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The British Virgin Islands national integrated development strategy

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Summary

The purpose of this paper is to describe the effort of the BVI to change its approach to development planning through the formulation of a National Integrated Development Strategy (NIDS).

The paper is divided into 7 sections highlighting process, methodology, institutional arrangements and our experience in general. Section 1, Introduction and Background, describes the rationale for the NIDS and outlines the planning context including the socio-economic, environmental and spatial situations of the British Virgin Islands.

Section 2 describes the NIDS planning framework, extending the previous section and arguing that the concept did not happen overnight. This section continues with a description of the planning process, the project to develop NIDS, integrated development, the National Integrated Development Plan (NIDP) and the Operating framework of NIDS.

The third section outlines the NIDS implementation strategy, focusing on the existing institutional framework, the proposed framework and institutional reform. Section 3 highlights the critical role of political co-ordination, describes the key functions and key players and identifies their roles. This section also describes the monitoring and evaluation framework.

The fourth section of the paper discusses programmes, projects and initiatives arising out of NIDS.

Section 5 analyses NIDS in terms of its strengths and weaknesses while section 6 looks at lessons learned from the experience.

The final section of the paper deals with recommendations for future such as best practice, basic policy outlines, options for institutional organization and a strategic role for the new vision in planning.

I. Introduction and background

The fundamental purpose of our NIDS is to balance development across economic sectors and the geographical districts of the British Virgin Islands and to establish our country on a path of sustainable development.

The successful implementation of integrated development planning in our context meant elimination of the disparities in economic progress across districts and in the provision of supportive activities such as competitiveness and business development, human resources development and infrastructural services.

In the past there had been many isolated attempts at improving the economic, social and environmental situation of the British Virgin Islands through development planning initiatives concentrated mostly on economic planning. Although a recognizable level of success is conceded, there have been obvious shortcomings. The obvious shortcomings in this could be summarized as follows.

There has been no agreed strategic framework or clear targets and indicators against which progress could be measured. There has been a fragmentation of policy and a proliferation of initiatives that have been loosely co-ordinated, sometimes contradictory, and often distracting. A wide range of public, private and voluntary bodies, a potentially powerful partnership, has been prevented from applying the critical mass of effort and resources to achieve real and lasting change. The full resources of the community were not brought to bear on the decision-making process and our planning efforts did not directly contribute to the deepening of democracy.

There was no full partnership involvement in the preparation and implementation of our development strategy. There were no arrangements whereby the purpose and effect of relevant national policies and programmes were considered as a coherent whole and dovetailed with sectoral strategies across the British Virgin Islands. To address this situation the GBVI turned to integrated development planning and the formulation of NIDS.

The NIDS focuses on issues that are relevant to all stakeholders. However, the details are sensitive to the specific needs of individual and communities.

The basis of our National Integrated Development Strategy is to create a different kind of society in which people were the subject of their development. The passive and active social advocacy targeted the building of a society without the pitfalls of our neighbouring countries. Our desire for a different type of community grew in part out of the awareness of the benefits of a better balance between economic gains and social cohesiveness. The essence of the local advocacy effort was the building of communities around people's needs, and the integrated approach was promoted as the most viable mechanism.

Our NIDS aims to create communities where people are happy to live, work and play, where there is access to economic opportunity and benefits and a pleasant and safe environment. Implementation of the NIDS in our view would call for a strong programme of community action across all parts of BVI.

We envisaged NIDS, with its active community participation, as strengthening social cohesion, developing community networks and helping to find local solutions to local needs and issues. The NIDS would have improved the perceptions of where people live, and developed a sense of belonging and involvement. NIDS would have to improve the fabric of our communities being instrumental in breaking down barriers and encouraging social integration if all sections and cultures within the community were involved in the planning and decision making processes.

1.1 The Planning Context

The territory of the British Virgin Islands is an archipelago that is comprised of approximately 60 islands, rocks and cays. It is located in the northeastern Caribbean Sea, 60 miles east of Puerto Rico, at the eastern end of the Greater Antilles. The territory has total area of 153 sq. km (59 sq. miles). There are four main islands on which the majority of the population resides.

A marked physical characteristic of the topography of the territory is the presence of a large number of distinct valleys. The terrain is relatively rugged and there is a relative scarcity of flat land, most of which is located in the coastal areas. This, together with accessibility to the road network and marine areas and the development of hotel and marina activities in those areas, has influenced significantly the pattern of settlement and land use. Most of the recent physical development is along the coastal low-lying areas, where the highest concentration of population is located. The topography also accounts for the relatively high percentage of undeveloped land. On the most developed and populated island of Tortola, undeveloped land accounts for approximately 73% of the acreage, with the majority of the development in the capital – Road Town, and East End.

The BVI is a British Dependent Territory that attained the ministerial system of internal self-government in 1967. Ten years later in 1977, the territory assumed constitutional responsibility for its internal financial affairs. The BVI receives no budgetary aid from the United Kingdom (UK). There is a unicameral legislature comprising fourteen (14) members, and elections are constitutionally due every 5 years. The UK Government, through an appointed Governor, retains responsibility for external affairs, defence, international representation, law and order, and the

public service. The Governor has reserved legislative powers and normally acts on the advice of the Executive Council (the quasi-Cabinet) over which he presides formally, and which comprises the Chief Minister, the Attorney General, and three other ministers. The Governor also appoints as Chief Minister one of the elected members of the legislature.

Rapid growth apart, the age distribution of the population continues to change. There is an increasing active (working) segment swollen by substantial immigration. Relatively low return migration accounts for an unusually small proportion of the elderly, while a relatively low average fertility rate accounts for the small percentage of births. The average crude birth and death rates were 16.83 and 4.98 respectively between 1993 and 1997. While the population cannot be characterized as either “youthful” or “aged,” the age profile suggests that the percentage of the old will increase over time, such that eventually the BVI will have an increasingly older population than at present. In 1996, the “young” (< 15 years) represented 27.1% of the population, while the “active segment” (15-64 years) was 67.8% and the “old” a mere 5.2%.

Most critical is that, to date, our environmental management framework has not developed the capacity to deal effectively with all the concerns. The management function is dispersed among a number of departments including the Department of Agriculture, National Parks Trust, Conservation and Fisheries Department, and Town and Country Planning Department. The Conservation and Fisheries Department has the primary responsibility for environmental matters including environmental planning and monitoring, fisheries management, coastal zone and beach management, oil spills, and environmental education. The Department of Agriculture is responsible for soil and water conservation, reforestation, and the planning of national parks and protected areas. The Town and Country Planning Department has overall responsibility for physical development and, in this regard, requests Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) on major developments, but there is no mandatory or legal requirement to undertake such assessments. Other environmental programs instituted by non-governmental organizations (NGO) and special interest groups include tree planting, environmental awareness campaigns, and recycling and reusing materials. Plans are also underway to integrate the management of marine and coastal areas into the overall planning effort, consistent with integrated planning.

The legislative framework is equally diffuse. While there are several pieces of legislation on the statute books, weak implementation and enforcement are major constraints that inhibit their effectiveness. In addition, other pieces of legislation to strengthen the legislative and regulatory framework have been drafted but not enacted. Government, however, is committed to improving the way in which it manages the environment. It has established the Conservation and Fisheries Department, and is a signatory to a number of regional and international treaties and agreements pertaining to environmental management.

Therefore, while it is clear that a number of initiatives are underway to address environmental concerns, they are generally under funded and uncoordinated, and are being implemented without adequate institutional capacity and human resources capability.

Though generally similar in structure to the economies of the members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) with small internal markets, extremely open to world trade, and very vulnerable, the performance of the economy of the BVI differs markedly from that of those countries. The economies of the OECS are characterized by low rates of growth and GDP per capita, high unemployment, and poverty. On the other hand, the BVI economy grew at an annual average rate of just over 6% in real terms between 1994 and 1997. This rate of growth is one of the fastest in the region, in comparison to a rate of less than 2% for the OECS. GDP per capita is estimated to have increased from \$20,815 in 1993 to \$26,875 in 1996, and is currently one of the highest in the world. There is almost full employment; labour is imported; the Human Development Index (HDI), which is a broader measure of social development than GDP, shows

that the BVI falls in the high human development average range of 0.800, and there is little evidence of poverty.

Tourism and international financial services have emerged as the major engines of growth. Together, these sectors dominate overall economic activity. They account for more than two-thirds of GDP, wages and salaries, Central Government revenue, and international trade. The international financial services industry, which largely involves offshore company registration, is the largest earner of foreign exchange. It is a major employer of professionals and medium-skilled persons. The industry provides important linkages with accounting, legal, and banking services, and provides an important service to an international clientele. Tourism is the second largest earner of foreign exchange and the single largest employer in the private sector. On the other hand, the once dominant agriculture sector accounts for less than 5% of GDP, and is now an insignificant employer of labour. In fact, the physical structure of the territory denies a comparative advantage in agriculture, while manufacturing potential is limited through high wages, limited skills, and weak infrastructure.

Fiscal operations are characterised by a pattern of steadily increasing revenue and expenditure. Between 1993 and 1997, revenue increased from \$70.3m to \$128.2m, while expenditure rose from \$56.7m to \$91.4m. As a result, there was a substantial surplus on the recurrent account that was used to finance capital expenditure and build up reserves. Over the period the overall budget surplus moved from -\$1.7m in 1993 to an estimated \$24.3m in 1997. On the recurrent account, Government has managed generally to contain expenditure on personal emoluments to less than 50% of total expenditure. This trend was reversed in 1997 when there was a significant increase of 8% that reflected public sector pay rises and a higher level of employment. This was matched by a commensurate decrease of 7% in expenditure on operations and maintenance. In fact, while recurrent expenditure has increased annual over the period from \$56.7m to \$91.4, capital expenditure did not keep pace with either growth in revenue nor recurrent expenditure. Capital expenditure rose from \$18m in 1993 to \$21.2 in 1994, but has fallen to \$13.4 in 1997.

2. The BVI National Integrated Development Planning Framework

The advent of the integrated development strategy was not merely as the result of an executive, bureaucratic or political decision. The history of our modern day development depicts a small entity with a fragile development environment, a small endowment of raw materials for manufacturing and very poor conditions for sustained food production in agriculture and fisheries. The main industries that are today responsible for our economic growth in combination with the prevailing international operating environment for developing countries contributed immensely our decision to embark upon the journey into integrated development.

Embarking on this integrated approach to development was more the continuation of a process started some two to three decades ago more by circumstances of our international development partners than by rational design. Given our adaptation of the ministerial system of government, the development of separate economic and physical planning capacities under the auspices of the UN in 1970's and the commitment of the cadre of international investors, we were placed on path to balanced development.

A number of other domestic factors were responsible for re-enforcing this sustained path to the integrated approach. The exposure of our people to standards and achievements in the developed, industrialized countries of North America and Europe

through mass media and the steady flow of tourist through our country annually all pushed decision makers to the integrated approach. Simultaneously, in the last decade or so with advent of mass tertiary education overseas in North America and Europe, educated nationals agitated and advocated for a more holistic form of development. Of course much of the social situation nationally was occasioned by the need for mass immigration as a result of sustained expanding economic development.

The process leading up to integrated development planning was an incremental one beginning the development of a planning capacity in economic and spatial planning. The establishment of major departments or agencies to address some crosscutting issues that arose in health, education and welfare followed this initial step. To address the rapid increase in population through immigration from diverse regions of the world, various new social services agencies, with strong encouragement and assistance from the international donor community, begun researching the issues and proposes measures to address them.

The sustained expansion of tourism, the growing consciousness of the domestic population and external governance interests gradually led the local political directorate to include organized environmental management as a day-to-day function of government. This step was highlighted by the establishment of a Department of Conservation and Fisheries to assist the Ministry of Natural Resources and labour with the administration of the environmental management portfolio. The action on the part of government proved to be the single most important factor signalling the inevitable move towards integrated development planning. However, the establishment of an environment management portfolio to handle related bureaucratic and legal issues contributed to the inevitable overlap between physical planning and environment management. This situation illuminated the weaknesses in the existing disaggregated approach to planning highlighting the legal and bureaucratic issues of not considering all issues simultaneously and preparing solutions to improve all areas and not compromising any particular area.

Ultimately, the process leading up to the decision to engage in integrated development was brought on by internal structural and sectoral imbalances, stimuli from the international development and local communities, the urge to manage our natural resources in light expanding economic activity, and our desire to seriously shift to sustainable development.

2.1 The Planning Process

Crafting strategy is an analysis-driven exercise. Judgments/choices about what strategy to pursue should ideally be grounded in a detailed assessment of the external environment and internal situation. The strategy must match the full range of external and internal situation considerations. Failing this, the strategy is not likely to be adequate.

The critical path, therefore, begins with the situation analysis and moves on to strategic choices (or alternative strategies). Such analysis is the starting point of the exercise. It facilitates the understanding of the situation in each area/sector of analysis, identification of main issues/driving forces/critical factors, evaluation of strategic options, and definition of a chosen strategy.

The integrated planning process begins, like any planning process should, with the definition of objectives before action. Of course one could simply start before the objectives with how will the process be executed. In the case of the BVI with the development of NIDS, the implementation strategy required full participation of the stakeholders including the private sector, non-governmental organizations and special interest groups.

The research began with the formation of multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral committees to investigate the past and current situation in 28 study areas divided into 5 broad areas. A public consultation process designed to validate the committees' findings and to add new information succeeded the preparation of sector papers outlining the basic situation. A further purpose of the consultation was to discover or confirm issues and their magnitude.

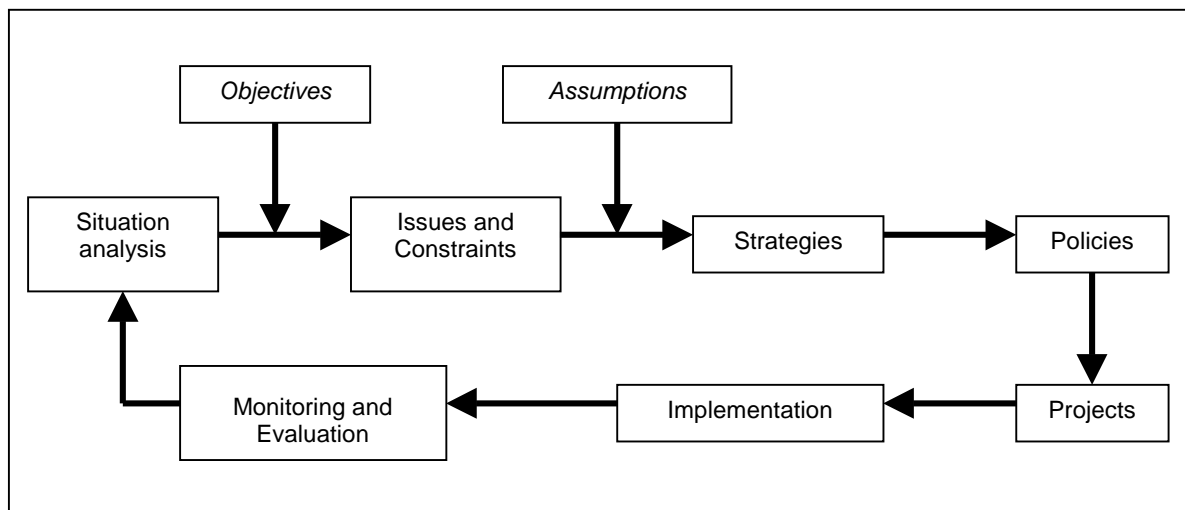
To finally confirm the issues and constraints, a two-day retreat with the key players in the research and public consultations allowed us to proceed to the development of strategies. However, before developing the strategies a number of planning assumptions were made.

The public consultation process continued leading up to the preparation of strategies and policies. Without the benefit of public consultation via media, meetings and television, another national retreat was held to develop policies and strategies.

The planning process continued with the development of performance targets and indicators to inform about the impact on the lives of the people. In other words, in order to measure the success of NIDS it was necessary to design measurement variables. Unlike most others processes in NIDS, measurement variables and indicators were designed by planning officials.

Although this process is still in progress, the identification of investment programmes and projects (to deliver the outputs) was the next step. Of course this process lead to implementation followed by monitoring and evaluation before re-commencing the cycle.

FIGURE 1
BASIC PLANNING PROCESS OF NIDS



The basic planning process of NIDS may be represented graphically by the above.

2.2 The Project

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 comprises a territory-wide strategy for development that touches on all aspects of life in the BVI. It is the most powerful influence on the economic and social life in the BVI. The strategy clearly

recognizes this fact, and deals with it in an honest and straightforward way. The project was developed by the Government in collaboration with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS)**.

The main objectives of the project are to ensure:

- Guidelines are established within which the economic, environmental, physical, and social elements of development planning are coordinated;
- There is coordination among all agencies and institutions involved in development planning;
- There is the widest possible participation in the development process;
- The process of integrated development planning is institutionalised in the BVI;
- A capacity for integrated development planning is established; and
- A NIDP is produced.

2.3 Integrated Development

An integrated development strategy is one approach to development planning that is based on the notion of strategic management. It is perceived as more appropriate than the traditional “top-down” planning methodologies to cope with the challenges posed by the more prevalent dynamic and turbulent environments characterized by a high degree of uncertainty. It is consistent with the overall Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS). The elaboration of the integrated development strategy requires a number of elements, including:

- A long-term strategic view;
- An interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach;
- Strong overt political commitment;
- Institutional strengthening and/or administrative reforms;
- Wide stakeholder participation; and
- The establishment of practical mechanisms to facilitate continuing and meaningful interaction among the stakeholders.

The strategy is born out of a recognition that economic growth is no longer the dominant or exclusive concern and goal of planning. Development is now rightly seen as a global, multidimensional process involving all sectors of human activity, and on all factors that impact on the quality of life of the society – economic, environmental, physical/spatial, and social. The integration of all these facets of development is a necessary element of a successful development strategy today. This approach ensures the balance between growing economic activities that may tend to be dominant and relatively limited space, and other more fragile natural, social, and cultural factors that are not easily reproduced.

2.4 The National Integrated Development Plan

The NIDP is the main tangible output of the NIDS. It is a blueprint for the future of the BVI. It articulates a vision, sets the goals, identifies the strategies and tactics, and details the actions needed to attain the vision. The phases of strategic management (mentioned above) facilitate the development of an NIDP, with the following key sections:

- Vision;
- Situation Analysis;
- Challenges/Issues/ Constraints;

- Policies/Strategies;
- Specific measures/actions (including PSIP);
- Implementation;
- Monitoring and Evaluation; and
- Review

The foundation for the development of these components is the Integrated (Country) Situation Report, which is the pillar and fundamental building block of the NIDP. This report represents the integration of the background work that commences with the sector/issue papers and evolves into the “component” papers – economic, social, physical, and environmental, as well as those dealing with the critical demographic and international dimensions. The preparation of the situation report leads to the identification and prioritisation of the main challenges, and the subsequent formulation of alternative policies/strategies/actions to address those critical issues and areas of concern.

2.5 Operating Framework:

The operating framework for the preparation of the NIDS consists of two interrelated components:

- The **methodological framework**, which outlines the approach and processes or set of activities leading to the development of the strategy – the plan development process; and
- The **institutional framework**, which outlines the network of human resources necessary for the elaboration of an integrated strategy and resulting plan – the management process.

The *Methodological Framework* combines two sets of activities – “operational” and “process” activities. The former is based on well defined and largely sequential phases. The latter outlines the combination of approaches utilized to undertake the “operational” activities in each phase. For the elaboration of the NIDS, seven broad phases are identified. These are represented in a grouping of the major activities and tasks as follows:

- Conceptualisation/Planning;
- Analysis;
- Strategy Formulation;
- Approval;
- Implementation;
- Monitoring and Evaluation; and
- Review

In the first phase, conceptualisation/planning is the major activity. During this phase, a vision and broad national goals are identified, the project scope is clarified, a draft conceptual framework and methodology are developed, and outline work plan is prepared. This is followed by the analysis phase, during which basic research precedes the situation and diagnostic analyses. The result is an integrated situation report, which highlights the major challenges, sets the development agenda, and facilitates the assessment of alternative solutions – strategies, policies and actions, based on different scenarios. It is important that the situation report should integrate the four major elements – economic, environmental, physical, and social - and be complemented by analyses of the demographic situation and the relevant international developments. This leads into the stage where strategy is formulated, and broad feasible policies and actions are identified. The Public Sector Investment Plan (PSIP), as well as effective implementation and monitoring and evaluation

mechanisms, is designed. The fourth important phase in the process is its approval by the Executive Council. Next is the implementation phase, the success of which depends on the effective institutionalisation of the process, and adequate institutional capacity in terms of organization and human resources. The sixth phase ensures the success of the project through effective monitoring and evaluation. The seventh phase comprises continuous review in the light of experience and changing circumstances.

The process of the development of the NIDS is based on three main premises:

- It is participatory;
- It combines the top-down/bottom-up approach to planning; and
- It integrates.

The resulting “process” activities are as important for the development of the strategy as the “operational” activities. They are based on a networking model characterized by continuing integration and interaction. This facilitates the combination of the more holistic and participatory “top-down/bottom-up” approach, instead of the traditional centralized and compartmentalized “top-down” directive planning. This “combination” approach is typified by the involvement of the political directorate and senior officials, as well as professionals and key stakeholders, in an iterative process of recommendation and feedback.

This approach makes the NIDS an effective instrument of social dialogue.

In the development of the NIDS, integration is effected in the following three forms:

- The main elements of development planning – economic, environmental, physical, and social;
- The efforts of the local agencies involved in the development planning process; and
- The efforts of international agencies assisting with or facilitating the process.

The *Institutional Framework* defines the groups of main actors involved in the participatory mechanisms, and the institutional mechanisms that they utilize in the development of the NIDS. The groups of the main actors are:

- The Public;
- Public Service Professionals;
- Public Service Managers;
- Private Sector and other Non-Government Representatives;
- International Organizations; and
- Political Directorate.

The mechanisms through which they act and interact are:

- Workshops/Consultations;
- Working Groups/Secretariats;
- Sub-committees;
- Project Management Team;
- Strategic Change Team; and
- Executive Council.

3. The National Integrated Development Strategy Implementation Strategy/Approach

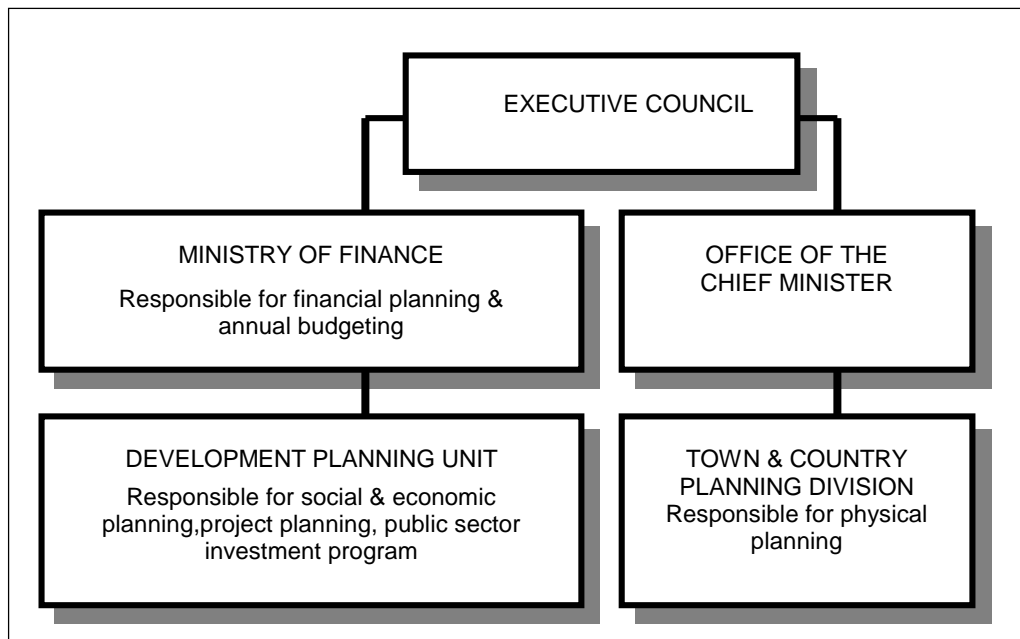
3.1 Existing Capacity and Planning Implementation Mechanisms.

The decision to engage in the planning of national management in a formal and integrated way has fundamental implications for the organizational and institutional evolution of agencies directly responsible for the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the plan. Planning is acknowledged as a process that does not terminate with the preparation of the plan document; necessary complements of the process are implementation, monitoring and evaluation, review, and update. Experience also tells us that a number of attempts at plans elsewhere have been thwarted because of inadequate attention to these facets of planning. It is imperative, therefore, to establish, *a priori*, mechanisms to support the work of those who toiled to produce the plan. In this section, we present a framework for effective plan implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

3.2 The Existing Institutional Framework

The institutional framework for national planning in the BVI comprises formal and informal systems. Within the formal system, the overall responsibility is shared between the Office of the Chief Minister and the Ministry of Finance. The latter had direct responsibility for financial planning and annual budgets and is the reporting ministry for the Development Planning Unit that has general responsibility for national planning and the coordination thereof, and primary responsibility for economic and social planning, and project planning through the preparation and monitoring of the Public Sector Investment Program (PSIP). The Office of the Chief Minister, through the Town and Country Planning Department, has specific responsibility for physical development. This framework is depicted below in Figure 2.

**FIGURE 2
EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL PLANNING**



Sectoral planning is undertaken in line agencies, such as the Conservation and Fisheries Department and the Departments of Social Development and Agriculture.

The formal system is supported mainly by two *ad hoc* inter agency committees – the Planning and Projects Review Advisory Committee (PPRAC) and the Capital Projects Monitoring Committee (CPMC). These committees comprise a number of heads of departments, and provide direction and oversight to the project planning and implementation process. The latter is also undertaken by the relevant line agencies. For the purpose of the formulation of this plan, a Project Implementation Committee was established.

The Office of the Financial Secretary undertakes a monitoring function that consists primarily of tracking expenditure on capital projects. Evaluation, on the other hand, is largely non-existent.

3.3 The Political Process

The players in the political process include ministers of the Crown, political parties, non-governmental organizations, interest groups and the people in general.

The present political process employs a number of mechanisms to complete the decisions about choices for development. However though, at the centre of the political process are consultation and participation. Like the overall NIDS process, the political process is complex with various players and a multiplicity of interactions at different times all in the name of democracy.

According to political operatives the planning process starts with the representative democratic process as consultation between the elected and those who elect them. In the present BVI situation this could mean either a minister of the Crown or any elected representative. At the same level there is also the participation of interest groups, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders in deliberations.

The present political process has a multiplicity of players and it is therefore important to have someone or a body as the final arbiter. The politicians play a significant role here managing the consultative process, arbitrating among the various interests, approving both the level and the distribution of benefits. In this connection the political process makes the investment choices, assigns benefits to various groups and individuals and assesses the outcomes on the life of BVI Islanders. The politicians in this context then are faced with coordination of a process that undoubtedly seems to sideline or marginalize the bureaucracy.

But in the BVI, the political process is further complicated by the presence of the representative of the HMG, the Governor who is chairman of the decision-making Council of Ministers.

3.4 The Bureaucratic Process

The present bureaucratic system for planning is characterized by the lack of a clear separation between the allocation and the administration of investment resources (budgeting) and the determination of priorities (planning). The net result of this situation is that priorities are often decided in the budget process rather than determined in a more democratic way as the outcome of a consultative process.

Arising out of our colonial relationship with HMG representative as the Minister of Finance, this position was effectively used to influence public sector management, set parameters for finance and overall development. However, with the Minister of Finance being a local official, interestingly the situation has not changed appreciably.

The planning process essentially starts at the ministry or even the departmental level with no real macro direction or clearly spelled national priorities. National priorities arose out of the sectoral objectives brought forward by ministries. In the absence of national crises and emergencies, the determination of national priorities arises out of a political process sometimes reflective of “a power against power struggle.”

In the “planning process” the Ministry of Finance plays a key role as arbitrator influencing decisions mainly through financial limitations. This situation arose given that a vacuum existed in

the development process. Planning had been a political activity since the introduction of the ministerial systems that ministers concluded that their nearness to the people and their positions as elected representatives gave them the exclusive mandate to plan.

3.5 The Proposed Framework

Plan implementation is a formidable responsibility, which assumes:

- Acceptance of the culture and principle of integrated planning;
- Acceptance of and participation in the approach adopted for arriving at the plan document;
- Ownership of the plan; and
- Recognition of the plan as the basic tool for defining activities.

The institutional weakness of the public sector is a significant constraint to effective plan implementation. Yet, it is one constraint that is within the power of Government to remove. Efforts will be made over the plan period, earlier rather than later, to undertake a program of institutional strengthening of the public sector, with special emphasis on the planning capability. An international consultant is hired to review and make recommendations to strengthen the public generally and specifically. This intervention has the advantage of achieving the objectives of:

- The lessening and eventual eradication of the dependence in the form of external assistance in carrying out basic government functions;
- The enhancement of the indigenous capability for national management, and for coping with the requirements of international linkages;
- Improvement to the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative structures; and
- The introduction of modern management techniques, and the streamlining of the procedures and mechanisms for decision-making.

At the DPU, for example, greater emphasis is to be placed on the areas of manpower planning, data collection, and analysis. At the institutional level, the planning capability may be enhanced by implementing an organizational model based on the integration and expansion of the traditional planning functions undertaken by the DPU and the TPCD, and the establishment of a planning hierarchy. The integration of the major planning functions at the national level could be achieved by the creation of a Department of National Planning, with the following divisions:

Economic and Social Planning;
Physical Planning;
Environmental Planning;
Projects; and
Information, Statistics, and Publications.

3.6 Policy Co-ordination

The creation of a NIDS to map the way forward in our national development is expected to meet challenges both domestically and externally. On one hand the process of globalisation now appears to be challenging the predominance of the autonomy of our political system advocating for a consolidated system of the various powers and elevating the logic of economic power to the dominating influence. Globalisation has placed us on an irreversible path to increased transparency, global efficiency, production standards and international competitiveness.

The new global paradigm of development without protection of domestic systems dictated that a new role for planning had to be carved out. It became clear that the new challenges of globalisation in our context could only be met with an institutional and systematic shift in our focus from the short-term present situation to a long-term perspective. To legitimise the longer-term perspective meant in our view a fuller participation of the persons affected. In the context of our constitutional arrangements this amounted to political representatives extending their activities into investigation, validation and prescription not only to the powerful or influential interest groups but also to all groups in our communities. But of course, given the level of political maturity and the structure of political parties, it proved difficult for political representatives to execute a series of complex activities amounting to research, analysis and prescription.

The role of planning under the NIDS focused on executing what was historically a political function but changed as circumstances brought on by globalisation and domestic advocacy for enhanced participation in the political process took root. Yes, planning under the NIDS became a highly technical operation that essentially used a critical part of the political process and usurped some political functions in the interviewing process. While officials in the integrated development planning process represented the bureaucracy, they were in fact proxies for the political representatives. Planning officials were now required to execute co-ordinating activities between various institutions and also between the different groups of government programmes.

The implementation strategy for National Integrated Development Strategy puts a premium on co-ordination towards the strategic national priorities. From the broad priorities developed, the Project Management Committee formulated a series of integrated objectives designed to obtain the outcomes indicated. The Steering Committee, comprising high-level officials was given the responsibility of developing a set of integrated measures to achieve the board objectives arising out of the NIDS process.

We are aware that responsibilities must be assigned in every area of implementation to facilitate the strategic functioning of government. The mechanism that seemed to be most appropriate for NIDS is the Planning and Project Review Advisory Committee (PPRAC), a multi-disciplinary body of ministers, high-level officials and technical officials heading up implementing agencies. This committee covers the full range of operational policies, strategies development and monitoring of the implementation progress.

The PPRAC by its multi-disciplinary nature performs a variety of co-ordination functions including the final stamp of approval in defining and formulating policies, agreeing on major operational policy guidelines, oversight on the supervision of programme implementation and final evaluation of results. This committee is divided into a technical and a main committee, with the latter being mostly responsible for the technical aspects and the former concentrating on policies and strategy guidelines.

3.7 Political Co-ordination and the Integrated Development Plan Process

In the context of the British Virgin Islands, with its colonial relationship with the United Kingdom and the limited autonomy we have in our democracy, political co-ordination of the development process is not only critical but it is also complex with the agenda of the various interests competing. The key to successful integrated development planning depends on the extent to which the consultative and participative processes are managed to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

While it is acknowledged that political co-ordination of the IDP process introduces some elements of reduced effectiveness and efficiencies in the short term, it is necessary for the processes of validation and approval of issues and strategies, respectively. For example, political representatives not participating in the research and analysis area of the exercise delays moving forward with the approval process because of their need to validate the technical findings.

Political co-ordination spans the spectrum of strategic and operational planning if one is to ensure proper resources allocation, that aspirations and hopes of the people and the priorities of government are all aligned. Of course in our context there is another political layer added with the presence of the United Kingdom Government; therefore political co-ordination of the integrated development planning process becomes more critical as there must be a further alignment with the policies of the United Kingdom, and in some instances the European Union. So political co-ordination is absolutely essential to strike the ultimate balance between “economic efficiency, social equity and political democracy” as they are played out in the integrated development planning processes in the bureaucracy, the markets and the political arenas.

Because political co-ordination requires the clear establishment of roles between it and the bureaucracy, the concept of political responsibility is absolutely essential. Policy co-ordination in the economic and social arena in terms of programmes integrating to achieve like results must have that political dimension. In the implementation of NIDS where ministers have management responsibility and exercise functional oversight two main functional committees serve to initiate and support political co-ordination. The first being the previously mentioned mixed Planning and Projects Review Advisory Committee (PPRAC) of bureaucrats and ministers and the latter being the Executive Management of the Public Service (EMPS). These committees are able to implement systematic co-ordination of integrated programmes eventually improving the co-ordination between sectors as the PPRAC focuses more on policies and strategies while the EMPS concentrates on effective and efficient implementation of same.

Political co-ordination serves as the enforcer and arbitrator in case of conflict and contradiction between various agencies of Government resolving differences of interpretation of the hopes and aspirations of the people as found in the NIDS.

3.8 Key Functions and Key Players

In terms of the hierarchy of planning, we must distinguish and recognize the relative importance and distinction among different levels of planning, and the roles of the agencies at the respective levels. This will assist in removing some of the misunderstanding of the roles of functionaries in the planning and development process, and eliminate the duplication in efforts across agencies and possible conflict among those agencies. The proposed framework recognizes the resource constraints of the territory, and seeks to provide a simple but efficient integrated arrangement.

The first layer of the framework will be the Department of Development Planning (DDP), which will have responsibility for coordination, prioritisation, and strategic direction. It will articulate, elaborate on, and integrate the strategic and sectoral development policies. These policies will guide the preparation of the national, as well as sectoral, plans. This will constitute the strategic level, or Level 1 of our planning effort. The preparation and implementation of plans and projects, monitoring and evaluation, and the reviewing outcomes and outputs will be undertaken by the line agencies as implementing units. This will constitute a so-called Level 2, but no less important, component of the planning activity.

Effective implementation is also a shared public sector responsibility that can be reinforced by the establishment of a Planning Oversight Committee (POC). This is an important aspect of the framework in the light of the resource constraint. This Committee will have coordinating responsibility with respect to plan implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review, and will report to the Executive Council. Its work, which will be critical for policy review, will be undertaken through sub-committees responsible for separate areas, with technical support from the National Planning Agency. The chairperson of the POC will be the Minister responsible for National Planning. Members will include other Ministers of Government, the Permanent Secretary to the Chief Minister, heads of the planning divisions, the Financial Secretary, representatives from the NGO and CBO communities, and at least two representatives from the private sector. A senior professional officer from the National Planning Agency will serve as secretary to the Committee on a permanent basis. The POC will meet quarterly, and reports on the outcome of those meetings will be forwarded for the information of the Executive Council. Like the National Planning Agency, the POC will focus on integrating the approach to development.

The DDP has responsibility for project cycle management and public sector investment programming giving it significant influence over the national planning process. Having a co-ordinating and at times an operational role in project development affords the DDP an excellent opportunity to co-ordinate the national planning process. The DDP, in the implementation of NIDS is only responsible for ensuring that programmes and policies are consistent with NIDS. The line ministries are obligated to fine-tune their investment programmes in accordance with objectives arising out of NIDS.

3.9 The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Monitoring and evaluation are part of a cycle. Monitoring refers mainly to performance measurement in terms of timing, costs, and progress of plan activities. It will be undertaken at two levels, through monthly, quarterly, and annual progress reports. At the ministerial level, it will be done for activities that fall within the purview of the Ministry. Within the DDP, those reports will be aggregated into the territorial report only on a quarterly basis.

Evaluation, on the other hand, focuses on the effectiveness of the plan, its policies, programs, and projects, especially in the long term. Basically, it will examine and review the monitoring indicators to establish or verify cause-and-effect relationships. In particular, evaluation determines whether the intended benefits are realized, and assesses the distribution of those benefits. It also assesses the effectiveness of the solutions proposed to eliminate bottlenecks. The primary responsibility for plan evaluation will reside with the line agencies and the POC.

4. Programme/Projects Arising out of National Integrated Development Strategy

The NIDS requires a new and expanded role for government, a closer and better-defined relationship between government and the wide range of stakeholders and a sharper focus on the development of democracy. If these new relationships are to be put in place to meet the 21st century challenges, then it is expected that a number of related initiatives must be added to the inventory of management tools and mechanisms. In the case of implementations of NIDS many new initiatives have been put in place or designed and are awaiting implementation.

4.1 Programmes/Projects to Improve Planning

The initiatives arising out of the NIDS process centred around increased public participation, extension of the consultative process and increased effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of public services. Increased public participation is featured in the relationship with the business community, the non-governmental organization community and individual citizens. The specific initiatives in public participation are highlighted by in the establishment of regular business forums to hear from and exchange ideas and information on subjects of mutual interest. Individuals are afforded an opportunity to provide input into the design of major investments projects and other policy or legal initiatives. Most major public measures or initiatives

are taken to the public via discussions by the Department of Information and Public Relations on national radio and television for meaningful input.

To ensure the successful implementation of NIDS and to generate efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery government services, the PSDP has been developed as a Strategic Management Framework to establish the link to strategic planning and policy development with Operational Planning and Budgeting. To support the implementation of the Strategic Management Framework is a suitable Governance Framework to define the agreed roles and responsibilities of Ministers and High Level Bureaucrats in developing and implementing Strategic Plans Policies.

The PSDP in aiming to increase the productivity of the public service and quality of services delivered to customers identifies the processes in the various ministries and departments, re-defines job functions, scopes, responsibilities and mandates, provides new staffing levels and types, sets departmental standards of service and ensures that the public service is competent to implement the policies of the leadership.

Two related initiatives, which were brought on as result of the NIDS, are the revised PPRAC and the new Board of Management designed to increase political co-ordination and policy co-ordination, respectively. The PPRAC consisting of a main committee and a technical committee of high-level officials and ministers who examine macro development policies, co-ordinate their development and monitor the implementation of programmes. The Board of Management is a committee of the Executive Management of the Public Service plus the Governor whose primary concern is co-ordinating the implementation of policy determined by the Council of Ministers. Both committee have about 75% same membership and meet on a monthly basis.

Initiatives such as Programme Based Budgeting and Accrual Accounting are intended to improve financial management and complete links between planning and budgeting to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of public services. The outcome of these initiatives will be an effective set of mechanisms linking the priorities of government agencies with the allocation of financial resources in accordance with programme objectives of the political leadership.

The final initiative of significance in this case that came as a result of the NIDS is the Sister Island Project. The initiative essential seeks to improve the quality and the delivery of government services to the sister islands.

The projects above described all sought to increase public participation, information to the public and the efficiency in the delivery of government services to the public.

4.2 Programme/Projects to Improve Financial Management

Immediately below are measures put in place as a result of NIDS to achieve better financial control and to improve the planning process.

The NIDS process is partially responsible for the introduction of three initiatives related to finance and planning. These initiatives are designed to develop better linkage between ministry plans, national development and the budget. While the initiatives are not yet fully in effect, they seemed to narrow the gap between the resources allocation and priorities development process.

The measures include the introduction finance and planning skills in all ministries to assist, as a first step, with the development of policies and plans consistent with national priorities and procedural criteria. The finance and planning personnel work liase with the Development Planning Department and the Ministry of Finance in the development of programmes/projects and budgeting matters, respectively.

The second measure is the introduction of the first phase of programme budgeting. This measure is designed to affect financial control and assist with the national planning process. Ministries/Departments are allowed to add only an inflation escalator to their previous year's budget. Any additional or new activities come only in the form of a new initiative with full justification and the requisite paperwork. However, these new initiatives are limited to the current budget.

The third measure concerns the capital budget process. Ministries are now required to put projects through a well-defined process of development, appraisal and approval before they are placed in the pipeline for implementation.

5. Strength and Weaknesses of NIDS

5.1 Strengths of the IDP

The NIDS is centered around co-ordinated, strategic and participatory planning designed to take advantage of the knowledge of the communities thereby introducing non-traditional processes and thought. The concept of integrated development planning is thus based on the idea that co-ordinated and fine-tuned planning will increase effectiveness and efficiency of development measures. It proceeds on the assumption that the alignment of instruments and measures for the planning processes can also generate synergy effects.

The specific character of integrated planning is the alignment of different sector planning objectives rather than the creation of one-issue plans. The aim is to set in motion a series of mutually supporting activities in different sectors with a general objective in mind. Planning procedures are to be co-ordinated effectively between all responsible government bodies from the national level down to the local level.

One of the fundamental strengths of NIDS is that it focuses on deepening democracy, expanding the knowledge base from which to find solutions, expanding the political process through the principle of inclusion and increasing the chances of communities buying into solutions.

The main way the integrated development planning process deepens democracy is through the participative process. Participation in the decision-making process including research, deliberation and formulation of solutions deepen appreciation of persons and cement the idea that the choice of the people is paramount. Use of the consultative process in the development of NIDS opened the process to the full range of ideas to the skills and to all knowledge available in our communities. In our case it meant extending the process to the knowledge pool throughout the globe to the networks of partners British Virgin Islands firms trade in financial services, tourism and government. Another consideration is the use of extensive knowledge that foreign residents of the BVI have about environmental management and preservation.

Extensive and extended participation of stakeholders as a fundamental requirement of the integrated development planning process widens the political process, gives stakeholders the sense and the perception that they are part of shaping of their own destiny. Participation by stakeholders increases the communications between various and rival interest groups constituting a value in dialogue. The integrated development planning process with extensive participation allows the opposing and differing stakeholders to negotiate or bargain their positions without the intervention of the bureaucrat or political leader. This part of the process in the final analysis allows competing interest to compromise and reach solutions which would otherwise be, in some instances, time consuming or made by bureaucrats with out as much local knowledge as stakeholders.

Solutions derived out of a process in which the full knowledge of the community was brought to bear, where there was widespread participation by the various stakeholders, where people perceived that they played a role in determining their destiny have a positive effect on stakeholders. The feeling is that the solutions implemented have been bought into or owned by the majority of the people. Ownership of processes and community solutions almost reduce the planning process to a technical exercise. Stakeholders' ownership of the integrated development planning process proved to be critical, as the private sector became the largest advocate for the adoption of the NIDS.

The integrated development planning is the single process that can cause development of both vertical and horizontal alignment between budget and planning processes. The strength of the integrated development planning process that produced NIDS is highlighted in the fact that it presented a transparent, technically sound, and politically acceptable set of priorities on which the budget process could assign resources. In the case of the British Virgin Islands, the NIDS caused a clear and irreversible separation between the budget and the planning processes. Previously the budget process and planning process were essentially executed simultaneously and in the same fora.

Another significant strength of the integrated development planning process is ability to align planning procedures across ministries, agencies and the whole of government thereby increasing the chance of better co-ordination at the bureaucratic and political levels. The integrated development planning process was able to initiate dialogue across ministries and departments that had never previously communicated except to criticise the efforts of one another. The integrated development planning process changed the focus of government departments from competing with each other to creating together. Previously competing departments, assembled in teams on sub-committees, were able to satisfy their individual objectives and create strategies that satisfactory met national development criteria and sectoral objectives.

In facilitating better co-ordination and alignment of certain development processes the IDP process extends the efficiency and effectiveness of public services delivery. The IDP process is inclusive, proactive and affords transparency in some development processes previously very ineffective and unnoticed.

5.2 Weaknesses of the Integrated Development Plan

The integrated development planning process as executed in the implementation of the NIDS is an iterative one that introduces additional difficulty in consensus building for policy development.

A major weakness of our NIDS was the introduction of people who do not play by the customary bureaucratic rules thereby extending the political process. The opening up of the political and bureaucratic process to unconventional approaches, thoughts and methods proved to be challenging and difficult to co-ordinate. The introduction of private and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) sector deliberations into the research and validation phases of the development process in NIDS brought on delays, extensions of time and differing views on approaches. In some instances the price of such inclusion was a less disciplined and questionable processes.

The rigid levels of transparency, accountability and responsibility ever present in the consultative process which bureaucrats are disciplined to be guided by were easily and often violated. The level of loyalty to government and ministers that are guiding principles in the operational activities of bureaucrats were lost when one integrated procedures employed outside the public sector.

The IDP process, in order to deliver NIDS, extended the capacity of the public service in that so many areas had to be dealt with simultaneously. Although private sector personnel played prominent roles in the sub-committees, it was bureaucrats who ultimately bore the responsibility for ensuring integrity of the process, timeliness of deliverables and quality of the output. As it turns out, one of the major strengths is also a major weakness. The diversity of the various actors in the exercise increased the manageability of the range of actors whose activities and inputs must be co-ordinated. Institutional measures such as meetings and seminars for deliberations and consultations are the arrangement, which are problematic in hosting.

Introduction of political co-ordination into the broad processes of conceptualisation, research, validation and implementation subtracted from the efficiency of the process. The integrated development planning process is well defined in terms of the rules and procedures of engagement but the political processes including political co-ordination are less well-defined and less disciplined. The performance criteria in the political processes are more likely to vary than in the bureaucratic environment.

In the British Virgin Islands our political processes and organizational structures were somewhat informal and weaker when compared with other developed countries and as defined under NIDS. The political processes cannot manage the consultative and deliberative processes as effectively or efficiently as the bureaucracy can in situations where all interests are adjudicated simultaneously. The major weakness here is that the political processes are more effective in managing consultations when interests are identified in isolated situations rather than in consolidated fora.

The political process by its nature is less open and transparent as it traditionally manages competing or differing interests through the management of information. Political structures in the British Virgin Islands must by necessity establish different protocols for the various actors while trying to manage the distribution or accumulation benefits arising out of the development process. The IDP process, with political co-ordination as an indispensable component, introduces a multiplicity of objectives commonly associated with political management of development benefits but very detrimental to efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services.

6. Lessons learned from the Exercise

The past five (5) years of involvement with the IDP process trying to build a NIDS for the British Virgin Islands has taught us some lessons in the areas of strategy development, political co-ordination, the bureaucratic operations and public consultations.

6.1 Lessons Learned in Co-ordination

The success achieved thus far with the conceptualisation, development and implementation of NIDS suggests to us that working together and making joint planning decisions about the same space is very possible with patience, prudence and politics. Integrated planning is a slow process which requires political involvement at every significant decision making point. For example, in the consultative process the presence and active participation of politicians added to the success of the proceedings. As well, politicians played a major role in identifying particular areas concerning the hopes and aspirations of the people.

In the processes of implementing the NIDS, the international development community is very influential and their presence is well respected allowing the local bureaucrats to incorporate sometimes-controversial strategies or measures. The international community is a good arbitrator in settling disputes or disagreements between the various competing local interest groups as opposed to the local bureaucrats like the Project Management Team of our NIDS project.

Implementation of such a complex and comprehensive initiative such as NIDS with its large range of stakeholders, its varied institutional measures and its slow iterative processes require very clear definition of the roles of all the actors. This clear definition of roles avoids duplication of activities, establishes responsibilities and pre-empts bitter disagreements between some sworn enemies (interest groups).

One of the lessons learned during the development of NIDS is that high level and extended political involvement is a central feature in the processes that determines the future of people. Political mandates, approval and co-ordination of the fundamental development processes in NIDS were the only incentives for many organizations in the bureaucracy to participate. Political co-ordination has the capacity to move issues forward in a legitimate way across the boundaries of the bureaucracy and the gates of the private sector and the NGO communities.

The IDP process has taught us that articulating a national vision and having it accepted require the full participation and involving of the entire community. While the individuals in the communities are eager and willing to participate they are not yet willing to consult or deliberate on major decisions without the full involvement of their political representatives. During our consultative process communities always referred to their meetings with their representatives and that they already enumerated their wishes and needs. The perception in the communities is that their needs are made known to their representatives and the follow-up on to implementation should be the purview of the bureaucracy.

6.2 Lessons Learned in the Bureaucratic Processes

In terms of the operations of the bureaucracy, the IDP process reduces the autonomy and independence of agencies and ministers given that the requisite level of co-ordination, formulation and research establishes link at all levels. Policy development requires a more equitable distribution of the importance of the objectives of ministries. Particular ministries dealing with topical subjects such as business, economy, environment or education must share the arena in policy formulation and implementation with other lesser-known subject areas.

We also learned that the political process is one that is not well defined, disciplined and unclear. The rules are not as rigid and well established as in the bureaucracy and co-ordination is somewhat a guessing game rather than a rational activity. The political process concentrates heavily, like the bureaucracy, on the management of information but with not as much openness. The political processes do well when centralized and not dispersed. Communities are not necessarily made fully aware of the choices made by their neighbours. The process of information exchange is limited except law or agreement mandates it.

Under the present institutional and constitutional arrangements successful implementation of the NIDS requires, as a prerequisite a high degree of reform in the structures, political management, institutional arrangements and operational procedures. For example, our Public Sector Development Programme, one of the major complementary initiatives to the IDP process requires many changes throughout government. The reform of the process includes a consensus-based transition from development policies and strategies to ministry based strategic and operational plans and onto annual budgets. Under the implementation strategy of the NIDS a cross-ministry, inter-disciplinary team of high level officials and ministers are responsible for co-ordination.

7. Recommendations for Future

7.1 Best Practice

Given the defining criteria for best practice the National Integrated Development Strategy qualifies as such in integrated development planning. It has been earlier demonstrated that the NIDS is integrative, participative, strategic and sustainable in its aim to improve the quality of life for British Virgin Islands.

The NIDS is put forward as a best practice in national development planning because it will positively and tangibly impact on the living environment of the BVI improving the quality of life and raising the standards of living. Early indications are for improved environmental management, better-balanced development, improved social cohesion, better government services and a stronger economy.

Another criteria qualifying NIDS as best practice is the presence of partnership in the process. The partnership firstly includes the United Nations Committee on Human Settlements (UNCHS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Volunteer Programme (UNV). A second level partner during the process was the United Kingdom Government (UKG) in development of a MCaP laying out short-term goals and objectives, commitments by the BVIG and obligation of the UKG. The last level of partnership, not necessarily the least important was the partnership with the private sector, the non-government organizations, the Community Based organizations and the special interest groups.

The NIDS is a sustainable one in that it, together with the PSDP, has created long standing change in the national planning process, the delivery and structures of public services, institutional framework and decision making process and efficiency, transparency and accountability management systems. We are also confident that sectoral policies developed could be replicated elsewhere, especially in the region. Change is an underlying objective of NIDS given that it aims to establish a new planning process based on participation, integration and inclusion.

The simplicity and clarity of the NIDS process lends it to replication, adoption and transfer to various countries in the region. The NIDS sub-processes, institutional framework and operating framework lend itself to adaptability to all the governmental structures in the region. The NIDS process triggered many new initiatives in public service management and added a participative dimension to development planning meeting the criterion of leadership and community empowerment. The consultative process afforded communities and individuals real opportunities to meaningfully participate in deliberations about their future empowering them permanently. Communities participated fully in the research; policy formulation and programme development and their contributions were fully incorporated in the final product of NIDS. Of course, it was NIDS defining a new role for government in our national strategy that influenced public policy into the decision to implement the PSDP.

The NIDS has as one of its overarching strategies “the enhancement of social cohesion” and gender affairs feature prominently in the integrated strategies developed. By the nature of the IDP process, social inclusion is central. The consultative process included all interest groups in the communities. Cultural diversity is another area that is fully covered under NIDS in the detailed strategy under the overarching objective of “the preservation of the culture and uniqueness of the British Virgin Islander.”

Best Practice, which had their beginnings with the City Summit – the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), are understood to be initiatives which result in tangible improvements in the quality of life and improvements in the living environments sustainably. The NIDS processes resulted in formulation of integrated strategies and programmes. Although Best Practice initiatives are defined by positive impact, sustainability and partnership, the cornerstone of Best Practice is equitable partnership. The partnership referred to here goes beyond mere participation. The NIDS process placed a premium on working together and deliberating on points of interest with coercion or pressure. Individuals and communities were given a full opportunity to being their hopes and aspirations to the planning process. Partnership forces the inclusion of wide areas of knowledge, various professional disciplines, different systems of values and a set of consultative rules different than the public sector. Best Practices include multi-sectoral, multi-discipline and multi-dimensional approaches to solving problems of the community.

The NIDP process is a multi-discipline, multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral approach designed to achieve political objectives of democracy via a deepening of participation, consultation and deliberation. With these actions the equitable partnership in the development of policies, strategies and programmes, the people of the BVI were given a full voice in the decision affecting their lives and the lives of their children.

A lasting partnership has been created between government, the private sector and the NGO communities. In this context individuals were able define and clarify their priorities for the future development of the BVI. In this interaction between consultative partners we were able to promote and facilitate the exchange of experiences, expertise and knowledge about development planning that sought to improve the standards of living and quality of life of all British Virgin Islanders.

7.2 Basic Policy Outlines

The main question about the integrated development planning is always at which level do we really witness integration. Some professionals contend that integration should begin at the research level when issues are identified while others argue that integration can only occur effectively at least at the solutions level. The latter argument says that integration can first take place at level where policies and strategies are developed. Further yet, some planning professionals believe that integrated development is most effective if the focus is on the programme level where various stakeholders' interest could be addressed through a single initiative.

In the formulation of our NIDS we believed the integration process begun with the multi-disciplinary, participative approach. The multi-disciplinary teams participating in the consultative process initiated the approach of simultaneous identification and examination of issues. The solutions or strategies proposed to address the issues identified then begun to reflect a multi-sectoral and simultaneous approach to development. However, it must be conceded that at this level the integration process did not seem obvious, nonetheless the integrated approach was present.

The real test of the integrated approach is designing programmes that meet the multi-objectives across the various sectors and the spectrum of stakeholders. The real test came with designing programmes that cut across sectors achieving the various objectives and contributing to the overarching goals of improving the quality of life and sustainable development. At this level one is examining outputs rather than outcomes.

The basic policy outlines for integrated development are listed immediately below:

- Expand range of services offered within the existing leading export sectors
- Foster greater use of our natural resources for the expansion of sustainable economic activities
- Strengthen the human resource and institutional capacity for economic management
- Promote an investment climate that is conducive to private initiative/entrepreneurship

The level of integration here is noticeable as these strategies takes into account the objectives of both environment and economic management.

To provide another example of integrated strategies we believe are basic and could be modified to many regional situations. The basic policies below address economic social and environmental objectives. The policies are:

- To adapt our education system to respond to the evolving needs of the society
- To enhance and expand the quality of services and facilities offered by the health, education and welfare systems
- To rationalize the range of services offered in order to increase efficiency
- To more effectively regulate the flow of immigrants in order to reduce the negative impacts on the social systems.
- To expand and manage the range of sport and recreational facilities which are easily accessible to residents
- To provide the youth greater opportunities for meaningful participation in the development process
- To focus on the needs of the young male population with respect to the development of a variety of programmes and activities
- To improve the circumstances of all vulnerable groups by providing a better measure of social, political and economic equality and providing the legal framework to protect their welfare.

As a further example of basic policies that contain a level of integration, presented below are the basic outlines that again could be improved upon to many regional situations. The policies below were developed by mostly environmental interests hence a slight bias is obvious. The policies are:

- To guide the sustainable use of the natural resources
- To provide an environmentally protective waste management infrastructure in accordance with rate of economic development
- To establish adequate environmental standards for monitoring and evaluating changes in the environment
- To establish an effective mechanism for co-operation, co-ordination and consultation
- To institutionalise environmental concerns as an integral part of the development process
- To provide, consolidate, strengthen and extend environmental legislation for effective implementation and enforcement.
- To raise public awareness and incorporate environmental education material in the schools' curricula

The final set of integrated basic policies in the context of the BVI is listed immediately below. Clearly these seem to be influenced by physical planning but the objectives of orderly infrastructural development are economic, environmental and social. There are others examples but here are the policies:

- To provide a co-ordinated and orderly development of physical infrastructure
- To develop comprehensive local area plans
- To strengthen the institutional capacity for the integration of environmental and spatial concerns
- To strengthen the development approval process to ensure conformity
- To provide a co-ordinated approach to monitoring and enforcement by various/relevant agencies

There can be difficulties in seeing the integrated process at the research, policy formulation and programme output levels. However, the level of integration becomes more obvious further down into the development process. Of course integration is visible at the output level, but as planners our objectives and concerns should focus more at the impact or outcomes level. Our overriding concern should be how research, policies, strategies and programmes could impact on lives of the people for whom we are developing.

In the Integrated Development Plan process our final task was to develop integrated indicators to correspond with the objectives. The integrated indicators are what will be used to determine success and integration simultaneously.

7.3 Options for Institutional Organization

It is clear that the existing structure and grouping of the planning organizations in the public sector will have to be re-focused to meet the challenges of the National Integrated Development Strategy. The NIDS requires an organization that has the capacity to manage certain elements of the political process, to be technically sound in development analysis, to be sophisticated in research and to guide the development of strategic policy.

The 21st century planning institution that has to develop and implement NIDS must be a flexible organization that can easily adapt to the rapidly changing global environment. It must be an entity that is globally connected and well versed in the application of information technology.

The organization must be able to network and build lasting professional relationships with similar or like organizations globally. The new planning organization must be able to manage information much better and view it as a critical resource in its operation.

In terms of managing elements of the political process, the new planning organizations must encompass the consultative process, including deliberation and participation sub-processes, as a critical component of its research function. The organization must have the flexibility and creativity to work co-operatively with political interests to ascertain the hopes and aspirations of the people.

If one could use the Development Planning Department of the BVI as a model organization, we would see the new planning entity as being a combination of project management, public sector investment programming, policy development and research (statistics) skills. Essentially the new organization is a multi disciplinary one in which human resources flexible enough to allow operations outside of the normal parameters.

7.3.1 A Strategic Role for the New Vision in Planning

In the short history of the British Virgin Islands national planning and the development of strategies were never a part of the culture of our governments. Whatever level of strategy was employed in our development came as the result of our relationship with the United Kingdom government.

The United Nations Development Programme, mostly as a technical exercise featuring the use of foreign consultants to produce medium terms economic plans, introduced planning in the formal sense into our country. However, with the passage of time and the changing development circumstances, the idea of strategic planning became attractive. Through advocacy and agitation, a number of national community groups and the external community were able to persuade authorities towards strategic and integrated planning.

The Government of 1980's and 1990's gradually accepted the idea that our survival in international trade required a well mapped-out strategy. The total of our development circumstances including tourism and financial services growth, immigration, environmental management and social cohesiveness dictated a better planned approach. For this more inclusive and comprehensive approach, a new vision for planning in the BVI became essential.

The new focus on planning in the BVI emphasizes that it must firstly provide the umbrella strategy for development allowing a high degree of flexibility to enable rapid adjustment to changing circumstances. Strategically, planning must provide the development framework into which line ministries, departments and other agencies develop their integrated strategies. This new approach is designed to ensure that integrated planning reaches down to the programme level.

The new vision for planning requires that it must be integrated at the sector/activities, at the ministry and departmental levels and at the community level. Strategic planning must be the activity that deepens and widens democracy through the participative and deliberative processes. Planning in its new role must essentially take on some of the activities previously reserved for politicians. Considering the nature of our economic development with international trade as the driver, by design our integrated planning is focusing on the development of a framework through long range planning, the application of foresight and the conducting of future studies.

The new strategic role for planning is the promotion and development of the political system, strengthening public sector development or reform and assisting to ensure good governance and guiding the operational frame works for managing key areas of our community.

8. Conclusion

The NIDS, with participation, inclusion and integration as its fundamentals, places a premium on co-ordination as its attempts to bring a multiplicity of processes together in a simultaneous manner to achieve sustainable development.

This approach takes into account more than the traditional socio-economic parameters, giving equal and simultaneous consideration to all facets of development including the environmental, physical and spatial, which have been discerned through a participatory process and strategic analysis.

The hopes and aspirations of the people are captured in the development objectives that have been identified as:

- To reduce overall vulnerability
- To ensure balanced development
- To enhance human capital
- To ensure environmental sustainability
- To improve the physical infrastructure
- To maintain social cohesion
- To attain global competitiveness
- To promote global connection
- To promote good governance
- To preserve the cultural heritage and
- To ensure the meaningful participation of BVI islanders in the affairs of the territory.

The pursuit of these goals for a better quality of life is guided by a strategic vision of a society that is globally competitive and socially cohesive; that is able to satisfy the basic needs of its people; that upholds the principles of equity, human rights and good governance; that manages the natural resources of the territory in a sustained and integrated way'; that generates self-confidence among the people; and that maintains the unique cultural identity of the territory. In order to facilitate this vision, the primary mission of the Government is to mobilize and deliver resources to ensure the health, productivity, prosperity, cohesiveness and resilience of the people in a responsible and integrated manner.

To achieve that objective of NIDS, the BVI must change the way government operates and the nature of its relationship with the people. There must be a renewed emphasis on planning throughout government and the focus must be on the development of a flexible framework of long-range policies and strategies that allows quick response to changing global circumstances.

The new planning organization must be able to manage critical elements of the consultative process and establish broad guidelines that foster the deepening of democracy. It must improve the efficiency of the delivery of public services and must have the resources to effectively network to manage information in a 21st century way to the benefit of the people.



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