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**Singapore**  

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**USE CASE**

**Sovereignty as Strategy**

# Sovereignty as Strategy: Helping Small States Plan Beyond Aid

## 1. Context Snapshot – A Captivating Story

- City Name: Belmora
- Country: Saint Calixte (imaginary Caribbean island nation)
- Population: 420,000
- Year of Launch: 2023

For decades, Saint Calixte was caught in a familiar rhythm: budget crises followed by donor pledges; hurricane devastation followed by international sympathy. Its sovereignty was intact on paper, but in practice, its future often depended on others' priorities. Development plans were shaped by what funders wanted. Critical reforms were delayed, waiting for technical assistance or the next disbursement.

Then came a turning point. In 2022, a promised \$40 million aid package was delayed for 18 months—paralyzing infrastructure projects and damaging public trust. In the quiet that followed, Minister Lianne Morsay, a veteran of both grassroots politics and multilateral diplomacy, began asking a bold question: What would it take for a small state to become sovereign not just in law, but in strategy?

She found her answer in Singapore.

Reading *The Singapore Way*, Minister Morsay saw not a country with more money, but one with more resolve—planning decades ahead, designing policy with internal discipline, and negotiating globally from a posture of strength. Thus began a national transformation: sovereignty not just as identity, but as strategic foresight.

## 2. LOCAL LEADER'S Vision Statement

“We will no longer build our future in the pauses between donor cycles. We will build with clarity, credibility, and confidence—on our own clock.”

— Minister Lianne Morsay, Ministry of Strategic Development and Planning

### 3. 10 Lessons from The Singapore Way Adapted to the City

Singapore Strategy	Local Adaptation
Long-Term Planning	Launched “Belmora 2040” as a binding national foresight framework
Strategic Sovereignty	Shifted from project-based aid to systems-focused investment priorities
Hybrid Economic Policy	Balanced public investment with private innovation in the blue economy
Self-Reliance as Culture	Launched national “Sovereignty Labs” in schools and ministries
Institutional Continuity	Introduced multi-party consensus forums on core national strategy
Rule of Law	verhauled procurement systems for transparency and local control
Innovation Investmen	Created a public innovation fund drawn from diaspora bonds
Leadership Pipelines	Groomed second-tier technocrats via strategic foresight fellowships
International Credibility	Built new “Policy Dignity Index” to rate internal performance over donor dependence
Public Engagement	Held “We Plan Together” forums in 40 communities to shape the Belmora 2040 plan

## 4. The Local Plan

- **Name of Initiative: Sovereignty by Design: Belmora 2040**
  - **Objectives:**
    - Reposition Saint Calixte as a self-directed state beyond aid dependency
    - Institutionalize long-range planning through public, private, and civic systems
    - Align national development around resilience, foresight, and internal credibility
  - **Key Design & Policy Tools:**
    - Sovereign Systems Index (SSI) tracking state capacity in 12 sectors
    - Constitutional Planning Mandate (passed 2023) requires 20-year horizon setting
    - Diaspora Strategic Contribution Portal allowing non-resident citizens to fund or mentor national reforms

## 5. Implementation Framework

Phase	Activities	Duration	Stakeholders
Phase 1	Launch Belmora 2040 National Planning Dialogues	6 months	Planning Ministry, local councils, youth leagues
Phase 2	Create Sovereignty Policy Lab (public service reform accelerator)	6 months	Civil service commission, academic institutions
Phase 3	Pilot SSI across 5 ministries + quarterly dashboards	8 months	Prime Minister's Office, UNDP, Caribbean think tanks
Phase 4	Global Roadshow: "Small States, Big Vision"	Ongoing	Foreign affairs, diaspora councils, World Bank

## 6. Outcomes & Impact (18–24 Months)

- Quantitative:
  - Reduced donor-funded share of capital budget from 68% to 41%
  - 240 civil servants trained in long-term systems thinking
  - \$6.3M raised from diaspora bonds toward public innovation fund
- Qualitative:
  - Youth parliament rewrote “A Budget for the Future” based on Belmora 2040 priorities
  - A local mayor used SSI data to lobby Parliament for devolved infrastructure authority
  - In Davos, Saint Calixte presented as a case study in strategic autonomy for small nations

## 7. Challenges Faced & How They Were Overcome

Challenge	Solution or Mitigation
Elite resistance to reducing aid privileges	Reframed sovereignty as a legacy platform for all parties
Capacity gaps in ministries	Formed Ministry of Planning Corps—rotating technocrat mentorship teams
Donor skepticism of new frameworks	Shared transparent dashboards + co-designed new performance metrics
Public doubt	Used storytelling campaigns: “What We Can Do with Our Own Hands” aired nationally

## 8. LOCAL LEADER'S Reflections

“Singapore taught us that size is not the limit—credibility is. We’re not just claiming sovereignty; we’re practicing it. One plan, one act, one decade at a time.”

— Minister Lianne Morsay