



Report on the SDGs Catalysts Network 7th Quarterly Meeting

under the project

***CSOs For Good Governance:
Enhancing civil society's contribution to governance and development processes in
Trinidad and Tobago (CSOs4GoodGov)***



May 28, 2019

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute, Barataria, Trinidad & Tobago

1 Introduction

This report presents the outcomes of the *SDGs Catalysts Network's 7th Quarterly meeting* held on May 28th, 2019 at Caribbean Natural Resources Institute's Office, Barataria, Trinidad. The report provides an overview of the participants, objectives and methods, and recounts the main activities of the CSOs4GoodGov project. The following were addressed in the meeting:

- discussion on Trinidad and Tobago's (T&T) participation in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2020 process, and a possible strategy for CSO engagement/contributions;
- a facilitated session to engage Catalysts' in continued project monitoring and evaluation on status and impact of capacity building interventions;
- sharing by Catalysts on recent key CSO initiatives and advocacy action including the NPO Bill campaign and Tobago Environmental Partnership Conference, 2019.

Participants:

Nineteen (19) persons attended the meeting including participants from 15 SDGs Catalysts Network member organisations.

See Appendix 1: List of participants.

2 Meeting Objectives

The specific meeting objectives were:

1. To facilitate Catalysts' participation in CSOs4GoodGov project monitoring and evaluation on status and impact of capacity building interventions
2. To engage Catalysts to develop and come to consensus on a strategy for CSO engagement/contributions to T&T Voluntary National Review 2020 process
3. To facilitate sharing by Catalysts on recent key CSO initiatives and advocacy action

See Appendix 2: Specific workshop agenda.

3 Methodology

Veni Apwann used a series of interactive exercises and plenary discussion to facilitate evaluation of capacity building interventions, and Catalysts reflection on how successful these have been to date. Q&A's were accommodated throughout the sessions.

CANARI made short presentation on the VNR process and used plenary discussions to facilitate inputs by Catalysts on possible strategy for engaging in this process.

Verbal presentations in person and virtually via Skype, were made by Catalyst members – CAISO, Veni Apwann and Environment Tobago, on key CSO advocacy initiatives and events.

4 Review of Key Sessions

This section covers review of main discussions and findings from each of the key meeting sessions. It was noted that Component leads would incorporate status updates as part of their sessions and that Catalysts will be provided with the completed Year 2 donor report to get full information.

4.1 T&T Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2020– developing a strategy for CSO engagement/contributions

- CANARI shared brief background information and recapped what was known on the Trinidad and Tobago VNR process i.e. the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) had previously shared Trinidad and Tobago is one of the countries that has been granted approval to present its VNR at the 2020 High Level Political Forum (HLPF), New York. A Ministerial Committee has been established to coordinate the preparation of the VNR. A draft roadmap (developed before with the aid of UNDP) to serve as a base for developing the VNR, was still not available for review. At present, little other information had been made available, including on intended consultations with civil society.
- Based on information from official UN sites, CANARI shared information on the broader VNR process including the goal and purpose and key elements which include national dialogue, preparation of the report and presentation at the HLPF.
- Catalysts agreed this was a key opportunity. CANARI facilitated a discussion on how Catalysts can or want to engage in the process. Some actions suggested by Catalysts include:
 - Sending an early call to government to engage civil society i.e. draft and share call to action letter, which will also outline how civil society wanted to be engaged
 - Preparing an independent report informed by our own civil society led consultations
 - Holding consultations on different thematic areas of interest – one key topic of interest was listed as sexual reproductive health
 - Identifying possible champions and entry points
 - Identifying what government is presenting at other major sustainable development related fora e.g. SDG Global Summit¹ in September 2019 and Nairobi Summit² in November 2019, and make linkages
- CANARI committed to following up to provide further updates from the government end through the MoPD representative on the Project Steering Committee and to further strategise with Catalysts on how to most effectively engage/contribute to the process.
- Other Catalysts committed to following up to share information which could shape actions moving forward e.g. outcomes from recent ECLAC SDG events (UWI-IGDS) and information on the HLPF NGO Major groups as a possible model (Environment Tobago).

See copy of CANARI's supporting presentation for the session here:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ihZW2gt8gYdSptikDNGpzhvkjBDjKaYw>

(N.B. the presentation was not shared in entirety in the meeting given time limitations, however it is shared here for reference/as resource material.

4.2 Capacity building monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Summary notes from this session are included below but a full report with results and analysis will be shared by Veni Apwann once completed – date to be determined.

Veni Apwann conducted an interactive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) session intended to give Catalysts the opportunity for continued reflection on capacity building interventions and what key changes have been experienced in various aspects of organizational capacity from the start of the project till present, as a result. Catalysts examined changes to various indicators under key areas of leadership, governance, communication and advocacy. It was intended that responses against the indicators would give a sense of their performance in these 3 main areas of organisational capacity i.e. whether walking' (basic), 'running' (intermediate) or 'flying high levels' (advanced).

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=3033&menu=1634>

² <https://www.unfpa.org/press/nairobi-summit-advance-icpd-programme-action>

Overall, the exercise was commended as being particularly useful for identifying what needs to be addressed in the overall area of organisational growth. The following are some summary results:

- Many Catalysts identified positive change experienced in the areas of Leadership and Governance with only 3 and 5 Catalysts indicating that they were at the walking levels for each of those areas respectively.
- 12 Catalysts reported that their organisations were flying high in the area of Leadership with 3 of them complying with all 5 Leadership indicators.
- In the area of Governance, 12 Catalysts reported that their organisations were flying high in the area of Governance with one identifying compliance with 16 of the 19 indicators.
- The key area many felt more work needed to be done in was Communications and Advocacy.

During plenary discussions Catalysts noted the following changes they experienced

- There were changes in the external environment and civil society sector in general –engagement in project activities created a lot of exposure for Catalysts and demonstrated there is strength in numbers
- Change from more adversarial stance to one of more strategic collaboration
- Exposure to what other Catalysts/CSOs are doing was valuable in supporting each other and ensuring especially longer standing CSOs did not stagnate or remain limited in their knowledge and approaches.
- Lines became blurred on ‘who is who’ and ‘who is doing what’
- Some Catalysts adopted methods and approaches they were exposed to, for their own work e.g. more participatory approaches where more members were included in meetings and involved in decision making
- Increased interest and recognition of the importance of succession planning.

In terms of the exercise methodology itself, it was noted that governance indicators need to include consideration of funding. The results would be used for monitoring and evaluation and also shared for knowledge of Catalysts.

As a separate exercise, Catalysts who participated in capacity building interventions during Year 2 on proposal writing and in SHIFT! Leadership training were asked to share on their experiences. Participants noted the training was useful in a practical sense e.g. one Catalyst was successful with a small grant after being part of the noted interventions. Others felt small group sessions where participants could share ideas and get feedback, and the approach to making small grants application process clearer by using the application forms as part of training, were noteworthy. In addition, participants felt they benefited from networking as the sessions brought them in closer and more regular contact with other CSO peers

4.3 Sharing by Catalysts

Catalysts CAISO, Veni Apwann and Environment Tobago verbally shared on recent key CSO initiatives and advocacy action taking place in the period since the last Catalysts meeting in March 2019.

NPO Bill Advocacy Campaign 2019

Colin Robinson, Executive Director at CAISO and Colleen Davis of Veni Apwann shared on the NPO Bill Advocacy Campaign 2019, including experiences and lessons on the advocacy process itself and next steps.

- Useful aspects of the advocacy process included that there had been preceding steps and background information available e.g. an operational legal and fiscal working group and CSO advocacy paper; openness and willingness by core group of CSOs to share responsibilities and volunteer time; process of sharing info and useful advocacy materials i.e. use of social media and approach to translate the bill to ensure messages were available and accessible for the lay man; creation of a listserv for dedicated and extended communication with those interested; ability to leverage existing/personal relationships and engagement of CSO champions and

supporters in government e.g. Josh Drayton, temporary senator; and presence in the Senate which allowed for some amendments to be made 'on the spot.'

- A key win was noted as the interest of and invitation by the AG office for continued engagement with the group who had engaged in the advocacy process, in shaping upcoming legislation which could impact civil society.
- It was noted that opportunities for advocacy may arise unexpectedly and CSOs need to be ready to quickly mobilise.
- The convening of the Civil Society Alliance: Laws for Us and creation of two related working groups – a Legislative Reference Group and a Communications & Engagement Group, were noted as significant follow up steps to take any additional actions forward, particularly continued engagement with the AG's office and bringing other CSOs on board.

Perspectives and key outcomes of the Tobago Environmental Partnership Conference, 2019

Bertrand Bhikarry of Environment Tobago shared perspectives and key outcomes of the [2-day Tobago Environmental Partnership Conference](#) held in May 2019, which brought together key groups from government, civil society and private sector to present and discuss a range of environmental issues pertinent to Tobago. The goal was to build or deepen relationships among stakeholders for addressing environmental issues that impact the island's ecology and socio-economic well-being as well as initiate the process towards the upgrade of the Tobago Environmental Management Plan.

At this event, presentations were shared on key topics such as protected areas management, investing in the green/blue economies, sustainable tourism, promoting environmental stewardship and sustainability, improving waste management systems, mapping and capacity assessment of civil society organisations working on environmental issues and fostering partnerships in these areas.

Mutual benefit projects were identified and discussed including a project focused on fixing the road to Pigeon Point (key tourist area), as well as smaller projects happening on the ground and those promoting environmental conservation and co-management approaches - it was noted that many pilot projects were happening, included led by CSOs. Other projects and activities of significance to Tobago, such as the proposed Toco port project and related issues were discussed.

Some feedback included that the event provided excellent opportunities for networking and complementary, non-confrontational engagement and sharing across various sector stakeholders in and relevant to Tobago. The general consensus was that it presented a good model for other sector meetings. A copy of the conference report will be shared once complete.

5 Wrap up and next Steps for the SDGs Catalysts Network

The session wrapped up after Catalysts completed evaluation forms. *Refer to Appendix 3 for participant feedback on the meeting.*

Wrap-up points, including next steps included:

- Reminders to participants that the meeting report would be shared, including full report of findings of the capacity building M&E session.
- Once the process is complete, Catalysts would also receive the collated Year 2 Annual Report currently being finalised by UWTT for approval of the EU Delegation.
- Project component leads will be following up on the various activities/items discussed including
 - providing updates on the VNR process and working with others to solidify strategy and possible workplan for civil society to engage/contribute

- engaging Catalysts in further capacity building interventions planned in Year 3, taking note of findings at this session
- sharing call for contributions to the SDGs Knowledge Platform with more specific details and guidance
- As per usual, project component leads will continue to seek synergies and coordinate across components as most effective and efficient way of utilising project resources and supporting Catalysts’ participation in project activities.

The next quarterly meeting of the SDGs Catalysts Network would be scheduled for **by or before September 2019**. Upcoming activities for participation and inputs of Catalysts are summarised below:

VA Veni Partaje session	July 2019
SDGs Knowledge Platform call for contributions	Expected June 2019
8 th Quarterly meeting of the SDGs Catalysts Network	Date TBC, August-September 2019

Appendix 1: List of participants

* Virtual participation

	Name	Organisation	Contact No.	Email
1.	Kristen Francis	United Way Trinidad & Tobago (UWTT)	625-8286	kfrancis@uwtt.com
2	Candice Ramkissoon	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)	626-6062 / 779-0407	candice@canari.org
3	Sasha Harrinanan	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)	626-6062	sasha@canari.org
4	Colleen Davis	Veni Apwann (VA)	741-1139	daviscolleen99@gmail.com
5	Sarah McIntosh	Veni Apwann (VA)	682-1416	tocosarah@gmail.com
6	Sandra Pyke-Anthony	Veni Apwann (VA)	302-9895	sandrapykeanthony@ymail.com
7	Bertrand Bikharry	Environment Tobago (ET)	620-2080	bertrand@bhikarry.net
8	Andy Roberts	Environment Tobago (ET)		andy.roberts@environmenttobago.net
9	Denise Chapman	Habitat for Humanity	702-4663	denise.chapman@habitat.tt.org contactus@habitat-tt.org
10	Colin Robinson*	Coalition Advocating for Inclusion of Sexual Orientation (CAISO) / Alliance for Justice & Diversity	782-2290, 322-7373	caisott@gmail.com
11	Krista Hamel-Smith	Caribbean Kids and Families Therapy Organisation (CKFTO)	628-3268, 384-8937	gmanager@ckfto.org
12	Mohamed Hallim	Agricultural Society of Trinidad & Tobago	361-4290	mohamedhallim@hotmail.com

	Name	Organisation	Contact No.	Email
13	Dona Da Costa Martinez	Family Planning Association	652-6533	ed.fpatt@gmail.com
14	Tyrell Gittens	Caribbean Youth Environment Network: Trinidad & Tobago (CYEN-TT)	495-7853	cyen.tt.chapter@gmail.com
15	Beverly Beckles	National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD)	687-9392	ncpdtrinidad@gmail.com
16	Marcus Dular	Youth Business Trinidad & Tobago	3237939	relations@ybtt.org
17	Tricia Basdeo-Gobin	Institute of Gender & Development Studies (IGDS) -UWI	347-2462	tricia.basdeo@sta.uwi.edu
18	Joslyn Lee Quay	Trinidad & Tobago United Fisherfolk	481-0181	joslee_56@outlook.com
19	Jacque Burgess	Network of NGOs of Trinidad & Tobago for the Advancement Of Women		jacques123_98@yahoo.com

Appendix 2: Meeting Agenda



SDGs Catalysts Network 7th Quarterly Meeting

under the project

CSOs For Good Governance: Enhancing civil society's contribution to governance and development processes in Trinidad and Tobago (CSOs4GoodGov)

CANARI Conference Room

March 28th, 2019

9:00am – 12:30pm

Meeting Objectives:

1. To facilitate Catalysts' participation in CSOs4GoodGov project monitoring and evaluation on status and impact of capacity building interventions
2. To engage Catalysts to develop and come to consensus on a strategy for CSO engagement/contributions to T&T Voluntary National Report 2020 process
3. To facilitate sharing by Catalysts on recent key CSO initiatives and advocacy action

AGENDA

8:30am	Registration	
9:00am	Welcome and session overview	CANARI
9:05am	T&T Voluntary National Report 2020 – developing a strategy for CSO engagement/contributions	CANARI
9:35am	Capacity building monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Reflections from then to now <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational capacity • SHIFTing our thinking on leadership • Writing winning proposals 	Led by: Veni Apwann & Capacity building working group (CBWG) members
11:35pm	Sharing by Catalysts: NPO Bill Advocacy Campaign 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Advocacy Process • Next Steps Perspectives and key outcomes of the Tobago Environmental Partnership Conference, 2019	VA/CAISO Environment Tobago
12:15pm	Recap of meeting and next steps Session evaluation Wrap up and close	CANARI

Appendix 3: Summary of meeting evaluation responses



SDGs Catalysts Network 6th Quarterly Meeting

under the project

CSOs For Good Governance: Enhancing civil society's contribution to governance and development processes in Trinidad and Tobago (CSOs4GoodGov)

May 28, 2019

Meeting evaluation form: Summary responses

1. I learnt that...

- CSOs are important and can impact great and significant change.
- Where CKFTO is in leadership and governance, and communication and advocacy.
- Details regarding the NPO Bill.
- Trinidad and Tobago will be presenting a Voluntary National Report in 2020. CSOs will be involved in the preparation
- We need to develop the Voluntary National Report 2020.
- There is an upcoming event carded for July 9 on succession planning.
- CSOs are connecting the dots between project components to take back to their organisations.
- We (YBTT) may not be as advanced within communication and advocacy (more advocacy); it may be a focus for development.
- There has been a lot of progress on the relationship with the AG's Office re legislation.
- The capacity of CSOs has developed over the years, under the CSOs for Good Governance project. There has been holistic development in regard to governance, leadership and communications of CSOs, which has had an overall impact on our strength and ability to achieve overall aims, vision and missions.

2. I felt that...

- I missed out on important information shared in previous sessions.
- I want to get more involved in the NPO Bill.
- The Catalysts are very committed to enhancing CSOs' contribution to governance and development process in Trinidad and Tobago.
- The interactive session on capacity building was very useful and informative.
- CSOs are engaged and interested.
- The session was good for (1) connecting and meeting with other CSOs and (2) good reflection on where we are at an organisational level, which should show good fruit moving forward. I believe this type of assessment should be done monthly, not only at board level.
- It was a good experience – I liked the experience regarding the capacity building, but the configuration of the room did not allow for movement of people (not enough space).
- Advocacy efforts by CSOs can be very effective. Example, the NPO Bill.

- There have been strides in making CSOs more holistic and strategic bodies. Yes, we volunteer **but**, how do we? What is the goal? What is the outcome? There is more clarity on the way forward, which has improved our overall strength.
- The meeting was useful because of my long absence.

3. I noticed that...

- Persons present shared a community spirit, even though the organisations represented were all different.
- There are a number of areas I need to understand better or get more involved in. Example, legislation and networking.
- There is cohesion in the group.
- There was active sharing.
- CSOs are still struggling (to get) a steady stream of funding, even the stronger and older CSOs.
- 15 Catalysts out of 23 were present today – very good turnout.
- CSOs are being taken more seriously.
- CSOs have a place at the bargaining table.
- CSOs are willing to work together for the collective good.
- CSOs continue to streamline our relevance to society.
- Too few members of the Catalysts are present.

4. I discovered that...

- There are good people working hard behind closed doors to bring about important and necessary change in various sectors.
- FPATT is 'flying high' re monitoring and evaluation of capacity building interventions and that is easily linked to the fact that we are a member of a global organisation that has a very stringent accreditation process.
- Nothing new but rather very informative and sharing.
- CSOs are interested in learning how to strengthen their governance.
- Advocacy may be the centre of effectiveness, especially the point Trinidad and Tobago is at, where we have institutions dedicated to the right functions, but we need more collaboration and properly functioning government-based institutions.
- I have another session to attend on succession planning on July 9, 2019.
- The future continues to be bright for CSOs.
- Environment Tobago has strengthened the bargaining power of CSOs through their 2019 conference.

5. I would like to suggest that...

- Information from former meetings be shared with new persons.
- We continue meeting.
- The results of the monitoring and evaluation be shared, so that we can exchange experiences with each other and build on each other's strengths.
- Opening the door to more CSOs (and government-based institutions).
- It was a good experience – I liked the experience regarding the capacity building, but the configuration of the room did not allow for movement of people (not enough space).
- Many more training sessions to build CSOs' capacity be formulated.
- More activities like the Veni Apwann reflective activity.
- There be inclusion of more youths and more youth organisations at these discussions.

Thank you!