



GOVERNMENT OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS

GOVERNANCE REFORM TRANSITION PLAN (GRTP)



Plan to transition from the targeted implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry (COI) to wider and ongoing governance reform.

February 2025

Governance Reform Transition Plan (GRTP)

Version 5.0

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Governance Reform Transition Plan (GRTP) is to facilitate the transition from the targeted implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry (COI) to wider and ongoing governance reform.

The GRTP encompasses completing the COI recommendations through the assentation and bringing into force process; completing the COI Review and assessments; initiating the medium to long term COI reforms; implementing the approved COI policies and legislation; building public awareness and education about COI policy and legislation changes; instituting monitoring and evaluation of implemented COI reforms; building institutional strength and making systemic changes where changes are found to be not fit for purpose. There is a massive amount of education and awareness building that is required, both internally to the Government and within the wider community, for the value and benefits of the changes to be fully realised by the public.

The GRTP will continue to build on the collaborative relationship between the Governments of the Virgin Islands (VI) and the United Kingdom (UK) to achieve tangible and sustainable governance reform that will support a modern partnership based on mutual trust, respect, and cultural understanding, which recognises the Virgin Islands' right to self-determination.

2.0 GRTP OBJECTIVES

GRTP will focus on seven areas as follows:

1. **Completion of COI Recommendations:** Supporting the completion of the post legislative processes to get legislation assented to and brought into force, as well as complete Other Reforms the Government agreed to undertake.
2. **COI Review and Evaluation:** Completing the review and evaluation process and establishing the time and conditions under which the Order in Council held in reserve will be lifted.
3. **Ongoing Governance Reform:** Strengthening the governance of the Virgin Islands as a high priority under the following two ongoing governance reform initiatives:
 - a. **Medium to Long Term Governance Reform:** Completing the actions from the Ministerial Action Plan that were designated for implementation in the medium to long term.

- b. **Policy and Legislation Implementation:** Implementing the policies and legislation coming out of the implementation of the COI recommendations. This includes education and training of public officers and instituting new procedures, processes, and protocols to ensure recommendations are institutionalised.
- 4. **Public Education:** Launching a campaign to make the public aware of the impacts of the recommendations implemented, the improved changes to how Government services work and how the public can access the resources and information they need in order to realise the benefits and value of reforms.
- 5. **Monitoring and Evaluation of Reforms:** Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of legislation, policies, processes, procedures, and access to information, to ensure the plans implemented achieve their stated objectives and documenting the evidence of their effectiveness/ineffectiveness.
- 6. **Institutional Development and Strength:** Implementing plans to strengthen Government's capability, resources, and institutions to conduct and sustain the reform changes.
- 7. **Systemic Change:** Using evidence gathered from the monitoring and evaluation phase to adjust processes, policies, and legislation to ensure that the level of governance is fully relevant, applicable and works in the best interest of the Virgin Islands.

3.0 SUPPORTING GRTP

The implementation of the GRTP requires a support structure like that used for the implementation of the 48 COI recommendations. As such the following support structure will support the GRTP:

- 1. **The Governance Reform Coordination (GRC):** The Governance Reform Coordination function will be led by the Premier's Office. Conference rooms and virtual meeting facilities are available for the Governor's Office team to meet with the Governance Reform Delivery Manager (GRDM) and staff of the Strategy and Policy Unit.
- 2. **Meeting Structure:** Ongoing collaboration between the Governor's Office team and the GRDM, supported by the COI Implementation Unit staff will continue. The following meeting structure will support the implementation of GRTP:
 - a. **Coordination Meetings** between the Governor and Premier, as required, to keep GRTP high on the priority list, address issues hindering implementation and keep Cabinet updated of progress.

- b. Monthly meeting of the **Steering Committee** of Permanent Secretaries and senior public officers to coordinate the execution of the GRTP in relation to the various objectives.
 - c. Meeting of the **Tripartite Working Groups** of cross government officials, as required, to support implementation of the Medium to Long-Term Reforms as required based on the recommendation of the Steering Committee.
3. **Administrative Support and Coordination:** The GRC structure will continue to provide the administrative and coordination support needed to execute the GRTP.

4.0 MAINSTREAMING GOVERNANCE REFORM

Following the completion of the review and evaluation phase of the COI, it is planned that the GRTP will be mainstreamed into the Premier's Office as the coordinating ministry of Government, in collaboration with the Deputy Governor's Office which is responsible for the Public Service Transformation Programme (PSTP). This collaboration will be guided by the Modern Governance Policy for the Public Sector produced in 2023 and which will be revised and submitted to Cabinet for approval along with the proposed collaboration.

The collaboration between governance reform and public administration reform will allow the governance and administrative reform agendas to be integrated into one coordinated reform programme and executed collaboratively between the Premier's Office and the Deputy Governor's Office with the respective Permanent Secretaries acting as co-chairs.

The supporting structure for the coordinated reform agenda will be formalised between the Deputy Governor's Office.

5.0 IMPLEMENTING THE GRTP OBJECTIVES

The seven GRTP objectives are outlined below and the implementation timeframe indicated:

1. **Completion of COI Recommendations:** The completion of the 48 COI recommendations, including the assent process and bringing the legislation into force are targeted for completion by the end of first quarter 2025.
2. **COI Review:** It is anticipated that the process of completing the COI Review and evaluations, inclusive of public feedback, and the timeline and conditions under which the Order in Council will be lifted would be completed by the end of the first quarter 2025.

3. **Ongoing Governance Reform:** Ongoing governance reform will be executed in accordance with the attached Governance Reform Implementation Action Plan. (**Appendix I**) which has the following two elements:
- Medium to Long Term Governance Reform:** This includes actions from the 48 COI recommendations that fell outside the initial two-year implementation period, such as amending the remaining statutory boards legislation (B36), amending the Constitution for Judge only trials (B42), amending Criminal Procedure Rules (B45) and other actions. Additionally, there are Action Plans approved by Cabinet in relation to Statutory Boards (B24, B25), Discretionary Powers (A03), Public Assistance (B07) and other recommendations. It also includes Action Plans approved by Cabinet in relation to specific recommendations and actions from recommendations made by the reviewers of the various recommendations that Cabinet approved such as recommendations in the Residency and Belonger Status Review (B33) and other Cabinet approved reviewer reports. The Governance Reform Implementation Action Plan reflects the implementation of the Medium to Long Term Reforms and is attached as **Appendix I**.
 - Policy and Legislation Implementation:** This includes a total of 8 COI related policies were approved by Cabinet (**Table 1 below**) and 15 COI related pieces of legislation passed by the House of Assembly (**Table 2 below**)

Table 1 - COI Policies Passed in Cabinet

Discretionary Powers Policy (A03)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 57 - Social Security (Employment Injury Benefits) Regulations) • Section 175 (3) - Public Finance Management Regulations 	
Social Assistance Programme Design and Monitoring Evaluation Framework (B07)	
Emergency Disaster Management Fund Policy (B07)	
Civil Mitigation Policy (B07)	
Institutional and Non-Institutional Grant Policy (B07)	
Statutory Boards Policy (B26)	
Crown Lands Policy (B30)	
Residency and Belongership Status Policy (B33)	

Table 2 - COI Legislation Passed in the House of Assembly

Audit (Amendment Act, 2022 (No. 8 of 2022)	A04
Register of Interest (Amendment) Act, 2024 (No. 5 of 2024)	B04
Immigration and Passport (Amendment) Act, 2024 (No. 6 of 2024)	B33

Crown Lands Management Act, 2024 (No. 7 of 2024)	B30
Public Assistance (Amendment) Act, 2024 (No. 10 of 2024)	B07
Virgin Islands Inquiries Act, 2024 (No. 11 of 2024)	B01
Integrity in Public Life (Amendment) Act, 2024 (No. 12 of 2024)	B04
Service Commissions (Amendment) Act, 2024 (No. 13 of 2024)	B39
Public Service Management Act, 2024 (No. 14 of 2024)	B36
Parliamentary Commission for Standards Act, 2024 (No. 21 of 2024)	B05
Health Services Authority (Amendment) Act, 2024	
H. Lavity Stouff Community College (Amendment) Act, 2024	
BVI Tourist Board (Amendment) Act, 2024	
National Parks Trust (Amendment) Act, 2024	
Ports Authority (Amendment) Act, 2024	B26

Each of the affected Ministries created a Policy and Legislation Implementation Plan setting out how the above policies and legislations would be implemented within their respective Ministries. Those Plans were amalgamated into a single plan setting out the actions and milestones required to effectively implement the changes and the time in which the actions will be undertaken. The Governance Reform Implementation Action Plan (GRIAP) reflects the implementation of the policies and legislation coming out of the COI and is attached as **Appendix 1**.

- 4. Public Education:** The public needs a massive amount of education to process and digest the significant changes brought on by the implementation of the recommendations of the COI. A paradigm shift has taken place in the governance of the Virgin Islands and unless the public is educated on the changes and their benefits, the effort would have been fruitless. Additionally, unless the critical feedback from the public on the relevance and effectiveness of the reform is used to strengthen governance, then reforms would not be fit for purpose and would retard the growth of the Virgin Islands as a nation.

The GRTP Communication Plan was coordinated by the Director of Communications in the Premier's Office, in collaboration with the various Ministries and Communication Officers to provide a full multi-media, social media driven and integrated campaign to build public awareness and education on the changes in governance that resulted from the implementation of the COI recommendations.

The GRTP Communication Plan will educate the public on what has changed, how it impacts their lives, how they can access the information on the changes and how to interact with the Government to gain the full benefit and value of the services that resulted from the changes brought on by the COI. The GRTP Communication Plan will convey the benefits of the COI implementation and

other reform initiatives and their importance and impact on the lives of the people of the Virgin Islands and the development of the Territory. A copy of the GRTP Communication Plan is attached as **Appendix II**.

5. **Monitoring and Evaluation of Reforms:** As part of their internal and external communication and education programmes, Ministries will report at monthly Steering Committee meetings on feedback and concerns from internal and external stakeholders regarding the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of policies, legislation and processes under their Ministries and departments. Their feedback will be tracked and analysed by the GRC team and cases compiled according to the policy, legislation, or process in question. When sufficient evidence is compiled that the concern warrants change, the issue will be communicated to the respective Minister with a recommendation for action. The Minister may direct actions, including amendments to processes, policies, and legislation which the Ministry will be required to execute.

The Monitoring and Evaluation programme will begin in the February 2025 Steering Committee meeting.

6. **Institutional Development and Strengthening:** Each Ministry would have identified some capacity and resource constraints in preparing their input to the Governance Reform Implementation Action Plans. The feedback will be reviewed at the Steering Committee meetings and recommendations will be compiled on how to develop and strengthen Virgin Islands governance institutions in partnership with local, regional, and international institutions, and the UK Government. The recommendations will be submitted to Cabinet through the Premier's Office.

A focused programme on building strong institutions and capacity to strengthen governance across the public service would be an area of specific focus. Reports to the Premier are targeted for first quarter 2025.

7. **Systemic Change:** Evidence based changes will be compiled through the monitoring and evaluation process, confirmed by Steering Committee and forwarded to the Premier for submission to Cabinet. This is targeted to begin in March 2025.

6.0 THE WAY FORWARD

The implementation of the Governance Reform Transition Programme (GRTP) will capstone the most significant governance reform in the history of the Virgin Islands. As with the COI Recommendations and other reform initiatives implemented, it will help to establish a new governance platform upon which to build the future of the Territory.