Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Coalition for Forests

Terms of Reference

1. Background

1.1. The Government of Jamaica has undertaken a programme to strengthen its public finance management (PFM) to improve governance, accountability, fiscal control, efficiency and effectiveness in resource use. With support from the European Union (FED/2021/428-620), the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), in partnership with the Caribbean Coastal Area Management (C-CAM) Foundation and the Jamaica Conservation Development Trust (JCDT), will directly support this effort by focusing on participatory budgeting/PFM for the forest sector that will provide stakeholders a voice in the process and assurance that forest resources can continue to support their needs.

1.2. Under the project, a coalition is being established to improve the skills, abilities and resources of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Jamaica to engage in collective analysis, advocacy and dialogue with key government agencies to promote the development of mechanisms for public finance management for the forest sector. This will lead to strengthened citizen engagement in and support for sustainable management of forest ecosystems and biodiversity in Jamaica to benefit livelihoods, socio-economic development and human well-being.

2. Purpose

2.1. The overall purpose of the CSO Coalition for Forests is to engage key civil society actors in Jamaica in knowledge sharing and learning, collective analysis, advocacy and dialogue with key government agencies to promote the development of mechanisms for public finance management for the forest sector.

2.2. The objectives of the CSO Coalition for Forests are to:
   a) Mobilise and encourage civil society participation in the national budgetary cycle, including support reporting on civil society’s contribution and participation in the strategic budget formulation, budget analysis and debate, budget execution and reporting, and evaluation for accountability.
   b) Enhance the capacity of civil society to understand and actively participate in the budgeting process for forest conservation and management.
   c) Develop collective civil society positions and facilitate collective advocacy to influence national policy, budgeting systems, and finance management for the forest sector.
   d) Improve capacities for more effective partnerships among CSOs and between civil society, Government and other development partners.
   e) Enhance knowledge, change attitudes, and foster change in practices of civil society and government to support use of participatory budgeting and public finance management to enhance forest governance.
2.3. The **responsibilities** of CSOs that are part of the **Coalition** are to:

a) Collaborate with CSOs that have interests, rights, and responsibilities in forest research, conservation and management, to promote integrated approaches to participatory budgeting and public finance management for the forest sector, including through:
   
i. Acting to secure commitment of CSOs to engage in the budgetary process for the forest sector and mobilising them to work together for implementation of specific actions to contribute to delivery of national and local priorities.
   
ii. Identifying existing synergies and opportunities to lead or partner with Government and other stakeholders.

b) Catalyse actions by CSOs working in or supporting the development of the forest sector by convening and participating in consultations and workshops with CSOs, CSO networks, government and private sector to:
   
i. Collectively identify priorities for the development of the forest sector and potential areas for action by civil society.
   
ii. Raise awareness about the forestry priorities at national and local levels and relevance to community development and livelihoods.
   
iii. Facilitate sharing of experiences and best practices for CSO participation in the national budgetary process on forest conservation and management.
   
iv. Document the contribution that CSOs are making in the forest sector, including participation in the national budgetary cycle.
   
v. Discuss strategies and approaches for operationalising the participation of CSOs in the national budgeting process for forest conservation and management.
   
vi. Review and input into national forestry policies, plans and reports tracking public finance management and progress in implementation of actions by the Government and others to affecting the forest sector.

c) Facilitate and participate in coordinated advocacy to promote collective civil society positions on forest conservation and management.

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 forest conservation and management.
   
ii. Advising on priorities and strategies for shaping a civil society vision, position and action on forest conservation and management, including to any appropriate civil society representative in national coordination mechanisms as one of the key channels for inserting civil society positions into the national budgeting process for the forest sector.

e) Engage in participatory monitoring and evaluation of the **Coalition**’s performance toward delivery of its proposed objectives, including tracking progress in changing behaviours and relationships.

2.4. Members of the **Coalition** act together to achieve the purpose by:

a) Participating in meetings of the **Coalition**.

b) Participating in the project activities (e.g. workshops etc.) as needed.

c) Participating in relevant sectoral and national meetings and other processes led by Government, inter-governmental agencies and other development actors.

d) Supporting and fostering coordination and collaboration among CSOs.

e) Convening meetings of CSOs and CSO networks in the forest sector.

3. **Membership**

3.1. Members of the **Coalition** are CSOs that are actively engaged in forest conservation and management in Jamaica.
3.2. The *Coalition* will comprise at least 25 leading CSOs, including national non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations.

3.3. Members of the *Coalition* will be identified based on the following criteria:
   a) Expertise and/or experience in working on forest conservation and management.
   b) Recognised leaders in their sector and respected by other CSOs as well as Government.
   c) Willingness and capacities to engage with other CSOs for advocacy on forest management issues and provide leadership and support as needed.
   d) Interest in engaging relevant government agencies and playing a role in formulating and executing budgets that support forest management.

3.4. Members serve on a voluntary basis.

3.5. 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.

3.6. Members of the *Coalition* may identify additional expertise needed and propose new members which meet the criteria in 3.3.

3.7. Other sub-groups may be established as needed.

4. **Meetings**

4.1. Quarterly meetings of the *Coalition* will be used as the main forum to directly support CSO engagement, knowledge sharing and partnership building.
   a) Decision-making process: As far as possible, the *Coalition* 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.

4.2. The Jamaica Conservation Trust Fund will serve as the convenor and secretariat for the *Coalition*, with responsibility for:
   a) setting meeting dates and circulating a draft meeting agenda and any supporting documents to members for input prior to each meeting;
   b) hosting the meetings (virtually or in-person); and
   c) preparing and circulating notes of meetings and actions taken.

5. **Conflict of Interest**

   No member(s) of the *Coalition* may participate in any activity 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 team.

6. **Review of Terms of Reference**

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