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INSTITUTE



# EnviroRightsTT

Building civil society capacity to access information, participate in policymaking and access justice in environmental matters in Trinidad and Tobago.

## Project summary

The project, *EnviroRightsTT: Building civil society capacity to access information, participate in policymaking and access justice in environmental matters in Trinidad and Tobago*, aims to improve environmental governance with better transparency, accountability, inclusive decision-making and more informed and just public policy, protecting the right to a healthy environment in T&T. The project will empower CSOs and community members to advocate for and support vulnerable groups in accessing environmental information, participating in decision-making, and seeking justice.

Trinidad and Tobago, like other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), faces various environment and development challenges, including climate change, which are negatively impacting socioeconomic development. Robust legislation, policy, citizen awareness, and action are crucial for sustainable development and the preservation of natural assets. Additionally, strengthening mechanisms for effective voice and opportunity for marginalised and vulnerable groups to engage in decision-making is needed.

Although, there are institutional mechanisms in place in to support civil society's role in environmental governance and justice in T&T, these are not being effectively utilised. 1. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), enacted since 1999 but, transparency within public institutions still needs improvement. 2. The severely underutilised Environmental Commission established under the Environmental Management Act 2000. 3. While public participation is enshrined in environmental policies in T&T, though implementation varies. Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago has not yet joined as a Party to the Escazú Agreement, a regional treaty on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean which recognises the right to a healthy environment as a human right.

## Project in brief

**Objective:** Enhanced capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Trinidad and Tobago to advocate for and support vulnerable groups to access environmental information, participate in decision-making processes and seek justice to protect citizens' right to a healthy environment.

**Lead:** Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)

**Partners:** Environment Tobago, EquiGOV Institute, Environmental Law Associates Worldwide (ELAW) and Parliamentarians for Global Action.

**Funder:** European Union  
(NDICI/CSO/449-480)

**Project country:** Trinidad and Tobago

**Budget:** €360,000

**Duration:** Nov. 2023 to Nov. 2026

**Project webpage:** [www.canari.org/civil-society-governance/envirorightstt/](http://www.canari.org/civil-society-governance/envirorightstt/)



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## Target stakeholders:

To deliver enhanced environmental governance, the project will target:

- Civil society organisations (CSOs) working on environment and development issues (including climate change), particularly from a human rights perspective, operating both at the community and national levels
- Environmental defenders and advocates
- Professional and citizen journalists using traditional and new media
- Lawyers and legal experts
- Parliamentarians

These stakeholders will engage with Freedom of Information Unit, the Environmental Commission, Ministry of Planning and Development and its divisions, units and agencies as well as the Office of the Ombudsman which all have formal mandates to facilitate access to information, public participation and justice.

## Activities:

- Networking and alliance building
- Awareness raising and capacity building
- Technical and legal support and guidance to CSOs and individuals in accessing information, justice and redress
- Small grants for pilot actions
- Collective advocacy
- Institutional assessments and strengthening



## Project outcomes

Target stakeholders will be:

- empowered to effectively utilise the FOIA to access information on environmental matters, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability
- empowered to participate in policy and advocate for inclusive environmental governance
- more aware about and supported to seek justice through the mechanisms of the Environmental Commission
- able to promote and foster an institutional framework and partnerships which better enable CSOs to serve both as independent actors and partners in sustainable development

For more information contact (868) 638-6062 or [info@canari.org](mailto:info@canari.org).



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