



2020 Year Report

Period: Feb 2020 - Dec 2020

Introduction:

In accordance with the regulation of the CDS an Annual Report should be submitted to the CDS by April 30th summarizing the activities of the CDS of the previous fiscal year. The following is a summary report of activities conducted by the CDS during fiscal year January 2020 through December 2020. Considering the fact that this report period constitutes the first year of existences of the CDS the period covered will starting at incorporation date February 26th 2020. As a young organization, the CDS, during its first year would focus on its primary goal of making a contribution, through consensus forming dialog, towards a socially economically and ecologically sustainable Statia. (regulations CCS article 2 point 1)

Main Discussions/Focus:

The main objectives of the first year of existence was the familiarization with the work, task and responsibilities of the CDS. As a new organization each contributing organization has a role to play in achieving consensus on issues facing the community. While growing accustomed to the working processes task and responsibilities of the CDS the platform would be challenged to rethink its working processes due to the global pandemic.

As a result of restrictions in the ability to travel and conduct meetings in person CDS was forced to make several important changes in order to be able to effectively execute its work. In June 2021 a resident chairman was appointed replacing the interim chair who was now in the Netherlands and unable to travel to the Islands. The CDS also adapted its regulations to allow for digital meetings and consensus forming via digital media. (The adjusted regulation can be found on the website.) The ability to quickly adjust its method of working proven very important as is allowed the CDS to provided reactions, advice, and regular feedback to the island government on issues of socio-economic impact during this critical time. (such as advise and opinions on emergency ordinances and reopening procedures). CDS was also able to provide reaction to requests from the ministry of social affairs on issues such as implementation of covid 19 stimulus package.

In presenting a reaction, in as much as permissible, the CDS stakeholders sought consultations with their respective constituents to ensure that the final advise /opinion was representative of the sentiment within the community.



In addition to advice on pandemic related subjects previously mentioned the CDS addressed several other important subject areas such as the draft Electricity and Water law. In reacting to the draft electricity and water law the CDS together with STUCO NV and OLE submitted a combined opinion paper addressing the areas of concern that must be considered taking into account our economy of scale and special circumstances. The CDS also reacted to the draft law on Child Daycare in consultation with childcare organizations and stakeholders.

A recurring theme throughout the year and various meetings and discussions maintained the focus on poverty alleviation. This subject was discussed with minister of social affairs via a digital meeting November of 2020. It is expected that additional discussions on this subjects will follow this meeting in the coming year as there remains much work to be done as it relates to the development of an acceptable standard of living for all citizens on St.Eustatius. (These themes will include the development of minimum wage, social housing policy, social minimum establishment ect)

Given the challenges of the pandemic and the resulting limitation in providing information regarding the work of the CDS the plans for public information campaign (radio program, townhall meeting ect) were put on hold and disbursement of information during this period was restricted to information published via the website (www.centraldialoguestatia.com)

Budget:

In June 2021 in accordance with the regulation of the CDS a budget was discussed approved and submitted to the OLE. This budget was conservatively established taking into account current pandemic and limitations in the ability of the CDS to function fully as anticipated. Key areas of concern were the ability to reserve budget for the acquisition of expert advice and support in reacting to subjects addressed to the attention of CDS. Another area of concern identified in the budget was the ability to provide translations. As most documents received from the ministry are in the Dutch language this provides a challenge for some members of the CDS where English is the official language used. Research is still on going to find a permanent solution to this challenge. Repeated request for courtesy translation of documents received from the ministry have been unanswered forcing the CDS to come up with a solution for this reoccurring issue. Finally considering the tasks and responsibilities the CDS and the developing early stages it was deemed important to reserve a budget for workshops and training to allow membership to further develop skills and improve competencies to be able to execute task as effectively as possible. A carefully designed training program will further allow stakeholder



organizations to include their respective membership where possible further contributing to the overall capacity building of all stakeholder organizations.

Meetings:

In principle the CDS in accordance with its regulations operates on a predetermined meeting schedule published via its website. Practical experiences of the past year have shown the need for the CDS to be flexible with regards to its ability to react on key issues that may arise that may have significant social economic impact. As previously mentioned, the adjustment of the CDS regulation has created a provision for such emergencies where digital platforms are quickly deployed to allow for the CDS meetings and response as required.

Summary / Evaluation:

While the formal obligation of self-evaluation was not required, in accordance with regulations until 2021 considering all the activity of the first year of operations and further taking into account the experiences of the first year an evaluation was conducted.

The evaluation revealed that a majority of the members was content and had a positive opinion regarding the performance, frequency and working processes of the CDS during the first year. The evaluation also underscored the need for training and personal development. The membership recognized, based on the quantity and considerable variety of subjects addressed, the need for subject related expert input. This support would assist the CDS in their deliberations which is important to the further development of the CDS. Emphasis was also placed on the need to improve communication to stakeholder constituents and the public at large. It is expected that awareness regarding the work role and activities will increase the information flow and community participation via stakeholder organizations.

The evaluation of the experience of the first year of operation also raised questioned regarding the position, legal role and structural sustainability of the CDS. It was determined that this subject would be the focus of attention during the upcoming year and the CDS continues to develop. The relationships with third parties Island and Kingdom Governments will be the subject of discussion / research.

As a young Organization, CDS also recognizes the value in establishing networks. As a result of having a shared chairman CDS has established contact the CDB (Central Dialog Bonaire) which resulted in a joint position paper covering a variety of subjects of common interest. It is the



intention to build this network and collaboration with regional organizations in order to share experiences and seek collaboration where appropriate on subjects of common interest.

The CDS in its first year has been faced with several challenges as laid out in this report. The pandemic underscored the importance of the role of the CDS and the need to develop a reliable and efficient dialog platform that is ready equipped and able to provide useful input when required. As organization we recognize need for improvement and will seek to build on the experiences of the first year to accomplish this goal. Detailed information of the CDS (regulations, budget and all publications) are available via the website: www.centraldialoguestatia.com