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| **Project Title** | Pursuing Local Government Reform |
| **Objective** | To pilot Local Government reform in two (2) Municipalities of Trinidad and Tobago. |
| **Background** | Since independence, development in Trinidad & Tobago has been centrally planned and implemented, carrying with it the risk of the inefficient allocation of resources and funds across the various municipalities. Additionally, the individual characteristics of communities could not be fully captured in national planning, leading to ineffective systems and unsustainable progress. Consequently, infrastructural developments and economic growth did not occur evenly.  Globally local government reform has been shown to work well in places such as Ireland which undertook a decentralisation initiative with the aim of promoting sustainability and prosperity at a community level. The benefits from this initiative included an improved quality of service provision and, long-term savings. Governance at the community level allowed for more flexible and focused decisions to be made based on the individual characteristics of each area, and not the central “one size fits all” mode. (Department of the Environment, 2013)  As the Government of Trinidad and Tobago moves forward in improving the efficiency and management of the municipalities across both islands, Local Government reform has consequently been identified as the medium for driving this level of sustainable development. |
| **Project Components** | **Component 1: Review of existing policies and legislation on Local Government and hosting a Public Consultation**  In giving context to Local Government Reform, it is vital to understanding the current legislative framework that exists with regards to Local Government. It is therefore important that a gap analysis be conducted in tandem with the desired outcomes of the government, to identify the areas of focus requiring reformation. The results of this analysis will be used to guide the subsequent consultation process.  Public consultation as an element of stakeholder analysis involves engaging those most impacted by Local Government Reform. As part of the planning process, consultation with two (2) pilot municipalities will capture the concerns and expectations of the citizens, while clarifying points of ambiguity. This will ensure a smoother project implementation phase in alignment with publicly accepted objectives.  Public consultation will involve two (2) workshop sessions in each municipality participating in the pilot project. The identified stakeholders will include; the residents, businesses, NGOs and other interested parties of that municipality. UNDP under the Sustainable Development Goal of Sustainable Communities, can support this consultation process as the initial step towards Local Government reform. |
| **Component 2: Pilot project in Local Government Reform**  To demonstrate how Local Government reform can occur across Trinidad & Tobago, the UNDP can facilitate a pilot project in two (2) municipalities; an urban municipality and, a rural municipality. This can be implemented utilising a United Nations’ Volunteer (UNV) per municipality to manage the project. Working in tandem, the UNVs will participate in knowledge sharing by exchanging the lessons learnt from their respective municipality, towards building an improved model for implementation in other municipalities. This type of knowledge sharing will require the development of knowledge products which can be used to guide other municipalities on the advantages and disadvantages of their approach to local government, the best practices which should be engaged in reaching out to the citizenry and other information pertinent to the reform process.  To develop such a project, the Tobago House Of Assembly (THA) model on governance can be adapted as it demonstrates how decentralised Governance operates and exemplifies some of the expected challenges.  The Irish local government reform was done through a dissemination of central power to the Councils (analogous to the municipalities in Trinidad & Tobago) with regards to planning, roadworks, local economic development, urban regeneration and local sports. These thematic areas can be considered as part of the consultation process and can be extended to include disaster risk management and local tax management. (Department of the Environment, 2015)  In addition to the THA and Irish models, an analysis of other local government models relevant to Trinidad and Tobago will be completed to obtain a well-rounded idea of the process and as such help to guide a holistic approach in implementation. |
| **Component 3: Citizen Accountability and ICTs**  To ensure the sustainability of a decentralised Governance model, accountability is a critical element for monitoring and evaluating the success of the system. This was reiterated by the Minister of Rural Development &Local Government who placed an emphasis on the importance on the role of ICTs in democracy and accountability.  Citizen accountability empowers the citizens of the municipality to ensure that the Local Government is made answerable for their management of the municipality. Accountability must therefore be a transparent and responsible process, the results of which are made available to the public. Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are one mechanism for improving the accountability framework by reducing significantly, the power of one or several persons to manage the system exclusively.  For this component, the UNDP can procure an ICT specialist from its global network of technical experts, to develop an Action Plan for an ICT system for managing the municipal funds. The Action Plan should identify the necessary hardware and software required for implementing such a system, as well as, the policy instruments which must be put in place to regulate, monitor and manage the ICT system. Following successful development, this can then be rolled out to the other municipalities which will contribute to building the level of trust between the Local Government and the citizenry. |
| **Component 4: Disaster Risk Reduction**  Disaster Risk Reduction is a critical component of sustainability as the very nature of disaster management is rooted in preservation of life and economic stability. As such, municipalities must be equipped to manage disasters before and after they occur. By decentralising the initialdisaster response from the national level to a municipal level, the disaster monitoring and response strategies can be developed based on the individual risks which threaten each municipality. The response time can therefore, be faster and the losses incurred can be reduced.  Such an initiative has already been piloted in the Mayaro-Rio Claro Regional Corporation of Trinidad. Under project oversight by the UNDP, a Cuban Risk Reduction Management Centre model was replicated in Trinidad as a means of enhancing the capacity of the Disaster Management Unit for Mayaro. The project yielded promising results from its first response to the Mayaro flood disaster in November 2014. (United Nations Development Programme, 2014)  Following this success, a proposal has been developed for the enhancement of the capacity of Disaster Management Units across the country based on the lessons learnt during the pilot and is currently under consideration by the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government as well as the Ministry of National Security.  For this pilot project it is proposed to implement the year one activities based on this proposal for the capacity building of the two (2) pilot municipalities in Disaster Risk Reduction. |
| **Expected Results/Deliverables** | The deliverables from the Local Government reform pilot project include, but are not limited to:  **Component 1:**  -Gap analysis report on the existing legislation and policy frameworks with respect to Local Government, following review of these documents.  -Two (2) public consultation workshops for each municipality participating in the pilot project.  -Public consultation report summarising the concerns, challenges, recommendations and objectives suggested by the stakeholders for consideration by the project team.  **Component 2:**  -Review or analysis of other models of local government including the Tobago House of Assembly model of governance.  -Action plan from the UNVs for the pilot project including the relevant considerations from the stakeholder consultation.  -Implementation of the identified outcomes within the specified time period, as agreed between the partners involved.  - Development of knowledge products based on individual outcomes achieved  -End report from the UNVs on lessons learnt from the pilot project for implementation in other municipalities.  **Component 3:**  -ICT Action Plan with the recommendations for the necessary hardware, software and other resources for establishing an ICT system for the Municipality.  **Component 4:**  1. Consultations/Sensitization Local Government   * Identify 2 municipalities for implementation * Consults with national public/private/civil society sector bodies   2. Vulnerability assessments completed for DMUs   * Vulnerability criteria established   3. Implementation Plans formulated  4. Capacity assessments completed  5. DRR Capacity Development program, curriculum, and tools developed  6. Equipping and furbishing of DMUs    7. Data Management Systems established  8. Documentation of experience including design of  knowledge management plan |
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| **Budget** | This budgetary allocation includes the cost of: two (2) UNVs, four (4) stakeholder consultations, procurement of the ICT specialist, and an estimate for implementing the Risk Reduction Management Centres in two (2) pilot regions.  Component 1: USD 240,000 (the cost of both UNVs is included here as well as their office accommodation, supplies)  Component 2: USD 100,000  Component 3: USD 100,000  Component 4: USD 250,000  TOTAL : USD 690,000 |
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| **Implementing Partners** | Ministry of Rural Development & Local Government Kent House, Long Circular Road, Maraval Trinidad & Tobago  Tel: (868) 622-1669  Fax: (868) 628-7283 |
| **References** | Department of the Environment. 2013. “DOE.” February. Accessed October 2015. http://www.doeni.gov.uk/benefits\_of\_local\_government\_reform.pdf.  —. 2015. “DOE.” Accessed October 2015. http://www.doeni.gov.uk/local\_government\_reform.  Ministry of Local Government. 2013. *Draft White Paper on Local Government Transformation and Modernization 2013.* Port of Spain. http://www.ttparliament.org/documents/2207.pdf  United Nations Development Programme Regional Centre for Latin American and the Caribbean. 2014. *Sharing What Works South-South Cooperation for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean.* Panama. |