



GOVERNMENT OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS

National Employment Policy (2026-2030)

Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation
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1 Message from the Minister

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2 List of acronyms

BBP	Blue Belt Programme
BVI	British Virgin Islands
CSO	Central Statistics Office
ECROP	Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy
EFZ	Exclusive Fishing Zone
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HLSCC	H. Lavity Stoutt Community College
ILO	International Labour Organization
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEYAS	Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports
MFSEDDT	Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
MTDS	Mid-Term Development Strategy
MTFP	Medium-Term Fiscal Plan
NEP	National Employment Policy
NPDP	National Physical Development Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAs	Protected Areas
SAM-SDI	Self-Assessment Method for Social Dialogue Institutions
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSB	Social Security Board
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UKOTs	United Kingdom Overseas Territories
VCA	Value Chain Analysis
VI	Virgin Islands
VIG	Virgin Islands Government
YEP	Youth Empowerment Project

3 Rationale for a National Employment Policy in the BVI

As a small, open, and shock-prone island economy, the British Virgin Islands (BVI) must ensure that its labour market institutions and policies are sufficiently adaptive to respond to external disruptions, demographic shifts, and evolving skills requirements, while at the same time supporting private sector development and inclusive participation in economic activity.

With its *Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands*, the British Virgin Islands defines a people-centred development model that places equality of opportunity, education, decent livelihoods, youth empowerment, and social cohesion at the heart of national transformation. Employment promotion and labour force development are integrated in most objectives of the Vision and are expected outcomes of its implementation. In particular, the education outcome calls for an educated and highly skilled population capable of effectively participating in the BVI's evolving labour market. However, these employment-related aspirations need to be translated into a coherent framework which not only ensures that employment outcomes are improved, but also that employment promotion itself becomes a multiplier mechanism through which national objectives related to employability, prosperity, inclusion, and resilience are realised.

The Medium-Term Development Strategy (MTDS) translates the long-term aspirations of Vision 2036 into actionable priorities, but it similarly addresses employment in an indirect and fragmented manner. Within the MTDS, employment features primarily as an expected outcome of progress in education and skills development, economic diversification, private sector growth, and improvements in the business environment. As a result, while the MTDS advances important sectoral and institutional reforms that influence labour market performance, it does not explicitly define employment objectives, targets, or governance mechanisms, nor does it systematically integrate labour demand, labour supply, and labour market matching considerations into a unified policy approach.

At the sectoral level, while the BVI has articulated key strategies, related to the blue economy, climate resilience, tourism development and environmental sustainability, a similar pattern can be observed. These frameworks recognise the importance of skills, entrepreneurship, and workforce participation as enabling conditions for sectoral growth, yet they tend to treat employment primarily as an implicit outcome rather than as a strategic policy objective in its own right.

The National Employment Policy (NEP) therefore fills a critical policy gap by giving explicit structure, coherence, and strategic direction to employment outcomes that are envisaged in Vision 2036 and pursued through the MTDS though not yet addressed through a dedicated employment policy framework. Importantly, it will also ensure that job creation, skills development and productive engagement of the population are not ends in themselves, but essential enablers of balanced economic growth, social justice, and sustainable development outcomes.

4 National Context

4.1 Overview of BVI's major national development and strategic documents

It is essential to anchor the NEP within the BVI's broader strategic development framework. The key national planning and policy documents are reviewed in Table 1, with their employment linkages or potential highlighted. Overall, this review confirms that, by adopting a mainstreamed and systemic approach to employment promotion, the NEP will serve its own objectives and will also be instrumental in strengthening the capacity of these policy documents and strategies will reach their own development goals.

Table 1: Core national development and policy frameworks

Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands	
Description	The Vision 2036 establishes the long-term development framework for the BVI. It was developed based on extensive consultations and is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It articulates national goals and outcomes, spanning economy, education, infrastructure, environment, health and social wellbeing across a 15-year horizon.
Link with employment	The Vision refers to a limited number of key, albeit outdated, employment indicators (e.g., unemployment rates and labour force participation rates). It is articulated around 6 goals (Health, Education, Economy, Infrastructure, Good Governance and Environment). There are no specific employment targets at that level. Employment only features as indicators for national level outcome. For instance, within <i>Outcome 3: An educated and highly skilled population</i>, selected employment-related targets include: ▶ Increasing the number of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship; and ▶ Fostering entrepreneurship as an employment pathway. Under this outcome, skills building is associated with the need to match the evolving labour market needs with economic diversification objectives. There is however no indication in the document on how these evolving labour market needs may be assessed, or on how employment can be harnessed to be a transformative element towards sectoral development and diversification. As currently framed, employment is largely treated as a downstream outcome of economic growth rather than as a policy instrument that can actively shape productivity growth, economic transformation, and inclusive development.

The Mid-Term Development Strategy (MTDS)	
Description	The MTDS is the main implementation instrument of the Vision.
Link with employment	The MTDS does include employment references (for instance in relation to the education and skills outcomes, or to the Green and Blue Economy), and while it does not address employment directly, it proposes several strategies towards the achievement of an “educated and highly skilled population” (such as lifelong learning or the alignment of skills provision with the needs of the labour market) which do address issues of employability.
The Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP)	
Description	The MTFP sets out the Government’s medium-term fiscal strategy, outlines revenue, expenditure, and debt management priorities, and identifies key fiscal risks and mitigation measures to support macroeconomic stability and sustainable public finances.
Link with employment	The MTFP explicitly identifies unemployment and labour market disruption as high macro-fiscal risks. It proposes mitigating measures, such as employment incentives for businesses, job creation initiatives or skills development programmes to reduce unemployment. It also advocates for wage support legislation to encourage wage growth and mitigate the risk of reduced payroll tax.
Virgin Islands Strategic Blue Economy Roadmap	
Description	The Virgin Islands Strategic Blue Economy Roadmap defines an integrated approach for harnessing the BVI’s marine and coastal resources to support sustainable economic growth, environmental stewardship, and livelihood opportunities. It emphasises governance, maritime tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, marine science and innovation, and emerging ocean-based sectors.
Link with employment	Within the Strategic Blue Economy Roadmap, employment is explicitly recognised as an outcome, measured at least once (“Employment in blue economy sectors as a % of total workforce”) and linked to structural transformation, inclusion and sustainability. However, most indicators remain hard to quantify or hard to define. A list of relevant projects is provided in Annex 3.
The National Physical Development Plan (NPDP)	
Description	The 2018 NPDP is a planning document that aims to build a “stronger, smarter, greener and better BVI” in the wake of the destruction caused by Hurricane Irma. It sets out reconstruction guidelines across several sectors (human, economic, infrastructure, governance, and environment). Although these provisions only mention employment as a cross-cutting consideration rather than a standalone policy objective, they nevertheless have important implications for job creation, skills demand, and labour market resilience.

Link with employment	Several ongoing projects listed in the NPDP have direct employment linkages, and indeed to some provisions of the NEP. For instance, Project “HS.C.25., Expand the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) to other districts” could be linked to the expansion of the RATED programme and the establishment of National Youth Action Plan. Likewise, Project “HS.B.92., Conduct study on the establishment of unemployment benefits system/programme” aligns with the corresponding measure set out in the National Employment Policy.
Social Security Ordinance (CAP 266) and Social Protection Policy (2024)	
Description	The Social Security Ordinance (CAP. 266) provides the legal foundation for the BVI’s social security system and establishes the mandate of the Social Security Board (SSB). Under the Ordinance, the SSB is responsible for administering the social insurance scheme, including the collection of contributions and the delivery of benefits to insured persons and their dependants. Together with the Social Security (Benefits) Regulations, it provides the framework for income security benefits covering sickness, maternity, invalidity, old age, survivorship, and death, while also supporting the SSB’s role as the oversight body for the National Health Insurance (NHI) programme. In addition, the Social Protection Policy (2024) provides the Government’s framework for building an integrated, inclusive, and shock-responsive social protection system that reduces poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion while strengthening resilience.
Link with employment	The legislation is closely linked to employment because eligibility for most benefits is based on insurable employment, contributions, and earnings, providing income security during periods of sickness, maternity, disability, retirement, or the loss of a breadwinner. Consistent with the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) principles on social protection, the Social Security Ordinance should remain the principal legal framework for any new social protection measures, including unemployment benefits, either through alignment with or formal amendment to the existing legislation, ensuring legal certainty and effective implementation. The policy explicitly recognizes labour market programmes, workforce development, employment services, and livelihoods support as core pillars of social protection, highlighting the role of employment in reducing poverty, enhancing economic security, strengthening resilience, and supporting inclusive economic development.

4.2 Findings from the Employment Diagnostic Analysis¹

The *Employment Diagnostic Analysis* was carried out in the course of the year 2024. A major constraint in its development has been the lack of up-to-date labour statistics data in the BVI and limited structured social dialogue. The report used data from the 2010 Census, the 2015 Labour Force Survey and from the 2019 Survey of Living Conditions. As a result, the report relied on qualitative insights contributed by stakeholders during on-the-ground consultations.

The BVI labour market is characterised by a heavy reliance on foreign labour, with up to 72 per cent² of workers being defined as migrant workers according to Social Security Board data. Every year, the Department of Immigration processes around 10,000 requests for work permits, although only about 700 to 800 of these (less than 1 per cent) are new applications, indicating a stable workforce.

A recurring concern from stakeholders is that reliance on foreign labour may reduce employment opportunities for nationals in certain sectors and occupations. While this perception is particularly evident in areas such as the maritime industry, as well as in some highly skilled, specialised, or senior-level positions in sectors such as finance, information and communication technology (ICT), and tourism, where employers often recruit internationally, available labour market indicators do not suggest widespread displacement of national workers across the economy. Employment levels are high (up to 80 per cent) while overall unemployment rates are low (5.5 per cent). Furthermore, recent data shows a strong economic activity, with GDP growth rebounding to nearly 5 per cent in 2023 following the pandemic-induced contraction. Taken together, these indicators point to sustained labour demand, although they may mask skills shortages and labour market pressures in specific sectors and occupations where the balance between foreign and national employment warrants closer examination.

However, the fact that people work does not mean that they work well or productively. The *Employment Diagnostic Analysis* points to evidence of significant labour and skill shortages across various sectors and skill levels. At the lower end of the skills spectrum, employers report a shortage of candidates with essential soft skills. In the skilled trades and technical roles, shortages are reported for occupations such as electricians, plumbers, chefs, and hotel managers, among others. The limited availability and capacity of local training programmes to address key occupational and skill shortages further compound these shortfalls.

Labour market inclusion remains a challenge for certain groups. Youth unemployment is particularly acute, with rates reaching 23.5 per cent among young active men, compared to 13.0 per cent for active young women, and 5.5 per cent overall. Such high rates point to structural barriers affecting labour market entry and attachment. Addressing them will require a holistic and integrated approach spanning education and skills development, social support systems and health as well as decent job creation.

Finally, the *Employment Diagnostic Analysis* flags the weakness of tripartism and social dialogue. Representation of workers' interests remains limited, with few active employee associations beyond those established within statutory bodies, notably in the teaching

¹ All data and information from this section are taken from *Employment Diagnostic Analysis: British Virgin Islands*, Geneva: International Labour Office, 2025

² SSB administrative data reflects registered contributors and may not fully capture informal sector workers or individuals not yet registered in the social security system.

profession, nursing, and the police force. The absence of an overarching workers' federation further constrains the organisation and consolidation of labour representation, which remains largely public-sector driven. As a result, opportunities for structured and meaningful social dialogue are limited, and collective bargaining mechanisms are not yet sufficiently institutionalised to support balanced labour relations and inclusive labour market governance.

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4.3 Programmes landscape of on-going interventions pertinent to the NEP

This section reviews the on-going programmes and interventions that are directly or indirectly relevant to the implementation of the NEP, with a view to identifying complementarities, overlaps, and potential areas for coordination. It is based on contributions provided by members of the Technical Drafting Committee. Although it highlights important initiatives, this table should not be read as exhaustive, but rather as a living policy tool to be complemented during the implementation of the NEP.

Responsible unit	Name of the intervention (date of operation)	Objective	Target group (age, sex, education level, immigration status)	Other information (such as strong points and scope for improvement)
Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation				
	RATED (ongoing)	Provide pathways to employment through short term employment, apprenticeship and/or training, education and development	Unemployed people, no specific age, but mainly young uneducated people	▶ Very good out-reach capacity to inactive youth ▶ Need to expand scope of activities and placement opportunities beyond bush-cutting ▶ Will be expanded as an activity of the NEP
Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change				
	UK Blue Belt Programme <i>(VI Government's application to join awaits UK Government approval)</i>	To help United Kingdom Overseas Territories (UKOTs) like the VI to promote the creation and maintenance of healthy, productive marine ecosystems, while addressing global problems of illegal fishing, flora/fauna species extinction, and climate change via: 1. Understanding and protecting biodiversity. 2. Strengthening governance and management frameworks. 3. Managing human impacts. 4. Assisting compliance and enforcement. 5. Building capacity and 'ocean literacy'.	VI Government: driven by Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change	VI commitments to make us eligible for entry into the BBP include: ▶ Establishing/expanding/enhancing our protected areas (PAs) network, particularly in marine and benthic areas ▶ Developing comprehensive marine management frameworks. ▶ Establishing robust legislative + enforcement regimes, like an Environment and Climate Change Policy and Bill. ▶ Ensuring adaptive management review cycles to measure successes, ID gaps/weaknesses, introduce reforms, redirect investment, resources and training, etc.

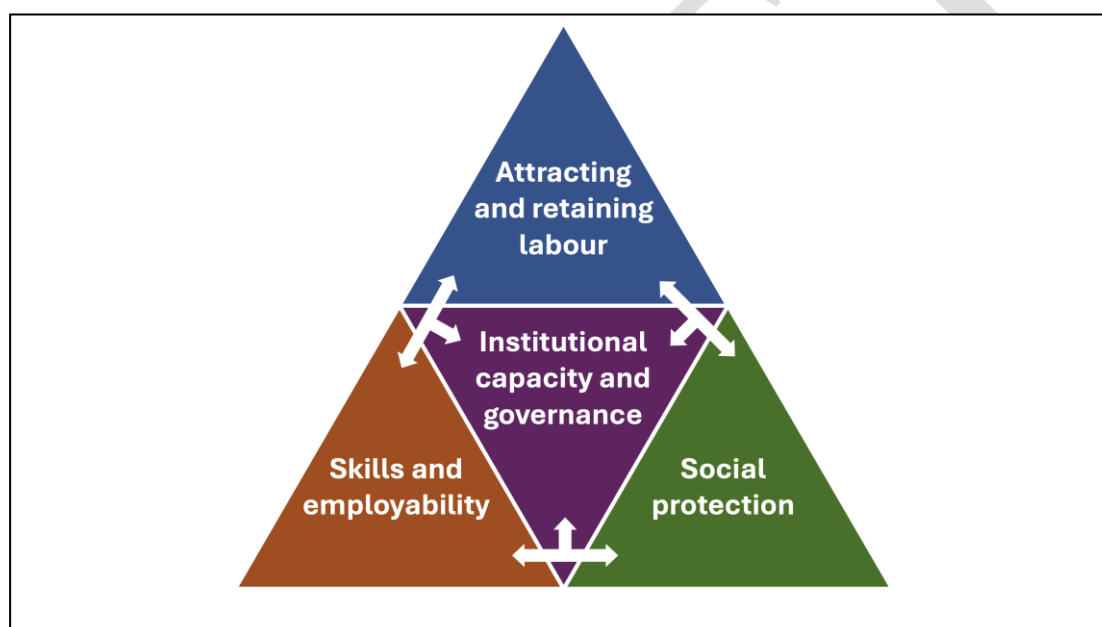
Responsible unit	Name of the intervention (date of operation)	Objective	Target group (age, sex, education level, immigration status)	Other information (such as strong points and scope for improvement)
	Blue Economy Roadmap	To develop the blue economy as a means of promoting sustainable economic growth while protecting and enhancing the habitats and resources that underpin that growth through improved environmental governance and stewardship, better education and an improved understanding of our shared marine space". It is (to be) implemented around six thematic areas: 1. Enabling conditions 2. Maritime tourism 3. Fisheries 4. Aquaculture 5. Marine information and science needs 6. New and emerging opportunities	▶ Unemployed and under-employed youth of all/varying education levels and immigration status. ▶ Early retired and under-employed adults of all/varying education levels and immigration status. ▶ Entrepreneurs of all ages. ▶ Gender is not a limiting factor. Gender equity is desirable and entirely possible. We believe that people who are differently abled can/should also participate in modified ways that reflect their needs and capacities to make meaningful contributions.	

5 Intervention strategy of the NEP

Based on the findings of the *Employment Diagnostic Analysis* and of further stakeholder consultations held from 16 to 28 November 2025 in the framework of the development of this NEP, this policy is articulated around 4 strategic axes which are complementary and self-reinforcing. These 4 axes listed below, and their linkages are represented in Figure 1.

1. **Attracting and retaining labour**
2. **Skills and employability**
3. **Social protection and other supports**
4. **Institutional capacity and governance.**

Figure 1: Axes and their linkages



5.1 Attracting and retaining labour

A large, but stable, number of foreign workers

The BVI's labour market is characterised by high employment and participation rates, reflecting strong labour demand and economic recovery following recent shocks. However, sustaining an adequate and resilient labour supply remains a key challenge. The workforce is ageing, and migrant labour accounts for approximately 72 per cent of total employment, with around 10,000 work permits for foreigners processed annually – although only around 700 or 800 are newcomers, implying a relative stable foreign workforce. This reliance on foreign labour is critical for maintaining economic activity across key sectors, which the BVI's labour force would not be able to do due to its small size. Reliance also exposes national vulnerabilities with regards to skills development and labour seasonality.

Boosting youth employment

Data available show that there are significant constraints to youth employment, which translate into high rates of unemployment among young people, and especially among young men: 23.5 per cent for young men aged 15-25 are unemployed, against 13.0 per cent for young women.

Not all young people are equal in their quest for employment. As the majority (between 80 and 90 per cent) of those who graduated from HLSCC can testify, some may only experience transitory spells of unemployment, if at all. For those who do not graduate, however, the pathway to employment is longer. Improving employment opportunities for them will require interventions that focus on building and increasing their employability. This may not focus solely on specific occupations, but should also build core skills for work, such as soft or digital skills, as provisioned in the Vision 2036 and in the Blue Economy Roadmap. For some in more difficult situations, it may be necessary to implement interventions of a social nature (such as health, psychological or stable housing) aiming to condition them to be receptive to skills programmes, coaching, or mentoring, so that they eventually qualify for employment.

Addressing high living costs and seasonal employment

High living costs, particularly housing and inter-island transportation, have several implications for employment outcomes. They affect labour attraction and retention, especially for the youth, women and lower- and middle-income workers, in the private sector (e.g., tourism) as well as in statutory body occupations, such as medical staff (nurses) or teachers, which struggle to fill positions due to the mismatch between wage levels and cost of living. This results in Islanders seeking better employment abroad, which in turn, opens opportunities for migrant labour, who may have lower wage reservations.

Seasonal employment patterns in tourism and construction compound these challenges. Together, these factors underscore the need for interventions that encourage labour retention, better manage labour mobility and seasonality, prepare for workforce ageing, and enhance the attractiveness of essential occupations, including those within statutory bodies. Climate change risks also pose emerging threats to labour supply, reinforcing the importance of anticipatory workforce planning.

Boosting the resilience of MSMEs

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are the “lifeblood of the Virgin Islands’ economic success”³ and play a central role in employment creation in the British Virgin Islands. Yet they are highly exposed to climate-related shocks, such as hurricanes and flooding. Strengthening the capacity of MSMEs to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to such shocks is essential to limiting business disruption and protecting jobs. This intervention will integrate disaster preparedness and business continuity modules into MSME training, supporting greater employment continuity and faster recovery following climate events.

Interventions under this strategic axis will seek to **develop a more competitive, inclusive and sustainable labour market that nurtures local talent, reduces reliance on imported expertise and support long-term economic growth**, through:

- ▶ The establishment and implementation of a National Action Plan on youth employment would set out a systemic, coordinated and institutionalised approach

³ MSME Grant Programme Policy and Administration Guide, Ministry of Financial Services, Labour and Trade, July 2024.

to strengthen employability and promote youth employment. Adopted within the framework of the NEP, aligned with Vision 2036 priorities, such an action plan would enhance policy coherence across education, labour and economic strategies, while at the same time provide custom interventions to the many youth profiles that can be found on the island;

- ▶ The strengthening of the RATED programme through capacity building and extension of its staff, and through expanded linkages with the private sectors and public entities with a potential for employment to provide a wider range of placement opportunities for low-skilled youth;
- ▶ Improving the attractiveness and retention of talents within statutory bodies through competitive compensation and benefits, including childcare and travel benefits, as well as developing qualifications and standards. This should be complemented by the development of qualifications and professional standards for childcare workers to support the provision of quality care services. Interventions in this area would benefit from the active engagement of social partners and accompanying capacity-building initiatives to strengthen social dialogue and implementation;
- ▶ The development of a range of targeted employment services strategies to be implemented by the newly created Employment Services Centres (see Strategic objective 4), such as:
 - “Intent-to-employ” agreements for students studying abroad/HLSCC, ensuring returning talent has guaranteed opportunities within the local economy sectors; and
 - entry-level employment pathways, including internships, apprenticeships (with pay), and rotational placements across key economic sectors⁴;
- ▶ The integration of business continuity modules into MSME training, to build MSMEs’ resilience to external shocks, thereby supporting greater employment continuity and faster recovery following destructive climate events.

5.2 Skills and employability

Skills development and the promotion of employability is a central pillar of the NEP. In line with the Vision 2036, and within the context of a small, open and shock-prone economy, equipping the workforce with relevant and future-proof skills is essential to support structural transformation, respond to changing labour market condition and broaden access to decent work.

A key challenge in this regard lies in reducing the mismatch between workforce capabilities and evolving labour market requirements. Despite high overall educational attainment at the secondary level, the high youth unemployment rates, especially for young men, reflect structural imbalances between the supply of skills generated by the education and the training system and the demand for skills in the labour market. Employers report skills shortages in sectors such as construction, tourism and other service activities, which contribute to continued reliance on migrant labour across a wide range of occupations and skill levels.

Although precise and recent data on this issue remain unavailable, a limitation that the future labour market information system envisaged under the NEP should help address, stakeholder

⁴ See Annex 2 for an example of such pathway.

consultations provided important qualitative insights, indicating that young people in the BVI face low employability as a result of skills mismatches, as reflected in issues such as:

- ▶ “Young people do not possess technical skills”. Stakeholder consultations revealed notable hiring difficulties on national workers in construction occupations (in particular plumbers or electricians, but not exclusively). Stakeholders in the tourism sector also mentioned the need for local skills, which would contribute to securing longer term employment. Updated data would be required to more precisely ascertain the exact occupations for which skills are missing;
- ▶ “Young people possess skills, but not at a high enough level, or without the required work experience”. As a result, they cannot compete effectively for more productive and decent jobs. This relates mainly to the sectors mentioned previously (construction and tourism), although further probing through labour force or ad hoc surveys could help precisely identify the occupations and sectors where this occurs; and/or
- ▶ “Young people lack core-work skills” (including workplace attitude, resilience and motivation to work under demanding conditions). This shows in their limited job-search capacities, (for lack of CV-writing or interview skills), or in their difficulties in remaining in employment, due to the lack of inadequate professional behaviour or lack of motivation.

Training capacity remains uneven, and employer investment in workforce development is limited. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) pathways require strengthening and expanding to improve alignment with labour market demand, particularly in emerging and priority sectors such as tourism, construction, financial services, and the blue and green economies – although this needs to be done in conjunction and harmony with current initiatives led by the HLSCC and Ministry for Youth Affairs to multiply the intended outcomes. Addressing these skills gaps is essential not only to improve youth employability, but also to support productivity, economic diversification, and long-term workforce resilience.

The BVI is also facing a gradual ageing of its workforce, particularly within the public service and statutory bodies, at a time when skills shortages and replacement pressures are increasing. In this context, policies should not only focus on initial training for labour market entrants, but also on maintaining employability and productivity throughout employees’ working life. Promoting lifelong learning, recognition of prior learning, intergenerational knowledge transfer and flexible opportunities for older workers to remain economically active will therefore be important components of a more inclusive and efficient labour market.

The skills development system in the BVI appears constrained to address these weaknesses. First, there is limited institutional capacity to anticipate current and future skill needs; second, linkages between education and training institutions, and employers and labour market institutions remain underdeveloped, limiting the opportunity for young people to acquire work experience; third, employer investment in workforce development remains limited. Fourth, access to lifelong learning, upskilling and reskilling opportunities is still insufficiently developed across the life course.

In line with ILO’s principles, strengthening skills development and employability requires a systemic approach, based on stronger arrangements for skills anticipation, broader participation of employers and workers’ representatives in skills governance, closer alignment of training provision with sectoral demand, and improved access to quality training opportunities for youth, women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

Regarding apprenticeship, the BVI already has several initiatives, such as the Technical Vocational Apprenticeship Programme, the Summer Apprenticeship Programme, the apprenticeship component of the RATED programme, as well as apprenticeship-linked provisions in investment policy. Building on these foundations, the Government may consider the adoption of an Apprenticeship System Act to unify these initiatives. Such a framework would define apprenticeships in law, establish common standards for apprenticeship agreements, clarify the respective roles of employers, training institutions and Government, and ensure that apprenticeship pathways combine off-the-job learning with supervised workplace training leading to recognised competencies and qualifications.

Interventions under this strategic axis will seek to **build a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready skills ecosystem that continuously aligns workforce capabilities with evolving labour-market demands by strengthening lifelong learning systems, expanding training capacity, and fostering robust employer engagement in skills development**, through:

- ▶ The strengthening of lifelong learning systems by (a) setting up systems of recognition of prior learning; and (b) expanding access to upskilling, reskilling, and micro-credential programmes for workers at all stages of their careers;
- ▶ The expansion of national training capacity through partnerships with regional and international institutions, investment in training infrastructure and instructors, and the development of sector-specific training provision where appropriate;
- ▶ The adoption of an Apprenticeship Act to establish a national quality apprenticeship system, including a centralised Apprenticeship Registry System, to unify existing apprenticeship-related initiatives, define common standards for apprenticeship agreements, training, certification and quality assurance, and require designated industry sectors, such as law, the marine and blue economy, and hospitality, to provide a minimum number of apprenticeship placements each year, supported through incentives or, where appropriate, as a condition for operating in the BVI;
- ▶ The development of a system for skills identification, skills shortages, and skills anticipation and matching through the integration within the future labour market information system;
- ▶ The strengthening of employer engagement in workforce development, including through co-financed training arrangements, fiscal incentives and sectoral partnerships that encourage firms to invest in skills development;
- ▶ The promotion of inclusive access to training opportunities for youth, women, persons with disabilities, and underserved communities, with particular attention to those facing multiple barriers to labour market entry;
- ▶ The support of digital transformation by integrating digital literacy, advanced technologies, and future-proof skills training across all learning pathways; and
- ▶ The strengthening of social dialogue and institutional coordination in skills governance so that employers, workers and training providers can contribute more effectively to identifying needs, shaping provision and monitoring outcomes.

5.3 Social protection

Social protection mechanisms play an important role in supporting labour market participation and resilience, yet observable gaps remain in the BVI. Notably, the absence of an unemployment benefits system limits the capacity to support workers during employment

transitions, particularly in situations of seasonal employment, economic shocks and climate-related disruptions. However, the SSB has initiated exploratory work, including actuarial assessments, reviews of regional and international practice, and legislative scoping to examine the feasibility of introducing unemployment protection. These efforts should be further strengthened to support the development of an unemployment benefit scheme. Within the context of the BVI, social protection responses should distinguish between temporary shocks affecting otherwise viable firms and persistent labour underutilization affecting workers.

Short-time work or employment-retention arrangements constitute an appropriate instrument for temporary shocks, particularly in the event of hurricanes or seasonal sectoral downturns, by helping firms preserve employment relationships and prevent large-scale layoffs. Short-time work schemes are Government-supported programmes that allow companies facing temporary economic difficulties to reduce employee hours instead of resorting to layoffs. Employees receive a portion of their lost income, funded by the State, while keeping their jobs and benefits. These schemes are common in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, where they constituted a major response to stabilise labour markets in the wake of COVID-19-induced restrictions.

However, such arrangements are firm-based and therefore do not, on their own, provide adequate protection for workers experiencing job loss, structural seasonality or persistent un- or under-employment. For these situations, the progressive deployment of a worker-centred unemployment benefit systems, linked to employment services and training, may be more appropriate, especially for vulnerable groups and seasonal workers.

Interventions under this strategic axis will seek **to develop a layered social protection framework combining temporary employment-retention measures in times of shock with worker-centred support measures for those experiencing employment interruptions, while strengthening linkages with public employment services, job-search assistance, off-season training and reskilling**, through:

- ▶ The study and design of a short-time work, or employment-retention mechanism adapted to the BVI's context;
- ▶ Continued support for exploratory studies on the design of a worker-centred unemployment benefit system to provide income support in cases of labour underutilization or unemployment;
- ▶ Undertake an actuarial assessment to determine the feasibility and financing options for a contributory unemployment benefit scheme, including recommendations on sustainability, coverage, and implementation;
- ▶ The linking of income support measures with the future Employment Services Centres, including registration, job-search support, counselling, and return-to-work pathways; and
- ▶ The provision of off-season training and reskilling opportunities to help seasonal workers maintain employability and transition across sectors and areas.

5.4 Institutional capacity and governance

Institutional capacity and governance gaps in the BVI represent a critical constraint on effective employment policy implementation.

Labour market data in the BVI are obsolete. The last census was carried out in 2010 and the most recent labour force survey dates from 2015. There is no established labour market information system to support evidence-based decision-making. Information about employment is essentially based on administrative data that the Central Statistical Office collects manually from various institutions. In this context, the Social Security Board (SSB) represents a significant and underutilised source of labour market intelligence, with administrative records covering employer registrations, contribution histories, earnings, and sectoral employment trends. Strengthening the integration and use of these datasets, along with collecting regular labour force data within a national labour market information system (LMIS) would enhance the production, dissemination, and analysis of labour market statistics and support more informed employment and social protection policies.

Employment services are underdeveloped, constraining job matching, career guidance, and active labour market support, particularly for young jobseekers. While private employment agencies operate in the BVI and provide useful expertise, the establishment of a public employment service would create an institutional platform for structured collaboration with HLSCC and employers and develop professional job and career counselling functions aligned with priority sectors and labour demand.

Social dialogue mechanisms remain weak, mainly limited to statutory bodies (such as teachers and nurses), limiting structured engagement among Government, employers, and workers on labour market issues.

Strengthened institutional capacity is essential to support the effective governance of the labour market and the implementation of the National Employment Policy. This is particularly important with regard to sensitive issues such as minimum wage adjustment, which require strong technical capacity, established consultations mechanisms and informed negotiation among Government, employers and workers.

Interventions under this strategic axis will seek to **strengthen institutional capacity by promoting transparent and accountable governance, deepening social dialogue with workers and employers, and developing a robust LMIS that supports evidence-based decision-making and responsive labour policies**, through:

- ▶ The capacity building of the Statistical Office (hire and train staff) to collect and analyse employment surveys (including enterprise surveys, labour force surveys or easy to implement ad hoc surveys);
- ▶ Conduct labour market analyses to anticipate seasonal layoffs and employment disruptions, enabling the timely implementation of targeted workforce and income-support interventions;
- ▶ The use of labour-market data to guide policy formulation, align training systems with workforce needs, and monitor institutional performance;
- ▶ The capacity building of employer groups and unions to engage in evidence-based employment policy dialogue;
- ▶ The implementation of “intent-to-employ” and entry-level employment pathways developed under the first pillar of this policy;
- ▶ The establishment of sectoral and national employment dialogue mechanisms with formal private-sector participation;
- ▶ The commissioning of preparatory studies on selected labour market issues, such as wage-setting and minimum wage review processes, to inform future social dialogue and policy discussion; and
- ▶ The rolling out of employment services (definition of their mission, training of counsellors and establishment of service centres).

6 The NEP framework

Strategic objective	Specific objective	Outcome	Key outputs	Monitoring and evaluation indicator	Primary responsibility
1. Attracting and retaining labour To increase sustainable local employment and talent retention by promoting the labour market integration of young people, implementing intent-to-employ agreements for returning students, and ensuring fair, competitive compensation and benefits aligned with industry standards.					
	1.1 Improve labour market integration of youth	Reduced youth unemployment and smoother school-to-work transitions	▶ National Action Plan for Youth Employment adopted and operational. ▶ Expanded RATED programme with increased beneficiary and employer participation. ▶ Formalised “intent-to-employ” agreement framework linking students abroad/HLSCC with local employers. ▶ Entry-level employment pathway established, including paid internships, apprenticeships, and sectoral rotations.	Outcome indicators ▶ % reduction in skilled labour out-migration. ▶ % of returning students employed in BVI within 6 months. ▶ % reduction in youth unemployment rate. Output indicators ▶ National Action Plan formally adopted. ▶ Increase in number of RATED beneficiaries. ▶ Number of “intent-to-employ” agreements signed. ▶ Entry-level employment pathway framework adopted. ▶ Number of MSME participants completing disaster preparedness training.	MFSEDDT
	1.2 Valorise essential occupations to retain local competences	Improved attractiveness and retention in essential and public-interest occupations	▶ Conduct a comprehensive review of compensation and benefits, including pension adequacy and non-wage benefits, benchmarked against regional and international comparators to strengthen talent attraction and retention in the public sector and statutory bodies.		▶ MFSEDDT ▶ SSB
	1.3 Prepare MSMEs for climate resilience	Improved continuity of employment during climate shocks	▶ Disaster preparedness and business continuity modules integrated into MSME training programmes.		▶ BVO Chamber of Commerce

Strategic objective	Specific objective	Outcome	Key outputs	Monitoring and evaluation indicator	Primary responsibility
	1.4 Harness labour migration for the development of the labour market and the economy.	Reduced labour shortages and increased job opportunities for BVI nationals abroad, as well as for skills exchanges.	▶ Conduct a Labour Market Assessment and a stakeholder assessment with a labour migration focus. ▶ Develop a national labour migration policy covering both BVI as a country of origin and destination. ▶ Successful draft and negotiate bilateral labour migration agreements with selected countries and territories.	▶ National Labour Migration Policy formally adopted. ▶ # of Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements negotiated and signed. ▶ # of migrant workers coming into and leaving the country in the framework of the BLMAs.	▶ MFSEDDT
2. Education, training and skills Build a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready skills ecosystem that continuously aligns workforce capabilities with evolving labour-market demands by strengthening lifelong learning systems, expanding training capacity, and fostering robust employer engagement in skills development					
	2.1 Prepare for an ageing workforce	Extended productive working lives and improved knowledge transfer.	▶ Expanded lifelong learning system providing upskilling, reskilling, and credential pathways across career stages.	Outcome indicators ▶ Labour force participation rate of workers 55+. ▶ % of graduates employed within 6 months. Output indicators ▶ Number of new lifelong learning pathways developed.	▶ MEYAS
	2.2 Reduce skills mismatches	Strengthened TVET systems to align with labour market demand.	▶ Expanded national training capacity through strengthened partnerships and sector-specific training hubs. ▶ National Mentor-Apprenticeship Programme established and operational. ▶ Labour-market intelligence system established to monitor skills demand and inform policy. ▶ Centralised Government Apprenticeship Registry System operational across designated sectors.	▶ Number of apprenticeship placements created. ▶ Registry system operational. ▶ Number of employers participating in training schemes. ▶ Number of apprenticeship programmes standardised	▶ MEYAS

Strategic objective	Specific objective	Outcome	Key outputs	Monitoring and evaluation indicator	Primary responsibility
	2.3 Incentivise employer investment in training.	Higher employer participation in workforce development.	▶ Tax incentive and co-financed training framework established to support employer-led workforce development. ▶ Expanded national training capacity through (1) partnerships with regional and international institutions; (2) investment in technical and vocational education; and (3) development of sector-specific training hubs.	and aligned with the National Qualifications Framework.	▶ MEYAS
	2.4 Develop an inclusive, resilient and future-proof workforce.	A resilient, competitive and inclusive workforce.	▶ Inclusive access to training opportunities for youth, women, persons with disabilities, and underserved communities. ▶ Digital transformation promoted by integrating digital literacy, advanced technologies, and future-skills training across all learning pathways.		▶ MEYAS
3. Social protection					
Build a resilient and equitable support framework for seasonal workers through adaptive unemployment benefits and expanded off-season training.					
	3.1 Address employment shocks and seasonality.	Reduced income volatility for workers affected by unemployment, seasonal layoffs, and economic shocks.	▶ Unemployment benefit system studied, including financing options, and progressively deployed. ▶ Employment-services-based referral and activation arrangements established for beneficiaries.	Outcome indicator ▶ % of workers receiving short-term or unemployment support who are in employment 6 months after the end of support. Output indicators ▶ Number or share of affected workers supported during declared shocks	▶ SSB

Strategic objective	Specific objective	Outcome	Key outputs	Monitoring and evaluation indicator	Primary responsibility
		Improved employment continuity and job retention during temporary economic and sector-specific disruptions.	▶ Short-time work/employment-retention mechanism designed and piloted for shock periods. ▶ Off-season training and reskilling programme operational.	▶ Share of seasonal workers accessing training and employment services ▶ Share of beneficiaries returning to employment within a defined period	
4. Institutional capacity and governance Strengthen institutional capacity by promoting transparent and accountable governance, deepening social dialogue with workers and employers, and developing a robust LMIS that supports evidence-based decision-making and responsive labour policies.					
	4.1 Develop a modern, integrated LMIS that collects, analyses, and shares timely labour-market data to support evidence-based decision-making.	Evidence-based employment and training policy and planning.	▶ Strengthened operational, statistical and analytical capacity of the Central Statistics Office. ▶ Labour Force Survey conducted and analysed. ▶ Operational labour-market intelligence system to anticipate seasonal layoffs and trigger timely, targeted interventions. ▶ Data-sharing agreement between CSO, SSB and Department of Labour and Workforce Development.	Outcome indicators ▶ Number of employment, training or labour market programmes formulated or revised annually based on labour market information and tripartite consultation. Output indicators ▶ Number of statistical staff hired and trained ▶ Labour force survey launched ▶ Number of employment service centres established.	▶ CSO ▶ SSB ▶ MFSEDDT

Strategic objective	Specific objective	Outcome	Key outputs	Monitoring and evaluation indicator	Primary responsibility
	4.2 Develop social dialogue	Institutionalised tripartite dialogue on employment policy governance.	▶ Revised mandate and operational framework for the tripartite committee to support NEP implementation. ▶ Sectoral and national employment dialogue platform established with formal private-sector participation. ▶ Employer groups equipped with the technical, analytical and negotiation skills needed to engage in evidence-based dialogue on employment and wage-related issues. ▶ Workers' organisations are supported in the progressive development of a representative organised labour platform and equipped to engage in evidence-based employment policy dialogue on employment and wage-related issues.	▶ Number of counsellors hired and trained. ▶ Number of users of the employment centres. ▶ Formal social dialogue platform established. ▶ Number of capacity building activities on social dialogue carried out. ▶ Number of sectors represented by trade unions. ▶ Number of labour policy statements prepared through the organised labour platform. ▶ Number of staff trained in digital systems and compliance monitoring.	▶ Workers' and employers' representatives
	4.3 Strengthen employment services.	Improved job matching and employability support.	▶ National employment service system operational, including service centres and trained counsellors. ▶ Entry-level employment pathways implemented. ▶ "Intent-to-employ" agreements implemented.		▶ MFSEDDT
	4.4 Strengthen labour governance and administration	Efficient, transparent, and accountable labour administration delivering timely, evidence-based services and enforcement.	▶ Standardised and digitised labour administration systems established. ▶ Institutional capacity strengthened through training and operational reforms.		▶ MFSEDDT

7 Implementation provisions

To balance broad stakeholder ownership while ensuring agility, accountability and an effective policy, the NEP will adopt a tiered governance structure distinguishing between strategic oversight and operational coordination.

1. National Employment Tripartite Council

The existing multidisciplinary Technical Drafting Committee will be formalised as a National Tripartite Employment Council, serving as the tripartite and cross-Government oversight body responsible for:

- ▶ Strategic guidance
- ▶ Validation of annual priorities
- ▶ Social dialogue platform
- ▶ Review of performance
- ▶ Recommendation of adjustments.

The organisational arrangement of the National Tripartite Employment Council will build on that of the initial Technical Drafting Committee⁵. It will continue to be chaired by the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation – as the Ministry in charge of labour-related policies and initiatives under which the Department of Labour and Workforce Development is located –, and co-chaired by the Ministry of Finance. However, its composition may be updated to include key stakeholders, such as the Social Security Board, the Central Statistical Office or the HLSCC.

The Council should maintain a close reporting relationship with Cabinet to ensure policy coordination and follow-up at the highest level. This is facilitated at present by the fact that the Premier and Minister of Finance is also responsible for the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation. Should ministerial portfolio assignments change in the future, appropriate arrangements should be made to preserve effective reporting links between the labour portfolio and Cabinet.

Members of the Council should also have clearly defined responsibilities in relation to the NEP's implementation and benefit from capacity-building. In this regard, the ILO's Self-Assessment Method for Social Dialogue Institutions (SAM-SDI) may provide a useful entry point for strengthening the inclusiveness and effectiveness of the Council and related social dialogue mechanisms.

2. National Employment Policy Secretariat

Day-to-day implementation of the NEP will be led by the Department of Labour and Workforce Development through a dedicated National Employment Policy Secretariat housed within the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation. The Secretariat, under the technical oversight of the Labour Commissioner, will coordinate implementation across responsible ministries and agencies, maintain monitoring and performance tracking systems, consolidate progress reports, and provide technical and administrative support to the National Tripartite Employment Council.

⁵ The composition of the Technical Drafting Committee is provided in Annex 4.

A capacity-building programme shall be developed and delivered to Council members and Secretariat staff to enhance competencies in labour market analysis, policy monitoring, wage setting issues, fiscal alignment and effective tripartite engagement.

8 Monitoring and evaluation framework

The British Virgin Islands' Employment Policy (2026-2030) will be monitored through a results-based framework aligned with its strategic objectives, outcomes and outputs. Monitoring will rely on a set of output and outcome indicators under each strategic axis, with clear assignment of responsibilities to the relevant ministries and agencies. The National Employment Policy Secretariat will consolidate administrative and statistical data, maintain a central performance tracking system, and prepare an annual progress report for review by the National Tripartite Employment Council and submit to Cabinet.

Given existing data gaps, strengthening labour market statistics will be a priority of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework. At present, several key labour market indicators, such as unemployment and youth unemployment rates, labour force participation rates, employment-to-population ratios or sectoral employment distribution, are not available. These indicators will only become available once a labour force survey is conducted and institutionalised as a recurring statistical exercise. Until then, administrative data will be used, which will be complemented with survey data as an integrated labour market information system is gradually implemented.

A mid-term review will be undertaken in 2028 to assess progress, identify implementation constraints, and recommend adjustments where required. In 2030, a final evaluation will assess the effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of the Policy and inform the next policy cycle.

9 Annexes

- Annex 1. Development process of the NEP
- Annex 2. Developing a pathway to employment for young persons aged 16-29
- Annex 3. Blue economy projects
- Annex 4. Composition of the Technical Drafting Committee

Annex 1. Development process of the NEP

The development of this NEP followed directly from the publication of the *Employment Diagnostic Analysis: British Virgin Islands* in 2025. Based on a review of available data and consultations with key stakeholders, the diagnostic analysis recommended developing an NEP and structuring it around four main axes:

1. attracting and retaining labour;
2. skills and employability;
3. social protection and other supports; and
4. institutional capacity and governance.

Following the publication of the diagnostic analysis, an international consultant was jointly selected by the ILO and the Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation (MFSEDDT), the Ministry in charge of labour, to support the development of the NEP.

The consultant adopted a similar methodological approach than that of the Employment diagnostic to translate its findings into a coherent policy framework. The main steps of this approach were:

- ▶ Desk research to follow up on the recommendations of the diagnostic analysis and review the relevant policy and institutional context;
- ▶ A two-day consultation workshop in the BVI with the members of the Technical Drafting Committee. The workshop objectives were to: (i) present the findings of the diagnostic analysis; (ii) provide an overview of the employment policy formulation process; and (iii) initiate policy discussions with the participants;
- ▶ Bilateral consultations with members of the Technical Drafting Committee to explore the issues raised during the workshop in greater depth; and
- ▶ Further online consultation with the Committee members to draw the BVI policy landscape.

Based on the information collected, the consultant prepared a first draft of the NEP, which was submitted to the MFSEDDT and ILO Specialists for review. Their comments were subsequently incorporated into a second draft, which was presented to the Technical Drafting Committee for comments and validation.

Annex 2. Developing a pathway to employment for young persons aged 16-29

Target group: Young person ages 16-29.

Programme focus: Developing a pathway to employment.

It is imperative to look at the issues of youth employment in different phases and in the broader context. The phases involve the following:

1. Young individuals before they enter the education system.
2. Those individuals that are currently in the education system,
3. Those individuals that have passed through the system and need employment.

The purpose of this programme is to lead to a mechanism/system that, in turn, results in the employment of young BVI Islanders.

This programme pertains to the five areas of action:

1. Registration

It is imperative that a system of registration be established to capture every young person that is unemployed. Every young person in the territory should know where to go to find employment in the Virgin Islands even before they need to work.

This unit/department must then be fully prepared to assist those registrants in finding employment.

2. Assessment

A thorough assessment of every registrant needs to be done to aid with preparation and placement.

The assessment will fall in the following areas:

- a) Employability based on background history etc.;
- b) Level of work experience;
- c) Personality profile assessment; and
- d) Job interest or business interest.

The list of registrants will vary from individuals with some work experience and are pretty much ready to enter the workforce on one end, to those that have social, family, and personal challenges and need some level of support/treatment before entering the workforce.

This step is critical for successfully placing individuals in jobs. The aim is to find the best possible fit for each individual. The emphasis is not only for them to find a job but also to enable them to keep the job.

An important part of the assessment is addressing the emotional state/readiness of each individual. Many of our young people are dealing with very personal challenges starting with the home and some level of peer pressure/bad influence from their peers.

Under this point, each individual should know what jobs they are best suited for and will guide to what positions they apply.

3. Preparation

Preparation involves the following:

- a) Resume and cover letter preparation;
- b) Job application process; and
- c) Job interview preparation.

4. Placement

Placement is an important step in the process. Placement begins with someone working with the registrants and developing a relationship with both the public and the private sector. It is important that employers know that there is a support mechanism connected to the person they are looking to employ.

This individual will learn the unique nuances of the different industries and sectors that will allow for capacity building with the programme.

5. Support

Once the individual has successfully gained employment, a support mechanism should be put in place to assist the individual. The main reason for this is the following:

- a) The new employee may lack important skills needed for the place where they are working, i.e., experience and soft skills.
- b) The employer might not have an employee handbook.
- c) Individuals in positions of leadership may lack leadership skills/abilities.
- d) The business might not have a human resource manager or a human resource presence.

This can prove very challenging for young people who might be new to the workplace and have unrealistic expectations of the job.

When challenges arise there should be someone outside the workplace that can function as an intermediary and keep things in a positive forward trajectory.

Conclusion - Broader implications for the VI

The broader implications for the VI is to engage the home situation and the education system as they play a critical role in the ultimate preparation and readiness of our people. We must develop a long-term plan for the territory beginning with our young children who will eventually become the leaders of tomorrow.

Our education system must be intentional and not just rooted in the current state of the VI but must consider what the VI will be like 20 years down the road. What will be the key industries of the future, and the manpower required and needed. We must begin the process of preparing our citizens now.

From a Policy perspective can we look at the following regarding employment of our younger citizens? We can develop policy that guide the following key areas:

1. Registration: Should graduates be required to register upon graduation?
2. Assessment: Should this be required of employers?
3. Preparation: Should this happen prior to graduation?
4. Placement: This already exist for BVI Islanders.

5. Support: This is an HR function – every organization should have this.

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Annex 3. Blue economy projects

Establishment of protected areas network

Programme focus: Establishment of a network of protected areas, or expansion of the existing network of protected areas, commensurate with other Territories within the Blue Belt.

Suggested interventions:

- ▶ **Comprehensive Assessment of Fisheries Protected Areas:** Evaluating the ecological health, management effectiveness, and long-term viability of current and proposed fisheries protected areas identified in the Protected Areas Systems Plan, with recommendations for management.
- ▶ **Fisheries Protected Areas Boundary Demarcation and Charting Project:** Installing physical boundary markers and updating printed and digital navigational charts to clearly delineate existing Fisheries Protected Areas for improved management and user awareness.
- ▶ **Rhone Marine Park Monitoring Station Installation Project:** Establishing a fully equipped monitoring facility on Dead Chest adjacent to the Wreck of the Rhone Marine Park.
- ▶ **Representative Coastal Habitat Evaluation Initiative:** Mapping, assessing, and categorising key coastal ecosystems including salt ponds, mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs to determine conservation priorities and restoration potential.

Comprehensive marine management

Programme focus: Development of a comprehensive marine management framework for sustainable management of human activities

- ▶ **Offshore Marine Mammal Biodiversity and Protection Assessment Project:** Combining existing data with field surveys to assess marine mammal species diversity beyond Territorial waters and recommend appropriate conservation protection mechanisms.
- ▶ **Critical Spawning Habitat Assessment and Conservation Planning Initiative:** Conducting systematic surveys to locate and assess spawning sites for red hind, snappers, groupers, and other key fish species, followed by evaluation of conservation needs and development of species-specific protection measures e.g., protected areas with buffer zones, closed seasons etc.
- ▶ **FZ Satellite-based Monitoring and Compliance Initiative:** A real-time satellite tracking and enforcement mechanism to enhance surveillance coverage and regulatory compliance throughout the wider Exclusive Fishing Zone (EFZ)
- ▶ **Comprehensive Marine Spatial Planning Project for the VI:** Development of a marine spatial plan (including baseline data collection, ecological assessment, socio-economic analysis and stakeholder engagement), in tandem with developing a VI Ocean Policy to guide sustainable marine resource management, conservation planning, and blue economy development across the VI's territorial waters and exclusive economic fisheries zone
- ▶ **Value Chain Analysis (VCA) studies into:**
 - the economic contribution of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and the necessary infrastructure/ cooperative arrangements needed to support the opportunities raised by the Study; and

- the economic contribution of the sports fishing industry for The VI and associated regulatory enforcement measures required to maximise its potential.
- ▶ **Sargassum Storage and Treatment Facility Planning Initiative:** Conducting site assessments and feasibility studies to identify optimal locations for Sargassum storage and processing facilities, with technical support for site preparation and treatment infrastructure development. The Virgin Island's Government (VIG) proposes to secure the raw material, treat/prepare it for safe handling, and then (using a cost-recovery mechanism), make it available as a natural resource for 3rd parties (mainly in private or academic sectors) to use in green innovative projects, research initiatives and cascading business models.
- ▶ **Fisheries Infrastructure Assessment and Data Systems Enhancement Project:** Analysing proposed infrastructure improvement plans and designing and implementing strategies to enhance data collection, monitoring, and information management across all fisheries facilities.
- ▶ **Fish Stock Assessment Capacity Development Project:** Establishing standardised protocols and procedures for conducting fish stock assessments while providing training to build local expertise and ensure sustainable implementation of assessment methodologies.

Robust legislative framework

Programme focus: Establishment of a robust legislative and enforcement regime for the protection of the marine environment

- ▶ **Climate Change and Environmental Regulations Development Initiative:** Drafting a detailed regulatory framework and compliance standards to support the effective implementation of the Environment and Climate Change Bill.
- ▶ **Virgin Islands Ocean Policy Development Project:** Developing the Virgin Islands Ocean Policy framework, aligned with the OECS Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy (ECROP), through stakeholder engagement, and scientific assessment. This framework will provide strategic guidance for sustainable marine resource management, and blue economy development across Virgin Islands waters.

Adaptive Management Review

Programme focus: Ensure an adaptive management review cycle is established to review and amend, where necessary, conservation and management measures for the protection of the marine environment

- ▶ **Fisheries Data Collection Standards Development and Training Initiative:** Creating standardised data collection protocols and conducting an annual workshop to ensure consistent application of robust data collection and storage methodologies throughout the fisheries sector

Annex 4. Composition of the Technical Drafting Committee

- ▶ Ministry of Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation (MFSEDDT) - Chair
- ▶ Ministry of Finance - Co-Chair
- ▶ Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change - Member
- ▶ Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development - Member
- ▶ Ministry of Health and Social Development - Member
- ▶ Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports - Member
- ▶ Deputy Governor's Office - Member
- ▶ Minister with responsibility for Labour's Representative - Member
- ▶ Labour Commissioner – Member
- ▶ BVI Chamber of Commerce Representative - Member
- ▶ Private Sector Representatives (2)
- ▶ Worker's Representatives (2)
- ▶ Civil Society Representatives (2)
- ▶ Sister Island Representatives (including one Youth) – Jost Van Dyke
- ▶ Sister Island Representatives (including one Youth) – Anegada
- ▶ Sister Island Representatives (including one Youth) – Virgin Gorda