



Foundation for Development Planning, Inc

Public Engagement Strategy

Foundation for Development Planning Inc (FDPI)

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1. Introduction

The Foundation for Development Planning, Inc (FDPI) was founded to support and implement programs that lead to the sustainable development of Caribbean communities. The objectives and purpose of the FDPI are to be achieved through engagement with "*relevant stakeholders to foster sustainable development in the Caribbean, integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions*".

The focus on engagement is responsive to the fact that the complex nature of sustainable development requires deliberate and cohesive collaboration between and among institutions in the three defined social sectors; the public sector, private sector, and civic sector. Additionally, moving successfully from concept, through public policy planning, to implementation of development initiatives requires the active participation of an informed citizenry.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development focuses on improving human rights and well-being, equitable access, justice, inclusive institutions and societies, and partnerships for action. Several of the 17 sustainable development goals and 169 associated targets not only address the need for participatory decision making, but also advocate for citizens to develop the vision for the future and spaces they need.

The FDPI has stated its intention to function in a number of roles as its capacity increases, with roles ranging from information sharing to participation in collective impact processes to functioning as an Institution of Place. The FDPI defines an Institution of Place, as "*an institution that serves as a steward of the communities and region in which it functions, a publicly engaged institution that plays an essential role in addressing issues of importance and facilitating the development of the communities and region it serves*".

The FDPI recognizes that, in order to function effectively in its various roles and achieve mission success, its programming must be supported by an appropriate engagement strategy.

Public engagement, in the larger development context, is understood to be the process of shared decision making and partnerships through which public agencies, civil society organizations, private institutions, and citizens work together to achieve project or program goals.

Beyond projects and programs, the collective action required to solve complex social problems has to be founded on a practice of participatory decision-making and public engagement. That requires the maintenance of governance systems that proactively support participatory processes. The sustainability of shared governance systems is in turn dependent on the constant replenishment of individuals of integrity and institutional cultures and practices that underpin just societies.

Additionally, institutional practices are largely dependent on the prevailing enabling environment, and the current models of government and governing display a prevalence of single-issue policies, laws, and initiatives. In order to facilitate policy coherence and collective action, sustainability initiatives must therefore overcome single-issue interventions and institutional silos.

Considering the foregoing, FDPI's public engagement strategy is intended to build synergies between individuals, institutions, and networks in the three social sectors. Specific areas, described below, include; information sharing, institutional partnerships, inter-governmental arrangements, youth in development, and networking.

2. Priorities and Delivery Mechanisms

Public engagement is identified in FDPI's program of work as a cross-cutting theme, meaning engagement is to be integrated into all FDPI initiatives. If engagement is necessary for producing social change, then the process must also include investment in creating the conditions for success. This includes information sharing and translation, building trust, and facilitating growth and development in individuals and institutions as necessary.

2.1 Information Sharing Mechanisms

Sharing information relevant to Caribbean development issues is a key aspect of FDPI's work, and includes facilitating access to information and reducing program and institutional silos.

2.1.1 Knowledge Platforms

The FDPI will utilize the following mechanisms for information sharing and facilitating access to information and data:

- Establishment of a digital library, which will be available to host the digital knowledge products of Caribbean institutions.
- Establishment of thematic online portals associated with FDPI's program of work.
- Collaboration with knowledge management centres of key regional institutions.
- Establishment of a community of practice for each of FDPI's program areas.

2.1.2 Professional Networks and Social Media Platforms

Information will be shared primarily through regional virtual networks for development practitioners, through FDPI's Associates Network, and by way of FDPI's social media platforms. The FDPI's social media platforms were established to facilitate discussion of Caribbean development issues, and include:

- FDPI's LinkedIn Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/5027470/>
- FDPI's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/DevPlanFoundation/>

In addition to the regional network of development professionals, FDPI will also focus on engagement with current and emerging leaders, as such persons are able to inform and/or influence discussions and decisions on important development issues in their communities.

2.2 Institutional Partnerships

2.2.1 Program Partnerships

The FDPI will establish partnership arrangements with institutions whose mandates are aligned with FDPI's program of work, as well as with institutions that can make substantive ongoing contribution to focus areas. Areas of interest for which collaborative arrangements are currently being explored are:

- Digital library and decision support system;
- Water resources management;
- Climate change and disaster risk reduction; and
- Environmental justice.

2.2.2 Regional Professional Associations

Responses to the challenges faced by Caribbean economies are increasingly being designed from multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral perspectives. As such, FDPI intends to facilitate greater input by regional professional associations in the development processes at national and regional levels. Caribbean regional professional associations identified for initial contact are:

- Caribbean Environmental Reporters Network;
- Caribbean Studies Association;
- Caribbean Planners Association; and
- Association of Caribbean Economists.

2.2.3 Network of Regional Backbone Support Institutions

Most Caribbean countries are not large enough to maintain the range of technical and policy support institutions typically found in larger countries. One response, by governments in the Caribbean Community, was to establish several technical agencies to support policy and program development for member states. Unfortunately, these regional inter-governmental institutions generally suffer from resource constraints. The addition of a network of support institutions may be able to generate much greater cumulative impact than thematic institutions, which generally function as silos. The idea of a network of support institutions is not a new one, and FDPI intends to explore the concept of establishing a network of regional backbone support institutions with selected partners.

2.3 Inter-governmental Arrangements

2.3.1 Regional Inter-governmental Arrangements

Access by FDPI to regional inter-governmental arrangements is enabled by agreements between the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands and its Caribbean counterparts. The U.S. Virgin Islands is an Associate Member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which enabled membership in the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) and the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST). Based on that arrangement, FDPI was able to participate in the regional and inter-regional preparatory meetings for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. In order to facilitate FDPI's full participation in ECLAC's programs and processes in the Caribbean, FDPI will seek accreditation by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands has agreements with several Caribbean governments, and participates in several regional cooperative arrangements. The FDPI will utilize these agreements as points of entry into regional bi-lateral and multi-lateral inter-governmental arrangements as appropriate.

2.3.2 Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

The FDPI is a member of the [Protected Areas Conservation Action Team](#) of the Caribbean Landscape Conservation Cooperative, a cooperative arrangement involving the U.S. Government, Government of Puerto Rico, Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and universities and civil society organizations in the two territories. The FDPI was appointed to the U.S. Virgin Islands Climate Change Council in 2015, and subsequently supported development of the climate change program for the Territory.

The FDPI will continue to collaborate with both governments where practicable.

2.4 Youth in Development

The term “youth” typically includes adults to age 35, and covers a range of life situations. Moreover, youth initiatives in the Caribbean typically address the deficiency side of the youth experience, not fully acknowledging the knowledge, competencies, and talent that young professionals can contribute to public policy and other development activities.

FDPI's youth engagement efforts will focus initially on young professionals, and a future youth development program will be explored through collaboration with institutions and groups such as:

- The Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.
- The Caribbean Regional Youth Council, the umbrella group for twelve (12) national youth councils.

2.5 Networks

The networking activities of FDPI will range from sharing of basic information to the development of alliances and sustained partnerships, and the Foundation will function in the following roles:

- (a) **FDPI as Participant** – As Participant, FDPI either will be invited to join a network or will request entry to the network. In the scenario where only information sharing is required, the decision to join a network will be based solely on the degree to which network programming matches FDPI's program priorities. In cases that require significant or new FDPI resources or capabilities, the decision will be based on an assessment of the requirements and benefits of participating in the network.
- (b) **FDPI as Convener / Moderator / Facilitator** – FDPI will play this lead role in cases where: (i) FDPI is invited to play such a role by other network participants; (ii) a clear leadership gap exists in a network that supports FDPI's programming; or (iii) leadership roles revolve among network members. FDPI will play a leadership role only in networks that are essential to FDPI's program priorities, and the decision to assume such a role will be based on a detailed assessment of requirements, costs, and benefits.
- (c) **FDPI as Initiator** – FDPI will act as Network Initiator only in cases where a network is needed to implement an approved FDPI program (not project), but where no such network exist. As Initiator, FDPI will prepare a detailed assessment and a network development plan prior to approaching potential network participants. In this role, FDPI will be responsible for managing the process of network development, including provision of the necessary resources and support systems.

Collaborative arrangements with a limited number of participants, especially in initiatives that are focused on production of specific outputs, will be treated as partnerships, and will be assessed and operated in accordance with the policies and procedures approved for partnership arrangements.

The FDPI's participation in networks will be guided by the following factors and considerations:

- (a) The target network should be focused on action that produces an agreed measurable positive change for a program, local community, country, or the Caribbean region.
- (b) There should be clarity of purpose, operational modalities, rules, and desired outcomes for the network.
- (c) The role and contribution of each participant should be clear, and there should be an assessment of the capabilities of participants to meet agreed commitments. When such analysis is not undertaken by the network, FDPI will undertake its own analysis prior to formally joining the network.
- (d) A target network should have, or must agree to develop within an agreed period of FDPI joining, mechanisms and support systems to facilitate constructive dialogue, negotiation, and increased capacity of participants for network development and effectiveness.

- (e) The network must have guidelines and mechanisms for conducting periodic assessments of its functioning, operating environment, and impact.
- (f) A target network should have an agreed exit strategy for participants.
- (g) The FDPI does not intend to join networks for the sole purpose of gaining access to resources or corridors of power, particularly if those resources or access detract from FDPI's priorities, nullifies its effectiveness, or undermines its integrity and/or credibility.

2.5.1 Civil Society Networks

The FDPI is currently a member of the Civil Society Network of the Global Environment Facility ([GEF-CSO Network](#)), and is subscribed to the Regional Public Mechanism of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean ("[Escazú Agreement](#)").

The FDPI will participate in other global civil society networks that are focused on island systems and small island developing states (SIDS), particularly networks engaged in production and dissemination of knowledge products, capacity development, and enhancing participatory processes for sustainable development.

Within the Caribbean, there is clearly the need to improve regional inter-governmental governance to facilitate greater participation by civil society, as well as the need for the regional civil society sector to enhance its capacity to contribute to national development and/or participate in regional development processes.

The FDPI will continue to share information within the Caribbean civil society sector, even as it works towards establishment of a formal mechanism for supporting development of the sector and coordinating participation of the sector in regional inter-governmental arrangements.

2.5.2 Establishment of a U.S. Virgin Islands Association of Nonprofits

Nonprofit organizations in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) provide a range of services and operate a large number of programs that contribute to the well-being of the residents of the USVI. Many of those nonprofits provide services within the funding and institutional framework of public sector agencies, making them extremely vulnerable to the vagaries of public sector cash flow constraints and political dynamics. The situation is exacerbated by the small contracting economy that is the USVI. This vulnerability was underscored by the major convulsions experienced by the local nonprofit sector in 2010, 2013, and 2018.

The FDPI will advocate for, and facilitate as appropriate, establishment of a territorial association of nonprofits tasked with strengthening of the civil society sector in the Territory.

2.5.3 FDPI Associates Network

The bylaws of the FDPI authorizes the board of directors to appoint associates, these being persons that wish to be formally associated with the FDPI, and who agree to abide by applicable standards of professional conduct. It is anticipated that an active network of

associates will increase FDPI's effectiveness in information sharing, planning, and program implementation.

Invitation to Collaborate

The FDPI welcomes offers to collaborate in partnerships or networks relevant to FDPI's Program of Work.

For information on FDPI's public engagement activities, visit the program page at:

<https://www.fdpi.org/program-of-work/public-engagement/>

FDPI Objectives and Purposes

The Objectives and Purposes of the Foundation for Development Planning, Inc. (FDPI) as stated in its Articles of Incorporation are:

- (1) To develop programs of study, research, and training aimed at improving the management of natural resources and the general environment of islands and island systems throughout the Caribbean and elsewhere.
- (2) To develop methods, technologies, and programs to support the conservation of natural, cultural, and historical heritage resources throughout the Caribbean Region.
- (3) To design and develop new techniques, methods, tools, and technologies for effective management of island ecosystems.
- (4) To engage in the collection, management, and dissemination of scientific information.
- (5) To support programs that lead to the sustainable development of Caribbean communities.
- (6) To provide technical support, paid or unpaid, to community, national, regional, and other organizations in the design and implementation of studies, projects, and programs in environmental management and sustainable development.

Mission Statement

Engage with relevant stakeholders to foster sustainable development in the Caribbean, integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

The Foundation for Development Planning, Inc. (FDPI) was registered in the United States Virgin Islands in 2010 as a non-profit corporation. The FDPI is classified as a public charity by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, and is granted exemption from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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