

STRATEGIC INPUTS POLICY

Introduction to the concept

Development is most likely to take place, both at the level of a project and a country, when all the necessary resource inputs are present in the appropriate mix. It is lopsided, if it takes place at all, when any essential factor is missing.

Development funding for infrastructural, industrial, agricultural and tourism projects has been rightly viewed as one of the critical resource inputs, the shortage of which has hampered the implementation of many critical development projects and the growth of developing economies on the whole.

Funds available through regional development banks and international and country bilateral programs have always been limited in relation to needs and, therefore, recipient countries have of necessity had to prioritize their project development needs, in some cases scaling down or underfinancing strategic programs to get them to fit the available funds.

In many developing countries economic projects have been launched with much optimism and fanfare only to run aground on the shoals of deficiencies as basic as working capital shortages or insufficient protection against equipment depreciation or obsolescence.

After at least five development decades and considerable investment capital inputs from outside, Dominica, like most Caribbean countries still pleads the case of critical, severe infrastructural and other resource constraints. With the tightening of external belts our countries have to carry out serious evaluation of their project spending habits and more carefully allocate their funds to the most strategic projects and ensure that they these projects not only work but have the multiplier effect in nudging along growth in all sectors.

Business cannot go on as usual.

The rethinking of development approaches need not mean fundamental changes or traumatic roundabouts as in the swing from socialism to free enterprise in former soviet led countries. It does, however, require an open mind and a disposition to do old things differently.

The Strategic Inputs Policy is proposed as a desirable and workable new approach.

The strategic inputs concept involves three basic dimensions:

1. Identifying developmental programs that have the greatest potential to impact overall development;
2. Determining through a strategic planning process all the inputs essential to the successful implementation of the project; the strategic planning process will be used to define and implement the project.
3. Mobilizing all necessary human and material resources to input into the project and monitoring its implementation until it is considered operationally sound within the guidelines established by all the [relevant national agencies](#). (= stakeholders)

The main strategic inputs are:

1. Development finance
2. Land
3. Local infra structure
4. Management
5. Marketing and promotion
6. Skills

The rationale

Resource inputs for development of the island are limited; available resources must be employed to optimum advantage. This means they must be focussed for the next development decade on high impact projects in critical growth areas.

Goals

The main economic goals of the SIP program will be:

- Full employment
- 10 % annual increase in GDP

The approach

The SIP policy *implementation* is predicated on three primary concepts:

1. Strategic planning
2. Mobilization of the community
3. Strong leadership

Clear objectives will be delineated in special SIP Policy Papers and promoted for wide-based discussion.

We will proceed with this policy in a consultative, responsive, open way; using it to bring people together, to work together despite political, religious or other differences. The slogan to be used to symbolize this essential approach is **TEAM DOMINICA**.

Every citizen will know why a particular development is taking place, what its objectives are and how it will benefit the community or country; every citizen will also know how he or she can make an input in projects that are planned.

TEAM DOMINICA will comprise Government and its agencies, public sector institutions, the private sector, the Unions, the Churches, NGOs-national and international, Clubs and Societies, Town and Village Councils and all those well meaning people who make up the Dominican community at home and abroad.

Dominica is a small family of 80,000 residents, the size of a very small town or even a large corporation in many countries

There are too few of us for anyone of us to be excluded from the development process.

Dominica is blessed with the underlying spirit to make this principle work; our ability to work as TEAM DOMINICA is demonstrated at times such as Community Service day and other big festive occasions; the plan is to institutionalize this spirit and approach in our everyday way of life.

Detailed project plans will be developed with full local community participation; local communities must feel ownership of these projects in material ways, affecting their design and outcome.

A key principle will be that the surrounding community will take an active interest both in financing and management of projects; they will be mobilized under the leadership of the village council through the strategic planning process.

SIP will serve to give focus and direction to development initiatives and will be pursued within a national development framework; Government ministries and departments will continue with their island wide development and maintenance services.

The identification of strategic growth areas does not imply that other areas and communities will be ignored or marginalized. The policy is one of marshalling limited resources strategically to make the maximum overall impact. This process, far from taking resources away from other areas, will draw other areas along through the multiplier effect.

All SIP projects will be selected with a view to integrating agriculture, industry, tourism and service elements. Our main industries must support each other and feed into each other as much as possible.

Administration

Overall direction of the SIP will be the responsibility of a restructured Ministry of Development and Finance.

An Economic Council will be set up to advise the Government on all economic development matters, and one of its major responsibilities will be to review and monitor the SIP. A Task Force will be responsible for coordinating the SIP.

The SIP Task Force will be selected on the basis of strong technical expertise and social commitment; it will be served by a special secretariat, and will work with government agencies and departments in a collaborative and integrated relationship that will be carefully designed to ensure mutual effectiveness.

Financing

Projects will be supported by a combination of local and overseas investment resources.

Government will provide leadership in mobilization of development funding as well as local financial resources for target projects;

Government guarantees will be considered for lending to projects by local banks; this will relate particularly to individual investment activities targeted for the project area.

Commercial Banks, The AID Bank, the National Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank and Credit Unions will be invited to be funding partners in implementing the policy, within the overall monetary policy of the Government.

Venture capital funds will be made available for qualifying activities undertaken by individuals or companies within the target area.

We attach great importance to venture capital funds as a stimulus to productive investment: public participation in the share structure of key growth companies until

the private partners are confident they can take over and carry the project through will provide the incentive that many investors need.

Projects

The success of SIP depends in large measure on the Projects selected for focus. The final projects selected to launch the strategy will be decided following a process of fact finding, national discussion and evaluation. It is a policy to which Dominicans will be expected to contribute fully at all phases.

Performance targets will be set for each project and results will be expected.

The following projects are offered as prototypes for launching the SIP:

- Indian River Development
- Scotts Head Development
- Lake District Development
- Agro Processing Project
- Dominica Sports International

1. Indian River Development

The Indian River is a sleeping resource with exciting possibilities for development; we do not fully appreciate it but it is a natural endowment which other Caribbean and developing countries would be proud to own; indeed it is a resource that most developed countries would exploit to the maximum.

With the right controls to maintain the environmental integrity and character of this valuable resource the site could be developed to serve Dominica's eco tourism thrust and the economic development of the surrounding Portsmouth community.

An Indian River Development Authority would be mandated to work with the community of Portsmouth to plan the development of the River to include features such as:

- i. scenic trails
- ii. landings
- iii. stocking with fish

- iv. paddle boating
- v. restaurants
- vi. cottages
- vii. on going cultural presentations
- viii. appropriate small scale aqua sporting facilities
- ix. toilet and sanitary facilities

The facilities should be ventures with significant local financial investment so that the maximum benefit to the island is maintained.

Resident Dominicans as well as visiting Dominicans will be encouraged to support the site.

With the new tourist ship berth at Portsmouth, the site would be an important second stop after the Cabrits in tours of the island.

2. Scott's Head Development

The Scott's Head promontory and bay is another resource endowment that stands begging to be developed to serve the economic needs of the people of Soufriere and Scotts Head.

The community should be mobilized and organized to participate fully in the development of integrated hotel and aqua sporting facilities on this site with a combination of local and foreign investment.

Major annual boating and fishing events should be targeted as a means of promoting the facility.

3. Lake District Development

The area of the fresh water and boiling lakes and the Falls is another major development site with potential for an integrated development project.

Here the emphasis would be on increasing the accessibility of the natural attractions to Dominicans and visitors and incorporating selected facilities which would increase the economic returns to the surrounding communities.

Facilities to be developed would be broadly similar to the Indian River facilities including paddle boating on the Lake, nature trails and cottages. A distinctive feature would be fruit orchards where visitors would be free to pick there own for a fee.

A naturalists' retreat centre would also be established and promoted in appropriate media overseas as a one-of-a-kind facility.

It is proposed that the Lake District Development be promoted as an opportunity for Dominicans overseas to assist the development of their country by purchase of \$1000 interest bearing Sponsors Certificates in the development; the certificates would entitle them to a benefit package which could include free use of the facilities while on vacation here.

4. Agro Processing Project

Dominica is only scratching the surface of its long recognized potential for development of agro-processing. There are many constraints to progress in this area which a strategic inputs project would aggressively tackle.

The strategy would be to build on the facilities that already exist by the injection of venture capital, expertise and a package of incentives; and by integration of the work of private investors with, for instance, the Division of Agriculture and an upgraded Government Produce Chemist Laboratory.

Because of the prime importance of agro processing to a successful agricultural diversification programme, high priority will be given by the SIP Task Force to plans for the development and expansion of existing facilities as an integral component of the wider agricultural development strategy.

Overseas marketing is considered a critical input and SIP would seek to link its efforts in this area on behalf of the industry with established partner corporations in the key target markets.

5. Dominica Sports International

A new Ministry of Tourism and Sports Development will be set up to integrate the parallel development of sports and tourism. This holds many exciting possibilities.

Dominica is a natural attraction to the sporting and health enthusiast but has so far lacked the facilities on which this could be promoted internationally.

Several of the facilities planned for Tourism development could be designed to accommodate off shore training by sports men and women in the winter months. Success in attracting international sports celebrities to Dominica as an alternative training venue would greatly promote the country, as the movements and preferences of these people are continuously reported by the international media.

Locally this would be an incentive to young Dominicans to raise their level of interest and their standards in sports; it may even be possible to organize periodic training programmes for young Dominicans to be conducted by some of these visitors.

More competitive aqua sports could be organized allowing for interaction of Dominicans and visitors; Dominica is an island and it is significant that although surrounded by water the country has not produced youth with any significant interest or aspirations for participation in international water sporting events; in fact this is true of the whole Caribbean. This reflects the way we see and use our environment. Perhaps it is the organization and competitive elements that have been missing.

A programme of strategic inputs in this area will serve to provide the minimum facilities and arrangements needed to achieve the goals.

Other key Areas of focus

While the above programmes have been used to illustrate the policy it is not being suggested that they are the most important growth areas for focus by Government at this stage. This will be determined through the extensive consultations that are considered an essential element of the SIP.

Other significant projects would relate to:

- Coconut Industry Development
- Banana Industry Development
- Cultural Development

SIP does not minimize the importance of development and maintenance of national infra structure; however, a balance must be struck between infra structure and the economic activities which must be initiated to make use of it, activities which generate jobs, incomes and security. We feel much, not all, of the infra structure needed to stimulate growth and expansion has been provided by previous administrations. Recent administrations have made great strides with the facilities for water, electrification, road networks and sea ports.

To build on the outstanding progress it is now necessary to focus, for the next five to ten years on developing the types of economic activity which will utilize these facilities in wealth creation, employment and productivity, to achieve the goals stated above.

TEAM DOMINICA can do it!

National Institutions and Services

SIP is also conceptualized as a case-specific approach to development of key national enterprises, agencies or facilities, such as ports, airlines, shipping services.

International development agencies such as the UN special agencies, USAID and CIDA have expended considerable resources on the establishment of programmes in Dominica and the rest of the Caribbean. Much funding has gone into conferences and studies and reports on the functioning and needs of local development organizations; yet the problems persist.

The approach proposed is to take an institution which appears not to be functioning at the desired level of efficiency and effectiveness - one which is not serving the wider economic and social goals of the country, as defined by the Government - and make the necessary strategic inputs into its reorganization and development, using the strategic planning process.

The first step would be to discuss the organization as a case study at a Round Table of all relevant agencies and departments; the organization would be studied in relation to its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and external threats, and the strategies outlined in existing documents which would be summarized for deliberation at the Round Table.

The Round Table would come up with specific processes and strategies, which the Government and the organizations management would consider for strengthening the operations of the organization. Interested international agencies would then determine the specific strategic inputs they could make to implement the agreed programme of improvement for the organization

Conclusion

In proposing this new approach to the mobilization of our country's resources and its people for national development we are not naive about the extent of the challenge that faces us. We cannot wave a magic wand to solve our problems, but we can achieve a great deal when what we do together is motivated by love, understanding, a fraternal spirit, and the determination to succeed.

The policy presupposes an agreement between all groups in the country, to work with each other on the basis of mutual trust, confidence and goodwill for the sake of all citizens; co-operation must replace confrontation at all levels.

Not everyone will be happy with all decisions at all times. This does not happen in a team or in a family. But members must agree to compromise, to adjust, to negotiate in a constructive way to keep the team or the family moving forward together. That must be the over riding objective.

One of the recurrent complaints we hear from people who try to do things here is that they meet with considerable frustrations, rejections and bottlenecks in areas where they would expect co-operation and understanding. We will pay particular attention to that phenomenon. We will want to know why people who want to implement enterprises of benefit to themselves and the country should feel themselves unduly frustrated by systems and procedures, personal idiosyncrasies and unjustified bureaucratic delays. We will seek to ensure that delays where they occur do not result from ineptitude, indifference and inertia in the Government services. To this end an understanding will be sought with the Civil Service Association that will foster a co-operative partnership to work diligently in support of the program.

Finally we want all our people to be sensitive to the real suffering and the needs, (sometimes very small) of the poor, the hungry, those who have heavy burdens and the underprivileged among us; to single mothers, our older citizens and handicapped people; concern and care for them must be always on our minds; only if we are motivated by charity in what we do can our efforts bear sweet fruit for all.

Michael White
Revised 17 November 1993