CONSULTATION DRAFT

NATIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE BILL, 2026

Arrangement of Sections

Section

1. Short title and commencement....2
2. Interpretation....2
3. Establishment of the Institute....3
4. National Development Plan....3
5. Approval of the Plan....4
6. Implementation and enforcement of the Plan....4
7. Revision and progress reports of the Plan....5
8. Board....5
9. Managing director and staff of Institute....5
10. Committees....6
11. Functions of the Institute....6
12. Powers of the Institute....6
13. Bank account....6
14. Funds and resources of the Institute....6
15. Accounts and audit....7
16. Budget estimates and annual report....7
17. Minister may give directions to the Institute....7
18. Regulations....8

SCHEDULE **9**

CONSTITUTION AND PROCEDURE OF THE BOARD 9

NATIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE BILL, 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BODY TO BE KNOWN AS THE NATIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE WHICH WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT OF THE BAHAMAS, STATUTORY BODIES AND OTHER AGENCIES WITH A COORDINATED APPROACH TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF THAT BODY AND FOR CONNECTED PURPOSES

Enacted by the Parliament of The Bahamas

1. Short title and commencement.

(1) This Act may be cited as the National Planning and Development Institute Act, 2026.

(2) This Act shall come into force on such date as the Minister may appoint by notice published in the *Gazette*.

2. Interpretation.

In this Act —

"Board" means the National Planning and Development Institute Board established under section 8;

"**Minister**" means the Minister responsible for National Planning and Development;

"**Plan**" means the National Development Plan referred to under section 4;

3. Establishment of the Institute.

(1) There is established a statutory body to be known as the National Planning and Development Institute (hereinafter "the Institute") with perpetual succession and a common seal, with power to sue and be sued and power to hold and dispose of land.

(2) The common seal of the Institute shall —

(a) be kept in such custody as the Board directs and not used except as authorised by the Board;

(b) be authenticated by the signatures of the chairperson or any other member of the Board, authorised by the board in that behalf, and of the secretary; and

(c) be judicially and officially noticed when affixed to any document and authenticated under this section, until the contrary is proved, any necessary order or authorisation of the Board shall be presumed to have been given.

4. National Development Plan.

(1) The Institute, in [consultation] with ministries of the Government of The Bahamas, statutory bodies, civil society, the general public and other agencies, shall prepare a National Development Plan ("the Plan") to promote and enhance the development of The Bahamas.

(2) The Plan shall be reviewed and published every three years on the official website of the Institute.

(3) The Plan shall include —

(a) identification and diagnosing of current issues;

(b) objectives for the enhancement of national development capacity;

(c) objectives for governance, transparency, accountability, and institutional strengthening;

(d) objectives for economic diversification, resilience, and sustainable growth;

(e) objectives for financing, resource mobilisation, and fiscal sustainability;

(f) objectives for improving conditions for economic, education, infrastructure, agriculture, human capital, environment, resources, technology, culture and tourism;

(g) objectives for expansion of welfare, health and medical care;

(h) objectives for the expansion of science and technology;

(i) objectives for the necessary development of Family Islands;

(j) objectives for monitoring, evaluation, and the establishment of data systems to measure progress;

(k) objectives for social cohesion, equity, poverty reduction, and protection of vulnerable groups; and

(l) any other matter necessary for the development of The Bahamas.

5. Approval of the Plan.

If a Plan has been prepared by the Institute and approved by the Minister, the Plan shall —

(a) be laid before both Houses of Parliament and, upon adoption by Resolution of both Houses, and

(b) have effect as the National Development Plan.

6. Implementation and enforcement of the Plan.

(1) If a plan is in effect as the National Development Plan, the Institute —

(a) shall establish mechanisms for the phased implementation of the Plan, including timelines, performance indicators and designated responsibilities for ministries, agencies, and statutory bodies;

(b) shall monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Plan, and shall prepare annual progress reports to be submitted to the Minister and published on the official website of the Institute;

(c) may issue guidelines, directives, or protocols to facilitate effective execution of the Plan across governmental and non-governmental stakeholders;

(d) shall promote public awareness and stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the Plan, including consultation with civil society, private sector and Family Island communities; and

(e) has the authority to request and receive data, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (*Ch. 324A*), from ministries, agencies and statutory bodies.

(2) All ministries, agencies and statutory bodies shall comply with the directives, guidelines and responsibilities assigned under the Plan.

(3) If a ministry, agency or statutory body fails to comply with the Plan based on technical advice, the Institute shall be provided with the technical advice for the non-compliance and the Institute shall keep a written record of the reasons for the non-compliance and consider the revision or amendment to the Plan.

(4) If the Institute —

(a) agrees with the technical advice provided by the ministry, agency, or statutory body, the Institute may amend or review the relevant part of the Plan; or

(b) does not agree with the technical advice, or the ministry, agency, or statutory body fails to provide technical advice for non-compliance, the Institute shall include the information in it's report outlining the non-compliance or delays.

7. Revision and progress reports of the Plan.

(1) The Institute shall —

(a) conduct a review of the implementation of the Plan annually; and

(b) submit to the Minister a progress report every six months for amendment, continuation, or replacement of objectives, based on performance indicators and stakeholder feedback.

(3) The Minister shall lay the progress report before Parliament within sixty days of receipt.

(4) The Institute may, with the approval of the Minister, issue supplementary plans or amendments to the Plan to address emerging national priorities, unforeseen circumstances, or deficiencies identified during implementation.

(5) Any amendments or supplementary plan shall be published on the official website of the Institute and communicated to the relevant ministries, agencies, and stakeholders.

8. Board.

(1) There is established a body to be known as the National Planning and Development Board ("the Board").

(1) The Board shall be responsible for the performance of the functions of the Institute.

(2) The *Schedule* has effect with respect to the constitution and procedures of the Board.

9. Managing director and staff of Institute.

(1) The Board may, for the work of the Institute, employ a managing director and other staff as it determines necessary.

(2) The managing director shall serve as the chief operations officer and must have qualifications and experience in economics and development planning, and in either government administration or finance.

(3) The managing director shall be an *ex officio* member of the Board.

(4) The Board shall, in consultation with the Minister, determine the remuneration and other benefits afforded to the managing director and other staff.

10. Committees.

(1) If the Board determines that specialist advice is necessary for the work of the Institute, the Board may appoint advisory committees of specialists for a fixed period.

(2) A committee appointed under subsection (1) shall not exercise supervisory or decision-making powers under this Act.

11. Functions of the Institute.

The functions of the Institute are to —

(a) propose and create in collaboration with other national stakeholder bodies strategic plans for the development of The Bahamas;

(b) monitor the implementation of the strategic plans for the development of The Bahamas;

(c) act as one of the research agencies of The Bahamas;

(d) collaborate with other research agencies of The Bahamas;

(e) prepare the annual report, progress reports and any other report or document as required in carrying out the objectives of this Act.

12. Powers of the Institute.

The Institute shall have the power to carry out activities, do all things and enter into transactions as appear to the Institute to be necessary, or advantageous for it to carry on or perform or enter into, for or in connection with the discharge of its functions.

13. Bank account.

The Institute shall —

(a) open and maintain a bank account;

(b) assign, as signatories on the bank account —

(i) the chairperson;

(ii) the secretary; and

(iii) by delegated authority, the managing director.

14. Funds and resources of the Institute.

The funds and resources of the Institute shall consist of —

(a) sums as may be appropriated by Parliament;

(b) sums arising from gifts, grants or donations from persons, including national and international bodies; and

(c) all other sums which may in any manner become payable to the Institute in respect of any matter incidental to its functions.

15. Accounts and audit.

(1) The Institute shall keep proper records in relation to the accounts, and shall prepare in respect of each financial year, a statement of accounts.

(2) The accounts of the Institute for each financial year shall be audited annually by auditors appointed by the Board from among members of The Bahamas Institute of Chartered Accountants.

(3) The Institute shall, three months after the end of each financial year, submit the audited accounts to the Minister, together with the report made by the auditor.

(4) The Minister shall cause a copy of the annual financial statement of account to be laid before both chambers of Parliament, together with a copy of the auditor's report.

16. Budget estimates and annual report.

(1) The Institute shall prepare for each financial year an annual budget of revenue and expenditure.

(2) The annual budget referred to under subsection (1), shall be submitted to the Minister three months before the beginning of the financial year.

(3) The Institute shall, three months after the end of each financial year, submit to the Minister a report of its activities, accompanied by a statement of its expenditure and revenue.

(4) The Minister shall cause a copy of the report of the Institute to be laid before both chambers of Parliament.

17. Minister may give directions to the Institute.

(1) The Minister may give to the Institute directions of a general nature as to the policy to be followed by the Institute in the carrying out or in pursuit of its functions as appear to the Minister requisite in the public interest and the Institute shall give effect to any such directions.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Minister shall not give directions relating to the appointment, termination of appointment, promotion or disciplining of any employee of the Institute.

18. Regulations.

(1) The Minister may, after consultation with the Institute, make regulations generally to give effect to this Act.

(2) Regulations made under subsection (1) may, in particular, provide for —

(a) the establishment of procedures, standards and performance indicators for the implementation of the Plan;

(b) the coordination of responsibilities among ministries, agencies and statutory bodies;

(c) the collection, management, and publication of data relevant to the monitoring and evaluation of the Plan;

(d) the facilitation of stakeholder engagement, including consultation with civil society, private sector and Family Island communities; and

(e) any other matter necessary for the effective execution of functions of the Institute.

SCHEDULE
(section 8)

CONSTITUTION AND PROCEDURE OF THE BOARD

1. Constitution and tenure of the Board.

(1) The Board shall be appointed by the Minister in writing and consist of nine members —

(a) the Financial Secretary or his representative;

(b) the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Works and Planning;

(c) the Managing Director of The Bahamas National Statistical Institute;

(d) the Chief Medical Officer or his representative;

(e) a person with experience in development planning systems recommended by the Minister;

(f) a representative of The Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers Confederation;

(g) a representative from civil society recommended by the umbrella organization of civil society organizations in The Bahamas;

(h) a representative of the University of The Bahamas; and

(i) the managing director, *ex officio*.

(2) A member of the Board, other than the managing director, may hold office for a period not exceeding three years, and may be eligible for re-appointment for a further period not exceeding two years.

(3) The Board shall appoint a secretary from among the staff of the Institute.

2. Appointment of chairperson.

(1) The Minister shall appoint one member of the Board to be the chairperson and another member to be the deputy chairperson.

(2) In the case of the chairperson's absence or inability to act, the deputy chairperson shall perform the function of the chairperson.

3. Vacancies.

If any vacancy occurs in the membership of the Board, the vacancy, shall be filled by the appointment of another member who shall, subject to this Schedule, hold office for the remainder of the period for which the previous member was appointed, and the appointment shall be made in the same manner and from the same category of persons, if any, as the appointment of the previous member.

4. Resignation.

A member of the Board, other than the managing director, may at any time resign his office, in writing addressed to the Minister and transmitted through the chairperson, and from the date of the receipt by the Minister of the instrument, the member shall cease to be a member of the Board.

5. Removal.

The Minister may terminate the appointment of a member of the Board if the member —

(a) becomes of unsound mind or becomes permanently unable to perform his functions by reason of ill health;

(b) is convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment;

(c) fails without reasonable excuse to carry out any of the functions conferred or imposed on him under this Act; or

(d) engages in such activities as are reasonably considered prejudicial to the interest of the Board.

8. Publication.

The appointment, removal or resignation of any member of the Board shall be published in the *Gazette*.

9. Remuneration.

There shall be paid from the funds of the Institute to the members of the Board such remuneration, whether by way of honorarium, salary and such allowances, if any, as the Minister may determine.

10. Procedure and meetings.

(1) The Board shall meet at least once each month or at times as may be necessary for the transaction of its business, and meetings shall be held at places and times as the Board may determine.

(2) The chairperson may at any time call a special meeting of the Board within seven days of the receipt of a written request for that purpose addressed to the chairperson, by any two members of the Board.

(3) The chairperson shall preside at meetings of the Board, and if the chairperson and the deputy chairperson are absent from a meeting, the members of the Board present shall elect one of their members to preside at the meeting.

(4) The quorum of the Board shall be five of its members.

(5) The decisions of the Board shall be by a simple majority of votes and in addition to an original vote, the chairperson or other person presiding at a meeting shall have a casting vote in any case in which the voting is equal.

(6) Subject to this Schedule, the Board may regulate its own proceedings.

(7) Minutes in proper form of each meeting of the Board shall be kept by the secretary and the minutes shall be submitted to the Minister within seven days after the meeting.

11. Power of the Board to invite persons to attend meetings.

(1) The Board may invite a person who, in the opinion of the Board, has expert knowledge concerning any of the functions of the Board which is likely to be of assistance, to attend any meeting of the Board and to take part in the proceedings.

(2) A person attending a meeting under this paragraph may, if invited, take part in any discussion at the meeting but shall not have any voting rights.

12. Disclosure of Interest.

A member of the Board who is directly or indirectly interested in any matter which is being dealt with by the Board shall —

(a) disclose the nature of his interest at a meeting of the Board; and

(b) not take part in any deliberation or decision of the Board with respect to that matter.

13. Protection of members.

(1) Subject to subparagraph (2), no action, prosecution or other proceedings shall be brought or instituted personally against the manager director of the Institute, chairperson or any member of the Board or committee in respect of any act done in good faith in pursuance or execution or intended execution of this Act.

(2) If the manager director of the Institute, chairperson or any member of the Board or committee is exempt from liability by reason only of subparagraph (1), the Board shall be liable to the extent that it would be if the manager director of the Institute, chairperson or any member of the Board or committee were a servant or agent of the Board.

OBJECTS AND REASONS

In 2016, the Economic Development Planning Unit ("the Unit") within the Office of the Prime Minister was charged with the duty to create and develop a National Development Plan for The Bahamas. A Commission was created within the Unit and eventually became the National Development Secretariat and Council who developed the National Development Plan Vision 2040. The government wishes to establish the National Planning Institute to provide for the government's goals and strategy for long-term development of The Bahamas. The work of creation and implementation of the National Development Plan shall be that of the body corporate the Institute.

This Bill seeks to provide for —

(a) the establishment of the National Planning Institute of The Bahamas, as the lead-coordinator of planning for the government of The Bahamas;

(b) the development of the National Development Plan, hereinafter known as "the Plan", as the primary long-term vision for the future growth and prosperity of The Bahamas;

(c) implementation of the Plan across all government ministries, agencies and departments;

(d) the provision of accountability measures and related interventions;

(e) aligning local government planning to the strategic direction of the Plan; and

(f) mandating the periodic review and assessment of the Plan.

Clause 1 of the Bill seeks to provide for the short title and commencement.

Clause 2 of the Bill seeks to provide for the interpretation section of the Bill.

Clause 3 of the Bill seeks to establish the National Development Planning Institute, provide for the common seal of the Institute and the parameters of the use of the seal and providing that the *Schedule* contains the constitution of the Institute.

Clause 4 to 5 of the Bill seeks to provide for the mandatory development and the requirements to approve the National Development Plan after it is approved by the Minister, that plan may be adopted by Resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

Clause 6 to 7 of the Bill seeks to provide for the implementation and revision of the Plan.

Clause 8 and the *Schedule* to the Bill seeks to provide for the establishment of the Board and the work of the Board.

Clause 9 of the Bill seeks to provide for the managing director and staff of the Institute.

Clause 10 of the Bill seeks to provide for a provision permitting the appointment of committees within the Institute.

Clause 11 of the Bill seeks to outline the functions of the Institute which includes but is not limited to —

(a) propose and create in collaboration with other national stakeholder bodies strategic plans for the development of The Bahamas;

(b) monitor the implementation of the strategic plans for the development of The Bahamas;

(c) act as a reservoir of information on national issues; or

(d) act as one of the research agencies of The Bahamas.

Clause 12 of the Bill seeks to outline the powers of the Institute which includes that the Institute shall have the power to carry out activities, do all things and enter into all transactions as appear to the Institute to be necessary, or advantageous for it to carry on or perform or enter into, for or in connection with the discharge of its functions.

Clause 13 to 16 of the Bill seeks to provide for provisions relating to the funding of the Institute including —

(a) Funds and resources of the Institute;

(b) Annual budget;

(c) Accounts and audits; and

(d) Annual Report.

Clause 17 of the Bill seeks to provide a provision that the Minister may give directions of a general nature as to the policy to be followed by the Institute in the carrying out or in pursuit of its functions.

Clause 18 of the Bill provides the power for the Minister to make regulations generally for the Act.