



CHARTING OUR COURSE: SUSTAINING BERMUDA

*Draft Sustainable Development
Strategy and Implementation
Plan for Bermuda*



Government of Bermuda
June 2006

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Government of Bermuda
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Design and pre-press production: Department of
Communication and Information
Printed in Bermuda by the Bermuda Press Limited
July 2006

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Foreword by the Premier

On behalf of the Government of Bermuda, I am pleased to announce the launching of the public consultation phase on the draft Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan for Bermuda.

Bermuda has seen many changes over the centuries, and has weathered many storms. The decisions made since we were first settled have created the Bermuda we see today. We have much to be proud of, but we need to make some choices now to ensure that our way of life continues.

This draft document entitled *Charting our Course: Sustaining Bermuda* contains the sustainable development strategy for Bermuda, a plan for the implementation of proposed actions, and supporting annexes. The Plan is the result of wide consultation with Bermuda and includes proposals for sustaining those things which we as Bermudians consider integral to our quality of life.

We determined early on that the Plan should be more than the Government's perspective – it must be guided by the people and institutions of Bermuda. This initiative has been about brokering a new partnership for the future of Bermuda. It hasn't been plain sailing and it will have its challenges going forward. The process thus far has been a powerful example of the spirit of partnership, with the people of Bermuda working in good faith with each other, the community, the project team, and with the Government, to develop and deliver our common aim – a sustainable Bermuda.

This next phase of intensive consultation will be to ensure that all Bermudians have input to the proposals put forward. The public, as the most important stakeholder in the development of the proposals for further action, need to be assured that we have got the plan right. It is my sincere hope that the public will take this opportunity to engage in open and honest dialogue to help shape the way forward. This can only be achieved by participating wholeheartedly. Let us hear your voice.

The Sustainable Development Unit along with the Sustainable Development Round Table will carry out extensive public consultation this summer on the draft Plan. Once the consultation process has concluded, the Government will finalise and publish the final Plan.

We believe that Bermuda's draft Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan provides us with the foundation upon which to make decisions that represent the views of the people of Bermuda on the type of Bermuda they want to pass down to their children's children.

Please review the entire draft Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan which is available on the Government's web-site www.chartingourcourse.gov.bm and at public locations throughout Bermuda.

I encourage you to get involved in "Charting our Course" by reviewing the draft plan and responding in kind with your views on the proposals to the Sustainable Development Unit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Alexander Scott'.

The Honourable W. Alexander Scott, J.P. M.P.
Premier of Bermuda

Part One: Introduction

1. Why we need a Strategy

- 1.1 As a small island we have little ability to influence the tides and currents of global affairs but are strongly influenced by them. Our size and relative isolation makes us uniquely vulnerable to changes in the global economy and uniquely strong in being able to adapt quickly. It also allows a higher level of control over physical borders. A world where surprise, change and uncertainty are the norm requires a degree of forward planning, harnessing economic, environmental and social assets, to chart our course into the next century.
- 1.2 Bermuda's viability as a prosperous place to live and work has been due historically to its participation in the global economy. Examples include privateering, blockade running, ship building, tourism, insurance and reinsurance. The position in 2006 is no different. Bermuda must sustain its development in a world of rapid technological change and extreme mobility of human and economic resources.
- 1.3 We cannot know every decision and situation which this island will face in the future but we can:
 - Prepare ourselves for what we know is inevitable or a strong possibility.
 - Keep scanning the horizons so that we are forewarned of upcoming challenges and changes.
 - Ensure that our systems can react effectively to these upcoming challenges and changes.
 - Ensure that we know what we are aiming for so that as well as adapting flexibly to the future, Bermuda maintains the unique identity of which its residents are justly proud.
- 1.4 This draft Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan (SDSIP) is based on extensive consultation with the people, charities, organisations and businesses of Bermuda, as well as available statistical data and research on approaches of other jurisdictions.

2. What this Document contains

- 2.1 The Strategy sets out
 - a vision for Bermuda in the future, drawing on the many inputs received during public consultation in 2005
 - some of the major challenges or weaknesses which Bermuda must bear in mind and the strengths which Bermuda can draw upon in aiming for this vision

- six primary priorities for action
- other secondary priorities for action
- monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to enhance delivery of these priorities

2.2 The Implementation Plan takes these primary and secondary priorities and organises them under five key themes:

- Theme 1: Building and Maintaining an Inclusive Strong Economy
- Theme 2: Transforming Governance and the Public Sector
- Theme 3: Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Natural Resources
- Theme 4: Sustaining our Communities
- Theme 5: Living within Bermuda's Limits

2.3 The Implementation Plan takes each priority and

- offers some background, defining the particular issue in question;
- sets some short-term and medium-term objectives, and where possible, targets;
- offers some options for actions to achieve those objectives;
- suggests actors, both Governmental and non-Governmental;
- suggests timelines for delivery; and
- sets out what is already being undertaken by Government.

2.4 A sustainable development strategy and implementation plan is not the solution to everything that needs to be done. As with any plan, part of the process is to prioritise in order to focus efforts and resources where they are most needed.

2.5 It will not be possible to implement the actions in one fell swoop. Sustainability is a long road, but where we have been able to make immediate progress we have done so and where not, we have ensured that this document contains clear directions as to what is needed. It is an AGENDA for action – some of which is being done already, some of which will take time.

2.6 This strategy has been prepared drawing on best practice guidelines prepared by a number of organisations, including the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). All the nations of the UN agreed in 2002, that they would develop and begin implementing national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) by 2005. This strategy and implementation plan fulfils that commitment.

3. What is Sustainable Development?

3.1 There are many definitions of sustainable development. The landmark definition below first appeared in 1987:

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. ⁱ

- 3.2 Others go further than the above:
A sustainable society implicitly connotes one that is based on a long-term vision in that it must foresee the consequences of its diverse activities to ensure that they do not break the cycles of renewal; it has to be a society of conservation and generational concern. It must avoid the adoption of mutually irreconcilable objectives. Equally, it must be a society of social justice because great disparities of wealth or privilege will breed destructive disharmony.ⁱⁱ
- 3.3 The underlying trend running through most definitions of sustainable development is a consciousness of how actions that we carry out today will impact on societies at present and into the future.

4. What Makes a Good National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS)?

- 4.1 At the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) States committed to:
...take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005
Johannesburg Programme of Implementation, paragraph 162
- 4.2 The UN has also established that the overall objective for a NSDS is not to develop a new strategy document, but:
...to improve or restructure the decision-making process so that consideration of socio-economic and environmental issues is fully integrated and a broader range of public participation assured.
Agenda 21, 1992, paragraph 8.3
- 4.3 A strategy for sustainable development may therefore be taken to comprise a set of processes which seek to **integrate the economic, social, and environmental objectives of society**. It does not necessarily involve a development plan covering a fixed period of time, nor does it necessarily require a separate planning process.
- 4.4 Such strategies vary from country to country because they provide a tailored analytical framework rather than a fixed blueprint or template. They should be adaptable to different national needs, resource constraints and capacities.

International Guidelines

- 4.5 The basic criteria for a successful NSDS are well established. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has developed a set of guidelines intended mainly for developing countries and the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

has developed similar principles appropriate for all countries (OECD/DAC 2001, UNDESA 2002). Both sets of principles are accompanied by guidance on implementation.

- 4.6 International Guidelines for an NSDS set out the following characteristics of a sustainable development process:
- **Integration** of a country's economic, social, and environmental objectives.
 - **Effective participation** by the general public and non-Governmental bodies to develop consensus on a shared strategic and pragmatic long-term vision.
 - Ensure **continuity** of the strategy development process. Link the short-term to the medium-term and long-term objectives.
 - **Country-led** and nationally-owned rather than imposed externally.
 - High-level **government commitment** and influential lead institutions.
 - **Comprehensive and co-ordinated** policy process, based on reliable analysis.
 - Realistic, but flexible **targets** and clear **budgetary priorities**.
 - Incorporate **monitoring, evaluation, and feedback** mechanisms.
- 4.7 It must be noted that in any strategic planning process, political differences and vested interests can mean tensions may arise between government ownership and non-government stakeholder participation. Tensions may also arise between achieving political support and a transparent process involving wide participation. Reconciling such tensions is a key issue in making an effective NSDS a practical reality in all countries.
- 4.8 An approach is needed which addresses the tensions from both directions. First, capacity should be strengthened in all sectors of society for implementing NSDS principles, such as through improving mechanisms for stakeholder involvement in decision-making. The Sustainable Development Round Table is one such mechanism (see Option 2.2.A.1 in Theme 2), as was the extensive public consultation undertaken in the development of this SDSIP.
- 4.9 Second, a process of gradual reform of existing institutions and strategic planning mechanisms should be initiated which takes advantage of this increased capacity, and itself encourages further movement towards sustainability. The modernisation of the Civil Service is a major example of this.
- 4.10 This process of continual improvement should begin with an assessment of what reforms are needed, or in other words current unsustainable trends, and continue with ongoing assessments of the progress that has been made.