



Empowering NON STATE ACTORS
through EU PARTNERSHIP IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

THE EU & NON-STATE ACTORS (NSAs)

The EU is committed to promoting the respect of human rights, the rule of law and democracy at home and abroad. The EU recognises the importance of Non State Actors (NSAs) in development and pays special attention to the role of NSAs. In Europe, non-state actors have a long history of participation in various national and Europe-wide programmes and processes ranging from tripartite dialogue initiatives to public-private partnerships, civil society collaborations or NGO specific programmes.

In its international relations, the European Union aims at involving NSAs in a systematic manner in its policy dialogue and programming processes with partner countries. In practice this means that NSAs are encouraged to participate in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU development programmes and policies.

WHAT ARE NON-STATE ACTORS?

The Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000 to govern relations between the EU and African Caribbean and Pacific countries defines NSAs as those players from the private sector, economic and social partners –including trade unions- and civil society in all its diversity according to national characteristics. A common feature lies in their independence from the State and the voluntary basis upon which they have come together to act and promote common interests. Examples are trade unions, employers organisations, non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOs), faith based organisations (FBOs), business organisations, gender groups and local authorities.

HOW DOES THE EU ENVISAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF NSAs IN ITS COOPERATION?

One of the great innovations of the Cotonou Agreement, covering 20 years of cooperation between the EU and the ACP, lies in the legal and political recognition of the complementary roles played by civil society, the private sector and decentralised local communities in the cooperation processes with national partners. **The Cotonou Agreement mentions amongst others that NSAs should be:**

- Informed and involved in consultation on cooperation policies and strategies... and on the political dialogue”;
- Provided with financial resources...to support local development processes”;
- Involved in the implementation of cooperation project and programmes...”;
- Provided with capacity-building support...to reinforce the capacities of these actors, particularly as regards organisation and representation...the establishment of consultation mechanisms...and to promote strategic alliances”.

There are various mechanisms envisaged to involve NSAs in EU development cooperation, different modalities to support NSAs and opportunities for funding (ranging from centralised calls for proposals issued in Brussels to local social infrastructure programmes and country-based training). Another way of supporting the involvement of NSAs in the EU development cooperation with a third country has been to set up NSA advisory panels.

WHAT IS AN NSA ADVISORY PANEL?

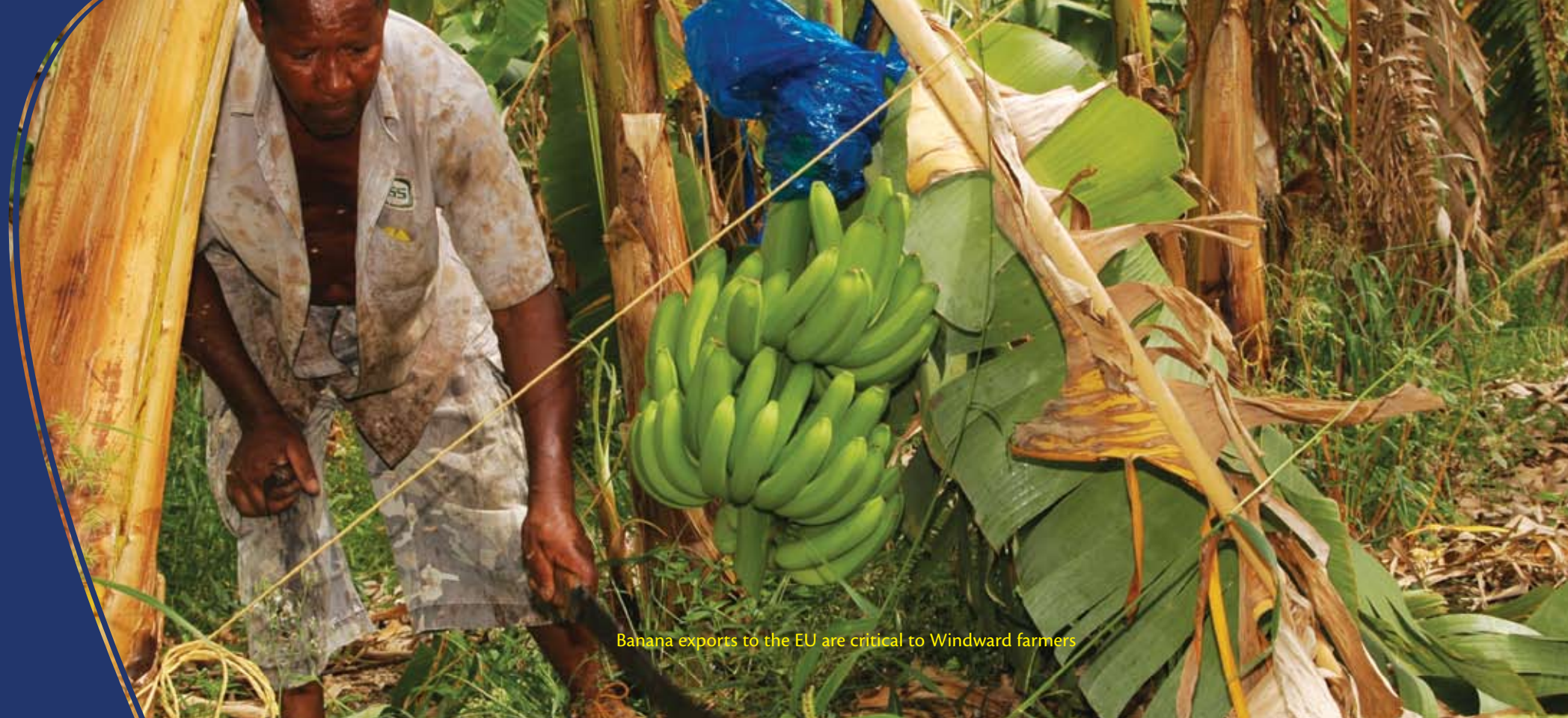
Non-State Actor Advisory Panels in the Eastern Caribbean are non-partisan bodies comprising some 8-13 organisations representative of the civil society. Examples are community based organisations, trade unions, women's groups, farmers' societies or business associations.

In general, the functions of the NSA advisory panels are to:

- Facilitate deeper involvement of civil society in the country/EU partnership
- Participate in political dialogue, policy dialogue and programming
- Review EU development assistance
- Provide advice on other matters related to the country/EU partnership as jointly requested by the Government and the Delegation or determined by the Panel, as well as on any other development issue affecting the country.

THE EU SUPPORT TO NSA ADVISORY PANELS IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

Since 2005, the EU Delegation has undertaken various efforts in conjunction with Eastern Caribbean Governments and local NSAs to establish NSA Advisory Panels in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.



Banana exports to the EU are critical to Windward farmers

In each country, the European Commission undertook a mapping of the NSA presence and capacity, looking into the feasibility of enhanced and structured NSA participation in the respective national partnership with the EU. Starting in 2006, at varying pace, nearly all panels have been launched and formally recognised through a MoU between the respective Government and the EU Delegation. Every two years, the panels are renewed through the updating of their Cooperation Protocol.

A modest financial allocation is available to cover the running costs of the Panels, in the form of Programme Estimates managed by the National Authorising Officer. Support may be given through the NSA panels for capacity building of civil society organisations from the national allocation under the European Development Fund.

GOOD PRACTICES OF NSA PARTICIPATION ON EU COOPERATION

Since 2005, various initiatives have benefitted from NSA participation in the achievement of development results. To this extent various examples can be considered as good practices.

- In respectively Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, capacity building programmes were implemented to support the development of civil society organisations. Training sessions were given on project drafting, project cycle management, conflict prevention, resolution and management and financial management.
- The Barbados NSA panel has organised various information and consultation meetings relating to the Economic Partnership Agreement, in favour of all players of the civil society.



- The Dominica NSA panel –with technical support- has used a two-weekly talkshow to share key messages and concerns with its members and society at large.
- The Barbados NSA panel runs a virtual email group informing its members about new opportunities for tendering and participation in EU sponsored projects
- In Saint Lucia, members of the NSA Advisory panel have actively participated in programming meetings and have in this way succeeded in ensuring financial support for equipment for the elderly under the Special Fund for Assistance.
- The members of the NSA panel of Saint Kitts and Nevis have actively participated in the design of the national country strategy for the 10th EDF round.
- In Saint Lucia, Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, NSAs have participated and benefitted from a large array of community-oriented support initiatives through their respective Social Investment or Poverty Reduction Funds.
- The Dominica NSA with the support of the EU Delegation hosted the inaugural NSA Regional Summit bringing together the representatives from other NSA Panels from the Eastern Caribbean as well as a limited number of other NSA groups to discuss their respective experiences and the possibilities of regional networking.

The various NSA representatives of the Eastern Caribbean and beyond have set up a regional NSA platform to channel their initiatives and support their involvement in relation to EU cooperation at the CARICOM/CARIFORUM level. There is funding available for capacity building and NSA participation under the regional programme of the 10th European Development Fund.

CONTACT:

Delegation of the European Union to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean

Palm Beach Corporate Centre, Hastings, Christ Church, BB15156
Bridgetown Barbados, P.O. Box 654C
Tel: (246)434-8501 | Fax: (246)427-8687
Email: delegation-barbados@ec.europa.eu
Website: www.delbrb.ec.europa.eu

NSA representatives are in particular encouraged to contact the EU National Authorising Office of their respective country.

WHERE DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- Website for EU funding possibilities: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/funding/index_en.htm
- EuropeAid dialogue with civil society organisations:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/dialogue_en.htm
- The Cotonou Agreement. NSA user manual, ACP Secretariat.
http://www.acpsec.org/en/nsa/nsa_users_guide_en_rev1.pdf
- ACP Secretariat: <http://www.acpsec.org>