



GOVERNMENT OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS

Ministry of Financial Services, Economic
Development and Digital Transformation

**Ministry of Financial Services, Economic
Development and Digital Transformation**

SERVICE CHARTER

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WELCOME

This Service Charter serves as an agreement between our office and our internal and external customers. It is an understanding based on the principle that this office will provide quality service to all.



OUR CONTACT INFORMATION

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 mfseddt@gov.vg

 www.gov.vg



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT



On behalf of the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation, I am pleased to present our Service Charter. This document embodies our commitment to serving the people of the Virgin Islands with excellence, integrity, and transparency. This Ministry plays a vital role in driving economic growth and development, fostering a thriving financial services sector, and advancing the Territory's digital transformation. We recognise that our success hinges on providing efficient, effective, and customer-focused services.

This Service Charter outlines the standards of service you can expect from us. It reflects our dedication to:

Putting you first: We value your time and strive to provide seamless and responsive service.

Accessibility and inclusivity: We are committed to making our services readily available to all.

Accountability and transparency: We operate with integrity and maintain open communication.

Continuous improvement: We actively seek feedback and embrace innovation to enhance our services.

This Charter is more than just a set of promises; it is a public declaration of our commitment to serving you. We encourage you to familiarise yourself with it and hold us accountable to these standards.

We are dedicated to working together to build a stronger and more prosperous Virgin Islands.

Natalie Fahie-Smith
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation



ABOUT US

The Ministry is led by the Minister for Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation, and he is supported by his abled Permanent Secretary, and his Heads of Departments and Statutory Bodies.

Our Vision

The Ministry's vision is to position the Virgin Islands as a globally recognised financial hub, while driving sustainable economic growth through innovation, regulation and digital transformation.

Our Mission

The Ministry's mission is to foster a prosperous and resilient economy through a competitive financial services sector, a productive labour market, a thriving business environment, and accelerated digital transformation.

Our Commitment To You

The Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation is committed to:

- Assisting you in a prompt, efficient and fair manner
- Providing you with courteous and professional service
- Preserving your privacy and confidentiality
- Responding to your enquiries on the status of applications in a timely manner
- Providing explanations for application denials
- Improving service delivery by monitoring and measuring our service standards
- Improving the public's perception of the Ministry and its departments
- Administering our programmes fairly

Our Core Values

- Developing and implementing legislation and policies related to commerce, labour and immigration that support a thriving economy
- Supporting the implementation of legislation and policies related to financial services
- Promoting occupational health and safety
- Providing excellent, professional, courteous and fair customer service to our clients
- Being responsive and proactive to our clients' needs
- Processing applications in an efficient manner
- Providing timely responses to enquiries



HON. DR. NATALIO D. WHEATLEY

Minister for Financial Services,
Economic Development and
Digital Transformation



HON. LORNA G. SMITH, OBE

Junior Minister for Financial
Services and Economic
Development



MRS. NATALIE FAHIE-SMITH

Permanent Secretary



MRS. SOPHIA BERKELEY

Deputy Secretary



EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

MEET OUR



MINISTRY OF FINANCIAL SERVICES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

DEPARTMENTS

- Department of Trade, Investment Promotion & Consumer Affairs
- Department of Immigration
- Department of Labour and Workforce Development

STATUTORY BODIES

- Financial Services Commission
- Scientific Committee
- BVI Finance
- National Bank of the Virgin islands
- Labour Arbitration Tribunal

SUBJECTS

- Banking (includes National Bank of the Virgin Islands),
- Companies
- Consumer Affairs
- Economic Planning
- E-Government
- Financial Services
- Human Resource Planning
- Insurance
- Investment Promotion
- Labour & Workforce Development
- Liquor License
- Science and Technology (including digital transformation)
- Trade and Business (including licenses)
- Trust
- Weights and Measures
- Industrial Development (including Incentives)
- Registration Apprenticeship Training Employment Development (RATED) Programme
- Cooperatives



OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE BEHAVIOURS AND STANDARDS

As a public sector organisation, we will work to ensure the services we offer to our clients are indicative of a respected, trusted and efficient Public Service with people at the centre of all we do. The Public Service organisational customer service standards and behaviours guide our interactions and delivery.

The customer service behaviours are the activities that directly affect the service quality and guide the daily interactions of public officers. Our customer service standards outline what our customers should expect during an interaction including, but not limited to, timeliness, accuracy, effectiveness and safety. Our clients can hold us accountable to these standards when conducting business with any government department.



SAFETY

- I prioritise safety in everything I do.



AUTHENTICITY

- I anticipate needs and welcome questions.
- I acknowledge others' contributions toward a successful customer service experience.
- I am knowledgeable about the services and programmes we deliver and proactively share information.
- I take accountability for my actions.



FRIENDLINESS

- I interact on a personal level, using names whenever possible.
- I smile, make eye contact, display positive body language and keep conversations positive.
- I thank each and every customer.



EFFICIENCY

- I reduce hassles and inconveniences.
- I value each customer's time and resources.
- I make it right immediately.

OUR COMMITMENT TO SERVING YOU

Our Commitment To Serving You

1.If you telephone us, we will:

- answer your call within three (3) rings;
- identify the Ministry and provide our name;
- greet you pleasantly;
- make every effort to address your enquiry or transfer you to the appropriate person who will do so.

2.If you visit us, we will:

- greet you promptly upon entering our office;
- advise you as to when you can expect to receive assistance in the event our officers are busy assisting other customers;
- serve you within five (5) minutes of arrival if you have an appointment.

3.If you write or email us, we will:

- respond within ten (10) business days of receipt, and respond to all oral requests within three (3) business days of contact;
- endeavour to respond within the timeframe but, in the event we are unable to you can expect us to:
 - a. contact you by phone;
 - b. acknowledge receipt of your communication in writing, at which time we will advise you as to when you can expect a reply;
- endeavour to respond to all your requests for information but, in the event we are unable to respond, we will refer you to the appropriate individual, department or agency.



WORK PERMIT EXEMPTION

This service allows persons to apply for approval to be exempted from the work permit process, for a period of time, based on three exemption categories.

Process

- ▶ **Step 1:** Download and complete the Work Permit Exemption Application Form in its entirety at www.gov.vg;
- ▶ **Step 2:** Submit the application form, along with the required documents, based on the application category (Marriage, Education or Minister's Discretion) to the Department of Labour and Workforce Development. At the time of submission, a \$100.00 application fee is required;
- ▶ **Step 3:** The Ministry will acknowledge receipt of application and request any additional information necessary to process the request;
- ▶ **Step 4:** Allow one month for application processing. The Ministry will contact applicants with the outcome of the application. Successful applicants are required to pay \$400.00 to the Department of Labour and Workforce Development at the Ministry's instruction. Additional instructions for the collection of Work Permit Exemption Cards will also be provided by the Ministry.

Related Fee(s)

Application Fee: \$100.00

Processing and Card Fee: \$400.00

Supporting Document(s) for all Applicants

One (1) original police certificate (local only)

Copy of your Passport Biography Page

Letter of Proof of Entry and Consecutive Residence in the BVI (from BVI Department of Immigration only)

Copy of Work Permit Card (if applicable)

Certificate of Earning from the Department of Inland Revenue

Certificate of Earning from Social Security

Job letter

Exemption by Marriage Applicants

Original or certified copy of Marriage Certificate

Evidence that your spouse is a BVI Islander/Belonger (i.e. copy of Biography page and Governor's Seal in passport; copy of Virgin Islands Belonger's Card; or copy of Naturalisation Certificate (Note: Belonger's Card or Naturalisation Certificate is to be accompanied by a local photo ID)

Letter of intent from intended employer (only applicable if applicant is unemployed)

Exemption by Education

Original or certified copy of school leaving certificates; or letter of proof from the relevant school(s) of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports. (1 document per School)

Exemption by Minister's Discretion

Proof of property ownership

Proof of local investment (if applicable)

One (1) Character Reference Letter

A copy of BVI Passport, Belonger Card or Naturalisation Certificate is required as proof. The Belonger card and Naturalisation Certificate should be accompanied by a local Photo ID.

Method of Applying

In Person

Processing Time

Approximately 1 Month

WORK PERMIT WAIVER

This service allows persons to apply for approval to waive the work permit process for an individual who is visiting the territory to work for a short period of time.

Process

- ▶ **Step 1:** Review application guidance document at www.gov.vg;
- ▶ **Step 2:** Submit application letter, along with the other required documents to the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation **via email** to mfseddt@gov.vg **at least one month in advance of arrival date.**
- ▶ **Step 3:** The Ministry will acknowledge receipt of application and request any additional information necessary to process the request;
- ▶ **Step 4:** Allow two weeks for application processing. Once processed, the Ministry will contact the applicant with the outcome of the application; and notify the relevant authorities, once the application is approved.

Supporting Document(s)

Letter to Minister requesting Work Permit Waiver

Passport Biography Page

Confirmed Travel Itinerary

Purpose of Visit

Related Fee(s)

No related fees

Method of Applying

Electronic

Processing Time

14 Business Days

IMPORTATION OF TRAILERS, TRUCKS, AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT (INCLUDING MOBILE VANS)

This service allows persons to apply for permission to import heavy equipment, including mobile vans, into the territory.

Process

- ▶ **Step 1:** Download the application to import form from www.gov.vg;
- ▶ **Step 2:** Return the application form to the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation **by email** to mfseddt@gov.vg;
- ▶ **Step 3:** The Ministry will acknowledge receipt of application and request any additional information necessary to process the request; and
- ▶ **Step 4:** Allow one week for application processing. Once processed, the Ministry will contact the applicant with the outcome of the application; and notify the relevant authorities, once the application is approved.

Supporting Document(s)

Any document to support your request including proof of purchase

Please submit a request letter stating the complete details of the items you wish to import.

Related Fee(s)

No Related Fees

Method of Applying

Electronic

Processing Time

5 - 7 Business days

GRANT OF HOTEL AID

This service allows properties to become eligible for hotel aid. Hotel Aid is governed by the Hotel Aid Ordinance (Cap 290) and the Hotel Aid (Amendment) Act, 2005.

Process

- ▶ **Step 1:** Download the application to import form from www.gov.vg;
- ▶ **Step 2:** Return the application form to the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation **by email** to mfseddt@gov.vg;
- ▶ **Step 3:** The Ministry will acknowledge receipt of application and request any additional information necessary to process the request; and

- ▶ **Step 4:** Allow, at minimum, two months for application processing. Once processed, the Ministry will contact the applicant with the outcome of the application; and notify the relevant authorities, once the application is approved.

Supporting Documents

- Approved Developmental Plan
- Business Plan
- Valid Trade License(s)
- Certificates Good Standing (IRD, SSB & NHI)
- Certificate of Incorporation (where applicable)
- Lists of Items to be imported

Method of Applying

Electronic

Processing Time

Varies (depending on the level of consultation with other governmental agencies)

Additional Notes

This application requires the Cabinet's approval.

GRANT OF PIONEER STATUS

This service allows businesses to apply for pioneer status, which is an incentive programme designed to reduce certain development costs for legitimate entrepreneurs who are leading innovative ventures. Pioneer Status is governed by the Pioneer Services and Enterprises Act (CAP 297).

Process

- ▶ **Step 1:** Download the Grant of Pioneer Status Application from www.gov.vg;
- ▶ **Step 2:** Return the application form to the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation **by email** to mfseddt@gov.vg;
- ▶ **Step 3:** The Ministry will acknowledge receipt of application and request any additional information necessary to process the request; and
- ▶ **Step 4:** Allow, at minimum, two months for application processing. Once processed, the Ministry will contact the applicant with the outcome of the application.

Supporting Documents

- Business Plan
- Valid Trade License(s)
- Certificates Good Standing (IRD, SSB & NHI)
- Certificate of Incorporation (where applicable)
- Lists of Items to be imported.

Method of Applying

Electronic

Processing Time

Varies (depending on the level of consultation with other governmental agencies)

Additional Notes

This application requires the Cabinet's approval.

LABOUR DISPUTES

This service aims to bring resolution to labour disputes, upon failure of resolution by the Department of Labour and Workforce Development, and prior to the matter being transmitted to the Labour Arbitration Tribunal.

Process

Once the matter is referred to the Minister, he or she will, conduct meeting(s) with the complainant and the respondent, either jointly or separately, to facilitate a voluntary settlement.

It is important to note that the Minister cannot make a decision on the matter; he/she can only guide the parties toward a voluntary resolution, being guided by the law. If a voluntary settlement cannot be achieved, as per Section 28, the Minister has several options available, including transmission of the matter to the Labour Arbitration Tribunal.

Related Fee(s)

No Related Fees

Supporting Document(s)

Additional Documents may be requested

Processing Time

Twenty-one (21) days in the first instance; with the option for either party to extend, upon agreement by both parties.

MICRO SMALL MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSME) GRANT PROGRAMME

This service aims to empower local businesses to overcome financial barriers and support growth initiatives by providing financial assistance to business owners. This programme seeks to stimulate economic development and strengthen the Virgin Islands' business landscape.

Process

- ▶ **Step 1:** Download and complete the application form from www.gov.vg;
- ▶ **Step 2:** Submit the completed form and the supporting documents to the Department in-person or by email to bvinbb@gov.vg;

- ▶ **Step 3:** The Department will acknowledge receipt of the application and request any additional information necessary to process the request;
- ▶ **Step 4:** The Department will contact the applicant with the outcome of the application; and provide further guidance of the issuance of the grant, if approved.

Supporting Documents

Proof of nationality and length of residence

Police Certificate(s)

Trade Licence

Company Incorporation Certificate (if applicable)

Financial Documents (e.g., bank statements, financial statements, business plan, financial projections)

Payroll Records (verifying number of employees)

Good Standing certificate or authorised payment plan from NHI

Good Standing certificate or authorised payment plan from SSB

Good Standing certificate from the Inland Revenue Department or authorised payment plan

Processing Time

2-3 months

Related Fee(s)

No Related Fees

RATED PROGRAMME

This service allows for temporary, short-term employment to unemployed Virgin Islanders and Belongers.

Process

Step 1: Download and complete the application form from www.gov.vg;

Step 2: Submit the completed form and the supporting documents to the Ministry in person;

Step 3: The Ministry will acknowledge receipt of the application and request any additional information necessary to process the request;

Step 4: The Ministry will contact the applicant with the outcome of the application; and provide further guidance, if approved.

Supporting Documents

Proof of Virgin Islander or Belonger status

Passport Biography Page

Social Security Card

Tax ID Number

National Health Insurance (NHI) Card

Processing Time

2 weeks

Related Fee(s)

No Related Fees



YOUR RIGHTS

Your Rights

As a customer, you have a right to:

- be dealt with promptly, professionally, fairly, and truthfully, in accordance with generally accepted service standards Public Service Management Code
- appeal a decision made with respect to any application to the Ministry responsible for Trade
- be given a reason for a denial with respect to any application from the Ministry responsible for Immigration, Labour or Trade.

As a customer, you can help us serve you better by:

- Completing applications fully
- Respecting and following our policies and established procedures;
- Addressing staff with courtesy
- Providing additional information when requested, accurately, thoroughly and in a timely manner
- Submitting queries and payment in a timely manner
- Abiding by any and all legal requirements and other obligations that customers are to meet in order to be eligible for services sought.

Tell us how we are doing

We value your feedback. It provides us with information that helps us to refine and improve our services. It is important to know what works well. By telling us when you have received excellent customer service and what we got right, it helps us to recognise the efforts of our people and to ensure we replicate best practice across the Ministry and its departments. We are committed to ensuring all complaints received are taken seriously and handled efficiently, fairly and confidentially. We will aim to resolve all complaints as soon as possible, however, depending upon the nature of the complaint, response times may vary. You will be provided with updates during the investigation of your complaint.

Submit your commendations and complaints through the Government's centralised platform, **Rate Us** (<https://rateus.gov.vg>).





APPENDIX

Scope of Programme Units within the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation

The scope of **Financial Services** includes:

- Regulating financial institutions
- Developing and implementing a financial services strategy
- Supporting the implementation of policies and legislation that govern the financial services industry

The scope of **Immigration** includes:

- Facilitating immigration relations between the visitors to our shores and residents
- Formulating Immigration policies and enforcing immigration laws
- Addressing immigration disputes
- Setting immigration quotas

The scope of **Trade, Investment Promotion and Consumer Affairs** includes:

- Ensuring compliance with trade regulations
- Addressing trade disputes
- Negotiating trade agreements and removing trade barriers
- Promoting exports and attracting foreign direct investments
- Administering the MSME grant programme
- Supporting domestic industries

The scope of **Labour and Workforce Development** includes:

- Enforcing labour laws
- Mediating labour disputes
- Overseeing labour market trends
- Developing the workforce through training opportunities and identification and remediation of skills gaps
- Processing work permits in compliance with the labour laws
- Implementing standards to protect workers' rights and ensure fair employment practices
- Promoting occupational health and safety

The scope of the **Labour Arbitration Tribunal** includes:

- Regulating its own procedures
- Hearing employment disputes and complaints and making orders or awards as it considers fair and just
- Acting in accordance with equity, good conscience and the substantial merits of each case
- Having regard to the principles and practices of good industrial relations

The scope of **Digital Transformation** includes:

- Developing and implementing a digital transformation strategy
- Digitally transforming public sector services

The scope of **RATED** includes:

- Providing temporary, short-term employment opportunities



ENACTED LEGISLATION

We will regularly publish legislation relevant to our duties, or links to such legislation on the Government's website and all social media accounts. This list of enacted legislation falls within the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation Portfolio. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list.

1. Arbitration Act
2. Bank and Trust Companies Act
3. British Virgin Islands Business Companies Act
4. Beneficial Ownership Secure Search Systems Act
5. Business Licensing Act
6. Caribbean Development Bank Ordinance
7. Company Management Act
8. Consumer Protection Act
9. Copyright Act
10. Dormant Accounts Act
11. Economic Substance (Companies and Limited Partnership) Act
12. Electronic Transactions Act
13. Electronic Transfer of Funds Act
14. Electronic Filing Act
15. Financial Services Commission Act
16. Financial Services Appeal Board Act
17. Financial Investigation Agency Act
18. Financing and Money Services Act
19. Immigration and Passport Act
20. Immigration and Passport Regulations
21. Insurance Act
22. International Business Companies Act
23. Insolvency Act
24. Limited Partnership Act
25. Liquor Licensing Act

ENACTED LEGISLATION CONT'D

26. Micro Business Companies Act
27. Miscellaneous Amendments (SIGTAS) Act
28. Mutual Funds Act
29. Mutual Legal Assistance (U.S.A.) Act
30. Mutual legal Assistance (Tax Matters) Act
31. Patents Act
32. Partnership Act
33. Private Security Industry Act
34. Proliferation Financing (Prohibition) Act
35. Securities and Investment Business Act
36. Third Parties (Rights Against Insurers) Act
37. Trade Marks Act
38. Trustee Ordinance
39. Trust Corporation (Probate and Administration Act)
40. Trustees Relief Act
41. Virgin Islands Deposit Insurance Act
42. Virgin Islands Investment Act
43. Virgin Islands Labour Code
44. Virgin Islands Special Trust Act
45. Virgin Islands Trade Commission Act
46. Virtual Assets Service Provides Act
47. Workmen's Compensation Ordinance

