and ended the year with a budget surplus of \$1.3 million. This eliminated the need for further financial assistance from Britain and officially brought an end to grant-in-aid in the territory more than two decades after the BVI became a British colony in its own right. [ Benito Wheatley, How BVI achieved financial Independence 40 years ago, Dec 4, 2018, [[The Virgin Islands Daily News](#)]

Resources for the implementation of NSDP will depend to a large extent on Government Revenue, especially as the Plan is tied to the Medium -Term Fiscal Plan and the Budget. However, with the vulnerability of the country more funding will be required for resilience building, mitigation, adaptation, as well as for growth and development. Resource mobilization and investment will be critical to the achievement of the goals of the NSDP. Investments will be required from the local and global private sectors and the Diaspora. With a Plan in place with an emphasis on monitoring and evaluation and results-based management adding transparency and impact, there will be further improvement in the business environment. This will result in more cooperation and ongoing support from the international development community towards the implementation of specific projects and programmes that will yield high economic and social returns.

The Policy and National Sustainable Development Plan Unit working closely with the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service will be at the centre of resource mobilisation and allocation. The first entity will be at the heart of development financing, while the latter will ensure the efficacy of the fiscal budget. It is expected that one of the roles of the Unit will be to develop this resource mobilisation framework very early in its existence, based on the priorities and deliverables of the Plan.

It is clear that financing of the Sustainable Development Goals will have to take a coordinated, multi-partnership approach. The first approach by the Policy and National Sustainable Development Unit must be within the UN system where both capacity build for countries to pursue financing of initiatives, as well as linkages to global initiatives that address financing. As noted in the UN's financing plan "The United Nations has a critical role in supporting the mobilization of finance for sustainable development." An immediate step must be the inclusion of the agencies like the UNDP from the implementation phase which can assist in the identification of resources. Areas needing financings will include but are not limited to:

- Resilience Financing.
- The establishment of National Integrated Financing Frameworks.
- Financing new innovations and digitization.
- Partnership and investor mapping.
- Public Private Collaboration
- SDG and Diaspora Bonds

The second strategy must be for collaborations with the regional organisations and their Observer Countries. Countries like Japan, South Korea and the UAE are involved in funding development projects throughout the region and give support to Associate Members

# Chapter 5: Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation

Ensuring Our Inputs Translate into Impact



“Enhancing and Protecting our Precious Land with the National Sustainable Development Plan”

-  National Outcome
-  Indicators and Targets



## Chapter 5: Our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The monitoring and evaluation of the National Outcomes will be undertaken primarily through the use of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators. These indicators as a global initiative are about 247 in number across all 17 goals. As not all goals will be particularly relevant to the Virgin Islands, the initial point for selecting relevant indicator came from what is referred to as the CARICOM Core Set of SDG indicators. These are a subset of the global set of indicators that have been selected as a matter of interest for our region.

Even before the initial work commenced on the NSDP we have been preparing ourselves for inclusion of the SDGs into the budgetary process. Prior to the writing of this plan there was preliminary work done to give consideration to the CARICOM Core Set of indicators and also to map the SDGs to institutional and budget framework. It should be noted that significant consideration was given to our ability to access ability to provide the data and identify possible gaps for data.

- There are 247 Global Indicators.
- There are 117 Indicators in the CARICOM Set
- There are 130 National Indicators

This preliminary work has contributed to identifying the indicators that we have identified to be relevant and of interest to the Virgin Islands. Also, these indicators will be presented as proposed across our National Goals and Outcomes. The tables below will present the SDG indicators that have been chosen by our team of public sector professionals

### Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into the BVI National Agenda



Table XLVI: Indicators to Monitor and Evaluate National Goal 1 and National Outcomes

Goal 1: Islanders are empowered for a Sustainable Future in an Inclusive Vibrant Society, Living Fulfilling Lives.

SDG Goal	Indicators	National Outcomes
3.1	3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio	1. Population
3.1	3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	1. Population
3.2	3.2.1 Under-five mortality rate	1. Population
3.2	3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate	1. Population
1.1	1.1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)	2. A Healthy Population
1.2	1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	2. A Healthy Population
1.2	1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	2. A Healthy Population
2.1	2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment	2. A Healthy Population
2.1	2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	2. A Healthy Population
2.2	2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)	2. A Healthy Population
3.3	3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations	2. A Healthy Population
3.3	3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence per 1,000 population	2. A Healthy Population
3.3	3.3.3 Malaria incidence per 1,000 population (vector borne)	2. A Healthy Population
3.3	3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population	2. A Healthy Population
3.3	3.3.5 Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases	2. A Healthy Population

3.4	3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease	2. A Healthy Population
3.4	3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate	2. A Healthy Population
3.5	3.5.1 Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders	2. A Healthy Population
3.7	3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods	2. A Healthy Population
3.7	3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	2. A Healthy Population
3.8	3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, new born and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)	2. A Healthy Population
3.8	3.8.2 Number of people covered by health insurance or a public health system per 1,000 population	2. A Healthy Population
3.9	3.9.2 Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services)	2. A Healthy Population
3.c	3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution	2. A Healthy Population
6.1	6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services	2. A Healthy Population
6.2	6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water	2. A Healthy Population
6.3	6.3.1 Proportion of wastewater safely treated	2. A Healthy Population
4.1	4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex	3. Education, Training and Labour Market
4.2	4.2.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex	3. Education, Training and Labour Market

4.2	4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex	3. Education, Training and Labour Market
4.3	4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex	3. Education, Training and Labour Market
4.4	4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill	3. Education, Training and Labour Market
4.5	4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	3. Education, Training and Labour Market
4.6	4.6.1 Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex	3. Education, Training and Labour Market
4.b	4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study	3. Education, Training and Labour Market
4.c	4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g., pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country	3. Education, Training and Labour Market
1.3	1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new-borns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable	4. Adaptive Social Protection, Leaving no one behind
1.4	1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services	4. Adaptive Social Protection, Leaving no one behind
1.5	1.5.2 Direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP)	4. Adaptive Social Protection, Leaving no one behind
1.a	1.a.1 Proportion of resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction programmes	4. Adaptive Social Protection, Leaving no one behind
1.a	1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)	4. Adaptive Social Protection, Leaving no one behind
8.b	8.b.1 Total government spending in social protection and employment programmes as a proportion of the national budgets and GDP	4. Adaptive Social Protection, Leaving no one behind

1.4	1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity
1.. b	1.b.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity
5.1	5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity
5.2	5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity
5.2	5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity
5.4	5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity
5.5	5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity
5.5	5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity
5.6	5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity
11.1	11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing	5. Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity

Table XLVII: Indicators to Monitor and Evaluate the National Goal 2 and National Outcomes

Goal 2: The Virgin Islands has a Prosperous, Vibrant, Thriving and Internationally Competitive Economy

SDG Goal	Indicators	National Outcomes
8.1	8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita	7. Sustainable Economic Environment
8.2	8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	7. Sustainable Economic Environment
10.4	10.4.1 Labour share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers	7. Sustainable Economic Environment
8.3	8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex	8. An Enabling Business Environment
8.5	8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities	8. An Enabling Business Environment
8.5	8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	8. An Enabling Business Environment
8.6	8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	8. An Enabling Business Environment
8.7	8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age	8. An Enabling Business Environment
8.8	8.8.1 Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status	8. An Enabling Business Environment
10.1	10.1.1 Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population	8. An Enabling Business Environment
10.2	10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities	8. An Enabling Business Environment

10.b	10.b.1 Total resource flows for development, by recipient and donor countries and type of flow (e.g., official development assistance, foreign direct investment and other flows)	8. An Enabling Business Environment
9.4	9.4.1 CO2 emission per unit of value added	9. Strong and Resilient Economic infrastructure
9.a	9.a.1 Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure	9. Strong and Resilient Economic infrastructure
11.2	11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	9. Strong and Resilient Economic infrastructure
9.2	9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita	9. Strong and Resilient Economic infrastructure
7.1	7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity	10. Sustainable Energy and Water
7.1	7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology	10. Sustainable Energy and Water
7.2	7.2.1 Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption	10. Sustainable Energy and Water
7.3	7.3.1 Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP	10. Sustainable Energy and Water
8.10	8.10.1 Number of commercial bank branches and automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults	11. Science, Technology and Innovation
9.5	9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	11. Science, Technology and Innovation
9.c	9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology	11. Science, Technology and Innovation
17.6	17.6.2 Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed	11. Science, Technology and Innovation
17.8	17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet	11. Science, Technology and Innovation
8.9	8.9.1 Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate	12. Internationally Competitive Industry Structures

8.9	8.9.2 Number of jobs in tourism industries as a proportion of total jobs and growth rate of jobs, by sex	12. Internationally Competitive Industry Structures
9.1	9.1.2 Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport	12. Internationally Competitive Industry Structures

Table XLVIII: Indicators to Monitor and Evaluate National Goal 3 and National Outcomes

Goal 3: The Virgin Islands has Good Governance, An Accountable Government, Citizen Participation and a Safe and Secure Society

SDG Goal	Indicators	National Outcomes
1.5	1.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people	16. Peace Safety and Security
1.5	1.5.3 Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies	16. Peace Safety and Security
3.6	3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries	16. Peace Safety and Security
11.5	11.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people	16. Peace Safety and Security
11.5	11.5.2 Direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP, including disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services	16. Peace Safety and Security
11.b	11.b.2 Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies	16. Peace Safety and Security
13.1	13.1.1 Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies	16. Peace Safety and Security
13.1	13.1.2 Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people	16. Peace Safety and Security
13.1	13.1.3 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies	16. Peace Safety and Security
16.1	16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live	16. Peace Safety and Security

16.1	16.1.1	Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	17. Justice for All
16.1	16.1.2	Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause	17. Justice for All
16.1	16.1.3	Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	17. Justice for All
16.2	16.2.1	Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	17. Justice for All
16.2	16.2.2	Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	17. Justice for All
16.2	16.2.3	Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18	17. Justice for All
16.3	16.3.1	Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	17. Justice for All
16.3	16.3.2	Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	17. Justice for All
16.4	16.4.2	Proportion of seized small arms and light weapons that are recorded and traced, in accordance with international standards and legal instruments	17. Justice for All
16.6	16.6.1	Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)	18. Efficiency and effectiveness of government
16.9	16.9.1	Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	18. Efficiency and effectiveness of government
17.1	17.1.1	Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source	18. Efficiency and effectiveness of government
17.1	17.1.2	Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes	18. Efficiency and effectiveness of government
17.18	17.18.3	Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding	18. Efficiency and effectiveness of government

17.19	17.19.2 Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration	18. Efficiency and effectiveness of government
16.5	16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months	20. Transparency Accountability, and Control of Corruption
16.5	16.5.2 Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months	20. Transparency Accountability, and Control of Corruption
17.4	17.4.1 Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services	20. Transparency Accountability, and Control of Corruption
17.19	17.19.1 Dollar value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries	20. Transparency Accountability, and Control of Corruption
17.2	17.2.1 Net official development assistance, total and to least developed countries, as a proportion of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee donors' gross national income (GNI)	22. Foreign Relation
17.3	17.3.1 Foreign direct investments (FDI), official development assistance and South-South Cooperation as a proportion of total domestic budget	22. Foreign Relation
17.3	17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP	22. Foreign Relation
17.9	17.9.1 Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries	22. Foreign Relation
17.11	17.11.1 Developing countries and least developed countries' share of global exports	22. Foreign Relation
17.12	17.12.1 Average tariffs faced by developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States	22. Foreign Relation
17.15	17.15.1 Extent of use of country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by providers of development cooperation	22. Foreign Relation
17.16	17.16.1 Number of countries reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the sustainable development goals	22. Foreign Relation

Goal 4: The Virgin Islands Embraces Environmental Sustainability for Sustainable Islands' Development

Table XLIX: Indicators to Monitor and Evaluate National Goal 4 and National Outcomes

SDG Goal	Indicators	National Outcomes
2.a	2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures	23. Environmental Sustainability
2.a	2.a.2 Total official flows (official development assistance plus other official flows) to the agriculture sector	23. Environmental Sustainability
6.4	6.4.2 Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources	23. Environmental Sustainability
6.a	6.a.1 Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan	23. Environmental Sustainability
11.6	11.6.1 Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated, by cities	23. Environmental Sustainability
12.b	12.b.1 Number of sustainable tourism strategies or policies and implemented action plans with agreed monitoring and evaluation tools	23. Environmental Sustainability
14.1	14.1.1 Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density	23. Environmental Sustainability
14.2	14.2.1 Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches	23. Environmental Sustainability
14.4	14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels	23. Environmental Sustainability
14.5	14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	23. Environmental Sustainability
14.6	14.6.1 Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing	23. Environmental Sustainability
14.7	14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a percentage of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries	23. Environmental Sustainability

14.b	14.b.1 Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries	23. Environmental Sustainability
15.1	15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area	23. Environmental Sustainability
15.1	15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type	23. Environmental Sustainability
15.4	15.4.1 Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity	23. Environmental Sustainability
15.5	15.5.1 Red List Index	23. Environmental Sustainability
15.6	15.6.1 Number of countries that have adopted legislative, administrative and policy frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits	23. Environmental Sustainability
15.8	15.8.1 Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species	23. Environmental Sustainability
15.9	15.9.1 Progress towards national targets established in accordance with Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020	23. Environmental Sustainability
15.a	15.a.1 Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems	23. Environmental Sustainability
15.b	15.b.1 Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems	23. Environmental Sustainability
3.9	3.9.1 Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution	24. Sustainable, Green Accessible and Liveable Communities
11.3	11.3.1 Ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate	24. Sustainable, Green Accessible and lovable Communities
11.6	11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g., PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)	24. Sustainable, Green Accessible and liveable Communities

12.4	12.4.1 Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement	24. Sustainable, Green Accessible and liveable Communities
12.4	12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment	24. Sustainable, Green Accessible and liveable Communities
12.5	12.5.1 National recycling rate, tons of material recycled	24. Sustainable, Green Accessible and liveable Communities
12.7	12.7.1 Number of countries implementing sustainable public procurement policies and action plans	24. Sustainable, Green Accessible and liveable Communities
12.a	12.a.1 Amount of support to developing countries on research and development for sustainable consumption and production and environmentally sound technologies	24. Sustainable, Green Accessible and liveable Communities
13.2	13.2.1 Number of countries that have communicated the establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases their ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contribution, national communication, biennial update report or other)	25. Hazard risk reduction and adaptation to climate change
13.3	13.3.1 Number of countries that have integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula	25. Hazard risk reduction and adaptation to climate change
13.3	13.3.2 Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions	25. Hazard risk reduction and adaptation to climate change
13.b	13.b.1 Number of least developed countries and small island developing States that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	25. Hazard risk reduction and adaptation to climate change

