Shaping a model for successful civil society participation in national governance & sustainable development processes

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About CANARI

CANARI is an independent, technical, non-profit organisation, registered in 1989 (but born out of an initiative started in 1976).

Our mission is to promote and **facilitate equitable participation** and **effective collaboration in the management of natural resources** to ensure a better quality of life and conservation of natural resources critical to the development of Caribbean islands.
CANARI’s Civil Society & Governance Programme

Our goal is “to enhance the capacity of civil society stakeholders to participate equitably and effectively in the governance of natural resources and amplify their voices, through research and action learning, innovative capacity building programmes and communication and application of lessons learnt.”

- **Capacity building** (technical and organisational), including training and mentoring
- **Advocacy** and facilitating **participatory processes** to support civil society inclusion
- Facilitating **networking** and **knowledge sharing**
The Issue and Opportunity:
Civil society participation in governance & development

UN Sustainable Development Agenda

Inclusive process to identify national priorities

National development plan

Collaboration among all development partners

Civil society role

• Implementers
• Advocates
• Watchdogs

There is the need for a more inclusive process to implement international commitments and national obligations for sustainable development

Government cannot (and should not) do it alone!
**CSOs For Good Governance:**
Enhancing civil society’s contribution to governance and development processes in Trinidad and Tobago

**The Initiative**
Establishment and facilitation of an [SDGs Catalysts Network] – an informal network of 20-25 leading Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working across sectors to address the range of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Trinidad and Tobago.
Objectives of the SDGs Catalyst Network:

**Advocacy**
- Develop collective civil society positions and facilitate and promote joint advocacy to influence sectoral and national policy for implementation of the SDGs

**Action**
- Mobilise and encourage civil society action for implementation the SDGs and support reporting on civil society contribution to delivery of SDGs

**Partnerships**
- Improve capacities for more effective partnerships among CSOs and between civil society and government and other development partners

**Participation**
- Ensure effective civil society engagement in the prescribed national coordination mechanism for the SDGs being led by the Government
Environmental Cluster Group: (Environment focused CSOs)

- Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) – Coordinator
- Environment Tobago
- IAMovement
- Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN-TT)
- Trinidad & Tobago United Fisherfolk (TTUF)
- The Cropper Foundation
- Council of Presidents of the Environment (C.O.P.E.)

Role in mainstreaming climate change action across SDGs – promoting integrated, inter-sectoral approaches to working
What results so far?
Civil society started mapping and re-aligning its work with the SDGs.

CSO Catalysts identify how their work is aligned with the SDGs.
Promoting SDGs and communicating more effectively on their work

CSO Catalysts report on how their work is delivering the SDGs.
Building relationships – identifying synergies, gaps, opportunities & improvements for working together

SDGs Catalysts share a vision of working more effectively together for collective advocacy and action. Strong relationships will be key for this.
Exploring roles for civil society as development partners

CSO Catalysts recognise that they are already working to help deliver the SDGs, including as advocates, implementers and watchdogs for sustainable development.
Collectively identifying civil society priorities for sustainable development

CSO Catalysts identify priorities as a rights-based, locally-driven and environmentally sustainable approach to development.
Civil society is collaborating for a stronger voice

“We believe the CSO sector can become a model for collaboration, engagement and innovative advocacy, with the SDGs as the foundation”
Engaging in knowledge sharing and exchange

We believe that CSOs will be able to participate more effectively in SDG advocacy and implementation if they are well informed about the SDGs and inspired by what other Caribbean CSOs are doing

Launching soon!
Implementing practical advocacy action

CSO Catalysts are raising awareness and calling for policies and actions to support the SDGs.
CSO Catalysts have called on the government and the international community:

- To recognise the contribution being made by civil society to delivering the SDGs in Trinidad and Tobago
- To practice more participatory approaches to implementation of the SDGs which involve partnering with civil society and local communities in Trinidad and Tobago
- To ensure that civil society is guaranteed an active role in national decision-making on the SDGs, including a role in deciding on priorities and monitoring implementation
- To offer the support civil society needs to serve as a critical partner in sustainable development in Trinidad and Tobago
A continuum of participation

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<th>Consulting</th>
<th>Actively Seeking Consensus</th>
<th>Developing and Deciding on Specific Agreements</th>
<th>Sharing Authority and Responsibility Formally</th>
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<td>Full control by agency with authority: Top-down decision making where some stakeholders may be informed of some decisions</td>
<td>Control and decision-making shared between stakeholders</td>
<td>Full control by natural resource users: All stakeholders fully involved in decision-making</td>
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Reference:
A continuum of participation in natural resource management. From Borrini-Feyerabend (1996)
How can parliaments collaborate with civil society organisations to tackle this issue?

Encourage governments to support self-organisation and capacity building by national civil society networks for effective representation and voice.

Create spaces for CSOs to be formally represented on decision-making bodies and structures (e.g., national committees) and include civil society representatives on national delegations to inter-governmental fora.

Engage civil society in the formal process to monitor national implementation, while recognising the value of independent monitoring and review by civil society (shadow or spotlight reports).

Create credible spaces for knowledge exchange and sharing to help build capacity and visibility nationally and wider region.
Thank you!

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