



EU ROADMAP FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

IN SURINAME FOR THE
PERIOD 2021 - 2024



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

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

Civil society in Suriname is comprised of a diversity of organizations, some of which are entirely autonomous of the state, while others collaborate with and even depend on the state. Private sector organizations and labour unions are well established and unions have long had an important influence on governance. The number of CSOs has been on the steady increase and they are actively engaged in raising awareness, disseminating knowledge, stimulating debates on policies and strategic priorities, and contributing to public consultations and the development of national legal products. This has repeatedly resulted in some human rights and development issues being placed on the agenda of the Surinamese government.

Surinamese CSOs play a key role in lobbying and advocating for human rights, democracy, good governance and the environment, but are also making strong efforts to engage in and implement socio-economic initiatives and actions to enhance human development, welfare, livelihood and social care for (vulnerable) groups such as persons with disabilities, the elderly, women and youth. They raise awareness, disseminate knowledge, stimulate debates on policies and strategic priorities and contribute to public consultations as well as the development of national legislation. In many cases, matters have been placed on the agenda of the government as a result of initiatives taken by civil society stakeholders.

The number of CSOs and their importance grew during the 1990s, due in part to citizens' distrust of and absence of faith in the ability of the government to solve social and economic issues affecting the country. The freedoms of CSOs are enshrined in the Constitution of 1987, notably in Article 52 which identifies the elements of political democracy, its representation and empowerment of and on behalf of the people. Freedom of expression and assembly are also embedded in the Constitution, thereby forming an important aspect of the CSO enabling environment in Suriname.

The civil society landscape is comprised of associations, cooperatives, unions and non-profits. Non-profits are particularly engaged in human rights and related activities that target low-income families, women, youth, men, persons with disabilities, elderly, indigenous and tribal peoples, as well as environmental rights. These non-profits are formally registered as a 'stichting' (foundation), association, union or cooperative in the Stichtingenregister (Register of Foundations) of the Chamber of Commerce in Suriname, under Foundations Act of 1968.

Contextually, Suriname underwent a change in government in 2020, which brought an end to the ten-year administration of the National Democratic Party (NDP) at the same time the country was navigating the Covid-19 health crisis. The current economic situation is characterised by a high level of public debt, fluctuating exchange rates for foreign currencies, shortage of available foreign currencies and a lack of public trust in financial/government institutions. In April 2021, the government entered into a staff level agreement with the IMF for a three-year programme under the Extended Fund Facility, with the aim to support debt sustainability, adoption of sound monetary regimes and institutional reform to strengthen policymaking and improve governance. The active participation of CSOs in good governance initiatives can play a critical role in ensuring that a third wheel of governance with a role of guaranteeing transparency and accountability, is in place. This commitment to enhance governance may also represent an opportunity for a more enabling environment for CSOs.

Key developments in the CS context (Enabling Environment for Civil Society) over the past two/three years.

This new CSO roadmap was formulated with the inputs from 53 local CSOs working on a wide range of human rights and development issues. The information they provided allows a better assessment of the key challenges and opportunities for civil society cooperation.

It is the general perception among Surinamese CSOs that there is an absence of strategic, structured and coordinated policy, despite their belief that the nature of their work is often the government's responsibility. Whereas some CSOs report having received varying forms of ad-hoc support from government in the past (including financial), they remain wary of political criticism.

62% of CSOs report that the regulatory framework is only moderately supportive. Limited understanding by the authorities of the roles that CSOs play, low public acceptance/limited trust, bureaucracy and red tape, and limited dialogue with public institutions were other hurdles listed by CSOs. On the other hand, 46% of CSOs find that the international community was supportive in enhancing the enabling environment, and 42% believe it to be moderately supportive. Further, some CSOs indicated information sharing by public to be poor and an impediment to effective service delivery to beneficiaries. Another hindrance to the growth of civil society in Suriname is the level of distrust among some CSOs. As a result, collaboration and networking can be strained, and issues of transparency persist. This weakens the position of civil society as a collective vis-à-vis government.

Suriname has a global freedom status score of 79 (100 being the highest, and of which civil rights rank 45 and political rights 34).¹ Reporters without Borders (RSF) ranked Suriname 19 out of 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index for 2020, one point behind Uruguay and one point ahead of Luxembourg.

In 2019, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of assembly and association are slightly above average (0.59 and 0.61 respectively). The right to equal treatment and non-discrimination is also average (0.61). This can be partially explained by the fact that Suriname comprises a population of less than 600,000 which reduces the level of privacy for citizens, which may further lead to discrimination and shrinking of the enabling environment on the grounds of biases such as personal affiliations with public figures, political creed or personal beliefs.²

Covid-19

Covid-19 has had an adverse effect on CSOs due to the restrictive health measures which caused substantial delays in project implementation. Suriname imposed stringent travel bans, confinement measures and curfews to help fight the spread of Covid-19. This had an adverse effect of the level of project implementation, notably for CSOs operating outside of Paramaribo, and in the hinterland.

Brief analysis of CS involvement in domestic policies (with a special attention to the 5 priorities of the Commission or *priority areas/sectors of EU engagement in the country*) and key challenges and opportunities. In line with the Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025), please also pay a specific attention to CS involvement in favour of gender equality/women's rights and empowerment

61% of CSOs participating in the EU roadmap survey can be grouped under Commission priority 5 (Governance, Peace and Security, Human Development). Their scope of work encompasses a wide range of issues, including human rights (women, children, indigenous, Maroon, LGBTQI, etc.), rule of law, social and community development, corruption and good governance. Priority areas 1 (Green Deal) and 3 (Sustainable Growth and Jobs) each comprise 18% of CSOs, followed by 7% in priority area 2 (Science, Technology and Digital) and 6% in priority area 4 (Migration Partnerships). The absence of a large number of CSOs in priority area 4 can be explained by the fact that Suriname is not a primary destination for migrants in the region due to socioeconomic factors such as language and employment opportunities. Due to its economic profile that in many ways resemble that of its CARICOM neighbours,

technological and digital innovation advances at a slower pace which may explain the relatively small number of CSOs active under priority area 2.

Public and private sector partnerships and dialogue with civil society constitute a core aspect of work for some CSOs, such as those working in the area of LGBTQI rights, women's empowerment and gender equality and environmental rights. For instance, dialogue with local authorities and relevant ministries on issues such as domestic violence formed part of past action grants implemented by organisations such as VVOB or Projekta. In the same vein, Parea has been working with businesses to get them to sign the Declaration of Paramaribo which secures their commitment to having gender neutral HR policies and eradicating discrimination from their environments.

Similarly, CSOs such as Conservation international Suriname, IUCN, ACT, Tropenbos and WWF are actively engaged in environmental protection and conservation in Suriname, leveraging their alliances with indigenous and tribal organisations to engage local authorities and public agencies in the realisation of their activities. In so doing, C.I. has actioned the political will of government by signing a MoU with the Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment to increase collaboration on conservation issues.

Regarding gender mainstreaming, most organisations rated their performance average to good. Some CSOs working in environmental protection and conservation, are also executing actions to develop skills, income generation and enhanced livelihood for women. These include CSOs working with indigenous and tribal peoples and those providing services such as the Red Cross. To ensure gender is mainstreamed in its thematic projects, the Delegation also encourages CSOs participating in calls for proposals to incorporate objectives targeting SDG 5 in their proposals, as well as sex-disaggregated data.

Based on the Delegation's assessment, women's rights and related issues benefit from the active engagement of several local CSOs, including Bureau voor de Dienstverlening NGOs and Projekta Organisatie voor Vrouwen en Ontwikkeling. These actors appear to be organised, competent and actively engaged in policy dialogue at both the grassroots and national levels, and play an essential role in building the capacity of smaller CSOs. However, among the many challenges Surinamese CSOs face, funding remains an obstacle to growth. 21% of the CSOs participating in the roadmap survey benefit or have benefitted recently from EU funding.

¹ Source: <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>

² Source: World Bank dataBrief reference to any update on Civil Society capacity over the past two years, also highlighting key challenges and opportunities.

The challenges affecting Surinamese CSOs are multifaceted, but those affecting their ability to effectively execute their mandates are mainly operational and financial in nature, and both are co-dependent on each other. Elements affecting the operational capacity of CSOs can range from poor levels of technical expertise due to limited opportunities for capacity building, to difficulties reaching beneficiaries in hinterland or rural communities. Logistics costs remain a primary impediment to successful project implementation, especially for CSOs with limited financial resources. Grassroots organisations with better community integration are often small and do not reach the financial eligibility criteria to tap in to EU (and other) funding. Funding continues to be the main setback to healthy civil society growth in Suriname. Among these grassroots organisations are community-based organisations (CBOs) which are also non-profits and are established by communities on voluntary basis to provide social services and empowerment at the local level. Many of these CBOs are not formally registered.

Considering these challenges, the EU has been increasingly encouraging CSO alliances through the co-applicant and sub-granting schemes since 2018. The 2020 CSO-LA call for proposals prioritised hinterland development under Lot 1, making co-applicants mandatory, and seeking proposals integrating indigenous and tribal peoples' rights, as well as conservation, as cross-cutting issues.

Additionally, the Delegation has strengthened its partnerships with existing partners by providing technical support for project implementation to help with reporting and better understanding EU contractual procedures.

In terms of opportunities identified for enhanced cooperation in civil society, particular emphasis was placed on strengthening the enabling environment for CSOs, notably through enhanced policy and political dialogues with government and private sector, on key policy and human rights areas. Better access to information was also a recurrent theme among CSOs and may represent an area of opportunity.

B. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PAST ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs

Key lessons, challenges and opportunities identified in the EU (EUD and MS/EU+) engagement with CSOs (i.e. in the involvement of CSOs in the political and dialogue the EUD has with the authorities, in the dialogue between the EU and Civil Society, in the EU operational support to CSOs, in the mainstreaming of CSOs into EU sectors of cooperation and trade, in the EU coordination and division of labour, etc.)

Cooperation engagement with CSOs since 2018 has been hinged on the successful implementation of action grants (no failed grant contract since 2018). This is primarily due to the strengthened relationship and increased technical support provided by the Delegation. The three main challenges affecting EU engagement with civil society are:

- Absence of financial absorption capacity which reduces eligibility of small/grassroots organisations from accessing EU funding
- Absence of CSO presence in certain thematic areas of interest to the EU, such as democracy, governance and security.
- Limited reach in remote tribal and indigenous communities.

Despite the diversity of the civil society landscape, CSOs also remain constrained by limited financial and administrative capacity. This has an adverse effect on the outreach capacity of many community-based CSOs. Recognizing the importance of building trust and supporting grassroots/community-based organisations, the EU has intensified efforts to strengthen capacity through its thematic budget lines (EIDHR and CSO-LA), by using the co-applicant and third party financing schemes available in its contractual procedures. This was pivotal in helping the Delegation to advance its CSO engagement while supporting an enabling environment for civil society. Calls for proposals are strategically drafted to build the capacity of smaller CSOs in key priority areas, with a view of fostering cooperation among local CSOs.

Efforts to support CSOs working on critical issues such as gender equality and women's rights, LGBTQI rights and indigenous and tribal peoples' rights were implemented thanks to this approach. Partnerships among CSOs were successfully implemented in a bid to build trust.

Since 2016, the EU has provided considerable support through its thematic budget lines, to CSOs working on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), as Suriname remains one of the CARICOM countries with the highest rates of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Since 2018, the Delegation has made a strategic move to encourage actions that target hinterland populations, notably the Maroon and indigenous forest peoples. In 2019, a grant contract was awarded to Conservation International Suriname through the EIDHR allocation, to address indigenous peoples' rights by working with community leaders and the Organisation of Indigenous Leaders (OIS). In 2021, two grant contracts were awarded under the 2020 CSO-LA allocation to address hinterland development through conservation and to tackle the issue of LGBTQI rights. These two actions are founded on CSO partnerships aimed at building capacity and expanding the reach of urban-based CSOs through community approach. The

Delegation placed special emphasis on gender mainstreaming for these three recent grants, by encouraging applicants to incorporate a gender sensitive or gender responsive component in their actions, as well as targeting SDG 5 and including the creation of sex-disaggregated data in reporting.

In the future, the Delegation will continue to provide thematic funding for actions that support building the capacity of CSOs through alliances, including for those working with the most at-risk groups. Consideration will be given to actions that integrate community resilience in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

While there is no joint programming in Suriname, CSOs were part of the extensive consultation process required to draft the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP). In order to guarantee a rights-based-approach to future programming, the inclusion of CSOs is also foreseen in the MIP.

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

A. 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
<p>1. Strengthened capacity of CSOs, including grassroots/ small CSOs</p> <p>SO 1: increase in number and types of CSOs tackling country priorities such as women's rights and gender equality, indigenous and tribal peoples' rights and climate change, children's rights and other relevant issues</p> <p>SO2: Increased capacity of CSOs working on critical human rights issues, including in rural and hinterland communities,</p> <p>SO3: Strengthened capacities of CSOs to effectively play their governance roles, including monitoring of the enabling environment and engaging on issues related to the defence and promotion of civic space</p>	<p>Sector: Social Commission Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 5 - Governance, Peace and Security, Human Development 	<p>This objective encompasses most SDGs, including SDGs 1, 2, 3 and 15.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, it specifically address: • SDG 5 – Gender Equality • SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities • SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
<p>Enhanced dialogue with EU-CSOs working within the scope of EU-Suriname MIP priority area on forest partnerships</p> <p>SO1: Increased participation of CSOs in forest partnership activities</p> <p>SO2: Enhanced transparency and accountability in the natural resources sector (including public institutions) through CSO involvement in forest partnership activities</p>	<p>Sector: Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1: Green Deals • Priority 5: Governance, Peace and Security, Human Development 	<p>This objective indirectly addresses several SDGs including SDGs 1, 2 and 3, and notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 5: Gender Equality • SDG 14: Marine Life <p>It specifically addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 13: Climate Action • SDG 15: Life on land

B. 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)
<p>Strengthened capacity of CSOs, including grassroots/ small CSOs</p> <p>SO 1: increase in number and types of CSOs tackling country priorities such as women's rights and gender equality, indigenous and tribal peoples' rights and climate change, children's rights and other relevant issues</p> <p>SO2: Increased financial capacity of CSOs working on critical human rights issues, including in rural and hinterland communities,</p> <p>SO3: Strengthened capacities of CSOs to effectively play their governance roles, including monitoring of the enabling environment and engaging on issues related to the defence and promotion of civic space</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (SO1) Targeted funding through thematic budget lines, to encourage CSO partnerships including when appropriate through co-applicant and sub-granting schemes, in view of multiplying and diversifying the number of eligible actors in civil society. 2. (SO2) Technical support provided by the Delegation to CSOs in the areas of reporting and contractual procedures. Where possible (through designated Commission facilities), capacity strengthening provided to CSOs on RBA and gendered/gender mainstreaming approaches. 3. (SO2) Policy and political dialogue to assess the needs and gaps in civil society, as well as alignment with Commission priorities. This can be accompanied by sector gender and social analyses to obtain updated and accurate information on the situation of women and LGBTQI persons, as well as on the role and needs of civil society in bridging gender disparities, and on any other issue regarding children, vulnerable minorities and groups covered by this SO, as appropriate. 4. (SO3) Capacity strengthening for CSOs on advocacy and governance roles of CSOs and on promoting networking and sharing among CSOs, including the building of inclusive approaches to engage the more grassroots organizations and to bridge the divide between rural and urban 	<p>Budget lines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO thematic budget line (CfP and support measures) • CSO Operational Facility • Human Rights and Democracy programme / Thematic Programme for Human Rights and Democracy 2021-2027
<p>2. Enhanced dialogue with CSOs operating within the EU-Suriname MIP priority area on forest partnerships</p> <p>SO1: Increased participation of CSOs in forest partnership activities</p> <p>SO2: Enhanced transparency and accountability through CSO involvement in forest partnership activities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (SO1) Promotion of CSO participation in EU policy and political dialogues, CSO mapping and information sessions on EU processes and procedures, and for programming. 2. (SO2) Support CSO's involvement as stakeholders in partnerships with public actors³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) CSO-LA MAAP / CSO thematic budget line / CSO Operational Facility in Brussels • Human Rights and Democracy programme / Thematic Programme for Human Rights and Democracy 2021-2027

³ Public partnerships can include (but may not be limited to) the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) in the scope of the EU-FLEG VPA, the Guyana Extractive Industries transparency Initiative (GYEITI), and other public agencies actively engaged in the responsible management and conservation of forests.

PART III– FOLLOW-UP OF THE RM

OBJECTIVE S FOR EU ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	OUTCOME INDICATORS	TARGET	BASELINE INFORMATION (if available)	SOURCES OF INFORMATION & MEANS OF VERIFICATION
1. Strengthened capacity of CSOs, including grassroots/small CSOs <p>SO 1: increased diversity in civil society landscape, tackling country priorities such as women's rights and gender equality, indigenous and tribal peoples' rights and climate change, children's rights and other relevant issues</p> <p>SO2: Increased financial capacity of CSOs working on critical human rights issues, including in rural and hinterland communities</p> <p>SO3: Strengthened capacities of CSOs to effectively play their governance roles, including monitoring of the enabling environment and engaging on issues related to the defense and promotion of civic space</p>	<p>1. Number of new partnerships/ thematic grants (per call for proposals) that feature grassroots/ smaller co- applicants and/or third party financing to grassroots or smaller/weaker CSOs.</p> <p>2. Number of younger/smaller CSOs with increased eligibility to funding/donor aid</p> <p>3. Number of EU- funded initiatives/ grants to review the legal and institutional framework enabling CSOs.</p>	<p>SO1: 2 (per annum)</p> <p>SO2: 1 (per annum)</p> <p>SO3: 1</p>	<p>SO1: 2 (per annum)</p> <p>SO2: 0</p> <p>SO3: 0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on calls for proposals • CSO/LA grants reports. • EIDHR grants reports. • Laws and other regulations on Civil society (i.e. laws, by-laws, decrees, etc.) • Public consultation reports and minutes of Government and CSOs meetings
2. Enhanced dialogue with CSOs operating within the EU- Suriname MIP priority area on forest partnerships <p>SO1: Increased participation of CSOs in forest partnership activities</p> <p>SO2: Enhanced transparency and accountability through CSO involvement in forest partnership activities</p>	<p>1. Number of policy dialogues with CSOs per annum (including consultations on the development of strategies, plans, project and/or programming documents)</p> <p>2. Number of CSOs supported by the EU/MS, that support or conduct independent research/evidence-based advocacy/ independent monitoring of public services at local and/or national level</p>	<p>SO1: 2 (per annum)</p> <p>SO2: 1</p>	<p>SO1: 1</p> <p>SO2: 0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of policy dialogues • Programme/project documents and/or strategies and plans incorporating CSO contributions issued from consultations • Reports on calls for proposals • CSO/LA grants reports. • EIDHR grants reports.

PART IV – ANNEXES & REFERENCES

ANNEX 1: THE PROCESS

How were MS/EU+ present in the country involved in the drafting of the RM?	The roadmap was shared with all Member States accredited to Suriname for comments and inputs.
What mechanisms are set up to ensure the involvement of MS/EU+ in the implementation and follow up of the RM?	Information sharing and possible donor coordination.
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 CSO survey and a consultation to present findings and obtain feedback to further refine the roadmap. Efforts to include grassroots/rural-based CSOs were made and the feedback was positive. Indigenous and tribal peoples, child rights, GEWE, LGBTQI, environmental and conservation CSOs were represented.
What mechanisms, are set up to continue the dialogue with CSOs? What mechanisms, if any, will be used to ensure the inclusiveness of the dialogue?	Increased policy dialogues, included on critical thematic areas such as gender, conservation and LGBTQI are foreseen by the cooperation section, moving forward. Grassroots/rural based CSOs will be included to ensure optimal inclusivity.
How is the RM integrated /coordinated with the JP process?	Not applicable (no JP process in the country).
How does the RM relate to other country processes including human rights and democracy country strategies, the gender action plan, etc.?	The CSO RM targets increased capacity strengthening and enhanced inclusivity in both EU policy and political dialogues, as well as in public decision-making processes (such as enhancing CSO regulatory framework, or enhancing the EU-Suriname MIP on forest partnership). These are aligned with the Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy, The CLIP and the MIP.

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

- EU roadmap for engagement with CSOs, surveys
- Consultation with 41 local CSOs
- Report on CSO assessment in Suriname, 2021
- CSO-LA Roadmap 2018-2020

