



EU ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FOR THE PERIOD 2021 – 2024¹

GENERAL INFORMATION

Status: restricted/public- public

Date of approval: 29 June, 2021

Update of a previous RM: Y

Part of the Joint Strategy? Y

Approved by (list of MS and possibly other donors endorsing the RM): Embassies of the Federal Republic of Germany, Kingdom of the Netherlands, French Republic and Kingdom of Spain.



¹ Alignment with the Joint Strategy and with NDP of the country would be the preferred approach.

PART I: BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT AND PAST EU ENGAGEMENT

A. THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY: BRIEF UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Introduction

CSOs constitute an important sector in Trinidad and Tobago and there is clear evidence that they have ramped up their activities from mainly engaging in service delivery to focusing on other areas namely, organised advocacy, policy monitoring and governance. While there are no stated limitations of space for expression, participation and policy dialogue, there is a general perception among CSOs that these spaces seldom allow for inclusion of citizens and their organisations in the full policy cycle. Funds are available through governmental and private sources mainly for those organisations that primarily engage in service delivery but much less so for those focusing on policy, governance and some human rights areas.

Despite the lack of formal mechanisms to involve CSOs on national development, including SDGs. There is clear evidence of the capacity of these organisations in general, to engage in dialogue and action with Government and other stakeholders, once opportunities are provided. In project reports, CSOs' results of Actions show that they are willing to demand open conversations with stakeholders on issues where an effective Civil Society voice will lead to a better outcome for Trinidad and Tobago. CSOs are also more open and willing to collectively advocate and mobilise themselves and others in their networks to take action on issues, recognising and leveraging each other's strengths where necessary. Support from the Delegation, member states and other donors are usually extended to areas, which are not at the top of the priority list of government, such as governance and transparency issues, and a number of human rights areas including LGBTI, death penalty and prisoner reform.

Consultations were held with civil society during the preparation of the Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) specific to the identification of the priority areas for Trinidad and Tobago. It was agreed that climate change and digitalisation were the two areas, which provided the best opportunities for coordinating stakeholders to support the country's development. Approval was given for a TEI, which combined both areas, 'Climate Resilience Infrastructures' in Trinidad & Tobago.

Climate Change

Climate change is on top of the EU policy agenda. Trinidad and Tobago has one of the highest CO₂ emissions per capita in the world. In order to fight climate change, decarbonising the energy system is critical for climate mitigation and encouraging more sustainably sourced renewable energy (RE) are essential. Investment in climate resilience infrastructures is a priority in the Government's Vision 2030 and the post-Covid-19 Recovery Roadmap.

In addition to climate change concerns, the water sector currently represents a bottleneck for the sustainable development of the country due to ageing pipes, water losses, low supply in the dry season (only approx. 35% of population receives continuous water supply), lack of supply in vulnerable communities, and environmental and fiscal space impact. In particular, watershed management presents a grave challenge for sustainable solutions.

The European partners can make a meaningful impact in these areas by supporting and complementing the shift in the Government's mind-set towards water resources management and CO₂ emissions, which will also contribute to the EU's long-term climate objectives. Energy transition has been a fundamental part of the EU's and MS' political dialogue over the past years and has contributed to a shift in attitudes towards renewable and efficient (RE/EE) energy.

This TEI has both commercial potential for the European business sector and relevance to the policy dialogue promoting the Green Deal values. Activities would build on past support to the RE sector. CSOs will be involved at all stages as beneficiaries and, hopefully, as implementers of approved programmes, at both the national and regional levels.

Digitalisation

Digitalisation is one of the emerging trends and priority areas for this country, which COVID brought into sharp focus. CSOs recognise the real need to engage in this area, at all levels. The immediate need is to inform policy and build their capacity to continue and scale up their work. Practically, there is a need to continue to engage their clients and stakeholders and find new ways of supporting them and maintaining communication, without losing momentum or rolling back on progress.

This area also provides a real opportunity for CSOs to partner with youth and to draw on their skills and expertise as digital natives. In addition to service delivery, CSOs involved in advocacy and education are feeling the immediate need for policy development and capacity building in this area.

The Delegation continues to engage with CSOs as implementing partners, advocates and beneficiaries on existing and new initiatives. These will be supported through implementation of Human Rights and Civil Society specific projects, regional and multi-country programmes, and public diplomacy initiatives.

Despite the absence of a full country MIP, it is expected that CSOs will participate in all Pan American, regional and Caribbean funding windows identified under the NDICI – Global European Programming future multiannual indicative programme (MIP) for the Americas and the Caribbean 2021-27.

Collaborations with like-minded countries to participate in programmes in the five geopolitical priority areas, identified by the EU, as well as the cross cutting issues such as Governance, Peace and Security, and Gender and Youth, will be sought. CSOs are also integral to the Delegation's Human Rights Strategy, given that they are recognised as being in the forefront of activities, advocacy and dialogue in areas such as gender equality and women's right issues. Through their efforts, they have succeeded in making progress in improved legislation, institutional support, dialogue and services. Organisations continue to actively address the subject and often partner with the Government, international partners and other stakeholders. There has also been some progress made in the area of youth. One of the existing projects is looking at promoting the voices of youth. It specifically addresses increasing youth participation in irregular migration and forced displacement issues.

The EU Delegation and Member States have identified seven strategic political and operational priorities for the HRD 2021-2024 period. These are the abolition of the death penalty; gender equality and women's rights; rights of the child; LGBTI rights; migrant and refugee rights; prisoners' rights; and the anti-corruption architecture. Given the progress made in the areas of advocacy, research, policy and capacity building, during implementation of the last EIDHR Strategy, the intention is to ramp up the involvement of civil society in all areas.

Results and Activities

Information for this roadmap was based on the integration of several information sources, many of which were developed through the Delegation's engagement with Civil Society in general, and with beneficiaries. These included responses from the CSO survey instrument; consultations with Human Rights collaborators; information generated from CSO project monitoring meetings; reports from EU funded CSO led actions; and Team Europe Initiative policy based consultations (climate change, digitisation). These sources of information contributed to the identification and analyses of different perspectives related to civil society in Trinidad and Tobago.

The support provided to CSO from the allocations received from both CSO and EIDHR thematic budget line as well the 11th EFF NIP, provided opportunities for CSO to engage in policy, research, advocacy, and capacity building. Specific opportunities afforded through these collaborations identified in their reports included:

- Establishment of an interim mechanism for CSOs to engage effectively in the implementation of the SDGs in T&T in partnership with Government.
- Advocacy actions by CSOs to hold Government accountable for implementation of the SDGs in priority areas.
- Increased and improved capacity of leading CSOs and CSO networks to contribute effectively to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in T&T, both individually and through collective action.
- Advocacy for and contribution to the implementation of a revised legal, fiscal and funding framework for CSOs in T&T, which promoted greater accountability, more efficient use of resources, and greater effectiveness in the delivery of CSO programmes.
- Development of civil society capacity with several parallel coalitions and collaborations. A key success story emerging from the CSO actions has been the 'Cari-Bois Environmental News Network'. This is a citizen-journalism platform that sought to deliver on advocacy communications components of one of the Actions, which has grown beyond the initial expectations of the Action. With over 73 articles published on environmental issues related to communities, the environment and the extractive sector, the site has

received almost 80,000 views since launching on World Environment Day (June 5) 2020.

- Through another civil society led project action, Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) met its international obligations on beneficial ownership disclosure. Because of this action, T&T was able to meet its Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) obligations, which required extractive sector companies to disclose their Beneficial Ownership (BO) and Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) before January 2020. This was achieved through the development of an online declaration form and the creation of a public registry for the extractive sector. This action also played a vital role in Financial Action Task Force (FATF) removing T&T from its grey list. The metrics and documentation developed throughout the action was used by the Registrar General and the Attorney General's Departments, as part of their FATF assessment report, which called for changes in legislation along with public sensitization.
- The 'Sexual Culture of Violence' project, provided opportunities to implement a community-university collaboration for support to some of the longest-standing and emerging local efforts to transform approaches to partner violence, homophobia, bullying and policing, while building partnerships as well as organisational capacity.
- Evidence of a greater number of partnerships and dialogue being engaged among local actors. This is very encouraging and should be increased. However, the number of strategic partnerships remain quite low when compared to implementing/ service oriented partnerships.

Despite progress and opportunities, there are still challenges related to the institutional framework necessary for the effective operationalization of CSOs. Overall, the work of CSOs is affected by the lack of financial resources, structural capacity, and formal mechanisms and openness to engage in productive dialogue with the Government that could lead to concrete outcomes. From the Delegation's perspective, project support presented opportunities to engage on specific policy areas and build the capacity of the organisations who were the direct beneficiaries.

B. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PAST ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs

Direct support to CSOs has been curtailed by donors due to Trinidad and Tobago's classification as a high-income country and its removal, from the OECD list of developing countries. The few donors that remain, including some international organisations and embassies, focus their support on democratic governance and on the development of mechanisms for making the rule of law more effective. Therefore, a lack of funding is the major perceived challenge identified by most CSOs. In various forums civil society organisations have reported that as a result of this challenge, important work is left undone, since the time needed to obtain financing curtails the pursuit of the organization's mission. The best-known and larger CSOs obtain support from a wide range of national and international sources, but only a minority of organizations can say that they are really engaged satisfactorily with the donor community. Government and corporate financial support is limited and mainly directed towards those organisations that are involved in service delivery.

Given the limited portfolio and resources in the Delegation and among member states, the opportunities for dialogue in a real sense, without expectation of funding support, but in line with general development partnership arrangement, has to be coordinated and strengthened.

Key lessons learnt from the process of implementing the previous Roadmap (RM).

Implementation of the previous Roadmap was limited to allocations received from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and CSO thematic budget lines. The Member States with a presence in Trinidad and Tobago (France, Germany, Spain and The Netherlands), have limited or no budget lines for bilateral support to civil society organisations. A joint EU Human Rights Strategy, which was developed and approved by all Member States present in Trinidad and Tobago for the period 2021-2024, provided an analysis of the priority issues, and opportunities to partner with civil society in Trinidad and Tobago.

While there was limited capacity to participate in operational initiatives each year, the work of these member states remains impactful particularly in the areas of public diplomacy, dialogue with the Government, and advocacy. Specifically, they used opportunities to engage with these organisations to support advocacy on a range of development issues including climate change, human rights and governance.

For its part, during the implementation of the last Roadmap, the Delegation engaged Civil Society Organisations in policy discussions with thematic issues such as the environment, climate change and innovation. Cross cutting issues, including human rights and governance were also discussed during these engagements. The Delegation also provided grant funds and technical assistance through the EIDHR and CSO-LA thematic budget lines, as well as the 11th EDF National Indicative allocation. The last NIP provide allocations to support civil society organisations who were involved in activities complementary to the focal areas. Two grants were awarded, through 'Calls for proposals' to address CSOs involvement in business and environment, with particular focus on the impact of the extractive sector on the country's environment.

The Delegation's commitment to increase its engagement with civil society organisations since 2015 has revealed a number of lessons thus far:

- Most civil society organisations are indeed enthusiastic about collaborating with the development partners and are interested in exploring opportunities for scaling up their activities and capacity. The underlying capacity challenges faced by many civil society organisations meant that intermediary-sized groups were best targeted and encouraged to form consortiums to secure funds for project implementation, as part of the guidelines for the 'Calls for Proposals'. This resulted in projects managed by consortiums, which incorporated groups that work across sectors and also allowed for enhancing the capacity of smaller organisations.
- Financial support and engagement with CSOs has provided opportunities for groups to function as advocates for monitoring, revising and development of policies. Specifically, these groups' involvement in human rights advocacy has resulted in successful changes for a number of human rights issues such as child marriage, 'buggery' laws, and prioritisation of issues for revision under the 'Equal Opportunities Commission' and approval of the 'Gender Policy'. CSOs have also formed themselves into a 'Strategic Development Goal' (SDG) Catalyst Network to coordinate, promote and monitor government's implementation of the SDGs.

- There are a number of collaboration challenges faced by CSOs. They include: different agendas and understanding of key issues; capacity issues – strengths/interests; differential access to funding; unwillingness/inability to be open about their weaknesses; different values driving behaviour; varying communication ground rules among groups; lack of engagement on clarification of structure and roles; and the process for seeking agreement or handling conflict.
- Initial attempts by Government to establish a 'Civil Society Board' to strengthen the voice and influence of CSOs did not succeed. A new CSO led initiative, which includes the development of a framework for civil society, was recently drafted. A proposal for Government engagement with CSOs is also currently being implemented as part of a CSO-LA funded project. This is driven by these organisations' recognition that CSOs governance initiatives are taking place in an institutional and policy vacuum, which ultimately reduces the impact and sustainability of their interventions.
- Engagement among development agencies have resulted in some streamlining of areas of support in order to avoid duplication and overlapping of efforts. However, the need for long-term sustainable partnerships to create social capital and fully take advantage of the opportunities within the CSOs is still being explored. This must include strategies to reinforce CSO's sustainability.
- The level of CSO engagement in project activities and collective advocacy is dependent on the capacity of CSOs involved, including capacities shaped by time and availability of human and financial resources. CSOs must possess the capacity and interests to engage when real opportunities present themselves; this requires additional resources, which should provide some flexibility to take advantage of these opportunities and not be constrained by a project. There is therefore a need to continue building their capacity and expertise in various areas, including through practical experiences, wide collaboration and consultation, knowledge sharing and research and documenting positions on key issues and recommendations, to be able to capitalise on/leverage opportunities for engaging or advocating when they arise.
- An early focus on relationship building and trust amongst CSOs/Catalysts and value of networking, is critical in supporting later collective advocacy. Existing networks can speak out as to how they have existed through the years and what are some of the best practices and lessons learnt. The model of using a network of leading Catalysts to connect to many networks is especially important for

information sharing, building wider awareness of opportunities and a significant level of trust to be able to collaborate effectively.

- Engaging in collective advocacy provides opportunities for increased access to resources and expertise, voice and visibility of CSOs and the potential to increase reach, as well as credibility of the sector.
- More integrated working across sectors must be encouraged and supported. This can add depth to work being done by CSOs in their own sectors
- Investment is needed for the transformation of public policy into practice particularly at the community level where tangible change is most likely to be felt and where behavioural change can be influential, on a larger scale.

Key lessons learned regarding some of the issues that limit engagement, between CSOs, the EU Delegation and member states, and which continue to affect partnership, include:

- Need for the Delegation and member states to build spaces for committed dialogue, instead of ad hoc consultations, which revolve around Calls for proposals, preparation of documents or discussion of issues, which are currently on top of the national agenda.
- Find ways to provide support to CSOs, which are not centred around specific project funds.
- Approach must be interactive, flexible and useful for individual mandates, thematic and national priorities.
- Need for structured dialogue to appeal to a range of CSOs across all sectors.
- Ramp up avenues to influence government action through promoting best practice and international obligations especially in areas where there is political apathy for the issues, lack of access, economic disparity, social inequalities, legal discrimination and lack of protection.
- Continued support to civil society's watchdog role with continued tracking of government's actions and advocacy on citizen priorities, especially of the most vulnerable.
- Need to find ways to as to how the Delegation can support micro CSOs, that are working with marginalised segments of society in these areas, but do not have the institutional

capacity to access our support, using the traditional mechanisms such as calls for proposals. While there are limited funds available under the thematic allocation support, more can be done to address the needs of micro organisations.

- The pandemic forced us to focus on developing innovations that support action in the context of COVID. With the rise in digital technologies in this virtual world, this is an opportunity for widespread communication that would help to build capacity and empower youth, to participate in decision making that affects them.
- Need to support work required in the area of social and behavioural change coupled with education initiatives, so that change becomes effective.
- Need to promote the 'Right to Development' alongside that of the SDG agenda. This entails revisiting the SDG agenda within the context of covid-19, evaluating progress and remedying shortfalls which already existed prior to covid-19 in some instances, but which have been exacerbated within the past 18 months or so.
- Facilitate partnerships with International CSOs to facilitate learning and leveraging of experiences, where appropriate
- Foster evidence-based solutions through investment in research, which will eventually contribute to the execution of the CSO's policy mandates, where applicable.
- Collaborate with CSOs to address issues of sustainability. This may go beyond funding and might even require the exploration of various operating models and possibly even legislative guidance or reforms, which may enable the kind of sustainability that organisations seek.
- Find ways to influence governments and funders to see civil society as strategic partners and to invest in their strengthening

Civil Society involvement in the Joint Programming (JP) (i.e. Working Better Together) and connections/interactions between the RM and the JP process.

Civil society organisations were consulted during the identification of the Team Europe Initiatives' priority areas. However, the opportunities for joint programming are yet to be fully explored.

PART II: EU STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN TO ENGAGE WITH CSOs

C. THE STRATEGY FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOS AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE EU COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT AND AGENDA 2030/SDG

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	RELATED SECTOR & COMMISSION PRIORITY	RELATED SDG
Develop and implement a structured dialogue and feedback mechanism between EU Delegation/ Member States and CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green Deal Alliances• Alliances for Innovation and Digital• Migration Partnerships• Governance, Peace and Security, Human Development	SDG Goals 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 16 and 17
Advocate for the establishment of a formal mechanism to consult with civil society as a key development partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green Deal Alliances• Alliances for Innovation and Digital• Migration Partnerships• Governance, Peace and Security , Human Development	SDG Goals 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 16 and 17
Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations in policy analysis & dialogue and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green Deal Alliances• Alliances for Innovation and Digital• Migration Partnerships• Governance, Peace and Security , Human Development	SDG Goals 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 16 and 17

D. THE ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	ACTIONS (including analysis, policy and political dialogue, operational support)	MEANS (EU programmes / instruments to implement the actions)
Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations in policy analysis & dialogue and advocacy	Operational support, including the award of grants to CSOs to implement their respective project activities as well as technical assistance to facilitate strengthening their capacity in areas such as communication, cross sector collaboration and advocacy.	<p>Calls for proposals through Human Rights and Democracy and CSO allocations; regional programmes</p> <p>Build on progress/ achievements of past and existing projects in sustaining activities /areas of interest.</p>
Develop and implement a structured dialogue and feedback mechanism between EU Delegation/ Member States and CSOs.	<p>Political and policy dialogue</p> <p>Include mechanisms for CSO participation in TEI and regional programmes.</p> <p>Increase the EUD /MS dialogue with CSOs on human rights, governance and in the focal sectors</p> <p>Facilitate information sharing and coordination between CSOs and development partners.</p>	<p>Public diplomacy</p> <p>Visibility activities</p> <p>Technical assistance</p> <p>Policy engagement/Consultative meetings</p>
Advocate for the establishment of a formal mechanism to consult with civil society as a key development partner	<p>Engagement with partners/stakeholders</p> <p>Political Dialogue, Monitoring & Evaluation, Public Diplomacy.</p> <p>Observance of International Days</p> <p>Preparation of Human Rights implementation report.</p> <p>Facilitate information sharing and coordination between CSOs and development partners.</p>	<p>Public diplomacy</p> <p>Dialogue with all stakeholder groups</p> <p>Advocacy, local statements and engagement with authorities</p> <p>Visibility activities related to CSO and Human Rights and Democracy projects</p>

PART III: FOLLOW-UP OF THE RM

OBJECTIVES FOR EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	OUTCOME INDICATORS	TARGET	BASELINE INFORMATION (if available)	SOURCES OF INFORMATION & MEANS OF VERIFICATION
Develop and implement a structured dialogue and feedback mechanism between EU Delegation/ Member States and CSOs.	Existence (or not) of a network of interlocutors for Civil Society at the thematic or sectoral levels	Minimum of 2 engagement sessions per annum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public consultation reports and minutes of EU/ CSOs meetings Political reports
Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations in policy analysis & dialogue and advocacy	<p>Level of knowledge, from public authorities, of the existing NGOs and of the project reports and good practices.</p> <p>CSOs' perception on the quality and applicability of the institutional framework regulating CSOs</p> <p>Support for projects implemented by CSOs</p>	At least 1 project funded, per year		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public consultation reports and minutes of Government and CSOs meetings NGO database/registry Global World bank governance indicators Project reports
Advocate for the establishment of a formal mechanism to consult with civil society as a key development partner	Level of responsiveness of the government to the needs of CSOs when drafting/updating civil society legislation (i.e. whether CSOs proposals are taken into account, etc.)	At least two issues, supported through advocacy and engagement efforts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of Parliamentary meetings (or sub-commission meetings) related to the discussion of the legal framework regulating CSOs (Hansard) Political reports; policy documents; CSO; and government reports CSOs' report on the quality and applicability of the regulatory legal framework

PART IV: ANNEXES & REFERENCES

ANNEX 1: THE PROCESS

How were MS/EU+ present in the country involved in the drafting of the RM?	Member States were consulted on the draft document and requested to include their respective actions, or proposals, to engage with civil society.
What mechanisms are set up to ensure the involvement of MS/EU+ in the implementation and follow up of the RM?	Review of progress reports, updates, participation in projects and well as advocacy actions.
What consultations with CSOs were organised? What type of actors were involved? What mechanisms, if any, were used to ensure the inclusiveness of the process?	A survey was sent out to a wide cross section of CSOs that were engaged on a regular basis with the Delegation and member states, or those that were identified, due to their involvement in the priority and cross cutting areas. The responses were analysed and included in the document.
What mechanisms, are set up to continue the dialogue with CSOs? What mechanisms, if any, will used to ensure the inclusiveness of the dialogue?	Consultation will continue based on specific areas as well as cross cutting areas.
How is the RM integrated /coordinated with the JP process?	Not applicable
How does the RM relate to other country processes including human rights and democracy country strategies, the gender action plan, etc.?	This roadmap will complement the implementation of the human rights and democracy strategy as well as the regional multi-country programmes

ANNEX 2: RELEVANT REFERENCES AND SOURCES TO DEEPEN THE UNDERSTANDING ON THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

1. United Way Trinidad and Tobago – Final Report: *Strengthening civil society engagement in a more environmentally sustainable, socially just, inclusive, accountable and resilient model of development and governance in Trinidad and Tobago*. December 2020
2. Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Initiative – Final Report: *Lifting the Veil on Secret Company Ownership: A Public Sensitisation Campaign on Beneficial Ownership Disclosure* (CSO/LA/2018/400-172) November, 2020
3. EU/Civil Society Consultation (CSO/LA and EIDHR), February, 2019
4. Proposed TEI: *Climate Resilience Infrastructures in Trinidad & Tobago*. Submitted to HQ, February 2021
5. Trinidad and Tobago: Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy 2021-2024. April 2021
6. The Cropper Foundation: Draft Final Report: *Enhancing Civil Society Capacity for Governance of Environmental Transparency and Accountability in Trinidad and Tobago Extractive Industries* (FED/2017/393-367). May 2021
7. Responses: CSO Survey: Update of EU Roadmap Engagement with Civil Society beyond 2020. May, 2021
8. Government of Trinidad and Tobago: Non-Profit Organisation Bill, 2019
9. Legal and Fiscal Working Group: CSOs for Good Governance Project: *Improving the Legal, Fiscal and Funding Frameworks for Civil Society in Trinidad and Tobago*- November 2019
10. CANARI: Trinidad and Tobago CSO Shadow Report – SDG 13: Climate Action. June 2020

