



CSOs For Good Governance:

Enhancing Civil Society's Contribution to Governance and Development Processes in Trinidad & Tobago

THE SDG CATALYSTS NETWORK Terms of Reference (Proposed)

Draft June, 2017

1. Background

- 1.1. Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) has committed to implementation of the **2030 Sustainable Development Agenda**, which was adopted by the United Nations in September 2015. The Agenda is a global plan for people, planet and prosperity with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets. The Preamble notes that "All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this Plan."
- 1.2. Effective engagement of civil society in T&T will therefore be critical to implement the SDGs. A consortium of seven¹ leading civil society organisations (CSOs) was granted funding from the European Union² to implement a three-year project "Enhancing Civil Society's Contribution to Governance and Development Processes in Trinidad and Tobago." A key outcome of the project is that CSOs are engaged in development, implementation, monitoring and reporting on the national agenda for SDGs, as a model for CSO engagement in development and policy processes in T&T.
- 1.3. **Component 1** of the project, which is led by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), will establish the **SDGs Catalysts Network** as an informal network of leading CSOs across all sectors to serve as a mechanism for effective engagement of civil society in T&T in the national SDGs process. CSO members of the *Network* will act as *Catalysts* to engage other CSOs and CSO networks in their respective sectors, as well as to promote and support civil society engagement with government, private sector and other development actors. Together the *Network* will support broad-based, cross-sectoral collaboration among civil society and with their partners toward more inclusive national development in T&T.
- 1.4. It is anticipated that establishment of the *Network* will strengthen participation and overall impact of CSOs in the national SDGs process, increase visibility of CSO contributions and highlight and reinforce their tripartite role as implementers, advocates and watchdogs. Not only will the formation of the *Network* help better define the size and reach of the sector and help normalise the practice of

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² EuropeAid/151176/DD/ACT/TT

including civil society in development and policy processes, the learning from this experience will provide a useful model and foundation for other CSO networks in T&T as they continue their engagement on other national and sectoral development issues.

2. Purpose of the SDGs Catalyst Network

- 2.1. The **overall purpose** of the *SDGs Catalyst Network* is to foster collaboration for development and implementation of a mechanism for civil society engagement in the national development process, focusing specifically on the SDGs. The **primary role** of the *Network* is to ensure that the consultative process determining the national priorities within the SDGs framework is inclusive and transparent, that government is held accountable for its commitments and actions to deliver the SDGs and that the contribution of civil society is recognised. The *Network* will serve as a group of informal advisors, sources of exemplary practices and specific experience and act as a bridge between civil society and other partners.
- 2.2. The **objectives** of the *SDGs Catalyst Network* are in the following areas:
- a) **ADVOCACY:** Develop collective civil society positions and facilitate collective advocacy to influence sectoral and national policy and practice for implementation of the SDGs
 - b) **ACTION:** Mobilise and encourage civil society action for implementation the SDGs and support reporting on civil society contribution to delivery of SDGs
 - c) **PARTNERSHIPS:** Improve capacities for more effective partnerships among CSOs and between civil society and government and other development partners
 - d) **PARTICIPATION:** Ensure effective civil society engagement in the national coordination mechanism for the SDGs being led by the Government
- 2.3. The **responsibilities** of CSOs acting as *Catalysts* are to:
- a) Act as leaders to catalyse actions by others in their sector(s) by convening and facilitating consultations with other CSOs and CSO networks within their sector(s) to:
 - i. Raise awareness about the SDGs and relevance to national development priorities
 - ii. Collectively identify priorities for the national SDGs agenda and potential areas for action by civil society, particularly as relevant to their sector(s) and noting cross-sectoral linkages
 - iii. Facilitate sharing of experiences and best practices for CSO implementation of the SDGs
 - iv. Capture the contribution that CSOs are making to implementation of the SDGs in T&T
 - v. Analyse emerging views, ideas, perspectives and information on implementation of the SDGs locally, nationally and in the region
 - vi. Discuss strategies and approaches for operationalising the participation of CSOs in national SDGs implementation
 - vii. Review and input into reports on implementation of the SDGs by government and others
 - viii. Drive development of collective civil society advocacy positions on the SDGs
 - b) Collaborate with CSOs from other sectors to promote integrated approaches to development across civil society including through:
 - i. Inputting into preparation of civil society action plans for cross-sectoral initiatives to deliver the SDGs

- ii. Acting to secure commitment of CSOs to engage in implementation and catalyse interest in working together for implementation of specific actions to contribute to delivery of results under the SDGs and targets
 - iii. Identifying existing synergies and opportunities to lead or partner with Government and other stakeholders
- c) Facilitate and participate in coordinated advocacy to promote collective civil society positions on the SDGs, including by:
 - i. Promoting and leveraging opportunities available through the Advocacy Action (Small Grants) Facility and other funds to lead or collaborate on advocacy initiatives or actions to contribute to implementation of the SDGs
- d) Contribute to an effective civil society voice including by:
 - i. Representing civil society in government-led meetings, working groups and other national processes on the SDGs
 - ii. Advising on priorities and strategies for shaping a civil society vision, position and action on the SDGs
 - iii. Making recommendations on how best to capture, share and incorporate inputs and report from civil society in the follow up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
 - iv. Inputting into the Government's official monitoring process and conducting independent 'shadow' reporting
 - v. Participating in selection and/or endorsement of an appropriate civil society representative for the national coordination mechanism (i.e. Inter-Ministerial Committee or other intended body established by the Government) as one of the key channels for inserting civil society positions into the Government-led SDGs process
- e) Support project communications including through:
 - i. Input into reports documenting CSO actions/contributions to delivery of the SDGs; contribute to project reports (annual and final evaluation reports), briefs, case studies, toolkits, shadow reports or other communication products
 - ii. Developing or inputting into development of communication materials on civil society perspectives and actions on the SDGs in T&T and contribute these to the online knowledge platform established for the project
 - iii. Assist with dissemination of targeted communication materials for policy makers and other key audiences via traditional and new media
- f) Input into other project components including via participation in technical working groups namely:
 - i. The *Capacity Building Working Group* - Participate in capacity building under the project toward creation of a cadre of national experts on and advocates for approaches that contribute towards stronger civil society and the achievement of an integrated and inclusive vision of sustainable development
 - ii. The *Legal and Fiscal Working Group* - Participate in the process to strengthen the legal, fiscal and funding framework for CSOs in T&T, including drafting of a policy brief and new law to be submitted to Government for the establishment and operation of non-profit organisations in T&T

- g) Engage in participatory monitoring and evaluation of the *Network's* performance toward delivery of project outcomes and outputs, including tracking progress in changing behaviours and relationships, as a standard agenda item at quarterly meetings and in annual evaluations

2.4 Members of the *SDGs Catalyst Network* **act together to achieve the purpose** by:

- a) Participating in meetings of the *Network*
- b) Participating in project activities (e.g. national consultation workshop, technical working groups, knowledge platform etc.) as needed and as far as feasible to support role in coordinating and fostering collaboration of CSOs
- c) Participating in the *Advocacy Action (Small Grants) Facility* including review, advice on and submission of joint proposals
- d) Organising into thematic clusters to discuss and act on specific issues
- e) Convening meetings of CSOs and CSO networks in their sector
- f) Participating in sectoral and national meetings, the SDGs national coordination mechanism and other processes led by Government, inter-governmental agencies and other development actors

3. Membership of the SDGs Catalysts Network

- 3.1. *Catalysts* are CSOs represented by designated lead and alternate lead individuals from the organisation.
- 3.2. The *SDGs Catalysts Network* shall comprise approximately 20-25 leading CSOs across sectors (e.g. environment, gender, youth, health, education, social and community development, culture and heritage etc. inclusive of the seven project co-applicants which have automatic membership within the *Network*, as well as community-based organisations and national/sectoral CSO networks. Collectively the *Catalysts* will encompass the full range of development priorities addressed in the 17 SDGs, with some CSOs working across several goals.
- 3.3. Members from the *SDGs Catalyst Network* shall be identified and recommended based on a process of collective assessment by project co-applicants and the Project Steering Committee. Pre-defined criteria will be used to shortlist candidates and invitations will be sent to shortlisted CSOs to self-assess their capacities to engage in the project, confirm their interest and apply for membership.
- 3.4. Important considerations for the selection of members include:
 - a) Expertise in one or more key sectors represented by the SDGs
 - b) Recognised leadership in their sector, respected by other CSOs as well as government and with a track record of delivering results
 - c) Willingness and capacities to champion SDGs with other CSOs within their sector and with other CSO networks and provide leadership and support as needed
 - d) Willingness and capacities to engage with other CSOs for advocacy and action on the SDGs
 - e) Commitment and capacities to engage in the project (including dedicating the time required to engage in project activities)
- 3.5. Members of the *Network* may identify additional expertise needed and propose new members.

- 3.6. Members shall advise on the name of their primary representative as well as an alternate. They may advise on a change of their representative or alternate at any time as needed.
- 3.7. One to two representatives of the *Network* will be chosen to sit on the *Project Steering Committee* in addition to CSOs leading components.
- 3.8. Members may also serve on technical working groups supporting specific project outputs and outcomes (e.g. *Legal and Fiscal Working Group* and *Capacity Building Working Group*) which will be established to engage *Catalysts* (as well as other key stakeholders) who can contribute technical expertise on implementation of project components.
- 3.9. Other informal sub-groups of the *Network* may be established as needed, including action learning groups focusing on specific sectors or pathways.
- 3.10. Members of the *Network* are eligible to apply to the *Advocacy Action (Small Grants) Facility* and utilise the knowledge platform that will be developed under the project.
- 3.11. Members of the *Network* may elect a Chair, Vice Chair and any other functional positions with terms and responsibilities as they decide.

4. CANARI's Role & Responsibilities

CANARI's role is to act as convener of the *Network* and to provide technical support to support establishment and operation of the *Network*. As such, CANARI will:

- a) Coordinate the process for selection of members to the *Network*
- b) Function as secretariat and act as convener for quarterly meetings of the *Network* with overall responsibility for coordination, administration and facilitation of the meetings, and undertaking communication with the members regarding actions around project activities and status of membership
- c) Coordinate selection of and support for the civil society nominee for the Inter-Ministerial Committee (or other SDG mechanism established by the Government)
- d) Develop and share a guidance package to support *Catalysts* to align their work and mobilise other CSOs in their sectors (including key communication materials, meeting templates etc.)
- e) Facilitate a national workshop with *Catalysts* and other CSOs in the various sectors to synthesise joint civil society positions and develop and implement an advocacy campaign around same
- f) Share research on critical governance issues requiring advocacy by civil society and examples of successful advocacy actions
- g) Establish and host an online *SDGs Knowledge and Advocacy Platform* to be leveraged by members of the *SDGs Catalysts Network* and wider civil society for awareness and advocacy on the SDGs in T&T
- h) Solicit input and prepare annual reports on activities of CSOs contributing to implementation of the SDGs and a final evaluation report on functioning of the *SDGs Catalysts Network*
- i) Support *Catalysts* to report and document actions, results and lessons via reports, briefs, case studies, and a toolkit to guide civil society advocacy on the SDGs (including models and case studies of successful

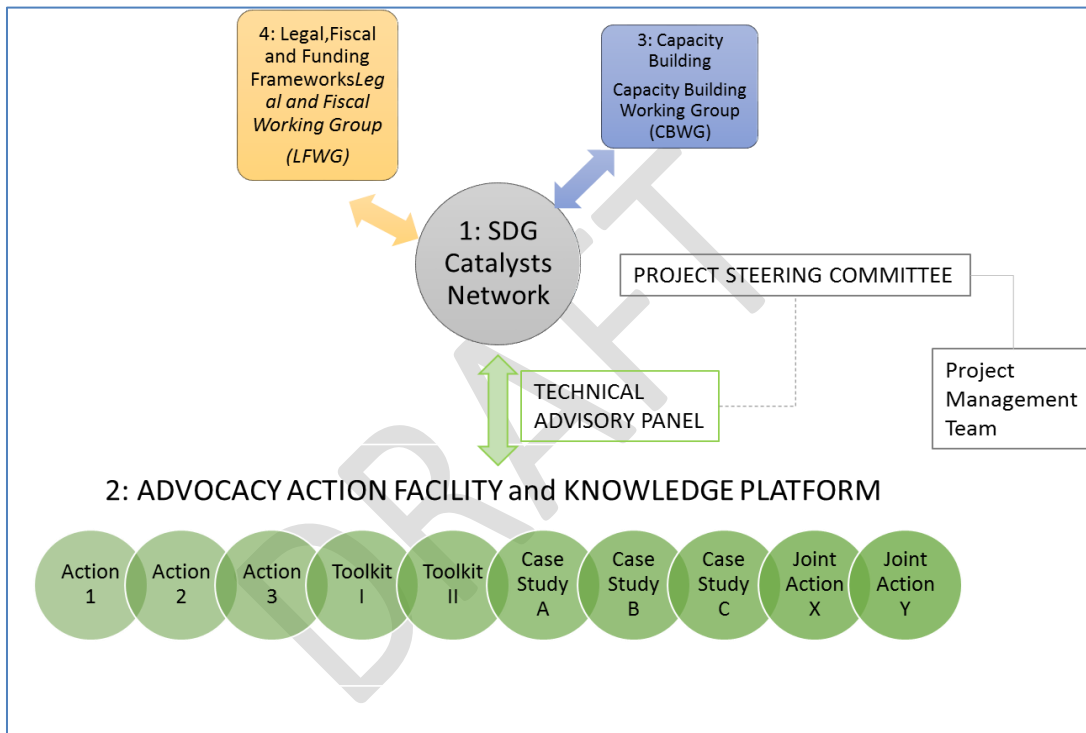
advocacy actions) and communicate online

- j) Provide informal coaching and peer learning to *Catalysts* throughout the project

5. Processes for knowledge sharing, coordination and collaboration

The following will be used to coordinate knowledge sharing and facilitate collaboration and decision making by the *SDGs Catalysts Network*.

5.1 The processes for knowledge sharing, coordination and collaboration are built into the project management arrangements. The relationship with other project components is shown below. The project is organised into four inter-linked components, with the establishment of the *SDGs Catalyst Network* as the heart of the project.



5.2 **Quarterly meetings** of the *SDGs Catalysts Network* will be used as the main forum to directly support CSO engagement, knowledge sharing and communication, including under other project components.

- a) Meetings will include discussions on priorities for advocacy, developing coalitions to engage in joint advocacy action projects, sharing results and lessons from advocacy initiatives, inputting on the capacity building strategy under the project, providing peer support to build capacity, advising and reviewing drafts of a new legal framework, decision-making on issues affecting the entire the *Network*.
- b) Quorum: A minimum of 50% of *Network* members are required for decision-making on issues affecting the entire the *Network*.
- c) Decision-making process: As far as possible, the *Network* shall strive for decision-making to be by consensus. Barring this, decision-making shall be by majority: where a course of action requires support from more than 50% members who attend the meeting, if there is quorum.

d) Barring extraordinary events, the quarterly meetings will be held on dates to be determined in consultation with members.

5.3 A ***SDGs Knowledge and Advocacy Platform*** will be developed to facilitate knowledge and information sharing by the *SDGs Catalysts Network* and wider civil society.

5.4 A ***National Workshop*** will be held with members of the *SDGs Catalysts Network* and additional civil society participants as needed to distil a collective civil society position on priorities for the national SDGs agenda and advocate this in Government-led processes.

5.5 The quarterly meetings, online *SDGs Knowledge and Advocacy Platform* and sector consultations/ workshops will be used to support the CSO representative to the national coordination mechanism with eliciting input from and feeding information back to civil society on planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting on implementation of the SDGs in T&T.

6. Conflict of Interest

No member(s) of the *Network* may participate in a discussion where such participation would give rise to a potential conflict of interest. Any perceived possible conflict of interest should be declared by the member(s) involved and assessed by other members of the *Network*.

7. Review

The terms of reference of the *Network* shall be reviewed and revised as needed and at least annually, taking into account any recommendation from the members for modifications. The *Network* may at any time recommend changes to its terms of reference.