

PHASE 0: COMMITTING TO AN ENERGY TRANSITION

Transitioning away from a dependence on imported fossil fuels will require leadership and commitment by various parts of the community. To begin, a group of community leaders—such as utility managers and local officials—must express their commitment to the public and to potential investors. With an expression of commitment, the challenge then becomes selecting a path, rather than whether the transition is possible at all.

0.1 Compile a List of Energy Opportunities

There may be many compelling reasons to transition from reliance on imported fuels. Clearly articulating them will facilitate initial conversations and inspire community leaders to commit to the change. Energy opportunities will evolve over time—and as more people join the conversation—so they should resonate with key decision makers and should be informed by readily available energy data, such as prices, fuel mixes, and current analyses of the energy system.

Possible Energy Opportunities (illustrative, not comprehensive)

Reduce wasted energy	Lower greenhouse gas emissions
Increase predictability of energy costs	Minimize water use in energy
Diversify fuel mix	Enhance use of local resources
Lower residential energy bills	Improve customer participation in markets
Attract private investment	

0.2 Identify Decision Makers and Resources

The entire community stands to benefit from the transition, and success will require input and participation from many stakeholders—individuals, private and public sector organizations, and utilities. At this early stage, an initial stakeholder list should focus on decision makers who are key to launching the transition, and the resources they may have or need to do so.

As the stakeholder list grows to identify all parties active in the local energy market—including consultants and international organizations—possible teams and available resources that may help implement the transition will take shape. With broader participation come more talent and resources, which facilitate success.

Phase 0 Describes How To:

- 0.1 Compile a List of Energy Opportunities
 - 0.2 Identify Decision Makers and Resources
 - 0.3 Convene Decision Makers for Initial Discussions
 - 0.4 Record the Transition Commitment in a Written Document
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Sample Stakeholder Matrix

Name	Role in Transition	Impact on Transition	Interest in Transition	Engagement Required

Illustrative only. The full worksheet on page 0-7 can be adapted to suit different needs.

0.3 Convene Decision Makers for Initial Discussion

After identifying which energy opportunities to pursue and which stakeholders will be involved at the beginning of the transition, it is time to start the dialogue about leading it. It can be beneficial to have a credible third party—such as a nongovernmental organization that does not stand to gain financially or politically—assist in convening meetings because its representatives may be perceived as neutral experts.

The result of early conversations should be obtaining support from key stakeholders to begin Phase 1, and identifying parties willing to demonstrate their leadership in the transition. These conversations can also begin to identify aspects of the vision that will take shape in Phase 1.

0.4 Record Commitment in a Written Document

Because an energy transition is a significant undertaking, it may be beneficial for key stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment to the effort in a written document such as a memorandum of understanding or partnership agreement. This document can describe the level of commitment necessary to undertake the transition, expectations about roles and responsibilities, and broader participation in the effort.

0.5 Phase 0 Resources**Lessons Learned**

- U.S. Virgin Islands Leadership Embraces Inclusiveness to Ensure Community Ownership of Clean Energy Vision

Worksheet

- Stakeholder Engagement Register

Template

- Memorandum of Understanding

Information Resources



LESSONS LEARNED

U.S. Virgin Islands Leadership Embraces Inclusiveness to Ensure Community Ownership of Clean Energy Vision

Getting the Right People in the Room at the Outset

Getting the right people in the room is critical to ensuring buy-in from key stakeholders when setting the vision for an energy project or initiative. Like many island communities, the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) was almost 100% dependent on imported oil for electricity, water desalinization, and transportation in 2009. USVI electricity costs were nearly four times the U.S. national average.

Part of the Energy Development in Island Nations (EDIN) initiative, the USVI pilot project launched in late 2009 as a collaborative effort led by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI), the USVI government, the Virgin Islands Energy Office (VIEO), and the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA).

At the inaugural EDIN-USVI workshop in February 2010, USVI Gov. John P. de Jongh Jr. announced his goal to reduce the territory's dependence on fossil fuel 60% by 2025. The next step was to form the project's leadership team and bring together key stakeholders to establish a vision for the USVI's clean energy future.

Challenge

After Gov. de Jongh announced the USVI's clean energy goal, the first challenge—and critical first step—was to charter and empower an effective leadership team for the project. The partners and stakeholders had different priorities and agendas, but each needed to be represented on the leadership team because each had expertise, resources, capacities, and capabilities that were essential to advancing the governor's goals. The leadership team also needed to include a local energy champion with the influence, charisma, and insights to achieve buy-in for the project.

Once the leadership team was in place, the next challenge was organizing the first locally held EDIN-USVI planning workshop to get the right people in the room to set the vision. Because the territory had a history of unsuccessful government initiatives and poorly planned and executed renewable energy projects, the leadership team faced a fair amount of skepticism and apathy in engaging key stakeholders and persuading them to participate in the workshop.



More than 25 government leaders, energy office officials, and utility company executives from the USVI attended a workshop at NREL in Golden, Colorado, in February 2010.

Photo by Adam Warren, NREL



Gov. John P. de Jongh Jr. at the EDIN-USVI Energy Workshop held at NREL in February 2010. *Photo by Rebecca Ottaway, NREL 18597*

“We must—together—embrace the challenge of transforming our community and the underpinnings of our economy to build the future that we need and must reach, not just for ourselves, but, more importantly, for our children.”

—Gov. John P. de Jongh Jr.

Although the leadership team agreed in principle about inclusiveness as an ideal, it wrestled with how many people to invite to the workshop—and whom. The first day would be geared toward teeing up the project, whereas the second day would be highly interactive, with its primary goals to form steering committees and set the vision. Because energy was a major pain point in the territory, the leadership team expected strong voices of opposition among the key stakeholders, and knew this would pose challenges to doing the work and controlling the public message.

The leadership team needed to strike a balance between including a broad set of public and private stakeholders with diverse interests and perspectives, and maintaining a manageable number of participants to allow work to be accomplished.

Solution

The governor’s office appointed VIEO Director Bevan Smith and WAPA Chief Executive Officer Hugo Hodge Jr. to co-lead the project with the support of a steering committee composed of DOE and National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) representatives and Basil Ottley with DOI. Despite representing diverse interests and agendas related to energy transformation, this core group was tasked with developing and implementing a plan for achieving the governor’s goal.

Ottley, a former USVI senator, was well-positioned to serve as the project’s local energy champion because of his deep roots and strong connections in the territory, lack of ties to any political administration, and keen understanding of the issues, needs, and challenges. These attributes, combined with his infectious enthusiasm for the project, made Ottley a valuable asset in identifying and engaging key stakeholders to participate in the early planning process. Along with other locally based members of the leadership team, he reached out to the various stakeholders to rally their support and motivate them to participate in the first USVI planning workshop.

While Ottley was key to gaining local support, DOE brought to the table unbiased technical expertise in renewable energy and energy efficiency. DOE would be critical to ensuring that the proposed technical solutions best used USVI’s natural resources while meeting the goal.

The steering committee members tapped in to their organizations’ public affairs and communications staffs to assist with the stakeholder engagement effort. In the end, the committee invited a diverse mix of public and private stakeholders—potential opponents included—ranging from legislators and government administrators to activists, educators, and local business leaders. Among the individuals and groups represented were:

- The USVI senate
- Government agencies (regulatory and permitting, housing, transportation, tourism)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Local tourism groups and hotel owners
- Community activists and advocacy groups (St. Croix Environmental Association, AARP, etc.)
- Local solar installers
- Real estate developers
- Energy service companies
- University students and staff.

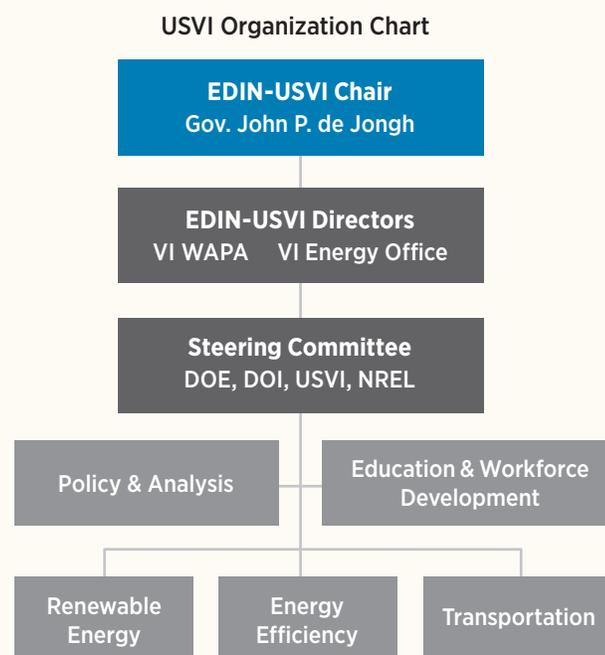


Illustration by NREL

Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

To achieve a clean energy vision goal, it is important to determine who will lead the effort and clearly define roles and responsibilities. In the USVI, three groups led the effort:

- Leadership team
- Steering committee
- Working groups.

Leadership Team

The USVI leadership team included executives from the governor's energy office and the utility.

Steering Committee

Representatives from partner organizations DOE, DOI, and NREL comprised the USVI steering committee. The group was tasked with developing and implementing a plan for achieving the goal, which it achieved by organizing the inaugural strategic energy planning workshop that led to the development of the USVI Energy Road Map.¹

Working Groups

The USVI working groups were composed of many public and private stakeholders, who focused on five key areas: energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation, education and workforce development, and policy and analysis. They began in the planning phase by developing a set of task-related initiatives to be considered. Next, they performed detailed analyses to identify the mix of energy efficiency and renewable energy that would enable the USVI to achieve its goal. They used the data gathered during the assessment phase to develop the USVI Energy Road Map.

To allow for open discussion, the workshop was closed to the media but a press conference immediately followed the event.

The initial planning workshop was held at the University of the Virgin Islands St. Thomas campus in June 2010. Of the 100 people invited to participate in the two-day workshop, approximately 60 attended. The USVI vision-setting exercise benefited from input from attendees who were essential or highly motivated, as well as from public and private stakeholders who were eager to do the work. It led to the development of five working groups to execute data gathering and to identify the necessary tactics and strategies to achieve the vision.

Key Takeaways

The USVI project demonstrates that an inclusive approach at the outset, with champions from the community and in the executive level of government, is important because successful energy transformation requires buy-in—not just from the local government, but from the entire community.

Identifying whom to include, inviting them to participate, and motivating them to contribute to the process are common challenges for those leading a community energy planning process, because energy transformation involves overcoming apathy and skepticism, and changing the status quo. It also involves

¹ Available at <http://energy.gov/eere/downloads/usvi-energy-road-map-charting-course-clean-energy-future-brochure-edin-energy>.

stakeholders—with vastly different viewpoints and agendas—coming together to reach a consensus about a vision for the project or initiative.

Overcoming apathy is challenging because it involves changing deep-seated attitudes and beliefs that are often rooted in cultural and societal norms and/or spawned by community experience. Likewise, changing the status quo is a significant barrier to success. Any threat to the established order carries with it an element of social, political, and economic risk, and thus there are bound to be people who resist change for a variety of reasons.

Finally, bringing together people with divergent perspectives and agendas—social, political, and economic—to shape a common vision is always an uphill climb. At this stage, it is important to recognize that although some individuals and groups will already have an understanding of and a vested interest in defining a sustainable energy future, others may not yet be engaged in the conversation or moved to action.

In the USVI, involving a broad cross-section of public and private stakeholders—potential opponents included—in setting the vision created an opportunity for civil discourse that was critical to the project’s long-term success. Although inclusiveness was not necessarily the easiest path, it proved an effective strategy for securing a sense of community ownership and brought all the benefits of transparency to the process. Involving detractors in the early planning stages gave project proponents a chance to understand and assess barriers to project success, address opposing views, assuage objections through thoughtful and reasoned arguments backed by hard data, and ultimately reach a consensus.

Finally, identifying a local energy champion was a critical piece of the puzzle. Involving a respected and well-connected community leader helped establish credibility for the project locally. Furthermore, the right person in this role can generate excitement and optimism, motivate key stakeholders, and rally grassroots support throughout the project.

Key lessons learned for setting the USVI clean energy vision include:

- Obtain executive sponsorship of the vision from public and private leadership.
- Form a public-private partnership to achieve aspirational goals. The public sector cannot establish a vision for energy transformation in a vacuum.
- Engage a broad cross-section of local stakeholders—even naysayers—to reach a consensus and secure community buy-in on the project.
- Identify and involve local energy champions throughout the process to pinpoint challenges and gather successes.

Worksheet: Stakeholder Matrix

Name	Role in Transition	Impact on Transition	Interest in Transition	Engagement Required

Template: Donor Coordination Matrix

Donor Name	Project Scope and Name	Project Partners and Consultants	Timeline (Start & End)	Funding Amount	Point(s) of Contact

Template: Memorandum of Understanding

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
[NATION]
AND
[COUNTERPARTY]

I. Background

The [INSERT ISLAND NATION] recognizes that reducing its dependence on imported oil is a primary pathway toward achieving energy independence and a cleaner environment. [NATION] is now embarking on the next phase of its clean energy future to drive economic vitality and growth through building the innovation sector and providing sustaining opportunities for job growth.

By taking action to transition from oil imports to use of local, indigenous renewable resources and efficient technologies, the [NATION] and the [COUNTERPARTY] are developing pathways for job creation, industrial transformation, environmental compliance, and technological innovation.

In [YEAR], [NATION] took the first steps to transitioning its energy system away from a dependence on imported oil. [NATION] recognizes the value of setting a long-term vision, and recognizes the role of [COUNTERPARTY] in convening the broad set of stakeholders necessary to set that vision and assess the pathways to realize that vision. [NATION] also recognizes the value of leveraging resources, knowledge, and experience of [COUNTERPARTY] in a shared commitment for the deployment of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and alternative transportation technologies, and promoting various opportunities to pursue innovative, tailored energy solutions.

II. Purpose

[NATION] and [COUNTERPARTY] (collectively referred to as “the Parties”) will enter into this Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) to set a vision, articulate pathways to realize that vision, promote effective collaboration, and prepare [NATION] to successfully complete the transition of its energy system. This includes jointly pursuing innovative policies, technologies, deployment strategies, and financing approaches relating to, without limitation: energy efficiency; renewable energy; alternate fuels; electric transmission and distribution systems; energy storage; alternative fuel vehicles; and other forms of clean transportation.

The successful execution of the purpose of the MOU will position [NATION] to focus on local energy resources, including efficiency, ensure continued long-term investment in its energy sector and achieve energy autonomy and sustainability.

III. Roles of the Parties

The Parties hereby agree that they will undertake, subject to Section IV and to the extent permitted by applicable law, the following activities under the MOU:

A. Parties Collectively

The Parties will endeavor to:

1. Agree on near- and medium-term opportunities for collaboration to achieve the [NATION] goal of [INSERT ONE TO THREE GOALS], in order to eliminate the State's reliance on imported oil;
2. Act, in support of one another and in concert when appropriate, to realize the benefits of the opportunities identified in (A)(1);
3. Designate Points of Contact ("POCs") for undertaking activities in concert and for consultation regarding activities relevant to the MOU undertaken individually; and
4. Support and promote communications and awareness campaigns to inform consumers, businesses, and major stakeholders in [NATION] of the goals and benefits of this Partnership.

B. [COUNTERPARTY]

The [COUNTERPARTY] will endeavor to:

1. Identify available resources that could further the purpose of the MOU, and work with the State to make appropriate use of those resources;
2. Provide technical assistance relevant to achieving the purpose of the MOU;
3. Assist in convening the national stakeholders that may help achieve the purpose of the MOU, realize the benefits of opportunities identified in (A)(1), and successfully complete the actions contemplated in (A)(2);
4. Ensure that the POCs identified under (A)(3), supra, employ effective communication relating to MOU activities in performance plans or other relevant planning structure; and
5. Designate a lead for each opportunity identified under (A)(1), supra, responsible for working with the POCs to coordinate activities under (A)(2).

C. [NATION]

[NATION] will endeavor to:

1. Develop the technical, workforce and academic tools necessary to realize the purpose of the MOU;
2. Identify, coordinate and maintain collaborative working relationships with key local stakeholders for implementation of the MOU;
3. Identify and lead processes required to fulfill the MOU, including drafting and implementing state and local policies necessary to demonstrate and foster the leadership contemplated by the [YEAR] MOU;
4. Designate a lead for each opportunity identified under (A)(1), supra, responsible for working with the POCs to coordinate activities under (A)(2); and

5. Involve the public, academic community, private sector, and state and local officials in the following:
 - a. Shaping and executing the projects, programs and policies under the [YEAR] MOU;
 - b. Realizing the benefits of opportunities identified in (A)(1); and
 - c. Successfully completing the actions contemplated in (A)(2).

IV. Miscellaneous

A. Termination

1. As a document whose sole and primary purpose is the internal management of the Parties, the MOU may be terminated through written notice by either of the Parties at any time; and
2. Nothing in the MOU can in any way restrict either of the Parties from participating in any activity with any individual or organization, public or private.

B. Fiscal Disclaimers

The MOU shall not:

1. Be construed to impact the procurement or financial activities of the Parties;
2. Be construed to be either a fiscal or a funds obligation document; nor
3. Be construed to intend to obligate the Parties to receive or transfer anything of value, including, without limitation, to expend, exchange, or reimburse funds, services, or supplies.

C. Cause of Action Disclaimers

The MOU shall not:

1. Create a legal obligation of the Parties; nor
2. Create a private right or cause of action for or by any person or entity.

Signatory

Signatory

Print Name

Print Name

Title

Title

Date

Date

Information Resources for Phase 0

These information resources and useful links are illustrative, not comprehensive.

Solar Powering Your Community: A Guide for Local Governments (U.S. Department of Energy [DOE] 2011). DOE developed this comprehensive resource to provide a framework for a comprehensive solar plan for a community by introducing a range of policy and program options.

Sustainability Planning Toolkit (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives [ICLEI] 2009). This publication provides a starting point to understand the key steps involved in developing or updating a sustainability plan.

The **Communications and Outreach Web Resource** (<http://www.icleiusa.org/action-center/engaging-your-community/outreach-and-communications-guide>) from ICLEI contains an array of steps and methodologies for communication and outreach efforts.

The **Planning Tool Exchange** (<http://www.planningtoolexchange.org>) is an online hub for tools, resources, and organizations in community planning.