

DOCUMENT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN BANK  
MULTILATERAL INVESTMENT FUND

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**SPOOL**

(TT-T1111)

**DONORS MEMORANDUM**

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

#### SPOOL

#### (TT-T1111)

Over the past five years Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) has attracted numerous Venezuelan migrants with at least 20,000 refugees and asylum seekers currently registered with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)<sup>1</sup>. As a small country, T&T has received more migrants per capita than almost any other country,<sup>2</sup> in part due to its relative proximity to the coastline of Venezuela. Language barriers and lack of channels to verify credentials and character references issued in Venezuela, have resulted in many migrants securing work in construction, hospitality, food services, retail, and janitorial companies, most of which have been negatively impacted due to COVID 19 public health restrictions, business closures and a severe downturn in economic activity. The resulting loss of jobs has contributed to an unemployment rate of approximately 80% amongst the migrant community<sup>3</sup>. Loss of earnings and associated shelter as well as food insecurity has placed migrant women in highly vulnerable positions, a situation exacerbated by increasing xenophobia blaming the spread of COVID 19 and pressure on basic public services on the migrants that continue to arrive in the country despite official border closures.

The proposed SPOOL program was selected for financing by IDB Lab through the [Better Together Challenge](#), launched by the IDB Lab in partnership with USAID. SPOOL seeks to invest in the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable women in migrant and host communities by providing technical training and support as well as employment and micro entrepreneurship opportunities in the emerging Carnival fashion sector. As a solution, SPOOL is a 360-degree Carnival and fashion garment manufacturing ecosystem comprising a unique online and on-the-job training program, garment production hubs, and an employment and market access matching service to support the year round needs of the fashion and Carnival industries. T&T's Carnival sector provides a significant opportunity for local content and value creation via the onshoring of costume and specialized apparel fabrication for local and regional Carnivals. Anya Ayoung Chee, a local designer and creative entrepreneur is very active in this sector and has recognized that there is a critical gap in the availability of labor and specialized skills that is constraining local production. Through the Together W.I. Foundation of which she is a founding member, the SPOOL project was developed to create, engage, and empower a cadre of skilled employees, contractors and entrepreneurs drawn from vulnerable migrant communities to power growth of a social impact business enterprise. The program will benefit 300 vulnerable women from migrant and host communities in T&T.

The SPOOL project will be executed by the Together W.I. Foundation under the technical direction of Anya Ayoung Chee, social activist, creative and fashion entrepreneur. Living Water Community will partner with Together W.I. Foundation providing technical and fiduciary support services. This solution, designed in coordination with the IDB Migration Unit, is directly aligned with the IDB Group's Vision 2025 in Gender and Diversity, the IDB

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Trinidad and Tobago Fact Sheet, April 2021.

<sup>2</sup> NPR, "Trinidad Faces Humanitarian Crisis as More Venezuelans Come for Refuge" John Otis, (December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018)

<sup>3</sup> Estimate provided by Living Water Community the UNHCR implementation partner for Trinidad and Tobago

Lab programming focus on talent and employment and with the IDB's Country Strategy with Trinidad and Tobago.

## **ANNEXES**

ANNEX I	Results Matrix
ANNEX II	Budget Summary
ANNEX III	iDELTA

## **APPENDICES**

Draft Resolution

## **AVAILABLE IN THE TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS SECTION OF MIF PROJECT INFORMATION SYSTEM**

ANNEX IV	Assessment of Integrity and Institutional Capacity (DICI)
ANNEX V	Reporting Requirements and Compliance with Milestones and Fiduciary Arrangements
ANNEX VI	Procurement and Contracting Plan

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>B2B</b>	Business to Business
<b>B2C</b>	Business to Consumer
<b>CCB</b>	Country Department Caribbean Group
<b>CTT</b>	Country Office Trinidad and Tobago
<b>DICI</b>	Assessment of Integrity and Institutional Capacity
<b>EA</b>	Executing Agency
<b>EY</b>	Formerly Ernst and Young
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IDB Lab</b>	Multilateral Investment Fund
<b>IDB/IDBG</b>	Inter-American Development Bank/Inter-American Development Bank Group
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization of Migration
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organization
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>OJT</b>	On the Job Training
<b>PSR</b>	Project Status Report
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>T&amp;T</b>	Trinidad and Tobago
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

## PROJECT INFORMATION

### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SPOOL (TT-T1111)

<b>Country and Geographic Location:</b>	Trinidad and Tobago, focus on capital city of Port of Spain and at least 1 other dense urban migrant host community		
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	Together W.I. Foundation		
<b>Focus Area:</b>	Inclusive Cities		
<b>Coordination with Other Donors/Bank Operations:</b>	This project was selected for financing through the Better Together competitive challenge supported by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the IDB Lab. The Better Together Challenge was a global joint initiative to crowdsource, select, fund, and scale innovative solutions worldwide to support Venezuelan migrants and their host communities in the region. This project has also been designed in collaboration with the <b>IDB Migration Unit (MIG/SCL)</b> to align it with their mandate knowledge and operations focus.		
<b>Project Beneficiaries:</b>	300 vulnerable women from the Venezuelan migrant and host communities in Trinidad and Tobago		
<b>Financing:</b>	Technical Cooperation:	US\$ 560,000	49%
	Equity:	US\$ 000,000	
	Loan:	US\$ 000,000	
	Other (explain):	US\$ 000,000	
	<b>TOTAL IDB Lab FUNDING:</b>	US\$ 560,000	
	Counterpart:	US\$ 571,600	51%
	Co-financing (if available; include a separate line for IDB Co-financing if applicable):		00%
	<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET:</b>	US\$ 1,131,600	100%
<b>Execution and Disbursement Period:</b>	30 months execution and 36 months disbursement.		
<b>Special Contractual Conditions:</b>	Special conditions precedent to first disbursement will be: Execution of a MoU between Together W.I. Foundation and Living Water Community		
<b>Environmental and Social Impact Review</b>	This operation was screened and classified as required by the IDB's safeguard policy (OP-703) on July 30, 2021. Given the impacts and risks, the proposed category for the project is C.		
<b>Unit responsible for disbursements</b>	CCB/CTT		

## I. The Problem

### A. Problem Description

- 1.1. Over the past five years Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) has attracted numerous Venezuelan migrants with at least 20,000 refugees and asylum seekers currently registered with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)<sup>4</sup>. The Organization of American States (OAS) Report (2021) puts this figure at 40,000, while other sources estimate that at least 60,000 migrants are living and working in T&T.<sup>5</sup> While the number of Venezuelan migrants is considerably lower than in other neighboring Latin American countries, T&T has received more migrants per capita than almost any other country,<sup>6</sup> in part due to its relative proximity (45 minutes by boat). The ratio of registered Venezuelan migrants to T&T citizens is 1.3%, while Brazil recorded a ratio of 0.1% in 2019<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, a study conducted in 2018 by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) found that approximately 83% of Venezuelan migrants interviewed intended to remain in T&T. Additionally, the impact of COVID-19 will presumably exacerbate the regional migration crisis and thereby substantially increase the number of migrants in the region.
- 1.2. Nationally, concerns have been expressed about the ability of a small island economy such as T&T, to absorb the impact of migrants and the burden this may place on state provided services such as health, education, and national security. To date, the Government's intervention as it relates to Venezuelan migrants centered on a registration process in 2019 which granted persons who entered the country, legally or illegally, the right to register with the Ministry of National Security and receive a registration card that enables temporary legal status and the ability to obtain work legally.<sup>8</sup> However, no other form of legal protection exists, thus many who are in T&T cannot work legally, send their children to school and have limited access to health care.
- 1.3. Prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, T&T faced a significant economic downturn due to the contraction of the energy sector's contribution to GDP with the global

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<sup>4</sup> UNHCR Trinidad and Tobago Fact Sheet, April 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Refugees International, "Forced into Illegality Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Trinidad and Tobago" Melanie Teff (January 2019). Many migrants are currently unregistered

<sup>6</sup> NPR, "Trinidad Faces Humanitarian Crisis as More Venezuelans Come for Refuge" John Otis, (December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018)

<sup>7</sup> E-International Relations, "Opinion- Venezuela's Migrants and the Challenges of Trinidad and Tobago" Faies Jafar, January 31, 2021 [Opinion - Venezuela's Migrants and the Challenges of Trinidad and Tobago \(e-ir.info\)](https://e-ir.info/Opinion-Venezuela-s-Migrants-and-the-Challenges-of-Trinidad-and-Tobago)

<sup>8</sup> Approximately 16,500 adults have registered, and they continue to receive extensions on their legal status, The Government has not allowed additional persons to register under this process



collapse of energy commodity pricing.<sup>9</sup> The COVID 19 pandemic resulted in a double shock to the economy and livelihoods of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, as public health restrictions have resulted in the ongoing closure of business and ensuing job losses for many<sup>10</sup>. Given the current social and economic context, finding decent work, shelter and food for migrant families has been challenging, this has only been exacerbated by public opinion that the state must prioritize support for nationals given current resource constraints. However, many migrants worked in industries most affected by closures stipulated under the country's COVID-19 health measures, including restaurants, bars, and casinos, rendering them in greater need of assistance to meet basic needs.

- 1.4. As a result of these circumstances, migrants, particularly women, have become even more vulnerable to exploitation, with many being underpaid, exposed to sexual harassment and in some instances, being subjected to human trafficking. Apart from Living Water Community (LWC), a local NGO and UNHCR partner, few organizations provide aid to migrants and refugees. LWC provides a myriad of social services to these vulnerable groups, however their resources are quite limited. Additionally, current social support services do not address the fundamental issue of providing sustainable livelihood opportunities to migrants and ensuring integration into the host country due to cultural and linguistic barriers. Assimilation into T&T society has proven even more difficult in recent times due to increasing xenophobia prompted by continued breach of the islands' closed borders by desperate migrants from Venezuela and fears that illegal migrants can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 and introduction of new variants.
- 1.5. Given T&T's proximity to Venezuela, and ongoing political, economic, and social crisis in Venezuela, it is unlikely that the island will see a reduction in the number of incoming migrants soon. Additionally, it is also imperative to find new forms of employment for both migrants and locals given the current economic challenges plaguing T&T.
- 1.6. One area that has been targeted as a potential growth sector is the fashion industry, which is also aligned with the national and regional Carnival sector. Currently the Carnival sector is estimated to contribute 6% of GDP annually, and the production of costumes and bespoke and specialty apparel for the festival and weeks of events and celebrations preceding the actual Carnival event each year, forms a key driver of economic value and a source of livelihoods. However, the local value and contribution of this productive sector has failed to realize its full potential, in part, because of a lack of skilled labor, and the availability of dedicated production facilities. Consequently, Carnival costumes designed in T&T are often outsourced for production to factories in China and many local fashion designers

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<sup>9</sup> World Bank estimated economic growth for the country in 2019 to be 0.9% (before Covid) after negative growth rates of -6.3% in 2016, -2.3% in 2017 and flat growth in 2018. In the downstream energy sector low commodity prices led to the closure of four energy plants which resulted in a loss of exports to the value of US \$25 million per month. Roadmap for Trinidad and Tobago Post Covid-19 Pandemic.

<sup>10</sup> It has been estimated that both these crises have resulted in over US \$58 million dollars in losses to the economy during the first quarter of 2020. Data pulled from "Roadmap for Trinidad and Tobago Post Covid-19 Pandemic" 2020 Roadmap to Recovery Committee

face significant constraints meeting the local and international demand for their unique apparel. Skills in costume design and fabrication translate to the local fashion industry, and skilled tailors, seamstresses and pattern makers remain in high demand for Carnival costumes and apparel, but there has been little interest especially amongst young people in the local population in investing in the acquisition and mastery of these skills.

- 1.7. It is worth noting that regional Carnivals in the Caribbean (Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Miami) and further afield in New York (Labor Day), Toronto, (Caribana) and London (Nottinghill) generate a demand that is year-round due to different timing of events. In 2014 the local fashion industry consisted of 210 companies which employed over 1400 people<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, approximately 46% of local garment manufacturers have exported to 48 countries, earning between US \$2.5 to US \$3.5 million during the period 2017-2019<sup>12</sup>.
- 1.8. If there was a mechanism to ramp up identification and upskilling of persons interested in fabrication of specialty costumes and apparel in Trinidad and Tobago, fashion designers, particularly in the Carnival and festivals sector, see a growth opportunity for higher local content and value creation. There would be a significant benefit to increasing local production in terms of forex savings, shorter lead times, greater opportunity for customization as well as the facility for quality assurance checks during the production process. Like other sectors in T&T that have struggled to attract entry level workers that can be trained and upskilled, the Carnival fashion industry has started to look at the migrant community as a potentially attractive option.
- 1.9. Recognizing the potential of this sector and based on very positive small-scale efforts to involve migrant workers in garment fabrication, local fashion designer and icon Anya Ayoung Chee, through the Together W.I. Foundation conceptualized the SPOOL project to offer training and apprenticeship opportunities to the migrant community to build out locally based production capacity, starting with her established brands. As a solution, SPÖOL is a 360-degree Carnival and fashion garment manufacturing ecosystem comprising a unique online and on-the-job training program, garment production hubs, and an employment and market access matching service to support the year round needs of the fashion and Carnival industries. Anya is a fervent believer in the ability to learn and master this craft having previously won Project Runway, a popular TV contest in the US, although she had only entry level training in garment construction. In addition, as many women in the migrant community care for their children without the benefit of extended family support, an opportunity to work in this industry is particularly attractive as it does provide flexibility in hours and could potentially be undertaken, in part, at home. The SPOOL project which was selected for funding through the USAID/IDB Lab Better Together challenge seeks to support the growth of T&T's fashion industry by providing training, mentorship,

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<sup>11</sup> [Creative Industry - Ministry of Trade and Industry \(tradeind.gov.tt\)](http://tradeind.gov.tt)

<sup>12</sup> [Local designers showcased in FashionTT's new LookBook - Ministry of Trade and Industry \(tradeind.gov.tt\)](http://tradeind.gov.tt)

and decent jobs for migrants and local vulnerable women in garment design, fabrication, and production.

- 1.10. **Beneficiaries:** the SPOOL team will train at least 300 beneficiaries within a 24-month period, it is anticipated that the majority of these trainees will be women, though men will not be precluded from participating in training, and at least 210 trainees will belong to the migrant community.<sup>13</sup> Of the 20,000 migrants registered with the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in 2019, approximately 16,500 were adults and 2,400 were children. Additionally, according to UNHCR<sup>14</sup>, approximately 46% of registered asylum seekers are female, with 35% being single parents and over half between the ages of 18-59. Most persons in the migrant community settled in T&T have completed secondary schooling, approximately 25% have completed tertiary education, but many are not fluent in English<sup>15</sup>. To save money, many migrants live in collective accommodation sharing the costs for food and rent. Prior to COVID-19 most migrants worked in construction, hospitality, as well as in domestic work. Due to current national lockdown restrictions many adults and breadwinners in this community have lost their jobs and are facing extreme hardship and food insecurity as it is estimated that 80% of the migrant community are now unemployed<sup>16</sup>. Prior to the COVID 19 crisis many businesses actively solicited labor from the migrant community as they are recognized as hard working and willing to undertake work which in many cases, they are overqualified to perform, and which does not attract reliable workers from the local labor force.
- 1.11. The following portrait of Maria, a Venezuelan migrant living in T&T and a targeted beneficiary of the SPOOL project best illustrates the challenges faced and sacrifices made by many migrant women.
- 1.12. Maria is 27 years old and worked as a teacher in a vocational school in Venezuela for five years before the situation in Venezuela changed drastically. Her husband was the first to try to go to Trinidad and together they scraped up enough money to arrange his passport and plane ticket. That was three years ago before the T&T immigration rules changed, and a visa requirement was imposed. To join her husband, Maria and her two children aged 6 and 3 had to enter via the southern border of T&T by boat two years ago. The journey took place at night and the children were afraid, but they were able to pay the smugglers and enter without being detained by the police. The family registered as asylum seekers with the UNHCR. Other than their UNHCR certificate (they are still awaiting the card since there is such a large backlog), Maria has her Venezuelan national identity card. Her Venezuelan passport has expired. She also has the children's birth certificates. They were also fortunate enough to be in the country when the government registration and the provision of permission to work was extended to

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<sup>13</sup> Based on experience from LWC, women participate in training and educational programming twice as much as men, since men are more likely to work manual jobs with long hours.

<sup>14</sup> Information provided by Living Water Community the UNHCR Implementation Partner in Trinidad and Tobago

<sup>15</sup> Information provided by Living Water Community the UNHCR Implementation Partner in Tr

<sup>16</sup> Estimate provided by Living Water Community UNHCR Implementation Partner in Trinidad and Tobago

the migrant community as their asylum seeker status on its own would not give them legal rights to employment. The first year for Maria and her family in Trinidad and Tobago was very stressful especially as the COVID-19 pandemic exploded a few months after her arrival. Her husband lost his job and she contributed what she could through odd cleaning jobs, though the pay was never much. With the strict lockdown measures, however, even those opportunities soon dried up. The children were not allowed to go to school and the family had no money to pay for private education. As the stress of the financial and health situation grew, Maria and her husband started fighting more and more. Eventually they were evicted from their small apartment and her husband went to live with a cousin and Maria and the children shared a room in a house with several other Venezuelans. Now a single mom, Maria started working in restaurants as businesses started opening back up. She took work anywhere that was willing to hire her. On weekends she would make empanadas and tequenitos and sell them to other Venezuelans in the area for a little extra money. She was able to pay her rent for the shared room and buy food for the children and occasional phone cards. With the new restrictions and closure of businesses caused by the worsening COVID-19 situation in 2021, all opportunities for work are now gone. No one in the large, shared house is employed and food is running out. Maria is afraid to go out looking for work because she does not want to get sick and every time she is on the street, she faces xenophobia since locals identify her as Venezuelan and blame her for the pandemic. She has not been able to buy a phone card in a long time, but the house still has internet for the time being, which Maria uses to apply for food assistance from Living Water Community. All Maria wants is the opportunity to earn a living in a safe environment so that she can provide shelter, food and an education for her children and send something back home to help support her parents.

## **II. The Innovation Proposal**

### **A. Project Description**

- 2.1 The project objective is to develop and implement a sustainable business model to engage, train, empower and support vulnerable women from the Venezuelan migrant and host communities in T&T. Beneficiaries will access training and engage in livelihood opportunities afforded through the SPOOL program in design and production of branded specialty fashion garments for T&T and other regional Carnivals, as well as other festivals and events. The program will also help bridge a critical gap in the availability of skilled workers needed to catalyze local production and growth within T&T's fashion sector.
- 2.2 This program will be delivered through an innovative combination of technology and services addressing all focus areas of the Better Together/Juntos es Mejor challenge as follows: (i) People: The SPOOL program will develop a newly skilled workforce as well as a cadre of entrepreneurs by offering courses in garment design and construction, Caribbean specific Carnival and festival product development, entrepreneurship, and digital skills specific to the garment industry. (ii) Productivity: SPOOL will improve logistics and supply chain in the local fashion and Carnival costume sector (iii) Services: To guarantee the wellbeing of and ensure sustained participation, SPOOL, with support from local specialist agencies will offer critical support services to participants that will assist in engagement,

equitable access, and success in the program. These services will include psychosocial support services, English language learning, childcare where feasible, transportation, and the opportunity for sharing and integration between local and Venezuelan women iv) Finance: SPOOL will provide access to markets to support entrepreneurial efforts of participants through e-commerce opportunities with partners like Carib Shopper, ShopCaribe and other online platforms. SPOOL will therefore be a full-service Carnival and fashion garment manufacturing ecosystem, comprising a unique online and on the job training program, garment production Hubs and an entrepreneurship and market access matching service.

- 2.3 **Innovation.** This program is innovative in three aspects: (i) the beneficiaries. The project team has recognized the immense contribution that migrants can make to the country and the need to provide meaningful, dignified livelihood opportunities which will reduce the vulnerability of this community to exploitation. This project exemplifies, with an innovative approach, the critical role that civil society organizations and social entrepreneurs play in delivering services and providing safeguards that national entities and legislation cannot provide; (ii) the program will develop a newly and innovative skilled workforce as well as a cadre of entrepreneurs specific for the fashion industry, and (iii) the program will provide access to new markets to support entrepreneurial efforts of participants through digital platforms (e-commerce opportunities). Thus, through the implementation of this program, IDB Lab will be supporting a social innovation which will ensure the delivery of goods and services to marginalized communities. The program to implement this innovative model is structured in three components as follows:

- 2.4 **Component I: Engagement and Empowerment of Candidates (US \$335,000: IDB Lab \$232,000, Counterpart \$103,000)** The objective of this component is to provide beneficiaries with technical training and support services they require to engage in livelihood opportunities in the fashion sector in T&T. In this component, Together W.I. Foundation will work with Living Water Community to identify trainee selection criteria based on the roster of migrants and members of their host communities that are currently registered and receive social support services from Living Water Community. The initial 300 trainees selected will participate in empowerment programs, skills training programs and language classes. The skills training programs will consist of online courses in garment design and construction, festival product development, entrepreneurship training as well as digital skills. SPOOL's multidisciplinary advisory team will develop the curriculum content, while Living Waters Community will offer the empowerment and language classes. The team will create an e-learning portal where trainees can access pre-recorded videos for the respective modules, thereby allowing students to move at their own pace. There will also be live online sessions allowing students to engage with tutors in real time. The basic level skills training program will be taught in Spanish with English subtitles. Trainees will receive supplemental hands-on training in SPOOL's anchor production hub, where students will be taught how to use different equipment such as industrial sewing machines. Participants' progress will be assessed periodically through the assignment of mini projects to demonstrate application of technical skills as well as a final practicum project.

- 2.5 While all 300 participants will be given the opportunity to build their skills through skills training programs and language classes, 100 trainees will benefit from SPOOL's advanced On the Job training program (OJT). The best performing

- trainees will be assessed by the multidisciplinary team throughout the basic level training course as well as the quality of their final practicum project. The 100 selected trainees will participate in a further 3–4-month training program that delves further into more advanced levels of garment fabrication. At the completion of this intensive OJT program, graduates will have developed skills that will either allow them to be employed by the SPOOL team, work with other fashion and carnival designers or companies, and/or have access to resources and support needed to develop their own micro business.
- 2.6 To guarantee participation and reduce attrition rates of recruits, SPOOL together with their partner Living Waters Community, will offer psychosocial support services, childcare where feasible, transportation to main production Hub and offer opportunities for integration between participating members of the migrant and host communities. Those persons participating in the OJT program shall also benefit from a small stipend and all participants will be provided with access to mobile data packages to ensure that they can access online training segments.
  - 2.7 Key outputs of this component include: (i) development of training content, (ii) enrollment of 300 participants and (iii) 100 participants recruited into advanced training and On the Job training opportunities.
  - 2.8 **Component II: Establishment and Operation of Anchor and Satellite Production Hubs (US \$480,900; IDB Lab \$259,900, Counterpart \$221,000).** The objective of this component is to establish and operate SPOOL production spaces where OJT's can complete their apprenticeship and be contracted to work on production of SPOOL's branded fashion garments and costumes. These workspaces are critical to facilitate the hands-on advanced skills development as well as the scaling up of production capability to provide livelihood opportunities for program participants. The production hubs are a key element for scaling over time and sustainability of the SPOOL model. The hubs will be established on a phased basis, starting with an anchor facility in proximity to the capital city and extended via the implementation of smaller scale satellite locations to extend the geographical scope of employment opportunities by providing workshops located in proximity to other dense migrant host communities. Each hub will be outfitted with equipment and facilities required for OJT recruits to practice and learn, as well as for designers and producers to utilize and to innovate their craft, using different materials, such as recycled materials and new technologies where feasible. The anchor production hub will not only be the base for co-creation and manufacturing but also innovating production processes, exploring new designs including hybrid Carnival and fashion wear and niche festival wear. To support sustainability and lower costs of operating the production hubs over the long term, consideration can be given to use of renewable/alternate energy sources, as well as water and waste efficiencies.
  - 2.9 In year 1 of the project, the SPOOL team will develop the anchor production hub site. The anchor production hub will be fully outfitted with a full suite of equipment known as a pod, this pod will facilitate garment construction from beginning to end. Production hubs will facilitate in person on the job training for trainees and will be used as the central headquarters for outsourced contract work for graduates employed by the SPOOL team. Given the specific vulnerability of targeted SPOOL participants, the production hub will be outfitted with security and access to the

facility will be managed by the facility owners. Given the ongoing health challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic, all training and work conducted at the production hubs, will comply with current health regulations, working stations will be physically distanced, protocols will be established to ensure personal sanitization and the maximum number of persons allowed at any one time, additionally all equipment, working stations, surfaces and floors will be sanitized daily.

- 2.10 During year 2, the SPOOL team will embark on establishing a satellite Hub in another easily accessible area of the country, the intent over time would be to establish decentralized production hubs throughout the country to facilitate ease of access and to increase SPOOL's production capabilities. Where possible, graduates of the SPOOL program will be employed not just to utilize but also to supervise the satellite production hubs.
- 2.11 The key output in this component will be the establishment of the anchor production hub and one satellite hub.
- 2.12 **Component III: Business Development and Marketing (US \$195,000: IDB Lab \$15,000, Counterpart \$180,000)** The objective of this component is to further develop and scale the SPOOL model as a key pillar in ensuring sustainability. The SPOOL team has been selected for support by the EY Ripples program. Through the Ripples program, EY professional teams provide advisory services and support working with impact entrepreneurs to scale innovative solutions to global problems. In this regard, EY's support to SPOOL will focus on the assignment of a team of professionals to deliver advisory and other professional support as needed to assist SPOOL in building out and scaling up its business model as a key element of sustainability. In addition, the SPOOL team will contract expert support to develop a branding and marketing strategy for the project, critical to this effort will be the development of digital content demonstrating not just the products and services offered but the underlying social purpose of the model which pairs upskilling and empowerment of vulnerable women as co-creators and producers of bespoke and specialized apparel starting with the Carnival and associated festivals segments of the industry. This mission is an alternative to fast fashion and mass-produced brands that can play well, particularly in the Gen Z market. The marketing strategy will also include avenues for the promotion of the direct-to-consumer platform internationally, as well as targeted marketing for business-to-business opportunities and content for other forms of media deemed relevant in the strategy.
- 2.13 To deliver and realize business results of this branding strategy and market development, the program will cover development of compelling digital content, recruitment of influencers and brand ambassadors as well as the implementation of a branding and marketing campaign.
- 2.14 To facilitate and encourage the empowerment of SPOOL participants to pursue their own micro businesses, resources from this component will be used to develop a customized online matchmaking platform which will facilitate direct to consumer transactions between SPOOL graduates and consumers. All 300 participants will be granted the opportunity to offer their services for garment design, fabrication, and alterations/repairs on this platform.

- 2.15 The key outputs of this component will be (i) the development of a sustainable and scalable business model, (ii) implementation of a branding and marketing campaign and (iii) an online transaction platform.

## **B. Project Results, Measurement, Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 2.16 Key project indicators include those that measure feelings of safety and wellbeing amongst trainees, alternative livelihood opportunities and gender participation. Upon completion of the 2 year project implementation period, the team will achieve the following results at the impact level (i) Operationalization of SPOOL to enable employment of vulnerable persons (ii) 75% of Beneficiaries who report an improved sense of safety and wellbeing upon program completion (iii) 80% of participants self-identify as female (iv) 70% of beneficiaries are Venezuelan migrants, (v) 50% of beneficiaries completing entry level program are engaged in employment or self employed as a result of training and (iv) SPOOL is able to cover all operational costs of its operations.
- 2.17 The project is also aligned to the **Sustainable Development Goals**, particularly with the following objectives: (i) **SDG 5**, gender equality, specifically target 5.b, for promoting activities to empower women; (ii) **SDG 8**, decent work and economic growth, in particular target 8.3, for promoting entrepreneurship and the growth of micro and small enterprises; (iii) **SDG 9**, industry, innovation and infrastructure, specifically target 9.3, for promoting entrepreneurship and MSMEs access to markets; (iv) **SDG 10**, reduced inequalities, especially target 10.2 for supporting the social and economic inclusion of Venezuelan migrants and entrepreneurs from the host community.
- 2.18 In accordance with IDB Lab requirements, Together W.I. Foundation will report on project results as outlined in the project results matrix every six months via the IDB Lab's Project Status Reporting (PSR) system and will also complete a final Project Status Report on conclusion of the project

## **III. Alignment with IDB Group, Scalability, and Risks**

### **A. Alignment with IDB Group**

- 3.1 This project was selected from the [Better Together/Juntos Es Mejor Challenge](#), in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Its evaluation process included judges/evaluators from across the IDB Group seeking to align the selected proposals with the work and priorities of other sectors. Additionally, and in the context of the challenge, it will be executed in coordination with and sharing its results with USAID and other partners.
- 3.2 The project directly responds to the **IDB Lab programming focus on talent and employment, as well as Gender and Diversity** as it seeks to develop technical and soft skills for livelihoods via engagement in training, employment, or contract opportunities and/or micro entrepreneurship.



- 3.3 The project is aligned with the **operational priorities of the IDBG** and its Sector Framework documents, specifically in the areas of **Gender and Diversity**, to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment, and in **Social Protection and Poverty**, seeking to support minimum consumption levels of extremely poor people through mechanisms that favor capacity building, promoting the autonomy of poor and vulnerable people, and offering special protection for those whose situation of dependency means they have specific care needs.
- 3.4 The project directly supports the **IDB Group Vision 2025** in Gender and Diversity, specifically the inclusion of women and the economically disadvantaged, racial, and ethnic minorities including migrants, that risk falling into poverty and or/social exclusion.
- 3.5 Also, this project has been designed in coordination with the **IDB Migration Unit** seeking to align it with their goal of implementing a comprehensive agenda to transform the challenges of migration into development opportunities for Latin American and Caribbean countries using financial and non-financial instruments, leveraging investments, and scaling innovative solutions contributing to the successful integration of migrants to their host communities
- 3.6 The project is aligned two of the three key pillars of the IDB Group **Country Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago 2016-2020**<sup>17</sup>, specifically the promotion of private sector development and fostering human development. It is also aligned with the Country Strategy's cross cutting focus on the promotion of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion.

## **B. Scalability**

- 3.7 As outlined in Component III of the project, the SPOOL program will receive advisory support and other professional services to refine and scale its business model through participation in EY's Ripple program. The Ripple program focuses the global talent of EY on development of innovative social enterprises, like the SPOOL program, that create meaningful impact. In addition, Anya Ayoung Chee as one of SPOOL's creators and the technical lead, is well established and networked in the local, regional, and North American fashion industries. The program seeks to address a key challenge that has stymied the growth of T&T's fashion industry for many years, specifically the gap in skilled labor required to scale up local and the onshore production, particularly of Carnival costumes and apparel for the T&T, regional and international festivals. The support and guidance of EY will provide critical support in helping SPOOL to define a path to scale and sustainability. In addition, expert service providers will be retained to support both the branding and marketing of SPOOL with a focus on B2C and targeted B2B channels based on SPOOL's value proposition and desired positioning in the market. By the end of year 2 of the project, it is expected that SPOOL will generate sufficient resources to sustain the training of additional beneficiaries and to expand production and sales further. The appeal of SPOOL's products and services as an alternative to fast

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<sup>17</sup> The IDB Group Country Strategy with Trinidad and Tobago 2021-2025 has not yet been approved by the Board of the IDB Group. However, the SPOOL program is aligned with the cross-cutting focus on gender, diversity and inclusion that will be mainstreamed in all operations.

fashion and mass production, in favor of more curated offerings that generate social impact beyond financial profits is expected to resonate particularly with more conscious consumers and Gen Z. Additionally, connections afforded to SPOOL as an IDB Lab partner are expected to assist the program in fostering additional market linkages as well as benefitting from network opportunities with other change makers in the Orange Economy and related fields.

## C Project and Institutional Risks

- 3.8 The project risk level is assessed as Medium. Key risks that have been analyzed and which contribute to this assessment are as follows: (i) **Market Risk:** Revenues required to cover SPOOL program operational costs are not realized by the end of year 2 due to insufficient demand. To mitigate this risk, in its branding and marketing operations, SPOOL will target and leverage a global customer base focused on sustainable small batch production which is linked to decent work for disadvantaged populations, and which is increasingly opposed to the fast fashion movement. (ii) **Socioeconomic risk:** Ongoing restrictions due to the COVID -19 Pandemic may affect both demand for and operations of the production facility. This risk can be partially mitigated as in the six months of the program online forums will be used for training of the SPOOL participants with production and marketing to begin in year 2 where business operations and economic activity is expected to return to a state of normalcy due to national and international vaccination programs that are being rolled out. (iii) **Political Risk:** Not all migrants have legal status to reside and work in the country and the continued extension of permits for existing legally registered migrants beyond 2021 is uncertain. This risk will be monitored but the team is focusing on delivering training to develop transferable skills (fashion, festival, and costume wear) that can be leveraged by participants wherever they go and can easily translate to informal self-employment opportunities. It is also intended that the online platform will connect providers and customers in any geographic location.
- 3.9 The Institutional Risk according to the Assessment of Integrity and Institutional Capacity (DICI) is rated as Low. The only risk identified is the need for an additional finance officer for the project which has been provisioned in the project budget under Project Administration.

## IV. Instrument and Budget Proposal

- 4.1 The project has a total cost of US \$1,131,600, of which us \$560,000 (49%) will be provided by the IDB Lab, and US \$ 571,600 (51%) by the counterpart.
- 4.2 The instrument to be used is a non-reimbursable technical co-operation given the focus of this operation as catalyzing livelihood opportunities for highly vulnerable women in Trinidad and Tobago's migrant and host communities via the application of a socially oriented commercial business model, that has high potential for development, but requires initial support to pilot and demonstrate impact and viability.

4.3 The project budget summary is presented in the following table:

	<b>IDB Lab</b>	<b>Counterpart</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Project Components</b>			
Component 1: Engagement and Empowerment of Candidates	232,000	103,000	335,000
Component 2: Establishment of Anchor and Satellite Hubs	259,900	221,000	480,900
Component 3: Business Development and Branding	15,000	180,000	195,000
Project Administration (Executing Unit costs)	45,500	60,000	105,500
<b>Contingencies</b>	7,600	7,600	15,200
<b>Grand Total</b>	560,000	571,600	1,131,600
<b>% Of Financing</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **V. Executing Agency (EA) and Implementation Structure**

### **A. Executing Agency(s) Description**

- 5.1 The Together W.I. Foundation will be the Executing Agency of this project and will sign the agreement with the Bank.
- 5.2 Together W.I. Foundation was founded in 2017 by a group of creative individuals based in Trinidad and Tobago who are driven to use their skills, talents, and resources to effect social change in their island and in the Caribbean region. Working together on a purely voluntary basis, the creative collective has been focused on the development of social justice campaigns, addressing key social issues impacting the region, including Gender Based Violence, the need for prison reform, crime, and the need for national and regional unification to better the world. Over the years, the Together W.I. Foundation's focus has transitioned to develop larger scale projects merging the creative industries, technology, education, and livelihood initiatives to support the evolution of the creative industries in the Caribbean, while developing innovative and sustainable mechanisms to enhance the quality of life for the disenfranchised members of the surrounding communities. To this end they have developed strategic partnerships with a variety of social impact organizations to execute their primary project, SPOOL, where the focus is on creating sustainable mechanisms for women in the fashion and carnival industries to gain financial freedom.
- 5.3 Anya Ayoung Chee is a founding member of Together W.I. Foundation and is a recognized creative fashion designer and entrepreneur in the local, regional, and North American fashion sectors following her winning the 9<sup>th</sup> season of Project Runway, a popular TV contest. Since this initial foray into the fashion sector, Anya has established her brand in the design and production of Carnival costumes and in her apparel lines the Anya Ayoung Chee Limited Edition and Wyld Flwr. With training from Parsons School of Design in New York and the Central St Martins

School of Art and Design in London, Anya through Together W.I. Foundation wants to create lasting social impact in her entrepreneurial endeavors. The SPOOL project is a manifestation of this aspiration to invest in the lives and livelihoods of more vulnerable and socially excluded women, as she sees skills development in the fashion industry as a path to empowerment and income generation. Anya will function as the technical lead for the SPOOL project.

- 5.4 Recognizing that as a volunteer organization founded and led by creative activists, Together W.I. Foundation may be challenged in reaching and engaging targeted beneficiary groups, and in managing financial reporting and fiduciary requirements of a donor funded project, Together W.I. Foundation has entered a technical partnership with Living Water Community, the UNHCR implementing partner in T&T that delivers key services and conducts advocacy for the local migrant population. Established in 1975, Living Water Community is a Catholic Lay Ecclesiastical and regional Non-Governmental Organization headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago. Living Water Community has established reach and gained trust in the Venezuelan migrant community in Trinidad and Tobago, as a key provider of essential services including food support, psychological, educational and health assistance. In addition, and importantly, the organization has developed the capacity for efficient and transparent management, procurement, and reporting requirements for international donor funds. Living Water Community will support implementation of the SPOOL project through (i) engagement of program participants, (ii) delivery of auxiliary services including language training, empowerment and other support required for successful participation in the program and (iii) assistance in the fiduciary management and reporting on IDB Lab and counterpart resources<sup>18</sup>.

## **B. Implementation Structure and Mechanism**

- 5.5 Together W.I. Foundation will establish an executing unit and the necessary structure to execute project activities and manage project resources effectively and efficiently. The Together W.I. Foundation will also be responsible for providing progress reports on project implementation. Details on the structure of the execution unit and reporting requirements are in Annex V in the project technical files.
- 5.6 To facilitate efficient and results oriented project implementation, the Executing Agency Together W.I. Foundation, will partner with Living Water Community the implementing partner for UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago. Together W.I. Foundation will establish a technical team to manage project activities including a training coordinator, project manager, production manager, production technicians and a fiduciary support officer. The Living Water Community will undertake fiduciary management of SPOOL program resources and will assist in recruitment of and provision of support services to course participants. In addition, EY in Trinidad and Tobago will partner with Together W.I. Foundation to support refinement and scaling of the SPOOL business model to achieve the program's targets for sustainable growth beyond the period of IDB Lab support.

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<sup>18</sup> IDB Lab funding will be disbursed to Together W.I Foundation., Living Water Community will assist with procurement, financial record keeping and reporting

- 5.7 To best co-ordinate and provide the required oversight and governance of the SPOOL project, Together W.I. Foundation will establish a SPOOL program management committee chaired by Anya Ayoung Chee with at least 2 participants from Together W.I. Foundation, 2 participants from Living Water Community (including fiduciary lead) and 1 participant from EY. The management committee will meet fortnightly for the initial 3 months of the program to facilitate rapid and coordinated mobilization, and on at least a quarterly basis thereafter. The key responsibilities of the management committee will be to assess program progress against key performance targets, participant progress, use and management of financial resources, risk management, performance of service providers, business development and quality assurance. The management committee will be supported by the SPOOL project manager and project execution team.

## **VI. Compliance with Milestones and Special Fiduciary Arrangements**

- 6.1 **Disbursement by Results, Fiduciary Arrangements.** The Executing Agency will adhere to the standard IDB Lab disbursement by results, Bank procurement policy<sup>19</sup> and financial management<sup>20</sup> arrangements as specified in Annex V and VI.
- 6.2 **Results Based Disbursement.** The project will be monitored by the IDB's Country Office in Trinidad and Tobago. Monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with the performance and risk management policies (fulfilment of milestones), as established by the IDB Lab. Project disbursements will be contingent upon verification of the achievement of milestones (pre-determined outputs critical to achievement of the development objectives). Achievement of milestones does not exempt the Executing Agency from the responsibility of reaching the results matrix indicators and project's objectives.
- 6.3 **Financial Management and Supervision.** Together W.I. Foundation, in partnership with Living Water Community, will establish and be responsible for maintaining adequate accounts of its finances, internal controls, and project files according to the financial management policy of the IDB Lab. For the procurement of other goods and contracting of consulting services, the Executing Agency will adopt the principles of IDB Policies (GN-2349-15 and GN-2350-15).

## **VII. Information Disclosure and Intellectual Property\*\***

- 7.1 **Information Disclosure.** This document will be disclosed and made available to the public upon approval.
- 7.2 **Intellectual Property.** The Executing Agency shall own the intellectual property rights to all works produced or results obtained under the project and will grant the

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<sup>19</sup> Link to the Policy: [Procurement of Works and Goods Policy](#)

<sup>20</sup> Link to the document [Operational Guidelines for Management of Milestones and Financial Supervision for MIF and SEP Technical Cooperation Projects](#)

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