



**Commonwealth
Foundation**

Civil Society Engagement Strategy

September 2013

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Acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPoA	Barbados Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CF	Commonwealth Foundation
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECOWAS	Economic Council of West African States
IGO	Intergovernmental Organisation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Countries
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organisation
SIDS	Small Island Developing States

Executive Summary

The fundamental purpose of this Civil Society Engagement Strategy is to provide the Foundation with a framework for both empowering and engaging civil society and achieve its ultimate outcome of *more effective, responsive and accountable governance in the Commonwealth with civil society participation*. It aims to focus on the need for strengthening its mechanisms for innovative relationships and coordination with CSOs. The strategy articulates how the Commonwealth Foundation engages with civil society as it implements the Strategic Plan of 2012 to 2016 towards innovative relationships with civil society actors. It will guide the Foundation's working relationships upon which are built a shared understanding of expected results and change processes.

The Strategy is primarily meant for the Foundation's use but if appropriate, other intergovernmental agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors and interested stakeholders in the Commonwealth may be able to use the Strategy.

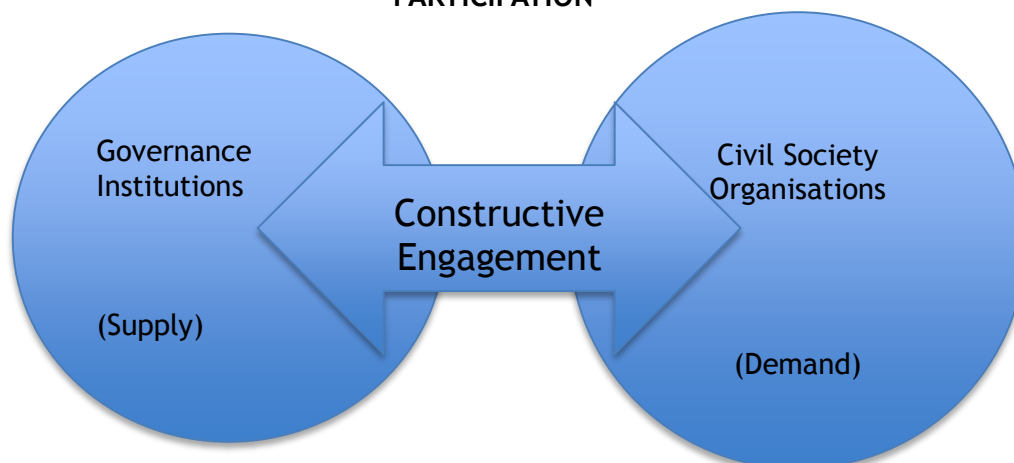
The Strategy is a living document that will continue to evolve, sharpen and adjust as it is applied in the work of the Foundation. It will benefit from the ongoing dialogue with various partners and the wealth of learning coming from the field.

Aligned with global commitments to development effectiveness and guided by its principles of engagement and core values, the Engagement Strategy takes on a longer-term perspective, building capacity, strengthening the enabling environment for participatory governance and policy change and applying an integrated, holistic approach. It underscores a systematic and synergistic approach to monitoring, learning and sharing of best practice. This Strategy is premised on the *theory of change* that by having a stronger and more organised voice, increased capacities in policy and advocacy, with clearer messages, and sustained opportunities to work collaboratively with governance institutions, civil society will be better able to participate more effectively in governance processes and address the challenges faced in their operating environment.

The following diagram shows the Foundation's three core action areas of constructive engagement:

CSO-Governance Constructive Engagement Areas and Approaches

MORE EFFECTIVE, RESPONSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION



Strategic Constructive Engagement Areas

1. Capacity Development to strengthen supply and demand (cultural dimension, policy development and advocacy)
2. Enhancing of platforms and spaces for engagement (regional and pan-Commonwealth)
3. Good practices, Sharing, Knowledge Management

Strategic Constructive Engagement Areas	Approaches
1. Capacity Development	Knowledge, attitude and skills building in key areas of need
	Sub-regional and regional network strengthening
	South-South Co-operation
2. Enhancement of engagement platforms and spaces	Improve the access and utilization of existing strategic sub-regional and regional platforms
	Apply the knowledge, attitudes and new skills learned following a learning-by-doing approach
	Provide Technical Assistance to select government ministries in CSO engagement
3. Replication of Good Practices and Knowledge Management	Promoting knowledge sharing and learning among CSOs and governance institution
	Documenting and disseminating knowledge resources, lessons learned and success stories
	Replicating good and fit practices in participatory governance
	Maximising communications and technology to enable meaningful learning and performance on participatory governance

1.0 Background

1.1 Rationale

Emerging Trends in the Development and Political Environment

Over the past two decades, civil society participation has become recognised as critical to national ownership of development processes, democratic governance, and the quality and relevance of official development programmes.

Civic engagement is a basic component of democratic governance. Civil society can be a powerful force and is important to the strengthening of responsive governing institutions and practices - in demanding more accountability, transparency, participation and effective governance, democratization of development co-operation, and the quality and relevance of official development programmes. Millions of civil society organisations (CSOs) worldwide contribute in unique and essential ways to development as innovative agents of change and social transformation¹. The varied roles of CSOs have emerged over the years - they support grassroots experiences of people engaged in their own development efforts; build capacity and advocate for and with the poor; innovate in service delivery; are both donors and practitioners of development; promote development knowledge and innovation; work to deepen global awareness and solidarity among people across national boundaries and push for inclusive policy dialogue with governments and donors to work together for common development goals.

Democratic governance is a key driver of development. Democracy is directly linked to the concept of governance². There is consensus that barriers to development problems are linked to failures in governance and that, “poor governance reinforces poverty for the poorest and most marginalised”³. If the institutions do not work properly, the vulnerable and poor members of society are the first to suffer. Hence the efficiency and responsiveness of governance and public institutions are increasingly the focus of thought and work in human development. An active civil society that is able to question public authorities and suggest different methods of political participation is a cornerstone of democratic governance. However, democratic governance also requires⁴:

- The practice of elections and being able to hold the elected official accountable
- A legislature which represents the people,
- An independent judiciary that is able to uphold the rule of law in a non-discriminatory way for all citizens,

¹ Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, The Siem Reap CSO Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, Second Global Assembly, Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, Siem Reap, Cambodia, June 28-30, 2011

² Belgian Development Co-operation, Democratic Governance the Key to Development, online at <http://www.btcctb.org/en/thematic-brochures>

³ J. Leavy and J. Howard, 2013, What matters most? Evidence from 84 participatory studies with those living with extreme poverty and marginalisation, Participate, Institute of Development Studies, p25

⁴ Belgian Development Cooperation, Democratic Governance the Key to Development, online at http://www.btcctb.org/files/web/publication/Democratic_governance_The_key_to_development.pdf

- Professional and politically neutral security forces that act in the interest of the common good,
- An accessible media, which are free, independent and unbiased.

While there is no one defined method or rulebook for pursuing inclusive and democratic governance, each country defines its own unique process based on its values, standards, history, local realities and by learning from the experience of other countries.

Civil society in a Global Context

The distinctive rise of shared governance is a political development of recent decades where the participation of non-state actors (particularly CSOs) in global policy making has increased significantly. Our growing interconnected and interdependent world is characterized by increasing economic globalization, facility of information and communication technology and expanding mobility. Recent moves towards government decentralisation, with greater decision making power and finance provided at local levels, have built upon and often extended the scope for CSOs to influence policy at the local level. Decentralisation and devolution have increased citizen participation and promoted civil society activity as people have responded to opportunities to influence decisions that affect their lives.⁵ Meaningful public participation in decision-making, implicit in which are strong civic capacities and a healthy associational life, is a foundation of social stability and peace. As we collectively tackle the challenges of poverty and social inequality, food and energy insecurity, peace and security, economic crises and climate change, new forms of co-operation transcending national and sectoral borders are necessary and the impact of CSOs in the local, regional global governance dialogues cannot be underestimated.

Why a CSO Engagement Strategy

The need for this CSO Engagement Strategy is in line with the Commonwealth Foundation's efforts to more effectively undertake its mandate in a changing global society and pursue its vision of a world where every person is able to fully participate and contribute to the sustainable development of a peaceful and equitable society. There are several compelling reasons for the Foundation to strengthen its partnership with CSOs and scale up activities to promote civic engagement and fulfill its mandate more meaningfully:

1. It will better equip the Foundation to strategically utilise its unique position as an Intergovernmental Organisation (IGO) and a development organisation, and recognised convenor of multiple stakeholders in the Commonwealth
2. It will improve understanding of the role of civic engagement in development and how to better engage civil society
3. It will strengthen the Foundation's developmental focus and enhance its analytical capacities by scanning and reflecting updated civil society perspectives in the Commonwealth IGO environment
4. It will enable the tapping of civil society and their network of knowledge and expertise throughout the Commonwealth for creative partnerships and

⁵ Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can be More Effective, ODI, RAPID. 2006. Online at <http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID>

- improve the sustainability of development results, particularly during times of global economic crises and donor cutbacks
5. It will enrich the knowledge base on participatory governance through strengthened reporting and documentation of good practices

From a civil society perspective, partnering with the Foundation offers several competitive advantages:

1. Access to high level ministerial policy-making processes and strategic platforms in the Commonwealth
2. Convening capacity to support innovative partnerships with influential organisations (for policy advocacy, resourcing initiatives and scaling-up impact and facilitating co-operation rather than competition)
3. Relationship of trust with Commonwealth nation governments
4. Wide reach into 54 Commonwealth countries and access to multiple stakeholders including governments, civil society, donors and other development actors
5. Support for participatory governance opportunities at different levels - national, regional, pan-Commonwealth, global
6. Ability to serve as a learning platform and provider of technical support
7. Opportunities for South-South co-operation among civil society and governments
8. North-South partnerships and South-South exchanges to compare notes, exchange lessons and bring southern voices to bear on global issues

The strategy articulates how the Commonwealth Foundation engages with civil society as it implements the Strategic Plan of 2012 to 2016 towards innovative relationships with civil society actors.

1.2 Structure of the Document

This Engagement Strategy is divided into nine sections. The first section presents the rationale of the CSO Engagement Strategy, makes a case for the strategy, and explains who are the intended users of the Strategy, its purpose and objectives. The second and third sections provide a brief on the Foundation including a definition of participatory governance and an overview of the strategic plan. Section four describes the process to develop the Strategy. Section five provides an extensive discussion of the international principles of development co-operation that the Strategy aligns with. Section six discusses the Strategy's principles of engagement. Section seven presents the core areas of constructive engagement and a brief segment on new strategic opportunities. Section eight and nine contain the reference sources and the annexes.

1.3 Who are the users of the Strategy

The Foundation is optimising its convening advantage and unique position as an intergovernmental agency with a mandate to strengthen and mobilise civil society in support of Commonwealth principles and priorities. It recognises the importance of enabling CSOs to contribute to improving and sustaining development outcomes by engaging in participatory governance. Although the Foundation's thrust is on the demand side (CSOs and citizens) of governance, its strategic priorities also address the supply side (state institutions and structures), and the interaction between the

two. This document offers a framework of assistance to maximise the Foundation's engagement with civil society to achieve its objectives.

The Strategy is primarily meant for the Foundation's use but if appropriate, other intergovernmental agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors and other interested stakeholders in the Commonwealth may be able to use the Strategy.

1.4 Objectives of the Strategy

The overarching purpose of the CSO Engagement Strategy is to provide the Foundation with a framework for both empowering and engaging civil society and achieve its ultimate outcome of more effective, responsive and accountable governance in the Commonwealth with civil society participation. It seeks to focus on the need for strengthening its mechanisms for innovative relationships and coordination with CSOs. Specifically, the strategy aims to:

1. Strengthen the design and implementation of initiatives that will enhance collaboration and learning between CSOs and governance institutions
2. Provide operational guidance to staff as it animates and expands its strategic plan and annual workplans
3. Build cooperative modalities to promote constructive engagement between CSOs/Networks and governance institutions that will arrive at sustainable results
4. Promote staff interactions with CSOs/Networks, governance institutions and partners in a way that enhances the Foundation's work and contributes to the effectiveness of support to CSOs
5. Assist the Foundation in developing performance measures to facilitate the tracking of progress towards achieving results.

2.0 The Commonwealth Foundation

2.1 Why CSOs in Governance

Commonwealth leaders recognised the value that the efforts and endeavours of people acting outside the realm of government bring to the Commonwealth. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Port of Spain in 2009, Heads of Government pledged to the reform of Commonwealth institutions and in 2011 committed to promote the future of the Commonwealth through the strong and important voice of its people, with a revised mandate for the Foundation to more effectively deliver the objectives of strengthening and mobilising civil society in support of Commonwealth principles and priorities. Furthermore, the Commonwealth Charter Clause 16 recognises the important role that civil society plays in our communities and countries as partners in promoting and supporting Commonwealth values and principles, including the freedom of association and peaceful assembly and in achieving development goals⁶.

This Strategy is premised on the *theory of change* that by having a stronger and more organised voice, increased capacities in policy and advocacy, with clearer messages, and sustained opportunities to work collaboratively with governance institutions, civil society will be better able to participate more effectively in governance processes and address the challenges faced in their operating environment.

2.2 Mandate, Vision and Mission

The Commonwealth Foundation is a development organisation with an international responsibility and reach and has a mandate to work with civil society organisations to promote a shared Commonwealth identity and principles of governance and democracy. An intergovernmental organisation, the Foundation recognises it is uniquely situated at the interface between government and civil society and intends to optimise this distinction by focusing on participatory governance and developing the capacity of civil society to act together and learn from each other to engage with the institutions that shape people's lives.

2.3 Defining Participatory Governance

Governance encompasses the rules, institutions and processes, through which people, organisations and government work toward common objectives, make decisions, generate legitimate authority and power and promote and protect human rights.⁷ *Participatory* governance is about how the state, the market and civil society interact to effect change. These interactions involve the inclusion of civil society in decision-making processes, enabling citizens to exercise voice and vote and engaging in policy formation among others. An active civil society that is able to question public authorities and suggest different methods of political

⁶ The Commonwealth Charter, March 2013. Online at <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk>

⁷ Governance (Overview), Canadian International Development Agency, December 2010. Online at <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca>>key development challenges>governance>overview

participation is a cornerstone of democracy and good governance, both of which are hallmarks of the Commonwealth. Democratic governance is more than simply a matter of “universal suffrage” and while “development and democracy are goals in their own right, they must be mutually reinforcing, with a clear “democratic dividend “in terms of delivering tangible benefits to people.⁸ The Heads of Government committed themselves to making democracy work better for pro-poor development by implementing sustainable development while building democracy. So, although democracy and development can progress separately, the Commonwealth believes that they are mutually reinforcing. It is impossible to attain either in isolation.

⁸ 2003 Abuja CHOGM Communique Aso Rock Commonwealth Declaration on Development and Democracy : Partnership for Peace and Prosperity, 2003. Online at <http://thecommonwealth.org>

3.0 Overview of the CF Strategic Plan

Through its strategic planning process for the period 2012-2016, the Foundation has identified as its ultimate outcome, a more effective, responsive and accountable governance with civil society participation. In support of this ultimate goal, one intermediate outcome was identified as the main focus of the Foundation, recognising its unique position as well as limited resources, namely; *Enhanced collaboration and learning between CSOs and institutions in governance*. Four short-term intermediate outcomes were then identified to further illustrate the Foundation's theory of change and guide the development of specific activities so that they clearly link to the intermediate outcome. These built on the strengths and competitive advantages articulated during recent regional consultations as well as the renewed focus of the Foundation

- Outcome Area 1: Strengthened ability of CSOs to use creative expression for Participatory Governance
- Outcome Area 2: Enhanced capacity of regional CSOs and networks/alliances to engage in participatory governance
- Outcome Area 3: Enhanced interaction between regional CSOs and networks/alliances and institutions in governance
- Outcome Area 4: Enhanced knowledge management for more effective Participatory Governance

The Foundation's logic model is included in Annex 1 of the Strategy.

The Foundation's work is also guided by four values which recognise core aspects of the Commonwealth: its *diversity* being its centremost strength, the importance of *collaboration*, *integrity* and *ingenuity* to solidify its competitive edge. Three cross-cutting outcome areas are mainstreamed in the design and implementation of the Foundation's programming. The themes are *gender equality*, *environmental sustainability* and *cultural respect and understanding*. A full copy of the Foundation's Strategic Plan (2012-2016) is included in Annex 2.

4.0 Process to Develop the Strategy

This CSO Engagement Strategy was developed through an intensive six-month process of review and regional scoping. Seven regional consultation initiatives were organised across the Commonwealth: three full regional consultation workshops held in the Americas, Asia and Europe, three more deliberate processes in the sub-regional areas of Western Africa, Eastern Africa and South Africa and one separate consultation for the Pacific. Five of the seven regional consultations are now completed and the remaining two, Europe and the Pacific, will take place in October 2013. The main objectives of this consultation process were to update the Foundation's knowledge of CSOs particularly those in the Global South along with their strengths and areas of weakness particularly in terms of participatory governance, learn about their focus areas of concern in policy and governance and to hear their perceptions of and suggestions for the Foundation.

The CSO Engagement Strategy is based on the input and recommendations from these regional consultations as well as a review of secondary literature and various interviews and meetings with key stakeholders. The experiences, lessons and new development opportunities of other partners have greatly informed this Strategy. Consistent with a belief in not reinventing the wheel and replicating best practices, it builds upon various studies and the good practices and experiences of other donors as explained in the 2012 Aid Watch Canada Briefing Paper #2, the 2012 UNDP Global Strategy to Strengthen Civil Society and Civic Engagement, the AusAid Civil Society Engagement Strategy as well as key documents that provide a civil society perspective of development effectiveness, particularly the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness results. Other reference materials are listed in Section 8.

4.1 Findings and Recommendations from the Regional Consultations

The findings and recommendations from the wider range of stakeholders and the regional consultations process sponsored by the Foundation confirmed preliminary assumptions, provided critical updated information on their own respective regional situations and affirmed the Foundation's efforts to develop this Engagement Strategy. Initial findings and recommendations gathered can be summarized in the following twelve opportunities and challenges.

- a) The consultations have affirmed the Foundation in a unique position as an IGO and development organisation with a mandate to strengthen and mobilise civil society that can:
 - Open doors to governance institutions and help to bridge divides within civil society
 - Provide access to spaces that can generate various forms of interaction among citizens, and between citizens and government officials
 - Convene stakeholders and bring diverse sectors together
- b) The Foundation's concentration on participatory governance has opened up a relevant strategic direction that is at the heart of development effectiveness and resonates with Commonwealth democratic principles and values.

- c) Overall, the Commonwealth has a relatively low profile. However there is growing recognition among partners that the Foundation is becoming an influential resource. For example, the Foundation's success with its project on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda has enhanced the profile of the organisation and raised interest in joint sponsorship.
- d) There is initial interest among select government institutions to seek capacity development in participatory governance and this is one area to pursue together with civil society counterparts.
- e) The Foundation has made a mark and achieved a certain degree of visibility and niche status in its work in culture. Culture is recognised as an enabler of participatory governance and sustainable development.
- f) Thirty-two of the 54 Commonwealth member countries are designated as Small States. There is a strong potential for the Foundation to focus some of its work on these states in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, which has also pinpointed this as an area of concern.
- g) Regional and sub-regional civil society platforms currently exist in the Commonwealth. Whilst their capacity and readiness is uneven, they are potential entry points on which to anchor the programming efforts of the Foundation. There are also regional civil society - government structures throughout the Commonwealth that similarly offer potential platforms with which to work with CSOs and governments, and collaborate to achieve a common vision.
- h) The discussion and reflection within the Foundation regarding participatory governance is a relevant one within the civil society sector - the meaning of genuine consultation and citizen's engagement and voices continues to be debated. There is an articulated need in all regions scoped so far for CSO partners to engage in a process that will further develop a regional development agenda, with an accompanying policy advocacy action plan. This is particularly timely due to the post-2015 development agenda process.
- i) CSOs are engaged in governance across the different regions in a variety of methods from mass protest and activism to participation in service delivery, capacity builder, watch-dog monitoring and policy development with differing levels of success. Feedback received pointed to the need for building CSO capacities particularly in joint agenda setting, policy development and advocacy strategy development and implementation.
- j) Furthermore whilst there was recognition of the importance of broad-based collaboration and networks and at a regional, south-south, pan-Commonwealth and global levels, one challenge identified time and again was the ability to sustain momentum and a sense of community of practice, and of continuing to share the currents of mutual inspiration between participatory governance movements in different contexts - developed and developing country, small state, fragile state or at a national, sub-regional, regional, pan-Commonwealth or global level.

- k) Civil society is dynamic, vibrant and can be influential but the legal and policy environment for their full operations and engagement is greatly uneven across the Commonwealth and governments in numerous countries are restricting the space for civil society.
- l) The Foundation belongs to a Commonwealth family of three, in particular: the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth of Learning and the Commonwealth Foundation, each with specific but complementary roles and functions towards a common vision. There is a clear and urgent opportunity for these three sister organisations to more systematically and synergistically collaborate, share results, lessons and strategies to maximise particular areas of expertise and limited resources and improve long-term results and impact.

5.0 International Principles of Development Co-operation

This Engagement Strategy adheres to several sets of basic principles, already globally affirmed and with a particular focus on aid effectiveness, governance and CSOs. These are the Rome and the Paris Declarations for Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action that together helped transform aid relationships between donors and partners into “true vehicles for development co-operation”⁹. The Istanbul Principles and International Framework for Development Effectiveness, also internationally recognized, are the result of CSO analysis on what it believes are necessary to achieve development effectiveness for governments, donors and civil society. The Critical Enabling Conditions by Donors for CSO Development Effectiveness provide valuable insights on the circumstances needed to facilitate an engaged and effective civil society.

5.1 Principles of Aid Effectiveness

First is the set of principles for effective aid, now confirmed by over 100 countries as the blueprint for maximising the impact of aid. They are rooted in continuous efforts to improve the delivery of aid and marked by four important High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness, each one with increasing participation from CSOs.

Rome Declaration for Aid Effectiveness (2003), resulting in three priority actions:

- a) Development assistance be delivered based on priorities and timing of the country receiving it
- b) Donor efforts concentrate on delegating co-operation and increasing staff flexibility
- c) Good practice be encouraged and monitored

Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness (2005), where donors and recipients both agreed to commitments and to hold each other accountable for them. Taking the Rome Declaration further, five fundamental principles were agreed on in the Paris Declaration:

- a) Ownership - developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improving their institutions and tackling corruption
- b) Alignment - donor countries align behind these country strategies and use local systems
- c) Harmonisation - donor countries coordinate, simplify and share information to avoid duplication
- d) Results - Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and measuring them
- e) Mutual Accountability - donors and partners are accountable for developing results.

Accra Agenda for Action (2008), where civil society were recognised as development actors in their own right, broadening the stakeholders in the aid effectiveness agenda and the need to deepen and accelerate implementation of the 2005 targets were agreed on:

⁹ OECD-DAC website at

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/fourthhighlevelforumonaideffectiveness>

- a) Improvements in the areas of ownership, partnerships and delivering results
- b) Capacity Development also lies at the heart of the Accra Agenda for Action

Busan Fourth High Level Forum (2011), acknowledged democratic ownership as a key tenet of development effectiveness, strengthened commitments to transparency and accountability, gave significant references to human rights standards for the principles guiding development effectiveness and acknowledged the **Istanbul Principles and the International Framework** to achieve development effectiveness. More than 150 countries and 45 international organisations agreed in Busan, on the need to form a new inclusive forum with a greater variety of stakeholders in order to ensure that development co-operation has the maximum possible impact on development results: The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation¹⁰. Supported by the UNDP and OECD, this new, inclusive forum works to foster engagement, communication and knowledge sharing among the many different development actors and to maintain political support for the commitments reached in Busan.

5.2 Principles of CSO Development Effectiveness

From a civil society standpoint, the Istanbul Principles and International Framework represent the results of a CSO-led analysis and consensus on what civil society believes is necessary to achieve development effectiveness both for governments and donors as well as CSOs themselves. They are statements of values and qualities that should inform CSO socio-economic, political, and organisational relationships. These milestones have deepened CSO legitimacy and credibility and illustrate a serious and deep process reflecting on CSO development practices and accountability. That they have been officially recognised by governments, international and multi-lateral organisations has given global legitimacy and has proven an authenticity to the notion of CSOs as “development actors in their own right”¹¹.

The Foundation’s Engagement Strategy acknowledges and is further guided by the **Istanbul Principles for CSO Effectiveness** and the International Framework to implement them¹² and the decades of ground-level experience by thousands of CSOs around the world it represents:

- a) Respect and promote human rights and social justice
- b) Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women's and girls' rights
- c) Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation
- d) Promote environmental sustainability
- e) Promote transparency and accountability
- f) Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity
- g) Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning
- h) Commit to realising positive sustainable change

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Better Aid/Open Forum, “CSOs on the Road from Accra to Busan: CSO Initiatives to Strengthen Development Effectiveness”, Brian Tomlinson (AidWatch), June 2012. Online at <http://www.cso-effectiveness>

¹² See full copy of the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and International Framework in Annex 3. The Toolkit for Implementation of the Istanbul Principles is an accompanying resource and can be accessed online at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org>

While not new, these principles form the basis for accountability standards that CSOs have committed to uphold in their own work. On the other hand, the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness provides guidance to the implementation and achievement of effective aid.

As reflected in the International Framework, the CSO Engagement Strategy supports the **critical enabling conditions needed by donors from government for CSO development effectiveness**¹³:

- a) That all governments fulfill obligations to fundamental human rights that enable people to organise and participate in development
- b) Recognition by governments, donors and other stakeholders of CSOs as development actors in their own right
- c) Structuring democratic political and policy dialogue to improve development effectiveness. Key conditions include:
- d) Systematic inclusion of diverse views, particularly from grassroots based social organisations, women's organisations and indigenous peoples' representatives in governance discussions.
- e) Transparency and clarity of purpose and process
- f) Freedom to access information
- g) Timeliness in order to impact decisions
- h) Being accountable to their constituencies for transparent and consistent policies
- i) Creating enabling, financing for CSO development effectiveness. These funding modalities should focus on:
 - A long term results-oriented perspective
 - Core institutional funding, based on the notion that CSOs provide public goods
 - A responsiveness to CSO initiatives
 - Access for a diversity of CSOs
 - Predictable, transparent, understandable, harmonised terms
 - Promoting mobilization of local resources
 - Supporting the full range of CSO programming and innovations, including policy development and advocacy.

Furthermore, the Foundation is also learning from the good practices of other donors - bilateral and multilateral - to engage with civil society, specifically from the twelve lessons compiled by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) "based on evidence and experience, identifying common ground and action, while respecting the distinctive objectives and roles of official donors and CSOs." The lessons are summed up in response to a survey of DAC members on "How members work with CSOs" and relevant commentary in DAC peer reviews and the outcomes of a 2011 workshop involving representatives from northern and southern CSOs and DAC members on "What makes for good co-operation between DAC members and CSOs"¹⁴. The **Twelve Lessons** focus on important conditions for an enabling CSO environment and set the stage for policy dialogues between CSOs and donors at many levels - global, national; in the donor and in the developing countries. These

¹³ Excerpt from the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, The Siem Reap Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, June 2011. Online at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/InternationalFramework>

¹⁴ Brian Atwood. Twelve Lessons, OECD online at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/peerreviewofdacmembers/lessonsonpeerreviews.html>

should be understood alongside the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness conditions listed on page 19 of this Strategy paper.

DAC's Twelve Lessons on Partnering with Civil Society¹⁵

The Strategic Framework for CSO Partnerships:

Lesson One: Have an evidence-based, overarching civil society policy.

Lesson Two: Strengthen civil society in developing countries.

Lesson Three: Promote and support public awareness raising.

Lesson Four: Choose partners to meet objectives.

Lesson Five: Make policy dialogue meaningful.

Delivering Effective Support for Civil Society:

Lesson Six: Respect independence while giving direction.

Lesson Seven: Match funding mechanism with purpose.

Lesson Eight: Minimise transaction costs.

Lesson Nine: Build strong partnerships with humanitarian NGOs.

Focusing on Learning and Accountability:

Lesson Ten: Focus on results and learning.

Lesson Eleven: Increase transparency and accountability.

Lesson Twelve: Commission evaluations for learning and accountability

However, in the briefing paper “Good Practice in Donor Engagement with Civil Society: Creating and Enabling Environment for CSOs? A Commentary on Partnering with Civil Society: Twelve Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews”, Aid Watch Canada notes that while these lessons will facilitate ongoing CSO dialogue regarding the implementation of Busan commitments to ensure an enabling environment for CSOs, more direct guidance on key directions for donor overarching policies is needed to result in a strategic focus on the policy orientations for good practice. Drawing from the various lessons, they conclude that all donor policies and strategies on civil society partnerships should explicitly address the following principles and approaches, adapted to donor country conditions and contexts¹⁶. These reflections and lessons are helpful for the Foundation as it reviews its strategic context and formulates its framework for working with civil society.

1. Empowering citizens through CSOs - focus on citizens participating and take up democratic ownership as a pillar for effective development (Lesson 2). Encouraging an engaged citizenry in donor countries is also essential (Lesson 3)

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Good Practice in Donor Engagement with Civil Society: Creating and Enabling Environment for CSOs? A Commentary on Partnering with Civil Society: Twelve Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews, Aid Watch Canada, November 2012. Online at http://cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/briefing_paper_2_dac_twelve_lessons.pdf

2. CSOs as development actors in their own rights, who play a vital role in enabling people to claim their rights, and promote rights-based approaches (Lesson 2, 7)
3. Strategic, informed and inclusive approaches to partnerships - develop a deliberate strategic approach to CS partnerships fully informed about the context and CSOs roles in development in all their dimensions. Strategic objectives should drive the support and choice of partners and not donor funding mechanisms (Lesson 4 and 9)
4. Transparent and regular policy dialogue - helps identify common ground for collaboration and paves way for achieving results (Lesson 5)
5. Balance partner conditions in ways that strengthen CSO independence - CSOs should be independent to pursue priorities which may not align with their respective governments' or donor's preferences (Lesson 7 and 8)
6. Funding modalities with flexibility tailored to the diversity of CSOs and CSO "right of initiative"- strive to increase the share of core funding to strengthen CSO ownership with a mix of funding mechanisms tied to donor strategic directions for CSO partnerships. (Lesson 7 and 8)
7. Reducing transaction costs - develop more strategic, standardized and streamlined approaches (Lesson 8)
8. Address the humanitarian/development continuum in donor CSO policies - mechanisms should not only focus on immediate emergence response but also address a continuum of interventions leading to longer-term development outcomes.
9. Accountability to longer-term development results - ensure that reporting required focuses on development results (rather than inputs) and learning (Lesson 10 and 12)
10. Improve transparency - make transparency the foundation for accountability, including transparency of the donors
11. In addition to these directions set out in the Twelve Lessons, three other areas were identified as missing from the Twelve Lessons and would be valuable for donor policies and strategies to consider:
 - to have greater reflection on donor and CSO partnerships, explicitly addressing the real contributions and current challenges in INGO and regional/ national CSO partnerships in development and in CSO strengthening in developing countries
 - to more explicitly take into account in donor modalities of support and policy dialogue CSO 'watch-dog' roles in both developing and donor countries
 - to address in donor policies and strategies the implications of the recognition in Busan that CSOs "play a vital role in enabling people to claim their rights and in promoting rights-based approaches".

5.3 Small States

Specific to the Commonwealth Foundation, there are refinements to the Istanbul Declaration that need to be further considered for small and vulnerable states. The Commonwealth Foundation has a special interest in responding to the needs and concerns in development policy and practice for CSOs in Small States, since the majority of Commonwealth member countries are small. Thirty-two of the 54 Commonwealth nations are designated Small States, including both island states as well as several larger countries that share the same characteristics as Small States.

Small States are sovereign countries with a population of 1.5 million people or less. There are 32 Commonwealth Small States. With limited resources, they face many challenges. Some larger countries - Botswana, Jamaica, The Gambia, Lesotho, Namibia and Papua New Guinea - are classified as Small States as they share similar characteristics: decline in global trade and investment, lack of readily available information for investors, trading partners and capacity to harness growth opportunities¹⁷.

These Small States are confronted with many problems and difficulties some intrinsic and timeless while others new, in making progress towards sustainable development and sustainable island living. However, small island societies have a record of thriving in challenging times. Their long histories are rooted in new and innovative approaches, societal mobilization and technological adaptation.¹⁸

There is a need for international engagement efforts that bring together governments, civil society, regional bodies and international organisations to focus on the effective implementation of the 2005 Mauritius Strategy for Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The Mauritius Strategy reaffirmed the continued validity of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) as the “blueprint providing the fundamental framework for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States”.¹⁹ It stressed that the acknowledged vulnerability of such states will grow unless urgent steps are taken, and reaffirms the international community’s commitment to support the efforts of Small States to the full and effective implementation of the BPoA.

The Mauritius Strategy highlighted several new priorities and emerging issues now considered important dimensions of sustainable development in SIDS. Particular attention is being given to marginalised dimensions such as culture, youth and outer islands. It emphasized the agreed “special case in sustainable development” of Small States due to the critical impacts of climate change and natural disasters and highlights the need to develop and strengthen effective disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, emergency relief, and rehabilitation and reconstruction capacities in these nations. The Mauritius Strategy also commits to full implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and to further promotion of international co-operation on climate change.

Another consideration for the Foundation is being mindful of the need for a different form of engagement with fragile states and situations. This has already been understood by international organisations as demonstrated in the 2011 New Deal for Engagement in fragile states and international partners to 1) “do things differently”- by designing and implementing their interventions with an even greater consideration for the specific characteristics of fragile states; and, further,

¹⁷ The Commonwealth Secretariat website. <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/our-work/small-states>

¹⁸ UNESCO website. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/sids/>

¹⁹ Ibid

2) focus on “different things”- by structuring their interventions around peacebuilding and statebuilding goals²⁰.

Embodied in the 2007 Policy Commitment and a set of principles for good international engagement in fragile states, the long-term vision for international engagement in fragile states is to work with local reformers to build legitimate, effective and resilient state institutions.²¹ The adoption of the shared principles can help maximise the positive impact of engagement and minimise unintentional harm by harnessing international support and pressure. Progress towards this vision requires collective action within and among governments and organisations. Therefore, if the Foundation is to work with these fragile nations, it will be important to adhere to these principles²²:

- Take context as the starting point
- Ensure all activities do no harm
- Focus on state-building as the central objective
- Prioritise prevention
- Recognise the links between, political, security and development objectives
- Promote non discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies
- Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts
- Agree on practical co-ordination mechanisms between international actors
- Act fast...but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance
- Avoid pockets of exclusion (“aid orphans”)

Moreover, it is important for the Commonwealth Foundation to start from these specific declarations and commitments that are based on considerable study, analysis and consensus building. Critical from a CSO perspective in Small States, is to ensure that citizens’ voices are included in these strategies and ways forward. Of particular importance is the need for ensuring culturally sensitive solutions and taking care that particular island differences are respected. Learning from the work of respected organisations such as the UNESCO in support of these countries and communities, effective action is rooted in the fields of culture, basic and natural sciences, social and human sciences, communication and education.

The underlying challenge is that of building capacities, bridges and networks, in promoting problem-solving actions that mobilise key actors and constituencies, that generate effective momentum and impact, that are culturally sensitive and scientifically sound. Addressing this challenge calls for meaningful collaboration between societal and organisational sectors (intersectoral co-operation), between regions and between islands of different affiliations (interregional co-operation) and between generations (intergenerational co-operation).²³ Worldwide, there is increasing recognition of the intrinsic importance of culture to all aspects of the

²⁰ OECD-DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility, 2013, *Fragile States 2013: Resource flows and trends in a shifting world*. Online at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/FragileStates2013.pdf>

²¹ OECD-DAC website: *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*, 2007 OECD-DAC High Level Meeting. Online at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf>

²² Ibid

²³ UNESCO website. Online at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/sids/culture-tourism/culture/>

development process, reflected for example in the debates of the World Commission on Culture and Development and its report *Our Creative Diversity*. With respect to Small States, this widening recognition was reflected in the increasing profile given to culture in the lead-up to the Mauritius International Meeting, and to the inclusion of 'Culture' in the updated Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted in Mauritius.

Furthermore, the findings and recommendations from studies on the MDG progress made by Small States is also considered in the Foundation's Civil Society Engagement Strategy. That Small States, especially Micro-states have made much less MDG progress than large states showing that for 68 million people who live in Small States, there is for many a life of unacceptable social and economic inequity, risk of survival and deletion of environmental degradation.²⁴ This is significant for the Commonwealth since a majority of the Small States are Commonwealth member countries.

²⁴ John L. Roberts and Ibukunoluwa Ibitoye, July 2012, *The Big Divide, a Ten Year Report of SIDS and the MDGs*, Commonwealth Secretariat

6.0 Key Principles of Engagement

The Commonwealth Foundation Civil Society Engagement Strategy acts as a framework to strengthen its working methods with civil society. It is aligned with the international principles for development co-operation, which guide the way forward and is founded on several key principles of engagement.

Firstly, it believes in the importance of collaborating through partnerships. The Foundation's mandate is to enhance the capacities of civil society in support of Commonwealth principles and priorities. To best perform this role, it must seek and nurture relationships that are mutually beneficial and based on trust, shared vision and commitment to common objectives. By working through partnerships, effectiveness and efficiency are enhanced, crucial and often limited resources, expertise and relationships are accessed, risks and benefits are shared and new knowledge is produced.

Secondly, it views the strategic role of the Foundation as an intergovernmental organisation, development organisation and a convenor of multiple stakeholders, both government and non-government across the Commonwealth. Recognising this strategic value of the Foundation, the interventions and actions that the Foundation undertakes to support civil society will optimise its convening powers and relationship of trust with governments to broker and sustain dialogue and relationships among various stakeholder constituencies. These may include diverse civil society, foundations, faith-based groups, local authorities, governments and the private sector.

Thirdly, the Foundation recognises the importance of CSOs in policy dialogue and change at different levels of decision-making from the community, local and national to the global spheres. It understands the evolving nature and growing influence of civil society on the success and sustainability of development efforts and on how this impacts on the lives of citizens, particularly the poor and disadvantaged.

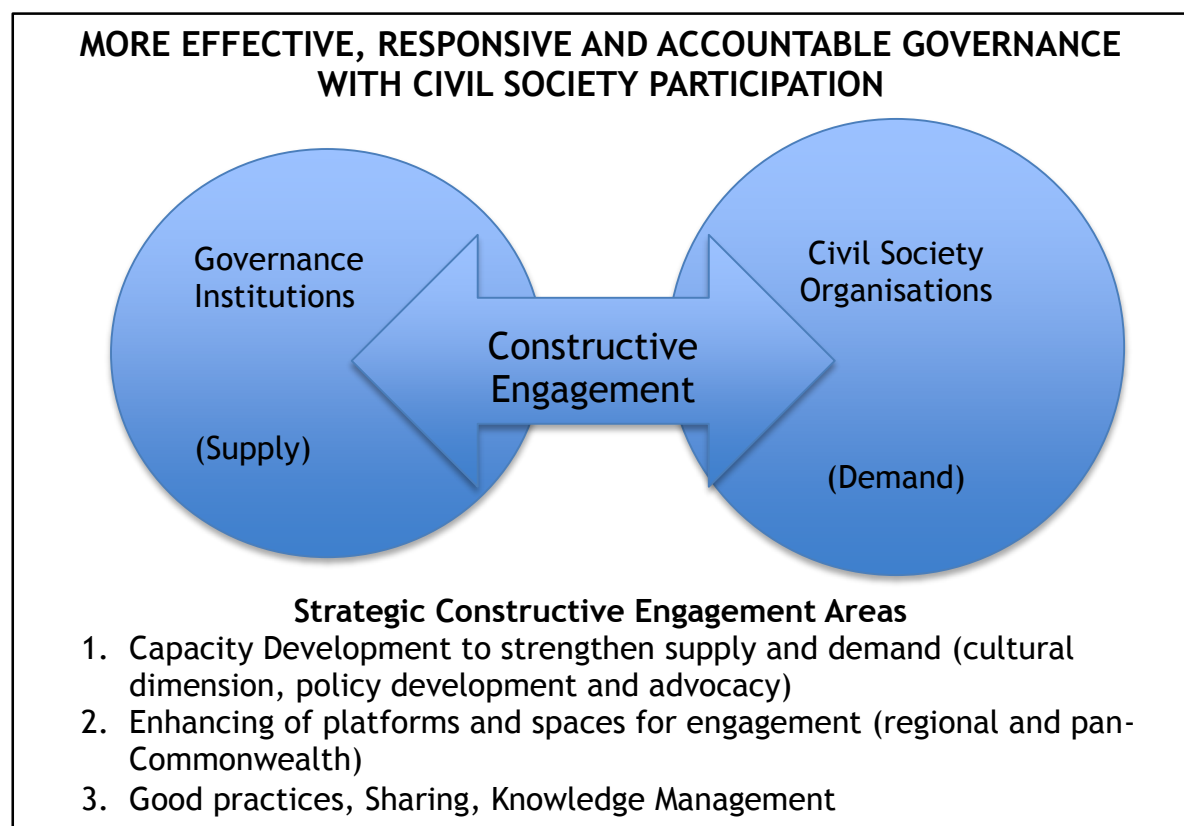
The Strategy builds on these principles and the Foundation's core values while supporting the various international principles, commitments and consensus forged by donors, international organisations, governments as well as civil society. It applies the lessons learned and recommendations especially coming from a civil society perspective.

Finally, the Strategy is a living document that will continue to evolve, sharpen and adjust as it is applied in the work of the Foundation. It will benefit from the ongoing dialogue with various partners and the wealth of learning coming from the field.

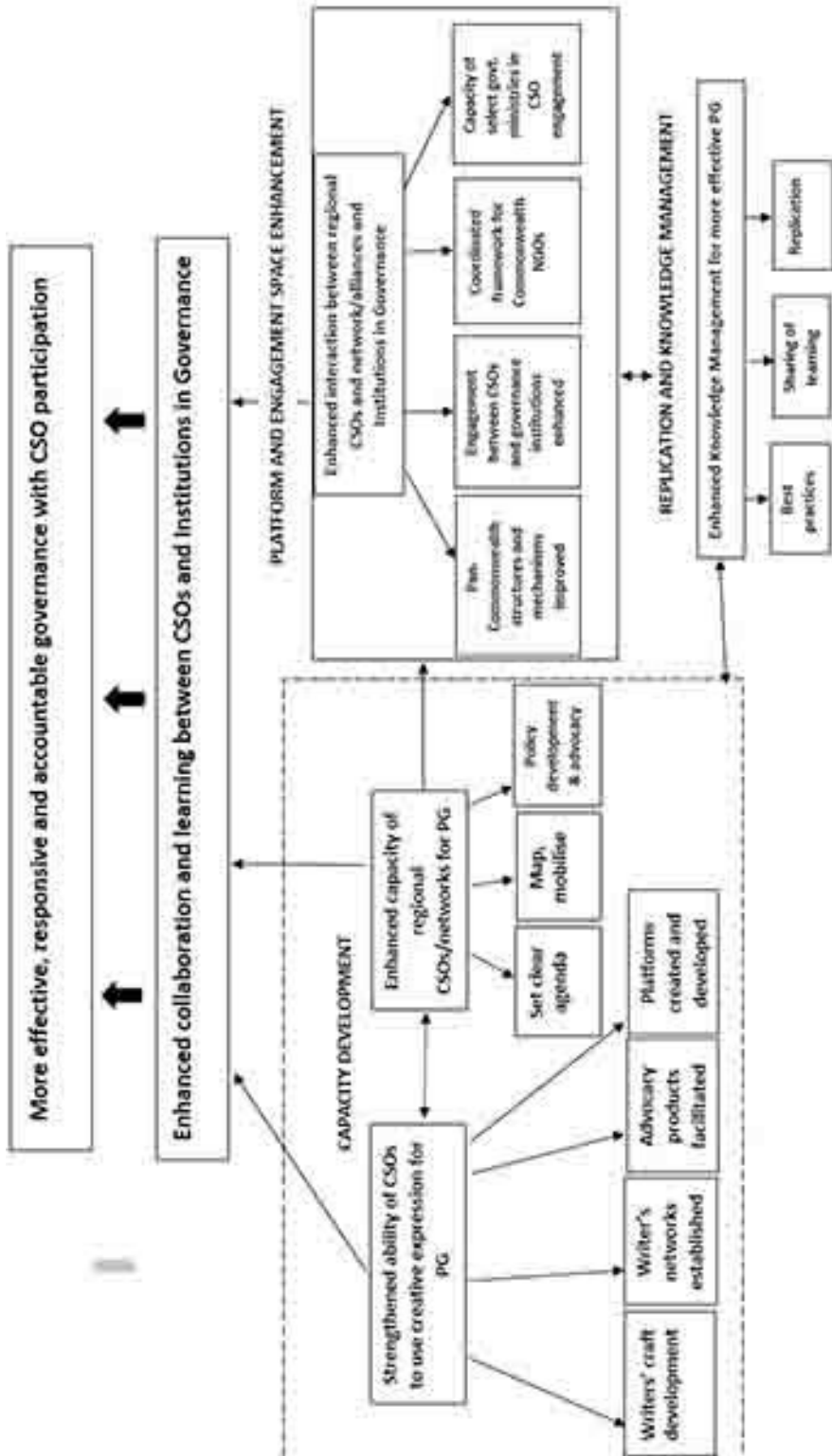
7.0 Strategic Constructive Engagement Areas

This Civil Society Engagement Strategy takes on a longer-term perspective, building capacity, strengthening the enabling environment for participatory governance and policy change and applying an integrated, holistic approach. It underscores a systematic and synergistic approach to monitoring, learning and sharing of best practice. The following diagram shows the Foundation's three core action areas of constructive engagement: a) capacity development to strengthen the supply and demand - in the cultural dimensions, policy development and advocacy, b) enhancing platforms and spaces for engagement at the regional and pan-Commonwealth levels networks, and c) replication of good practices and knowledge management on participatory governance.

Diagram 1: CSO-Governance Constructive Engagement Areas



This Engagement Strategy envisions the achievement of both 'downstream' local development results and 'upstream' policy impact. Taking into account the findings and recommendations from the regional scoping and consultation process and in optimizing the unique contribution that the Foundation offers, the Commonwealth Foundation proposes that targeted, strategic interventions focus on three core areas of engagement to achieve this. This is illustrated in the theory of change depicted in the following graphic.



CF THEORY OF CHANGE

As such, the three core constructive engagement areas are as follows.

7.1 Capacity Development

Capacity development is a key methodology to strengthen and empower civil society and achieve development results. In the Accra Action Plan, capacity development was identified as “lying in the heart of the AAA”.²⁵ It is defined as a “locally driven process of learning by leaders, coalitions and other agents of change that bring about changes in socio-political, policy-related, and organisational factors to enhance local ownership for and the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to achieve a development goal”²⁶.

The capacity development model that the Foundation espouses promotes a systematic approach of thinking through and tracing the relationship of a set of variables to a particular goal in a given context and then applying the new capacities in specific instances. It is an open system capacity development model that defines the stakeholder terrain at the individual, organisational and institutional levels. It identifies the various stakeholders that should be included in the capacity development process along with the capacities needed. It also includes effective monitoring of results in order to capture progress made. This model offers a view of capacity as a complex, holistic process that takes place at different levels of the system and in a web of interconnectedness.²⁷

It should be clarified that capacity development is viewed as a comprehensive approach involving a variety of tools and participatory techniques based on exemplary practices and lessons from other practitioners using a learning-by-doing approach, on-site mentoring, locally-based hands-on training and direct application of new skills to local situations.

The findings and recommendations from regional scoping missions and consultations have identified some key capacity development gaps. These have helped to affirm the Foundation’s theory of change. Civil society’s ability to engage effectively with institutions in governance can be hindered by these main factors: by their awareness of the issues being debated by the governance institutions and their understanding of the processes and structures and their ability to engage - organise, articulate, prioritise, move forward an agenda and interact with governance institutions. All these point to a need for capacity enhancement with an emphasis on addressing these factors. Consistent with the Foundation’s theory of change, some of these capacity areas of action include:

a. Knowledge, attitude and skills building in key areas of need

- These include approaches and interventions that integrate culture into the development agenda recognizing the specific contributions that

²⁵ OECD, Aid Effectiveness, 2012. Online at

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/thehighlevelforaonaideffectivenesshistory.htm>

²⁶ Otoo, Samuel et al. The Capacity Development Results Framework: A Strategic and results oriented approach to learning for capacity development, World Bank Institute, June 2009, p3

²⁷ Commonwealth Foundation Strategic Plan, 2012-16, Commonwealth Foundation. Online at: <http://www.commonwealthfoundation.org>

culture as a sector has made towards achieving sustainable development (e.g. craft development, writers networks established)

- Policy development and advocacy as two areas of weakness mentioned by participants in the consultations, in the context of sub-regional and regional positions and including monitoring skills

b. Sub-Regional and regional network strengthening

- Collaboration and networking skills enhancement - opportunities for sub-regional or regional networking and collaboration. Some sub-regions/regions have better established or more mature networks whereas others are still beginning to establish themselves. Customized interventions will support the building of strong networks ready and able to engage with regional level governance institutions
- Regional development agenda setting - strengthen capacities to exchange intelligence, articulate positions, negotiate, prioritise and build consensus across a network.

c. South-South co-operation

- Opportunities for South-South exchanges across regions for cross learning and further collaboration. This should not necessarily be limited to CSO leaders but may include the second level leaders who would greatly benefit in exposure to new and different ways of performing similar roles or arriving at similar results

7.2 Enhancement of Engagement Platforms and Spaces

This core area further addresses the hindering factors to achieve a strong and engaged CSO community, namely: a) a lack of CSO ability to engage and b) governance institutions' lack of understanding and recognition about the role and benefits of civil society engagement. It builds on the Foundation's convening capacity to support innovative partnerships with influential organisations to:

a. Improve the access and utilization of existing strategic sub-regional and regional platforms (e.g. ECOWAS, OIC, OIF, African Union, CARICOM, ASEAN) as well as those at a pan-Commonwealth (e.g. Commonwealth Ministerial Meetings, Commonwealth People's Forum) and at a global level (e.g. UN, OECD, G-20, World Economic Forum). It will do this by:

- Scaled up activities and impact to a higher level of governance
- Bolstered policy research
- Sharpened advocacy planning
- Sign posted civil society expertise and best practices
- Monitored regional agendas
- Prepared representation at key meetings
- Facilitated co-operation rather than competition among civil society and others

b. Apply the knowledge, attitudes and new skills learned in the first core engagement focus area - i.e. capacity development - following a learning-by-doing approach, CSO capacities will be strengthened in these important areas of weakness to better utilise the space to pursue clearly articulated CSO agendas. This may be done by:

- Bolstering policy research
- Sharpening advocacy planning
- Accessing required technical assistance
- Monitoring of regional agendas

- c. **Provide Technical Assistance to select government ministries in CSO engagement** - In partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat the Foundation will identify select national ministries based on a set of criteria that includes proven openness from the government, interest from local civil society participation and using a learning-by-doing approach.

7.3 Replication of Good Practices and Knowledge Management

A third core focus area addresses further barriers to realizing effective civil society engagement in governance, particularly: the lack of a knowledge sharing culture in governance, limited funding dedicated to support learning, undocumented good practices and success stories, inability to use or access technology for knowledge sharing, disabling political environments and the media's lack of coverage of participatory governance stories²⁸. The Foundation will optimise its role as a knowledge broker and convenor of partners and stakeholders to share experiences and facilitate learning and capacity building. Knowledge management is a key strategy to enable and enhance collaboration and learning between CSOs and institutions in governance. Increasing the understanding among civil society and other stakeholders is dependent on developing systematic mechanisms for acquiring, sharing and utilising information and for getting the 'right information to the right people at the right time'. Interventions and activities will focus on these four groupings:

- Promoting knowledge sharing and learning** among CSOs and governance institutions
- Documenting and disseminating knowledge resources**, lessons learned and success stories
- Replicating good and fit practices** in participatory governance
- Maximising communications and technology** to enable meaningful learning and performance on participatory governance

7.4 Other Strategic Opportunities

An important influence that is increasing its financial support throughout the world, and sometimes directly to CSOs, is private aid. With ambitious global agendas matched by large resources, the private sector and private foundations are transforming the development landscape. "Creative capitalism", a concept launched by Bill Gates at the recent World Economic Forum by which corporations include considerations of the public good as part of their business model, is gaining interest. So are social enterprises and social entrepreneurship²⁹. Governments have been attracted for two main reasons: 1) to improve the value for money in public service delivery projects and 2) to draw upon expertise within the private sector, while retaining responsibility.

²⁸ Commonwealth Foundation, 2012, Strategic Plan 2012-16 Online at <http://www.commonwealthfoundation.org>

²⁹ UNDP Strategy on Civil Society and Civic Engagement, online at <http://www.undp.org>

The rise of this new resource offers CSOs throughout the world with new opportunities as well as challenges in engaging with this new partner. However, it will be important to remember that the “contributions and impacts” of the private sector will differ depending on sectors, type of actor and size ranging from large multinational corporations, to small and medium enterprises, and to micro-enterprises”. Therefore, the size, influence and capabilities of the particular private organisation involved will greatly influence the private sectors’ impact in development assistance.³⁰

The private sector is becoming increasingly aware of aid activities as a means of meeting the expectations of a growing, ethically conscious market. The authenticity of development assistance by the private sector has been recently questioned, however, and debates around ‘aidwashing’ have surfaced³¹. With the role of the private sector specially mentioned in the Busan outcome statement, these debates will likely intensify. At one end, it has been argued that the private sector can operate in a regulatory-light environment, ignore cultural competency and because businesses are focused on profit, not aid assistance, the core development philosophy ‘to do no harm’ is compromised. Conversely, other scholars and policy makers suggest involvement of the private sector is central for development practice in such an economically-driven global environment³².

As development CSOs are looking to collaborate with private sector companies for otherwise dwindling resources, it is important to approach such arrangements with care. This is an area that the Foundation with its pan-Commonwealth reach and convening capacity, may pursue and provide some guidance to partner CSOs in carefully forging the kind of creative but principled alliances needed to fulfill its respective missions.

³⁰ New Zealand Council for International Development (2012) NGO-Private Sector Development Projects: Lessons Learned, A CID Discussion Paper (2012), p6 Online at <http://www.cid.org.nz/assets/Resources/Other/PPP-Discussion-Paper-2012.pdf>

³¹ ‘Aidwashing’ can be defined as: A form of spin in which a company uses its philanthropic work to deceptively promote the perception that their policies, activities, products or services are ethical” (Jones, 2012: 117 cited in CID Discussion Paper 2012: 6)

³² Ibid

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9.0 Annexes

1. Commonwealth Foundation Logic Model (Updated, May 2013)
2. Commonwealth Foundation Strategic Plan (2012-2016) - available on the Commonwealth Foundation website:
http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/sites/cwf/files/downloads/Commonwealth_Foundation_Strategic_Plan.pdf
3. Critical Enabling Conditions by Donors for CSO Development Effectiveness

Annex 1. Commonwealth Foundation Logic Model (Updated, May 2013)

ULTIMATE OUTCOME	More effective, responsive and accountable governance with civil society participation			
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES	Enhanced collaboration and learning between CSOs and institutions in governance			
SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	1 Strengthened ability of CSOs to use creative expression for participatory governance	2 Enhanced capacity of regional CSOs and networks/alliances to engage in participatory governance	3 Enhanced interaction between regional CSOs and networks/alliances and institutions in governance	4 Enhanced knowledge management for more effective participatory governance
FOCUS	Strengthen cultural practitioners and connect them with the wider CSO community	Develop CSO capacity for participatory governance specifically in policy development and advocacy	Increase access to, and improve, existing spaces; and create new spaces	Develop mechanisms, and facilitate their adoption
ENABLING OUTCOME: a more effective Commonwealth Foundation				

Annex 2. Commonwealth Foundation Strategic Plan (2012-2016) - available online at:
http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/sites/cwf/files/downloads/Commonwealth_Foundation_Strategic_Plan.pdf

Annex 3. Critical Enabling Conditions by Donors for CSO Effectiveness (Derived from The International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness)*

An enabling environment for CSO development effectiveness requires:

1. All governments to fulfill obligations to fundamental human rights that enable people to organise and participate in development.¹⁶
2. Recognition of CSOs as development actors in their own right.
3. Structuring democratic political and policy dialogue to improve development effectiveness. Key conditions for dialogue include:
 - Systematic inclusion of diverse views, particularly from grassroots based social organisations, women's organisations and indigenous peoples representatives.
 - Transparency and clarity of purpose and process.
 - Freedom to access information.
 - Timeliness in order to impact decisions.
 - Resources to enable full participation of stakeholders.
4. Being accountable to constituencies for transparent and consistent policies.
5. Creating enabling financing for CSO development effectiveness. These funding modalities should focus on,
 - Long term results oriented perspective;
 - Core institutional funding, based on the notion that CSOs provide public goods;
 - Responsiveness to CSO initiative;
 - Access for a diversity of CSOs;
 - Predictable, transparent, understandable, harmonised terms;
 - Promoting the mobilization of local resources;
 - Supporting the full range of CSO programming and innovations, including policy development and advocacy.

* From the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, The Siem Reap Consensus on The International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, pages 22-24, accessible at <http://www.csoeffectiveness.org/InternationalFramework>

¹⁶ The multi-stakeholder Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment agreed in its pre-Busan Key Messages that an enabling environment must “in law and practice at minimum [be] in keeping with existing commitments in international and regional instruments that guarantee fundamental rights. These include: freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to operate free from unwarranted state interference, the right to communicate and cooperate, the right to seek and secure funding and the state's duty to protect.” *Key Messages, page 10.*