



Observatory on Strategies and Mechanisms for Effective Public Management

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

December, 2014

This Observatory is being reviewed by the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU)



General Information

General Information

By Country: Indicators of Public Management

1. The Commonwealth

[General Information](#): Presents key facts about Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Geography, society, economy, politics, amongst other)

2. The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)

[General Information](#): Presents general information about Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

3. Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

[Governance Indicators Database](#): Presents indicators and statistics about Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

4. The World Bank (WB)

[World Development Indicators](#): Presents indicators and statistics about Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

[Doing Business](#): The World Bank and International Finance Corporation compile statistics and indicators on the "Ease of Doing Business" in Saint Vincent. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is ranked 103 out of 185 economies per indicator, there is a list of the economy's distance to frontier (DTF) measure, and there are additional tables summarizing key indicators for each topic and benchmarked against regional and high-income economy (OECD) averages.

5. The United Nations (UN)

[World Statistics Pocketbook](#): Contains a series of economic, social, trade profile and environmental statistics and indicators.

By Country: Publications and Research Studies

1. Organization of American States (OAS)



[Public Management Guiding Institutions in the Americas](#) (2014) Organization of American States.

2. International Monetary Fund (IMF)

[St. Vincent and the Grenadines: Detailed Assessment Report on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism](#) (2010). International Monetary Fund

3. The World Bank (WB)

[World Development 2014 – Risk and Opportunity: Managing Risk for Development](#) (2014). The World Bank

4. The United Nations (UN) - Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

[Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy 2014: Regional integration and value chains in a challenging external environment](#) (2014). Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean



Long Term Vision

General Information

The Long-term vision of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is strictly linked to the [National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013 – 2025 \(NESDP\)](#)¹.

The methodology for formulating the Plan was hinged on the premise of inclusion and wide-ranging public participation. Accordingly, consultations were held in every constituency in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, thereby providing extensive opportunities for Vincentians at every level to make an input and to have a voice in the development process. It was felt that this approach would lead to greater “buy-in” and a sense of ownership.

The consultative approach was not restricted to Vincentians living at home. Twelve (12) consultations were held with the Vincentian community in major Caribbean and international cities. The consultations proved instructive, providing a number of suggestions, some of which have been incorporated in this plan.

In addition to the community consultations, the Plan also drew from a wide range of planning instruments. These included national, sub-regional, regional and international plans/strategies, including the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States’ (OECS’) Charter, and its Growth and Development Strategy, Eastern Caribbean Currency Union’s (ECCU’s) Growth and Stabilization Strategy, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) framework, Millennium Development Goals and the Mauritius Strategy for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) ([NESDP 2013 – 2025, page 19](#)).

The 2013-2025 Plan was formulated using the process illustrated below:



Source: National Economic and Social Development Plan, page 19

National Planning / Strategies

Introduction

Since the independence from Great Britain – in 1979 - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has developed three (3) National Development Plans, respectively for the period 1986 – 1988; 1991 –

¹ For more information on the NESDP 2013 – 2025, see Section “National Planning / Programmes”



1995; and the last one which is the [National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013 – 2025 \(NESDP\)](#).

The institution responsible for the overall supervision and monitoring of the [NESDP 2013 - 2025](#) is the [Economic Planning and Social Development Unit \(EPSDU\)](#) of the [Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning](#), which was also the entity responsible for the preparation of the Plan. Additionally, to further aid the process, eight (8) technical working groups were established, namely: 1. Culture, Identity and National Pride; 2. Economic Sector; 3. Social Capital; 4. Governance; 5. National Security; 6. Energy, Disaster Management and the Environment ; 7. Physical Infrastructure ; 8. Education, Telecommunications, Science and Technology.

The Plan offers a vision for improving the quality of life for all Vincentians and is anchored on the achievement of the following objectives ([NESDP, page 10](#)):

- High and sustained levels of economic growth;
- Reduced unemployment and poverty levels;
- Improved physical infrastructure and environmental sustainability;
- High levels of human and social development;
- A peaceful, safe and secure nation;
- A technologically advanced work-force;
- A deep sense of national pride and cultural renaissance;
- Regional integration; and
- Enhanced global solidarity

Institutional Framework

The government entity responsible for the promotion of national development through the formulation of public policies and strategies on the subject is the [Economic Planning and Social Development Unit \(EPSDU\)](#) of the [Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning](#).

The main functions of the [EPSDU](#) are:

- To formulate goals, objectives and development strategies for the national economy;
- To coordinate the preparation of development plans, socio-economic strategy papers and reviews;
- To coordinate the incorporation of social policies into development planning;
- To assist in the coordination and implementation of technical cooperation programmes;
- To provide advice on issues relevant to socio-economic planning and development; and
- To provide support services to the Cabinet Committee on the Economy (CCE) and the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC).

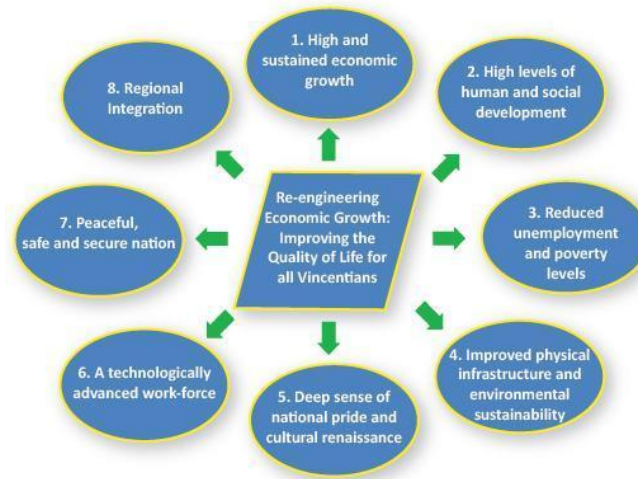
Strategies and Mechanisms

The last Plan developed by the government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is the [National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013 – 2025 \(NESDP\)](#) that seeks to outline a strategy to

achieve sustainable economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction leading to the improvement in the quality of life for Vincentians (NESDP, page 10).

In that regard, the NESDP 2013 – 2025 focuses on five (5) strategic objectives and corresponding strategies whose final aim is the realization of a comprehensive and sustainable country development. These objectives and strategies are, as follows:

FIGURE 1.1: ELEMENTS OF THE VISION



Source: National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013 – 2025 Page 16

Goals and objectives of the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013 – 2025

- **Goal 1: Re-engineering Economic Growth**
 - a) Objective 1.1: To maintain strong macroeconomic fundamentals;
 - b) Objective 1.2: To revitalize the agricultural and fisheries sector;
 - c) Objective 1.3: To stimulate growth in the tourism sector;
 - d) Objective 1.4: To develop the financial sector;
 - e) Objective 1.5: To enhance the role of the private sector and manufacturing in economic and social development in conjunction with the State and co-operative sectors;
 - f) Objective 1.6: To attain a strong and sustainable external trade position;
 - g) Objective 1.7: To develop the information and telecommunications services sector;
 - h) Objective 1.8: To enhance productivity and competitiveness;
 - i) Objective 1.9: To maximize benefits through integration into the OECS Economic Union, CSME and Global Economy; and
 - k) Objective 1.10: To boost economic activity in the construction sector.
- **Goal 2: Enabling increased human and social development**
 - a) Objective 2.1: To reduce poverty;



- b) Objective 2.2: To create jobs and reduce the levels of unemployment;
- c) Objective 2.3: To create an adaptable, functional and literate population;
- d) Objective 2.4: To promote self-care interventions and healthy lifestyle practices;
- e) Objective 2.5: To facilitate social, cultural and economic development at the community level;
- f) Objective 2.6: To empower the youth to meaningfully participate in and contribute to national development;
- g) Objective 2.7: To improve the housing and living conditions of the population; and
- h) Objective 2.8: To facilitate the protection and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

■ **Goal 3: Promoting Good Governance and increasing the effectiveness of Public Administration**

- a) Objective 3.1: To enhance participatory democracy, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of public goods and services;
- b) Objective 3.2: To develop and maintain a peaceful, safe and secure society;
- c) Objective 3.3: To lift the quality of the judicial and legal system and to enhance public confidence in it;
- d) Objective 3.4: To enhance the role of civil society in the maintenance of democracy; and
- e) Objective 3.5: To widen and deepen diplomatic relations.

■ **Goal 4: Improving physical infrastructure, preserving the environment and building resilience to climate change**

- a) Objective 4.1: To optimize the use of limited land space;
- b) Objective 4.2: To upgrade the road network in St. Vincent and the Grenadines;
- c) Objective 4.3: To improve air access to St. Vincent, including the construction of an International Airport;
- d) Objective 4.4: To modernize and expand seaport facilities;
- e) Objective 4.5: To enhance the capability of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to prepare effectively for, respond to and mitigate disasters;
- f) Objective 4.6: To ensure an adequate, safe, reliable and sustainable supply of water;
- g) Objective 4.7: To conserve the natural resources of the country through effective utilization and management;
- h) Objective 4.8: To ensure a clean, safe and healthy environment;
- i) Objective 4.9: To reduce the dependence on imported fuel; and
- k) Objective 4.10: To reduce the adverse impact of climate change.

■ **Goal 5: Building national pride, identity and culture**

- a) Objective 5.1: To instill in the citizenry a sense of national pride and appreciation of the history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines;



- b) Objective 5.2: To engender a grater sense of community and social responsibility;
- c) Objective 5.3: To preserve, maintain and promote the cultural heritage of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and
- d) Objective 5.4: To maximize the contribution of cultural industries to economic growth.

Public Budget

Introduction

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Consolidated Fund is the primary source in which all revenues or other monies raised or received by the State should flow into ([Section 68 of the Constitution](#)).

It is noteworthy that the [SVG Constitution](#) dedicates its [Chapter V](#) to the Finance topic, including the core principles related to the withdrawals from Consolidated Fund; the authorization of expenditure by appropriation law or in advance of it; among others.

Likewise, the main legal instruments regulating the Public Budget is the [Finance Administration Act of October 12th 2004](#), which provide for the management and control of public money, the operation and control of the Consolidated Fund and for the authorization of expenditures, among others; and the [Finance Audit Act of November 3rd 2005](#), that regulates the functions of the Audit Office related to the control and supervision of Public Accounts, among others.

In that regard, the entities responsible for the drafting and implementation of the Public Budget, as well as for its supervision are, namely: 1. the Minister of Finance; 2. the Director General; and 3. the Accountant General.

Institutional Framework

All aspects related to the public budget are organized and applied by three (3) main entities, whose functions and tasks are regulated by the [2004 Finance Administration Act](#). These are, namely:

- 1) The [Ministry of Finance](#) which holds the following functions, among others ([Section 5 of the Finance Administration Act of 2004](#)):
 - a) Prepare the annual and supplementary estimates;
 - b) The Government's fiscal management and control, including the management and control of revenue and expenditures and of the Consolidated Fund;
 - c) The management of the public debt, of the investment of public money and of loans and advances made and guarantees given by the Government
- 2) The Director General which has the following responsibilities, among others ([Section 6](#)):
 - a) The supervision of the Ministry of Finance;
 - b) To oversee the preparation of the annual and supplementary estimates on behalf of the Minister of Finance;
 - c) To advise the Minister of Finance.



- 3) The [Accountant General](#) which is responsible for, among others ([Section 7](#)):
- a) Maintaining the central accounts of the Government;
 - b) Receiving and banking of public money and overseeing its disbursement;
 - c) Preparing the Public Accounts and any other financial statement required by the Minister or the Director General;
 - d) Evaluating accounting and financial management systems throughout Government

Strategies and Mechanisms

The Minister of Finance shall prepare and present before the House of Assembly the annual estimates of the revenue and expenditures of the Government for that financial year. This document has to be presented not later than thirty (30) days after the commencement of the financial year of reference ([Section 24 par. 1 of the Finance Administration Act of 2004](#)).

The annual estimates shall contain the detailed description of the expenditures of the Government; the estimated amount of the expenditure to be incurred on each service; and the reference to the provision of the law that authorizes the expenditure to be charged on the Consolidated Fund.

Once the annual estimates are approved by the House of Assembly, the Minister shall introduce to the Parliament the Appropriation Bill providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure and the appropriation of those sums, under separate votes for the different services required.

Within a period of six months after the close of each financial year, the Accountant General shall submit to the Director of Audit accounts showing fully the financial position of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on the last day of each financial year ([Section 13 of the Finance and Audit Act of 2005](#)).

Professionalized Civil Service

Introduction

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is currently developing a massive reform of its Public Sector in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its Civil Service. To that end, the [Public Sector Reform Unit \(PSRU\)](#) was created, with the vision of facilitate transformation in the delivering of the highest quality service throughout the Public Sector.

The government entity in charge of the professionalized civil service in SVG is the [Ministry of Reconciliation, the Public Service, Labour, Information and Ecclesia](#), through its Service Commissions Department; nonetheless, the Constitution of 1979 provided also the creation of the Public Service Commission (PSC), responsible for appointments in the public service; disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices; and for the removal of public officials from their office ([Section 78 of the Constitution](#)).

Civil Service is mainly regulated by the [Civil Service Orders](#), entered into force on February 2, 1970.



Institutional Framework

The entity responsible for the planning and implementation of public policies related to the Public Service in the country is the [Ministry of Reconciliation, the Public Service, Labour, Information and Ecclesia](#), through the [Public Sector Reform Unit \(PSRU\)](#), whose main objective is to facilitate the transformation of the Public Sector through the provision of technical advice, information and guidance to Police Makers and Public Officers for the delivering of efficient and effective public service.

The other government institution responsible for all matters related to the public service and Human Resources Management is the Public Service Commission (PSC), created by the 1979 Constitution and whose main functions are the appointments in the public service; to exercise disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices; and to remove public officials from their office ([Section 78 of the Constitution](#)).

The structure of the PSC is as follows ([Section 77 of the Constitution](#)): 1. a chairman appointed by the Governor-General; 2. one (1) member appointed by the Governor-General; 3. neither less than one nor more than three other members appointed by the Governor-General.

The PSC also counts with the [Service Commissions Department](#), as autonomous body whose main functions are:

- To administer the general regulations relating to the Civil Service;
- To initiate and review policies affecting Public Service Personnel, Training and the general management of the Training Programme, including Scholarships, with the advice of the Training Committee;
- The improvement of management procedures and practices in Ministries/Department through Training Programmes;
- To facilitate the recruitment, selection, placement and retention of quality workers;
- To make optimum use of the knowledge and skills of all who demonstrate the potential for excellence;
- To implement and enforce the various Civil Service Orders, Public Service Regulations and Statutes governing the management of the Public Service;
- To enhance the responsiveness and the quality of service provided by the Service Commissions Department;
- To enhance Human Resources throughout the State through the development and delivery of quality programmes;
- To undertake Training Needs Assessment to adequately plan and deliver quality training programmes;
- To identify and source funds for training programmes;
- To identify Resource Personnel to facilitate/deliver quality training programmes.

Strategies and Mechanisms

This Guide has organized the Professionalized Civil Service in the following critical sections:

1. Entrance into the civil service



The Public Service Commission (PSC) has the power to appoint persons to hold or act in offices in the public service - including the power to confirm appointments ([Section 78 of the SVG Constitution](#)).

To be eligible for appointment to the Public Service a candidate must meet the following requirements ([Section 2.4 of the Civil Service Orders of 1970](#)):

- a) be over 17 years of age;
- b) possess such minimum educational qualification as may be prescribed from time to time;
- c) except in the case of appointment to the temporary staff, be certified by a government Medical Officer to be in sound health and mentally fit for employment in the Public Service; and
- d) produce two (2) recent certificates of good character, of which one, if the candidate has not previously been in employment, must be from the head of the school or college he last attended, or if he has previously been employed, from his last employer.

2. Training

Training is considered a fundamental phase in the professional development of civil officers of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The Service Commissions Department is the entity responsible for the administration of policies regarding officers' training and study-leave.

For what concerns specifically study leaves, these may be granted to an officer who is nominated by the Government to attend a course of study; or attends a course of study at his own request with the approval of the Government, which is given if the training or qualification obtained is likely to value to the Government.

Where an officer is nominated by the Government to attend a course of study or - having completed at least three years' service on the permanent establishment - receives a bursary or other award to attend a course of study which is considered to be directly beneficial to the government, the following provisions apply:

- a) if the duration of the course is less than 12 months the officer receives full salary; or
- b) if the period of the course is longer than 12 months, the officer receives one-half of the leave for which he may be eligible and is awarded study leave on full salary for a period not exceeding 12 months, and on half salary for the balance of the course.

If an officer on the permanent establishment - who has completed at least three years service - applies for permission to attend a course of study for which he/she is not given a bursary or other award, the application shall be forwarded to the Chief Personnel Officer with an opinion whether or not the officer's attendance at the course would be of benefit to the government. The Chief personnel Officer shall refer the application to the appropriate Service Commission with his recommendations. If the application is approved the following conditions apply ([Section 6.39 of the Civil Service Orders](#)):

- a) if the length of the course is less than 12 months the officer may be granted leave on full salary for the period; or
- b) if the length of the course is 12 months or more, the officer may be granted study leave as follows:
 - all the vacation leave for which he may be eligible as part of the study leave;



- full salary for a period of 12 months;
- half salary thereafter to the end of the course up to a maximum of 2 years.

3. Promotion and assessment

The effective date of a promotion is fixed by the Service Commission and it normally is the date upon which an officer who has been selected for promotion assumes the duty of the higher office which has fallen vacant ([Section 2.10 of the Civil Service Orders](#)).

If a civil servant is promoted to an office carrying salary on an incremental scale, the following provisions apply ([Section 4.4 of the Civil Service Orders](#)):

- a) If immediately prior to his promotion the salary of the officer was less than the minimum of the new office, he shall receive the minimum, but if the grant of the next increment in his former office would have brought his salary in that office up to the minimum of the scale of his new office, he shall be eligible for an increment in the new scale on completion of 12 months service from the date of his last increment;
- b) If immediately prior to his promotion the officer's salary was below the maximum of the scale of his office, he shall continue to receive his/her existing salary and twelve months after the date of his/her last increment shall be eligible for an increment in the new scale appropriate to the point of which he enters the scale; or
- c) If the maximum, or fixed, salary of his former office was not less than the minimum of the scale of his new office, and the officer has, at the date of his promotion, served at that maximum, or fixed, salary for a period exceeding one year, he shall immediately be eligible for an increment in the new scale appropriate to the point on the scale at which he enters.

Finally, for officers serving in the clerical grade, it is required to pass the clerical Officers' Promotion Examination before proceeding beyond a bar in the salary scale approved by the Service Commission ([Section 4.8 of the Civil Service Orders](#)).

4. Remuneration

Salaries in Public Service are determined by the Parliament and are provided in the Government's Annual Estimates of Expenditure approved by Parliament ([Section 4.1 of Civil Service Orders](#)).

Likewise, where the salary of any post is in an incremental scale, the officer appointed thereto on a permanent basis is paid initially the minimum salary of the scale and for the salary to be increased by annual increments at the rates provided until the maximum of the scale is reached ([Section 4.2](#)).

For what concerns the payment of salaries, the civil servant receives the full salary of his/her post from the date upon which he/she assumes the duties of the post. Salaries are normally paid on the last but one working day of the month or on such other day or days that may be determined by the Minister of Finance ([Section 4.3](#)).

5. Disengagement

The main causes of disengagement of a civil service from the Public Service of Saint Vincent of the Grenadines are, among others:



a) Resignation. An officer on probation or in a non-pensionable post other than a contract post may resign after giving not less than one (1) month notice in writing to the appropriate authority; while an officer who has been confirmed in his appointment to a pensionable post may resign after given not less than three (3) months notice in writing to the Chief personnel Officer. The appropriate authority may refuse to accept notice of resignation:

- if it is conditional;
- if the officer does not intend to complete a period of service for which he is bonded to serve the Government;
- if the officers is indebted to the government; or
- if disciplinary proceedings against the officer are contemplated or pending;

b) Retirement. An officer is required to retire on attaining the age of 55 year; or if he/she is reported by a Government Medical Officer to be incapable by reason of infirmity of mind or body of discharging efficiently the duties his/her office and the such infirmity is likely to be permanent ([Section 8.3](#));

c) Death. In the event of an officer dying in the public service, his/her Permanent Secretary is responsible for seeing that prompt application is made for any payment or gratuity that may be due ([Section 8.14](#)); and

d) Dismissal, provided as consequence of disciplinary proceedings in case of a misconduct of a serious nature.

Coordination

General Information

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes the important of inter-institutional coordination with the aim of achieving national goals and plans in a more sustainable effective, efficient and results-based way.

The entity responsible for the coordination among government ministers and for the implementation of inter-institutional coordination activities is the [Cabinet](#), which is composed by the Primer Minister and other Ministers part of the Executive Branch ([Section 52 of the Constitution](#)).

The [Cabinet](#) is the decision-making body for Government. It meets every week – usually on Wednesdays -, or as necessary, to make policy decisions based on submissions from the various ministries. It also serves as a forum where each minister gives an update on his/her ministry.

In carrying out its functions, the [Cabinet](#) can appoint different committees to deal with specific issues. These committees are formed as deemed necessary to give advice to Cabinet to assist it in making proper decisions and are dissolved after their missions have been accomplished. In that regard, one of the most recent Special Committees created has been the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Reparations Committee (2013), whose objective is to seek reparations for genocide and forced deportation of the Garifuna and Callinago people, for lands "stolen", and for the enslavement of Africans in SVG.



Evaluation of Policies / Programs

General Information

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is making pivotal efforts in order to provide the country with a strong Monitoring and Evaluation System to ensure higher performance and greater accountability to its public policies and programmes, especially the ones connected to the implementation of the [National Economic and Social Development Plan 2012 – 2025 \(NESDP\)](#).

In that regard the [NESDP 2012 – 2025](#) indicates that the [Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning](#) is responsible for coordinating the monitoring of Plan progress by reviewing annual reports from Ministries, departments and agencies, which are expected to report on Plan progress in a yearly basis, basing the assessment on indicators agreed *a priori*.

Likewise, the [Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning](#) is required to report annually to the Cabinet on overall progress in the implementation of the Plan. In addition, triennial reviews are undertaken with a view to assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness with which it was implemented ([NESDP 2012 – 2025 page 116](#)).

Gender Perspective

General Information

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is making important efforts to ensure the transversalization of gender perspective in the planning and implementation of public policies.

At the international level, the country is State Party to several international conventions on women's right, including: 1. [The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women "Convention of Belém Do Pará"](#), ratified on January 8th, 2001 and its Inter-American Mechanism (MESECVI); and 2. [The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), ratified on August 4th 1981.

The entity responsible for the development of public policies related to gender equality is the Gender Affairs Division of the [Ministry of Mobilization, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Persons with disabilities and Youth](#).

The main functions of the [Gender Affairs Division](#) are:

- Implement an action plan that will ensure gender integration into all policies, procedures and programmes, prevention and eradication of domestic violence and educational, social, cultural and economic growth of the marginalized;
- Collaborate with other departments/ ministries and organisations to institutionalize the responsibility for gender equality through out government and NGO activities;
- Influence departments/ ministries and NGOs to institute systems to collect and store sex-disaggregated data;
- Use disaggregated data as a source of information to provide related services and to use these data as relevant decision making. (E.g.) employment;
- Formulate a national policy on gender equity;
- Facilitate greater outreach to more persons;



- Provide greater impact of the gender sensitization programmes; and
- Strengthening groups/NGOs in an effort to reduce poverty.

Transparency and Accountability

Introduction

The [Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Constitution](#), enacted on October 27th 1979, recognizes in its [Section 1](#) that every person in Saint Vincent, regardless of race, place of origin, political opinions, color, creed or sex, is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms, subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, including freedom of conscience, of expressions and of assembly and association. It also establishes that, "except with his own consent, a person shall not be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to communicate ideas and information without interference and freedom from interference with his correspondence" ([Section 10](#)).

Any limitation to this provisions should be justified under the following situations: that is reasonably required in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health; that is reasonably required for the purpose of protecting the reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons or the private lives of persons concerned in legal proceedings, preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, maintaining the authority and independence of the courts or regulating the technical administration or the technical operation of telephony, telegraphy, posts, wireless broadcasting or television; or that imposes restrictions upon public officers that are reasonably required for the performance of their functions.

The [Economic Planning and Social Development Unit](#) of the [Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning](#) elaborated the [National Economic and Social Development Plan](#). In this comprehensive plan, designed to be carried out between 2013 and 2025, as part of the strategic goal of Promoting Good Governance and Increasing the Effectiveness of Public Administration, the authorities have included enhancing participatory democracy, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of public goods and services.

Regarding regional and international efforts, in March 2013, Caribbean governments and civil society organizations from 11 countries, including Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, attended the "*Regional Conference on Freedom of Information in the Caribbean: Improving Management for the Environment*", held in Kingston (Jamaica) to discuss access to information, public participation in governance, and access to justice. At the close of conference the decision was announced to launch a Caribbean network on freedom of information to support processes to improve standards for access to information in the region. In addition, the country is part of the [Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes](#), a multilateral initiative aimed at developing standards of transparency and exchange of information.

Institutional Framework

The [Freedom of Information Act](#), the main law addressing transparency and access to information in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, does not include explicit mention of any institutions primarily in charge of oversight and guarantee of the provisions included in the Act.



Nonetheless, the country has an [Audit Office](#), an independent supreme audit institution which has the formal mandate to promote accountability, transparency and improvement of all Government Departments and entities and to ascertain that the funds appropriated by Parliament are applied to the purposes intended.

The Audit Department, according to the Constitution ([Section 75](#)), is required to examine the accounts of the Central Government, Local Government and Statutory Undertakings and report annually on their findings.

Strategies and Mechanisms

The main legal instrument related to transparency and access to public information is the [Freedom of Information Act of June 27th, 2003](#). The object of the Act is to extend the right of member of the public to access information in the possession of public authorities by making available to the public information about the operations of public authorities and about the rules affecting citizens in their dealings with public authorities, by creating a general right of access to information in documentary form in the possession of public authorities, and by creating a right to bring about the amendment of records containing personal information that is incomplete, incorrect or misleading ([Section 3](#)). The document also establishes that any discretion conferred by the Act shall be exercised as far as possible so as to facilitate and promote promptly and at the lowest reasonable cost, the disclosure of information.

The [Freedom of Information Act](#) applies to information recorded in any form, whether printed or on tape or film or by electronic means or otherwise and includes any map, diagram, photograph, film, microfilm, videotape, sound recording, or machine-readable record by means of equipment or a programme (or a combination of both) which is used for that purpose by the public authority which holds the record ([Section 4](#)).

According to the law, personal information should be interpreted as information about an identifiable individual that is recorded in any form including: information related to race, sex, national or ethnic origin, religion, age or marital status of the individual; information relation to the education or the medical, criminal or employment history of the individual or information relating to financial transactions; any identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual; the address, fingerprints or blood type; correspondence sent to a public authority; the views or opinions of any other person about the individual ([Section 4](#)).

Regarding limitations, [Sections 25 to 35](#) list all the kinds of documents that are exempt from the provisions of the Act. Besides, [Section 5](#) specifies that the Act does not apply to the Governor-General or a commission of inquiry issued by the Governor-General. It also mentions that a court or the holder of a judicial office shall not be regarded as a public authority, and are therefore not affected by the Act.

Public authorities, being the main subjects of the act, should include: Parliament or any committee of Parliament; the Cabinet; a Ministry or a department or division of a Ministry; a local authority; a public statutory corporation or body; a body corporate or an incorporated body established for a public purpose, which is owned or controlled by the State; an embassy, consulate or mission of the State or any office of the State situated outside of the country whose functions include the provision of diplomatic or consular services ([Section 4](#)).

In terms of sanctions, the only explicit mention is made in Art. 42, where it is established that the wilful destruction or damage of a record or document required to be maintained and preserved according to this Act will be considered an offence and will be subject to liability on summary



conviction to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years. If this offence is committed while a request for access to the record or document is pending, the amount for the fee changes to eight thousand dollars, and the term of imprisonment to three years.

[Section 39](#) provides for a mechanism for appealing decisions by public authorities, stating that "Any person aggrieved by a decision of a public authority under this Act may apply to the High Court for judicial review of the decision, and that application shall be reviewed by a Judge in Chambers".

Finally, it is worth noting that the Act grants authority to Ministers to decide on the cost involved in requesting information and in obtaining requested documents ([Section 19](#)).

Information and Communication Technologies

Introduction

The development of strategies and mechanisms related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) holds a fundamental role in the government Agenda of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

To that end, the country developed a strong legal framework on ICT, among others: 1. The Electronic Transaction Act of 2007; 2. The Information and Communication Technology Services Investment Incentives Act, 2007; 3. The Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations 2008; 4. The Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund Contribution) Order 2008; 5. The Telecommunications (Licensing Classification) Regulations 2002; 6. The Telecommunications (Dispute Resolution) Regulations 2007; 7. The Telecommunications (Licensing Classification) (Amendment) Notice, 2002; 8. The Telecommunications (Fees Regulations) 2007; 9. The Telecommunications (Fees Amendment) 2008; 10. The Telecommunications (Licensing and Authorisation) Regulations 2007; 11. The Telecommunications (Private Network Licensing) Regulations 2002; 12. The Telecommunications (Tariff) Regulations 2004; 13. The Telecommunications (Interconnection) Regulations 2008; 14. The Telecommunications (Spectrum Management) Regulations 2007; 15. The Telecommunications (Numbering) Regulations 2008; 16. The Telecommunications (Confidentiality in Networks & Services) Regulations 2002; and 16. The Telecommunications (Terminal Equipment & Public Network) Regulations 2002.

Likewise, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines counts with National Strategies and Action Plans regarding ICT, being the last one the [National ICT Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2015](#), which comprises 65 objectives and almost 129 specific actions with the aim of developing ICT through all sectors of public management, as well as the private sector and civil society.

The government entity responsible for the planning of strategies and policies related to the development of ICTs in the country is the [Information Technology Services Division \(ITSD\)](#) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Commerce and Information Technology.

Moreover, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has developed another project aimed at increasing access and affordability to regional broadband networks and advance the development of an ICT-enabled services industry in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Caribbean Region: The [Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Program \(CARCIP\)](#), whose other participating countries are Saint Lucia and Grenada. The project is composed by three (3) components,



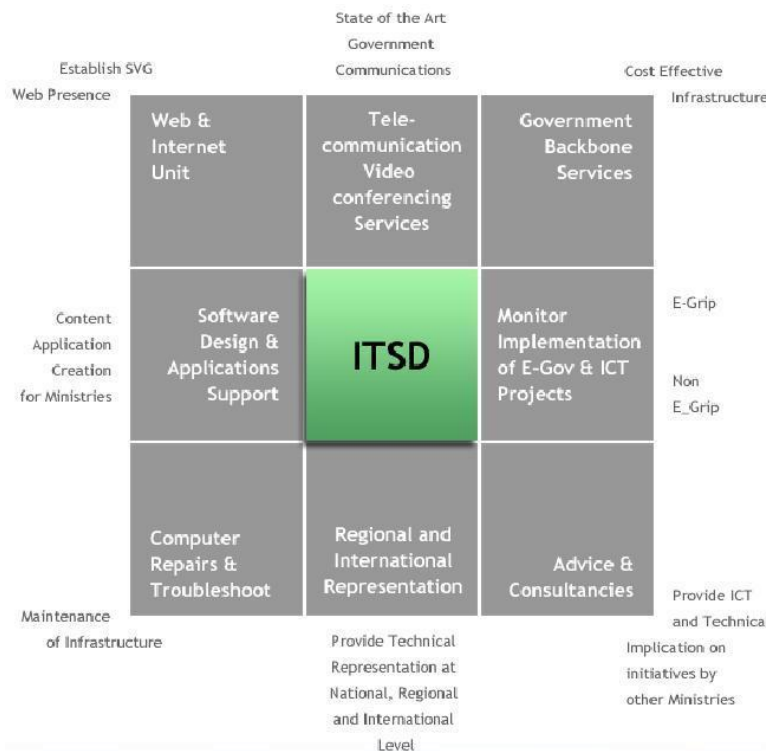
namely: 1. Regional Connectivity Infrastructure; 2. ICT - Led Innovation; and 3. Implementation Support, whose objective is to guarantee Monitoring and Evaluation activities, through the following initiatives:

Institutional Framework

The government entity responsible is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Commerce and Information Technology, through the **Information Technology Services Division (ITSD)**. The ITSD is the main ICT policy, advisory and technical maintenance services provider of the country. Its structure is as follows: 1. The Web and Internet Content Unit; 2. The E-Mail, Internet and Intranet Network Services Unit; 3. The Government Video-conferencing Services Unit; 4. The Computer Repair Section; and 5. The Government Backbone, PBX and Network Maintenance Division.

Likewise, the functions held by the ITSD are, among others:

- Maintain the Government’s website, consistent the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act;
- Develop and upgrade new software application;
- Provide advice to ministries on the appropriateness of software procured or developed by government;
- Monitor the EGRIP and other non-EGRIP electronic government initiatives;
- Represent Saint Vincent and the Grenadines at regional and international levels on ICT policy and initiatives; and
- Provide technical advice to the National Center for Technological Innovation.





Source: [The Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National ICT Strategy and Action Plan](#)

Strategies and Mechanisms

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines elaborated a [National ICT Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2015](#), which prescribes 65 strategies and 129 specific actions in almost every sector of public management, including also initiatives addressed to the private sector.

The sectors involved, and their strategies are:

a) Technical Infrastructure:

- Establish mechanisms to ensure the continued development of reliable, state of the art, country-wide ICT infrastructure with adequate capacity and network speeds;
- Ensure all installed ICT infrastructure and capacity is utilized effectively and contribute to resilience, redundancy and emergency response at a national level;
- Continue to promote a competitive marketplace to enable lower cost of access and a wider range of services by institutions or individuals;
- Encourage the development of infrastructure to facilitate the safe and secure development of e-commerce;
- Facilitate equitable and widespread access to ICT products and services;
- Support the private sector in the development and maintenance of the national ICT infrastructure, encourage continuous upgrades and investments in new ICT technologies;
- Reduce cost and travel to meetings and conferences with the use of Videoconferencing; and
- Facilitate the policy and governance framework to enable service delivery through IPV6, Internet Exchange Points and Data Centers.

b) Government, including Justice and National Security:

- Provide e-Leadership at the ministerial, national, sub-regional and regional levels;
- Mandate all ministries and agencies to incorporate the utilization of ICT in their development plans, programmes and projects;
- Require that all appropriate government information be put on-line within a reasonable timeframe through a single government electronic portal;
- Encourage and support the provision of government services through electronic channels where appropriate and cost-effective and which improve revenue collection;
- Deploy E-Government initiatives to improve efficiency;
- Develop and implement a policy framework to support and enable shared services within government, including the government backbone, email, Internet, VOIP and SANs;
- Facilitate the policy and governance framework to enable integrated service delivery across government;



- Expand and strengthen the policy and standards framework utilized within government;
- Support of the use of ICT to improve national security and the administration of justice in the country;
- Enhance the security of ICT users by implementing a Certificate Authority; and
- Implement a human resources management information system across government.

c) Agriculture:

- Establish and maintain an ICT mechanism for reporting, information sharing and increased policy dialogue;
- Promote the use of ICT to improve production technologies in agriculture, such as Automation Systems;
- Promote the use of appropriate ICT for the sustainable development of the Fisheries Industry including safety of fishers and harvesting of fish;
- Improve, upgrade and sustain a National Agricultural Production and Marketing Information Systems to support production, marketing, agro-processing and sector planning;
- Apply ICT to enhance agro-processing and value-addition to primary agr-fish products including marketing and distribution;
- Develop and maintain a universal, affordable and secure access mechanism for data and information sharing among farmers and fishermen; and
- Train stakeholders to effectively use appropriate ICT to meet their business needs.

d) Community Development

- Sensitize and train rural communities in the use of ICTs as information sources;
- Build facilities to promote ICT training and computer-aided training for all communities;
- Enhance access to ICT services and applications through rural community libraries and resources centers;
- Develop and implement ICT-based tools to help communities develop micro-enterprises and to tap into international markets so as to facilitate poverty alleviation;
- Support initiatives which encourage public, private and civil society partnerships in reaching all communities with ICT products and services, and which facilitate disaster preparedness; and
- Ensure and safeguard national heritage, culture, traditions and the environment in the process of ICT development within communities.

e) Health:

- Implement an integrated medical record information management system for the sector;
- Enact legislation, regulations, and protocols to facilitate the security and privacy of patient information;
- Develop a comprehensive electronic medical / health supply inventory management system;



- Create an enabling policy framework, legislation and regulations to support the broad deployment of telemedicine across the health system;
- Provide the technical infrastructure for the effective use of telemedicine applications;
- Provide high speed secure electronic connectivity between all health institutions; and
- Implement a comprehensive staff information management system.

f) Tourism:

- Develop an ICT-oriented Tourism sector for effective delivery of products and services;
- Enhance e-marketing and promotion of the tourism product to increase foreign exchange earnings;
- Establish and maintain a reliable Tourism Satellite Account System through the use of ICT;
- Develop a management information system for tourism through the use of ICT;
- Procure and use relevant ICT to support effective research, data collection and analysis in this sector; and
- Build human resource capacity within tourism sector to facilitate the use of appropriate ICT for tourism development.

g) Legal and Regulatory

- Review and improve the existing policies, laws and regulations to facilitate and promote the utilization of ICT by all sectors of the country and all segments of society;
- Ensure that the evolving legislative framework supports the long term development of the ICT sector;
- Support the development of the legislative and regulatory framework to enable e-commerce and the innovative use of ICT for economic development;
- Continue to grow and adapt the framework for enabling fair and equitable competition within the ICT market space;
- Formulate and strengthen the policy framework that enables and supports the growth and development of shared information resources and services across government, and between government and its key stakeholders; and
- Review periodically the legal and regulatory framework in order to keep abreast of global ICT developments.

h) Education and Human Resource Development

- Promote modern software technology for efficiency in education, as well as to promote skill development and professional capacity building;
- Introduce an Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS) in a phased manner into the education sector to bring about more transparency, efficiency and productivity;
- Encourage and support ICT training and development of knowledge and its active use by all public servants, private sector and civil society; and
- Foster the use of ICT for formal and non-formal education, skills development and adult learning regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or location.



i) Industry and ICT Sector, including trade and financial services:

- Create a conducive environment for a vibrant and sustainable ICT industry that is aligned to national priorities and which makes a significant economic contribution;
- Support and facilitate programs in the private sector that encourage the effective use of ICT to improve operational efficiencies and international competitiveness;
- Develop monitoring and measurement systems to enable government to determine the impact of ICT policies and measures on the ICT sector and industry generally;
- Encourage and support local ICT innovation and development of the current and potential markets through incentives and other schemes;
- Encourage and promote joint ventures between local and foreign entrepreneurs in the ICT sector; and
- Support the growth of the ICT sector by the strategic outsourcing of ICT support and service by government.

j) Governance and MTSTI as lead ICT Ministry:

- Ensure multi-stakeholders involvement in decisions;
- Establish Secretariat to monitor implementation;
- Manage National transition from IPv4 to IPv6;
- Ensure adequate public awareness to Cybercrimes;
- Adopt a policy of open source software applications; and
- Embrace and deploy Cloud computing.

Decentralization

General Information

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a constitutional monarchy, recognizing Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State. The Queen appoints the Governor-General, who is her representative in the island ([Section 19 of the Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#)).

The territory of the country consists of the main island – Saint Vincent – and of a chain of 32 smaller islands – the Grenadines - of which only seven (7) are inhabited – Bequia, Mustique, Canouan, Mayreau, Union Island, Palm Island and Petit St. Vincent.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines doesn't count with a decentralized local government system. Nonetheless, the [Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Gender Affairs, Persons with disabilities and Youth](#) does count with a [Department of Local Government](#), whose authorities are in charge of the provision of the following local services:

- Maintenance of cemeteries;
- Management of Community Centers;
- Management of Markets;
- Cleaning of drains;



- Construction and maintenance of roads and footpaths;
- Payment of wages and salaries; and
- Maintenance of Public Facilities

Quality of Public Services

General Information

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is making great efforts in order to guarantee the highest quality standards of public services to all citizens.

In that regard, the government institution responsible for ensuring the highest quality of the country's products and services is the [Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Bureau of Standards \(SVGBS\)](#), whose primary mission is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens by ensuring that all goods and services produced and/or used in the country are of consistently acceptable standards and quality. Likewise, the [SVGBS](#) is the institution representing the country to the [CARICOM Regional Organization for Standard and Quality \(CROSQ\)](#), which is the CARICOM entity responsible for promoting efficiency and competitive production in goods and services.

To that end, as part of the [Caribbean Community \(CARICOM\)](#), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines signed and ratified the [Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas Establishing the Caribbean Community including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy](#) of July 5th 2001, an international legal instrument whose main objectives are ([Art. 6](#)):

- a) improved standards of living and work;
- b) full employment of labour and other factors of production;
- c) accelerated, co-ordinated and sustained economic development and convergence;
- d) expansion of trade and economic relations with third States;
- e) enhanced levels of international competitiveness;
- f) organization for increased production and productivity;
- g) the achievement of a greater measure of economic leverage and effectiveness of Member States in dealing with third States, groups of States and entities of any description;
- h) enhanced co-ordination of Member States' foreign and foreign economic policies; and
- i) enhanced functional co-operation, including: 1. more efficient operation of common services and activities for the benefit of its peoples; 2. accelerated promotion of greater understanding among its peoples and the advancement of their social, cultural and technological development; 3. intensified activities in areas such as health, education, transportation, telecommunications.

Citizen Participation in Public Management

General Information



Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is strengthening citizen participation in public management through several initiatives and strategies, understanding the importance of the issue for the improvement of the efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of its Public Administration.

In that regard, the [National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013 – 2025 \(NESDP\)](#), under its Goal 3 - Promoting Good Governance and Increasing the Effectiveness of Public Administration, dedicates two (2) strategic objectives to civil society participation and participatory democracy, namely:

a) Strategic Objective 3.1 - To enhance participatory democracy, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of public goods and services, with the following outcomes:

- Timely publication and dissemination of statistical and other public data;
- Increased confidence in the functions and undertakings of government;
- A highly productive and innovative public sector; and
- Improved operational standards and procedures within the public service.

b) Strategic objective 3.4 - To enhance the role of civil society in the maintenance of democracy, whose outcomes are:

- Wider participation of the civil society in decision-making and governance;
- Increased understanding by civil society of government policies; and
- Increased policy dialogue within NESDC and the wider society.

It is also noteworthy that the methodology for formulating the Plan was hinged on the premise of inclusion and wide-ranging public participation. In that regard, consultations were held in every constituency in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, thereby providing extensive opportunities for Vincentians at every level to make an input and to have a voice in the development process. It was felt that this approach would lead to greater “buy-in” and a sense of ownership.

The consultative approach was not restricted to Vincentians living at home. Twelve (12) consultations were held with the Vincentian community in major Caribbean and international cities. The consultations proved instructive, providing a number of suggestions, some of which have been incorporated in the NESDP.