



European Union

Enhancing Civil Society Capacity for Governance of Environmental Transparency and Accountability in Trinidad and Tobago's Extractive Industries

Duration: 36 months

Overview

Trinidad and Tobago's extractive industries generate 54 percent of the country's revenues (EUR 3 billion a year), employ 12 percent of the workforce, and subsidise social benefits. However, in developing the oil, gas and mineral extractive industries, the Trinidad and Tobago Government and extractive companies have ignored the environmental deterioration these industries cause. In fact, the extractive industries are Trinidad and Tobago's most environmentally-deleterious industries. The World Bank ranks the country as the world's second largest per-capita producer of greenhouse gas, with the amount of greenhouse gas produced annually per Trinidad and Tobago national being 2.5 times that produced per year by the average USA citizen.

In addition, more than 33 percent of Trinidad and Tobago quarries operate illegally—with the country losing 20 percent of its watersheds in the past 25 years, and with about 70 percent of its northern watercourses (that provide more than half of Trinidad and Tobago's potable freshwater) being either polluted or overloaded with mine-based silt.

There is thus an urgent need for enhanced oversight of the reporting and verification of extractive-industry environmental information in Trinidad and Tobago. Such enhanced environmental oversight would ensure proper extractive-industry controls and mitigation strategies, from the application and planning phase to the execution and after-use stages. While this enhanced oversight should involve Government and extractive companies, it must be led by civil society, which represents citizens—the stakeholders who do not profit directly from extractive industries, but who are both the ultimate owners of natural resources and the ones most affected by environmental damage.

This project follows the model of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)—a global body that promotes extractive-industry fiscal accountability by disclosing the payments (verified by civil-society-supervised auditing) made by companies to governments, but incorporates an environmental component into the Initiative's reporting

Objectives

- To enhance civil society's capacity to independently verify extractor-reported environmental data;
- To foster public-private-civil society collaboration, with defined roles and mechanisms;
- To ensure high levels of extractive-industry environmental accountability and compliance (to standards, legislation, licensing conditions, and rehabilitation commitments at exploitation sites);



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- To enhance civil society partnership with Government agencies and extractive companies to ensure that related policy, procedure and legislation evolve with extractive-sector trends to environmental best practice.

The project will also improve communication and coordination among regulatory agencies, extracting and exploiting entities, and Trinidad and Tobago citizens, and so ensure high extractive-industry environmental compliance. Environmental accountability can lead to improved environmental and human health.

Specific Outcomes

- Enhanced stakeholder buy-in and increased levels of stakeholder collaboration and coordination;
- Enhanced governance mechanisms and structures (including related material capacities, such as information and communication technologies) within TTEITI and fenceline civil society organizations;
- A civil-society-led, EITI-like coalition with at least 12 members equally representing civil society, the State, and companies to govern extractive-industry environmental accountability;
- Increased capacity of TTEITI and fenceline civil society to participate in extractive-industry-related policy and legislation development;
- Train-the-trainer programmes to enable TTEITI and fenceline civil society organizations to educate extractive companies and State agencies on best practices and the policing of compliance;
- A paperless, user-friendly system for extractive industry and State input and reporting of environmental information;
- Procured independent assessor of reported information, with a report on the veracity of extractive-industry-provided data.

Beneficiaries: The Cropper Foundation, Environment Tobago, Fishermen and Friends of the Sea, Network of Rural Women Producers, Oilfield Workers' Trade Union