



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
DANIDA INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

STAR-Ghana Non-Grants Strategy

September, 2016

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Executive Summary (if applicable)

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Acronyms

1.0 Introduction

This document describes STAR-Ghana's approach to working with and supporting diverse partners, particularly those in the civil society sector, beyond the provision of grant funds. The non-grants strategy is a key component of the programme's overall Civil Society (CS) support framework and is complemented by a Grants strategy.

It lays out the programme's overall approach to CS support, including the key underpinning principles, focus areas for the first year of the implementation phase and processes for updating and keeping the strategy relevant to the context (internal and external) and the realities and issues of civil society in Ghana.

The strategy has been framed in broad terms at this stage of programme implementation, in line with the programme's approach of embedding political economy knowledge within its strategic programming activities and using this to feed systematically into an iterative process of design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. It will therefore be fleshed out in the early period of the implementation based on the findings of a planned CS political economy analysis (PEA) and continuously updated in subsequent years of implementation based on learning from practice and updated knowledge of the context.

2.0 Background

The Non-grants component of STAR-Ghana's CS support strategy is informed by a number of factors:

- a- A key lesson from the first phase of STAR-Ghana was the recognition that grant funding alone is insufficient to support CS actors undertake the kind of actions necessary to achieve transformative changes. The competitive nature of the grants process, the very short time period within which CSOs had to develop proposals and the short duration of the grant projects combined to limit the scope and levels of ambition of the strategy, a key component of STAR-Ghana's
- b- A key strategic shift in the second phase of STAR-Ghana is the move away from the tendency, during phase one, to equate civil society with NGOs and consequently tailor programme support to the needs and issues of this category of CSOs. STAR-Ghana phase two aims to take a much more inclusive understanding of the term. CSOs such as private sector and professional associations, trade unions, less formal citizen groups such as social movements and community organisations will be identified and supported. Learning from STAR-Ghana 1 indicates that for the private sector and professional associations in particular who raise significant amounts of funding from their membership, incentives for their involvement in advocacy around governance issues do not lie with grant funding. Similarly, community organisations and less formally organised citizen organisations require significant non-grants support to enable them develop the capabilities to participate actively in the processes of achieving transformational and inclusive national development.
- c- The donor funding environment in Ghana has changed significantly over the past 10 years and is currently characterised by both declining support for civil society voice and accountability actions and indications by a number of the country's major development partners to completely phase out support to CSOs working on governance initiatives. These developments require a response focusing on strengthening CS capabilities to sustain their organisations and the results of their strategic influencing.
- d- Link with transition to entity: positioning STAR as thought leader etc

3.0 Overall Approach:

The non-grants strategy is organised around STAR-Ghana's overall strategic approach, summarised as the 3Cs&L approach. The 3Cs&L encapsulate the programme's core mandate and function to act as Convener, Catalyst and Coordinator of civil society action towards systemic change and a facilitator of Learning to enable a more reflective and adaptive approach to programming..

The strategy will also focus on:

- Providing evidence, tools and innovative ways to support CS mobilise resources for its own actions. This will include facilitating access to evidence, links to other partners with evidence, and assistance in packaging and communicating evidence for the greatest impact. This will be complemented with 'technical' tools and mechanisms for interacting with government and other power-holders, as well as assistance to improve 'resourcefulness' through developing diversified funding sources and innovative ways of mobilising resources;
- Facilitating alliances, aided by the credibility of the STAR 'brand': Alliances are central to STAR2's collaborative approach for stimulating citizens' action. The programme will support formal and informal coalitions of change actors;
- Providing integrated capacity building support to partners: STAR-Ghana's capacity building strategy will combine support in strengthening partners' technical abilities with strengthening the ability to act politically. The capacity building support will also include the civil society sustainability workstream, started under the first phase of the programme, under which CSOs were supported to develop and implement action plans towards their longterm sustainability;
- Convening dialogue on critical and sensitive national issues: STAR-Ghana has developed a strong convening power, which has enabled it to bring together influential individuals in a way that previous donor-funded civil society initiatives had been unable to do. CSOs have often shied away from tackling sensitive national issues, no matter how critical these may be. The effect has been to limit their effectiveness. In such cases, the programme will actively create spaces for change or push through blocked issues.

4.0 Elements of the Non-Grants Strategy

The elements of the strategy outlined in the sections below are not stand-alone elements and should be seen as a menu of tools and approaches to be utilised by the programme alone or in combination, depending on the issues and circumstances, to achieve programme Outcome and Outputs.

4.1 Capacity Building Approach

Strengthening CS capacities to plan, manage, implement, and account for results and to sustain organisations is critical for achieving sustainable development objectives. Capacity building will therefore be at the heart of the programme's work with and support to its partners, particularly in the CS sector. In year one of the Implementation phase, the programme will build on the results and learning from the grant partner (GP) capacity building work undertaken in its first phase to develop and implement a holistic and integrated civil society strengthening strategy.

The overall objective of this strategy will be to support the strengthening of CSO's capabilities to achieve their mandates and objectives more effectively and sustainably and in the process contribute to achievement of the programme's Outcome and Outputs. The strategy will also seek to support CSO partners develop a culture of prioritising capabilities or continuous capacity strengthening which can be sustained beyond or without the stimulus of grants funding.

The Capacity strengthening strategy will build on a number of foundational strategies and studies, including:

- Gender Inclusion and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy;
- Foundational political economy analysis (PEA);
- PEA of Inclusion in Ghana;
- PEA of CS in Ghana;

The STAR-Ghana civil society capacity strengthening strategy will:

- Seek to situate support to CSOs within the wider context of the dynamics within each organisation's external environments. Context is important in organisational capacity strengthening as it determines the organisation's readiness and capacity for strengthening and is affected by the dynamics of its external environment;

- Adopt a systematic and comprehensive approach in which all stakeholders involved in the capacity building initiative are agreed on the outcome(s) intended by the support;
- Tailor and blend interventions (internal learning, peer support, external expertise), on the basis of a thorough diagnostic process;
- Deliver support through capable and trusted providers (which may include peers), to whole organisations;
- Keep an eye on sustaining the learning gained, through for example, cascade systems and communities of practice and learning.

Key elements of the strategy will include:

- Recognition of the role of STAR-Ghana as a facilitator and ownership of the objectives, processes and results by the partners. The objective is to support the development of capacity from within with STAR-Ghana and service providers acting as catalysts, facilitators, and brokers of knowledge and technique. The studies preceding the development of the strategy will explore how CSOs can best be encouraged and empowered to build their skills, knowledge and confidence (capabilities) as they seek to achieve their objectives and deliver outcomes for their constituencies more effectively and sustainably.
- Integrating monitoring of capacity development outcomes and impact into programme and partners' monitoring and evaluation systems;
- building on the lessons from STAR1, include assessments of partners' context and readiness to participate in the diagnostic process. This is critical if the capacity strengthening is to be successful and sustainable;
- seeking, through the CS PEA, to understand the complex factors in organisations that affect the effectiveness of capability building and reflect this understanding into the strategy;
- adopting an iterative approach, in line with the programme's approach to embedding PEA knowledge in all aspects of implementation, to ensure that the strategy responds to the dynamics and context of partners and reflect lessons learned;
- a reflection of the need for a tailored approach, recognising the unique characteristics and state of each organisation and the differing requirements for each stage of development;
- an approach that centres on active learning and accompaniment rather than formal training, and regular opportunities for learning.

4.2 Sustainability Workstream

The sustainability of civil society and civil society organisations has become a critical issue in the light of changing global, social, political and economic dynamics.

In Ghana, while the sector is growing, CSOs are generally fragile and dependent on donor funding mechanisms for survival. Questions are increasingly being raised, in the current environment of dwindling donor resources, as to whether the results achieved by CSOs in promoting more accountable and inclusive development can be sustained. The face of the sector is also changing, with the emergence and increasing effectiveness of citizen movements, organisations working in the virtual space and less formally organised citizen groups. These developments have created challenges and have implications for the effectiveness and sustainability of the sector, particular the segment dependent on external donor funding. Questions have been raised around the legitimacy and accountability of such organisations and these have implications for their effectiveness and sustainability.

To respond to the rapidly evolving context and remain relevant and effective, CSOs urgently need to review their structures, roles, responsibilities and relationships with communities, governments and funders to ensure their long-term sustainability. For STAR-Ghana, the issue of CSO effectiveness and sustainability is critical to the achievement of its Outcome and in particular for the success of the proposed independent national entity.

Under phase one of the programme, a CS Sustainability workstream was developed and implemented as a complement to its CB workstream. Thus while the CB workstream focused on strengthening

technical skills and knowledge of grant partners to implement their programme-funded projects, the Sustainability workstream aimed to support CSOs 'develop capacities which enable them to articulate issues relating to effective participation and voice of women, children, and excluded groups in the government business cycle'. The sustainability support, in the form of technical assistance and start-up funding will 'enable targeted organisations to achieve measurable step changes in their ability to bring about real change on behalf of and with their constituents; and achieve long term organisational sustainability'.

It is proposed to build on the lessons and results from the phase one pilot and take the workstream to scale in phase two.

A revised CS sustainability strategy will be developed, as a part of an overall civil society support framework, to support programme partners test models for their longterm organisational and financial sustainability. Lessons from these models will be documented and disseminated widely to inform practice of CSOs and CS support mechanisms and organisations.

The process for the development of the strategy, to be undertaken within the first half of Implementation Year 1, will involve:

- a- An evaluation of the STAR1 Sustainability workstream, to identify good practices and lessons;
- b- A CS PEA to gain a better understanding of the sector, its actors, their relationships, the dynamics influencing the behaviors of key actors and opportunities for STAR-Ghana support;
- c- Findings and recommendations from the Steering Committee's consultations with civil society actors on the planned transition of the programme into an independent national entity and on actions to enhance the effectiveness of the sector;
- d- A scoping study, to be led by SDD, which will pull together key inputs into a draft strategy which be validated by stakeholders and approved by the programme Steering Committee.

While the elements of the strategy will be developed through consultations with stakeholders as outlined above, it will include:

- Efforts to identify and support all segments of civil society, including NGOs, professional associations, community-based organisations, citizen/social movements and social media organisations;
- Target organisations of, or working with, excluded social groups, in line with the STAR-Ghana GESI strategy. These may be organisations which require particular models of support not being provided by current support mechanisms such as small CBOs, single identity groups, rural groups and volunteer-led organisations.
- The development and implementation of a civil society sustainability index as part of tools to gauge the continued existence and/or survival of CSOs. This element is based on recommendations from the End-of-Workstream review of the STAR-Ghana 1 Sustainability workstream. The CSSI will proffer criteria and indicators with which civil society can periodically measure their legitimacy, credibility, institutional strength and technical skills, influencing power, recognition and visibility among other important factors relevant to sustainability.
- Support for longterm organisational development of target partners;
- A complementarity between the sustainability support and support offered under the capacity strengthening workstream

4.3 Brokering Relationships

Weak relationships among CSOs and between CSOs and state actors have been identified in the DFID Business Case, the SC Design Framework and in the Foundational PEA as a critical constraint to achieving inclusive and sustainable development in Ghana. A central part of STAR2's theory of change is that individual citizens and civil society groups are more effective at driving change when working in alliances or coalitions

STAR-Ghana, as part of its 3Cs+L role, will build on its legitimacy with key development actors, to facilitate the development and strengthening of relationships among key stakeholders in order to develop the critical mass and evidence required to achieve sustainable developmental results.

Alliances: The programme will facilitate the development and strengthening of broad-based alliances of diverse CSOs, including citizen groups, private sector associations, trade unions and professional associations, around critical national issues such as anti-corruption, Right to Information and Constitutional Review. Using its Convenor and Catalyst roles as entry points for such alliance building, the programme will facilitate dialogue at various levels of governance around 'burning issues' to identify ways of supporting collective action.

Linking Local actions to strategic national influencing: The Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI) review of the STAR-Ghana¹ programme noted that the disconnect between the work of CSOs working at community and district levels and national level CSOs limited the potential impacts of work supported by STAR-Ghana, particularly in achieving strategic results. The programme will identify entry points, particularly through the CS and Inclusion PEAs, for linking community level voices and issues with strategic policy influencing actions of national CSOs and think tanks. In doing this, STAR-Ghana will be mindful of concerns raised by local level CSOs of their voices and issues being 'hijacked' by national organisations and of 'being used'. A study on how CBOs and other small CSOs could be reached and supported to be more effective was conducted by STAR-Ghana in the first phase. The findings and recommendations of this study will inform the development of detailed approaches to the brokering of these relationships.

Vertical partnerships among national level CSOs: Collaborations among national level CSOs, including think tanks, is not a common feature of the civil society landscape in Ghana. The reasons for this include the competition for funding and issues around 'egos and logos'. The absence of a trusted broker of such relationships has also contributed to this state of affairs. It must be acknowledged however that there are examples of donors facilitating purposive collaboration among national CSOs using grant funding as an incentive. The USAID-funded Northern Ghana Governance Activity for example, has brought together CARE Ghana, SEND, ActionAid Ghana and the West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP) to work on addressing the governance challenges to secure livelihoods in northern Ghana. These examples provide some lessons to guide the programme in brokering strategic level collaborations, formal and informal, for greater impact.

Civil Society and Parliament: STAR-Ghana, in its previous phase, was quite successful in piloting approaches to linking civil society with Parliament, particularly at the committees level. The lessons from these pilots will be reviewed in the light of the programme's focus and Outcome and applied in brokering relationships which enable greater citizen voice in the work of Parliament.

Strategic Partnerships: STAR-Ghana will identify organisations, with legitimacy and demonstrated competence on particular issues identified in the PEA, with whom it can enter into long term strategic partnerships. While this may involve the provision of grants to pilot approaches to addressing a problem or providing strategic leadership for coordinated civil society work on an issue, the focus of the relationship will be on a co-creation and ownership of an action to address a strategic issue. The process of identifying strategic partners will be developed in the programme's partnerships strategy, which be based on the findings of the CS and Inclusion PEAs.

4.4 Knowledge Brokering

This is aligned with the 'L' in STAR-Ghana's 3Cs+L approach. The programme's Communities of Practice and Learning (CoPL) strategy paper details how STAR-Ghana will facilitate knowledge sharing as a means of catalysing civil society actions.

4.5 Facilitating/strengthening spaces for dialogue and engagements

STAR-Ghana will act as a trusted and honest broker to bring together diverse partnerships of citizens, civil society organisations (both formal and informal), media, faith-based groups, private sector, and

executive/state institutions. This will help to surmount the barriers that have prevented collective action on key issues in Ghana's development.

As a first step, an inventory of spaces (formal and informal) focusing on the priority issues the programme's partners are working on will be conducted. These spaces will be assessed in terms of their effectiveness in promoting dialogue and action on the issues and their accessibility to citizens, particularly GESI groups. Based on the findings of the assessments, the programme will work with partners to address the challenges to the accessibility and effectiveness of these spaces.

Where there are no spaces for dialogue and action on an issue considered important and strategic by the programme and its partners, STAR-Ghana may support the creation or development of bespoke spaces on particular issues or areas of work.

5.0 Next steps:

The key next steps in taking forward the strategy are as follows:

- a- Conduct the CS and Inclusion PEAs as critical input in the detailing of the strategy;
- b- Development of an overall CS Support Framework, under which will be:
 - i. Capacity Strengthening Strategy;
 - ii. CS Sustainability Strategy;
 - iii. Partnerships Strategy
- c- Development of Framework for 3Cs+L Approach;
- d- Annual review of the non-grants strategy with the Technical Approach Paper (TAP)