

Country Focus Report

Indonesia

July 2025

Introduction to the Enabling Environment

What we understand by an Enabling Environment is the combination of laws, rules and social attitudes that support and promote the work of civil society. Within such an environment, civil society can engage in political and public life without fear of reprisals, openly express its views, and actively participate in shaping its context. This includes a supportive legal and regulatory framework for civil society, ensuring access to information and resources that are sustainable and flexible to pursue their goals unhindered, in safe physical and digital spaces. In an enabling environment, the state demonstrates openness and responsiveness in governance, promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. Positive values, norms, attitudes, and practices towards civil society from state and non-state actors further underscore the supportive environment.

To capture the state of the Enabling Environment, we use the following six principles:

Six key enabling principles:

1. Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms
2. Supportive legal and regulatory framework
3. Accessible and sustainable resources
4. Open and responsive State
5. Supportive public culture and discourses on civil society
6. Access to a secure digital environment

In this Country Focus Reports, each enabling principle is assessed with a quantitative score and complemented by an analysis and recommendations written by our NMs. Rather than offering a singular index to rank countries, the report aims to measure the enabling environment for civil society across the 6 principles, discerning dimensions of strength and those requiring attention.

The findings presented in this report are grounded in the insights and diverse perspectives of civil society actors who came together in a dedicated panel with representatives from civil society to discuss and evaluate the state of the Enabling Environment. Their collective input enriches the report with a grounded, participatory assessment. This primary input is further supported by secondary sources of information, which provide additional context and strengthen the analysis.

A) Introduction

Since the fall of the authoritarian New Order regime in 1998, Indonesia has achieved remarkable progress in building democratic institutions. As the world's fourth-largest democracy and the largest Muslim-majority, the country has embraced a presidential system

marked by direct elections and a vibrant multiparty landscape. These early democratic reforms were widely celebrated as a model of political transformation in the region.

However, in recent years, Indonesia's democracy has faced serious setbacks. Once hailed as a beacon of democratic transition, the country is now grappling with increasing authoritarian tendencies, shrinking civic space, and a steady erosion of civil liberties and political rights. Civil society, long considered a cornerstone of democratic governance and sustainable development, is increasingly under pressure.

A bibliometric analysis of 8,029 scholarly works published between 2015 and May 2025 (Image 1) underscores the central role of civil society in Indonesia's development discourse, highlighting its contributions to public health, human rights, international cooperation, and governance reform. This body of research emphasises a people-centred, context-specific approach, with civil society actors often at the forefront of policy advocacy, particularly for marginalised populations.

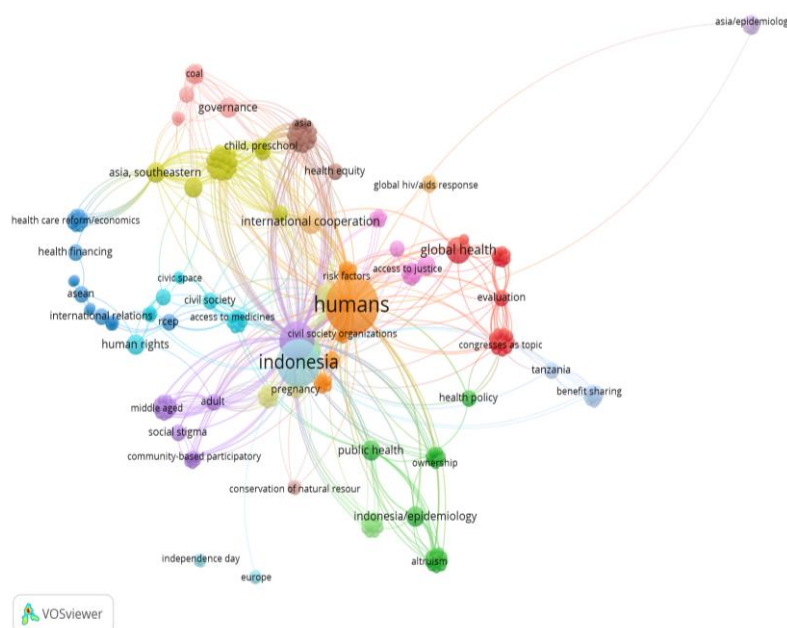


Image 1: Bibliometric map generated using VOSviewer. Data sourced from The Lens, an open-access platform that connects scholarly research with innovation and industry to advance evidence-based solutions.

Recent studies highlight a growing authoritarian trend in Indonesia, with a declining environment for civil society. [Freedom House](#) noted a drop in Indonesia's civil liberties and political rights score from 62 in 2019 to 57 in 2024, citing corruption and weak protections for religious minorities. [The 2024 Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index](#) scored Indonesia at 6.44, labeling it a "flawed democracy" (59th out of 167 countries), down from 56th in 2023, due to issues in government functioning and elections. The 2024 election of Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka raised concerns about democratic backsliding and power centralization.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) face legal, bureaucratic, and security challenges, including harassment, data breaches, and violence. Digital repression, such as doxing and cyber surveillance, targets critics, while political elites label CSOs as “foreign proxies,” undermining trust. Arbitrary arrests and biased investigations further limit equal treatment and protection for vulnerable groups.

At the same time, [internal challenges](#) weaken civil society’s ability to push back against democratic backsliding. Reformist groups often rely heavily on legalistic strategies that fall short of confronting entrenched anti-democratic forces. Many also lack grassroots engagement, opting for ad-hoc approaches rather than building sustained movements for social change.

B) Assessment of the Enabling Environment

Principle 1: Respect and protection of fundamental freedoms

Score: 3¹ - Obstructed

In Indonesia, the right to freedom of association is legally protected. [Article 28E, paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution](#) guarantees every individual the right to associate, assemble, and express opinions. This is further supported by [Law No. 9/1998 on Public Expression](#) and [Law No. 39/1999](#) on Human Rights. Additionally, Indonesia has ratified the ICCPR [through Law No. 12/2005](#), integrating international human rights standards into national law.

1.1 | Restrictions and Repression on Civic Space in Indonesia

Despite this, [Indonesia’s civic space remains obstructed](#), with CSOs and activists routinely subjected to legal, physical, and digital threats. Human rights and environmental defenders face increasing intimidation: Gustina Salim Rambe was [imprisoned](#) for opposing a palm oil mill, while [Bambang Hero Saharjo](#), who served as an expert witness in a major corruption case, experienced judicial harassment and suffered coordinated social media attacks. Despite at least 123 documented cases of threats, assaults, and reprisals against 288 human rights defenders, [very few perpetrators have faced prosecution](#). Civil society groups continue to advocate for stronger legal protections, including legislation to protect from Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs). A small step forward came in September 2024, when

¹ This is a rebased score derived from the CIVICUS Monitor rating published in December 2024. The country is rated as Obstructed in the Monitor, with a score of 48/100, which has been converted to fit our 1–5 scale.

the Ministry of Environment and Forestry issued [Regulation No. 10/2024](#), ~~a-on~~ legal protection for environmental defenders.

The right to peaceful assembly continues to be undermined by the use of excessive force and intimidation. In February 2025, [Papuan students protesting](#) President Prabowo's 'free nutritious meal' program, while demanding free education and better school facilities, were [met with excessive police force](#), including arbitrary arrests, intimidation, and the use of tear gas across multiple cities. From 22 to 26 August 2024, protests erupted across the country in response to a proposed election law amendment that would have benefited the former president's son. The state responded with unnecessary force, arbitrary arrests, and tear gas. A total of 344 protesters were arrested, 152 were injured, and 17 experienced adverse effects from tear gas. At least 65 people were subjected to incommunicado detention, one case of short-term enforced disappearance was reported, and 14 were criminally charged. Verified footage showed police in Bandung beating unarmed protesters, while in Semarang, tear gas was deployed in residential areas, leading to the hospitalization of 15 university students and children in nearby homes. These examples reveal a persistent pattern of legal and extralegal repression used to silence dissent, punish criticism, and limit civic space in Indonesia.

1.2 | Freedom of Expression: Challenges and Advances

Freedom of expression in Indonesia continues to be [similarly curtailed](#) through censorship, intimidation, and the misuse of defamation laws. Artists have faced pressure to censor their work, such as a band forced to retract a song criticizing police corruption. Meanwhile, journalists face grave risks, including murder. Francisca Christy Rosana, a political journalist from Tempo, received threatening packages, [including a pig's head and decapitated rats](#), after publishing investigative reports. The National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) [condemned the threats](#), while a presidential advisor [drew criticism](#) for making light of the situation. In July 2024, journalist Rico Sempurna and his family were killed in an arson attack related to his reporting on illegal gambling, with suspects arrested but the alleged military mastermind left unprosecuted. The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) [recorded](#) 73 cases of violence against journalists in 2024, ranging from murder and intimidation to digital and gender-based abuse. Offenders included police, military personnel, mass organizations (such as the paramilitary organization Ikatan Pemuda Karya), and government officials.

Despite a persistently restrictive climate, there have been notable gains for freedom of expression in Indonesia. In January 2024, human rights defenders Haris Azhar and Fatia Maulidiyanti were acquitted of criminal defamation after exposing military involvement in mining. A landmark [Constitutional Court ruling](#) followed in March 2024, striking down three defamation provisions, Article 14 and 15 of Law No. 1/1946 and Article 310(1) of the Criminal Code, for violating the 1945 Constitution. The petitioners argued these laws were often used

to silence dissent and weaken democratic accountability. This ruling marks a significant step forward for press freedom and free expression. In addition, [Amnesty International Indonesia](#) also recorded at least 530 cases of criminalization under the ITE Law between 2019 and 2024, affecting 563 individuals.

Overall, while Indonesia's legal framework formally guarantees civic freedoms, their implementation remains uneven and often repressive. This contradiction undermines the enabling environment for civil society, discouraging open participation and limiting the potential for inclusive, democratic governance. A strong enabling environment requires not just legal guarantees, but consistent protection and enforcement in practice.

Principle 2: Supportive legal and regulatory framework

Score: 2.7

The country's [legal framework](#) technically permits any individual or group, including marginalised communities, to establish a CSO without minimum asset requirements. Legal procedures for registration differ depending on the type of organization: associations (membership-based) or foundations. Foundations are regulated by the [2001 Law on Foundations](#), revised in 2004, while associations are governed by [Staatsblad \(Statute\) No. 64/1870](#). CSO registration is further regulated by [Law No.17/2013](#) concerning Societal Organizations and [MOHA Regulation No. 57/2017](#) concerning Registration and Management of Societal Organization Information System. [Law No. 17 of 2013 on Societal Organizations](#) recognises two categories of CSOs: (1) legal entities, which include foundations and associations, and (2) non-legal entities, which encompass various civil society-formed organizations without formal legal status. Full legal status requires approval from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. CSOs not seeking full legal status may opt for a Registration Certificate (SKT) from the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is relatively simple and free, though it must be renewed every five years. However, legal pathways contain ambiguities, particularly the absence of appeal mechanisms under the Law on Foundations and the vague procedural guidance for associations.

2.1 | Barriers to Registration and Operations

Despite the formal existence of these mechanisms, expert panellists indicate that CSOs face a wide range of barriers. Most panellists described encountering administrative challenges, many of which relate to lengthy bureaucratic procedures. These are compounded by high costs, limited clarity, and dependency on the commitment and interpretation of authorities.

“Bureaucratic issues can hinder the registration process. Lengthy, convoluted, non-transparent, and slow procedures present significant challenges in the process” (Speaker 8).

Discriminatory practices also significantly affect the registration of CSOs in Indonesia. While these issues were acknowledged by many expert panellists as affecting registration in the current climate, several of the most prominent cases were recorded in 2021. For instance, CSOs working on LGBTQIA+ issues faced serious obstacles in obtaining legal status. Notaries reportedly refused to process registration applications unless all references to LGBTQIA+ communities were removed. One LGBTQIA+ organization spent nearly a decade before finally obtaining legal recognition.

Foreign CSOs face even [more complex and restrictive procedures](#). To operate in Indonesia, they must navigate a series of bureaucratic and legal hurdles, including strict residency requirements and significant capital thresholds of USD 1 million for foreign legal entities and USD 100,000 for individuals.

The legal framework permits CSOs to determine their objective, carry out activities, access both domestic and international funding, and panellists acknowledged positively that the government does not interfere in their internal governance. However, these formal allowances are often overshadowed by constraints that limit effective implementation.

Transparency and accountability obligations strain operational capacities. While laws mandate financial reporting, especially for CSOs soliciting public funds, compliance is low due to complex reporting requirements that often exceed CSOs’ limited resources. Audits are legally required for organizations managing more than IDR 500 million (30,000 USD) in funds or holding assets over IDR 20 billion (1.2 million USD), yet small and medium-sized CSOs often cannot afford such services. According to findings by [Konsil LSM \(2021\)](#), most smaller organizations lack the necessary staff and technology to meet reporting standards. Among fifteen national CSOs [surveyed](#), only four had published their financial reports online, highlighting the gap between legal obligations and operational reality.

It is worth noting that some panellists did not encounter significant operational constraints, suggesting that experiences vary depending on the size, scope, and location of the CSOs.

2.2 | State Interventions and Restrictions

Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Indonesia face significant challenges due to [state intervention and inadequate legal safeguards](#). Interventions range from dissolving organizations, tight oversight, and steering research to align with government policies, to prolonged legal delays that hinder operations. Past attacks on CSO offices have rarely led to legal action, highlighting state failure to protect these groups. Women’s Rights Organizations

(WROs) also face interference from hardline religious groups, often without state support, leaving them vulnerable.

A key concern is [Perppu No. 2 of 2017](#), which permits the government to dissolve “anti-Pancasila (state ideology)” CSOs without due process, allowing appeals only post-dissolution. This regulation, used to [disband Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia](#) (2017) and the Islamic Defenders Front (2020), remains in effect and risks abuse against critical CSOs. The 2025 establishment of the [Joint Task Force for Eradication of Thuggery and Disruptive Mass Organizations](#), aimed at groups extorting businesses, further raises concerns about potential misuse against legitimate CSOs.

Opaque regulations, bureaucratic obstacles, and selective enforcement create a climate of fear and self-censorship, particularly for CSOs focused on human rights, environmental justice, and minority issues. The degree of state interference depends on the democratic environment and government disposition. In democratic systems, transparent legal mechanisms reduce interventions, but in hybrid regimes with authoritarian tendencies, CSOs face arbitrary dissolutions, undermining freedom of association and the rule of law.

Principle 3: Accessible and sustainable resources

Score: 2.3

CSOs in Indonesia face [significant barriers](#) to sustainable funding, with resources often concentrated among established groups, limiting opportunities for smaller or advocacy-focused CSOs. This concentration results in unequal opportunities, putting smaller organizations and those addressing sensitive or marginalised issues at a disadvantage. These groups typically face limited access to crucial funding information, networking opportunities, and institutional support.

The Indonesian government has taken steps to improve funding access for CSOs. [Funding opportunities](#) for CSOs from the state and local budgets may include Legal Aid Funds, Trust Funds, Grants, and Government Procurement through Self-Management Mechanism Type III/ Swakelola Type III. However, [access to these funds](#) is uneven and often restricted to smaller, community-based organizations engaged in empowerment activities rather than advocacy. Moreover, policies like granting religious organizations [mining permits](#) raise concerns about state control rather than genuine support.

The funding landscape is highly competitive, worsened by declining foreign aid since Indonesia’s 2008 G20 membership, potential further reductions with OECD entry, and donor closures like USAID amid global crises. Complex tax regulations and restrictive exemption processes further hinder CSOs. Additionally, stringent legal requirements, including mandatory registration and detailed reporting under Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No.

38 of 2008, create significant obstacles, often accompanied by informal pressures and intimidation.

CSOs critical of government policies face heightened scrutiny, as noted by Speaker 1: “When we were about to access funding, there was strict oversight from the state. We were questioned by the State Intelligence Agency (BIN) and the Ministry of Home Affairs, including a Q&A session on our activities. During the process, we even received a request for clarification regarding our criticism of the President.” These challenges underscore a restrictive environment that limits CSOs’ ability to secure resources and operate effectively.

3.1 | Effectiveness of donor funding for CSOs in Indonesia.

While donors generally impose reasonable conditions that align with CSOs’ goals, flexibility remains limited. Additionally, short-term, project-based funding cycles were flagged by five expert panels as a significant barrier, forcing CSOs to prioritise donor deliverables over meaningful community engagement. As one panellist noted,

“CSO work today tends to be more oriented toward fulfilling donor agendas rather than enacting real impact in communities. This weakens public trust, as advocacy efforts are often contractual rather than emotionally rooted in local needs.” (Speaker 2)

Another major concern is the thematic misalignment between donor funding and local priorities. Panellists observed that donor resources are often channelled toward global issues, making it difficult for local organizations, particularly those working on sensitive or marginalised issues, to access support:

“There is still limited flexibility in managing funds and designing programs. Donors often set priorities and focus areas that CSOs must follow, which can restrict Organisations of Persons with Disabilities’ ability to tailor programs to the specific needs of women with disabilities in different regions.” (Speaker 5)

[Risk mitigation and flexibility](#) are also often insufficient, despite the complex and shifting contexts in which CSOs operate. Moreover, strict financial reporting requirements and the practice of post-audit disbursements further exacerbate operational challenges, particularly during crises when cash flow becomes critical.

However, some positive practices were also noted. Despite the foundational requirements that CSOs must fulfil, several donors offer space for negotiation. A number of them are reported to be flexible and respectful of CSO autonomy, particularly in responding to on-the-ground

realities with some even providing allocations for emergency response and mental health support.

3.2 | Sustainable resources for CSOs in Indonesia

The most cited concern by the panelists is the lack of long-term institutional support and capacity development. This hinders the sustainability and self-reliance of CSOs, especially those working in sensitive or underfunded areas. They also highlighted that heavy dependence on donor funding significantly restricts CSOs' autonomy and adaptability. Many CSOs rely on just one donor, further exacerbating their financial instability and reducing space for strategic planning or long-term impact. A [2022 USAID study](#) that found that 110 (46%) out of the total of 240 local Indonesian CSOs stated they had only one source of funding, indicating a high level of financial vulnerability and limited capacity to sustain operations in times of uncertainty.

Panelists highlighted systemic barriers to sustainable CSO funding, including limited and highly competitive government support, particularly for "watchdog" CSOs, and a lack of transparency in funding access. The INFID-proposed CSO endowment fund, though promising, remains unimplemented, exacerbating financial challenges for smaller organizations.

These funding constraints lead to operational difficulties, with CSOs struggling to retain staff and sustain activities. Speaker 12 noted, "Even some large CSOs are troubled by a lack of leadership regeneration. The absence of strong cadres and shifting lifestyles have made CSO work less appealing to younger generations." Efforts to diversify funding through social entrepreneurship are hindered by donor restrictions on grant use for income-generating activities and a lack of technical expertise, limiting CSOs' ability to innovate and achieve financial independence.

Overall, the funding landscape for CSOs in Indonesia is fragile and unequal, with resources skewed toward larger, urban-based organizations, marginalizing smaller, community-focused, and rights-based CSOs. Donor-driven priorities, short-term funding cycles, and rigid administrative requirements undermine sustainability and autonomy. Overreliance on external funding misaligned with local needs erodes public trust and civic ownership. A shift toward equitable, diversified, and locally grounded funding, with investment in institutional support and innovative financing, is critical for CSOs to thrive as independent, impactful actors in Indonesia's democracy.

Principle 4: Open and responsive State

Score: 2.4

Indonesia's legal framework governing public access to information is primarily based on [Law No. 14 of 2008](#) on Public Information Disclosure (KIP). This law requires public bodies to provide, deliver, and/or publish public information under their authority to any information requester, except for information exempted by law (Art. 7). However, in practice, challenges remain. According to the [2024 Global Right to Information Rating](#), Indonesia ranked 42nd out of 140 countries. While this places Indonesia in the category of countries with moderately strong legal frameworks, notable gaps persist, especially in the areas of Requesting Procedures and Sanctions and Protections. Of particular concern is the absence of legal protection for whistleblowers.

Based on the expert panel discussion, the most frequently cited barrier is the unclear procedure for accessing public information. This suggests that the mechanisms meant to facilitate access are either poorly communicated or too complex, discouraging citizens from seeking information. Despite the existence of Law No. 14, public bodies frequently reject requests or fail to provide complete information, often asserting that the requested data is classified as exempt (confidential).

Unequal access to public information is another critical issue, especially for marginalised groups. For instance, panellists said that data on persons with disabilities is not consistently available, and information transparency varies significantly between regions. Moreover, controversial legislative drafts are often withheld from the public, and multiple versions of legislative documents have been reported, leading to confusion and eroding public trust. The use of buzzers and informal channels to disseminate official information raises concerns about manipulated public narratives and reduced information credibility. A recent example is the passage of the revised Law on the Indonesian National Armed Forces (RUU TNI). The Indonesian Center for Law and Policy Studies revealed that the legislative process lacked openness, as the draft Law was never officially published or shared with the public before ratification. In response, nationwide student demonstrations erupted following the draft Law's ratification by the House of Representatives (DPR) on 20 March 2025.

4.1 | Consultation mechanisms are selective and reactive

When attempting to engage the government, CSOs face selective, superficial consultations, with discrimination based on organizational type or government stance excluding critical

voices. Consultations are often last-minute or performative, limiting meaningful dialogue. Participation often occurs reactively, driven by public backlash rather than proactive policy-making. Legislation is frequently passed quickly, tailored to specific interests, with mass discussions designed to minimise interaction and dialogue.

Examples of laws passed in 2024 without meaningful civil society engagement include the Second Amendment to Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions, the Second Amendment to Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, the Law on the Welfare of Mothers and Children During the First 1,000 Days of Life, and the Amendment to the Law on the Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems. This trend continues in 2025 with proposed revisions to the Minerba Law, the State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) Law, and the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) Law.

In many cases, CSOs must create their own mechanisms to ensure their voices are heard, as institutional pathways are often weak, unreliable, or exclusionary. Structural barriers further impede inclusive participation. Women's participation is hindered by patriarchal cultural norms, while forums for persons with disabilities, such as those established to discuss the Regional Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (RAD-PD) exist formally but are rarely implemented in a meaningful way. As a result, the availability and accessibility of participatory mechanisms remain limited for many groups.

Secondary sources support this assessment. Indonesia scored 1.11 out of 4 on the [2024 V-Dem CSO consultation indicator](#), its lowest since 1999. This rating confirms that CSOs are sporadically consulted, and even when engaged, they are seldomly systematically involved in shaping policy. The score reflects that no institutionalised or regular mechanisms exist to ensure their input has weight in public decision-making.

Complementing this, the [Bertelsmann Stiftung's 2024 Governance Index](#) rated Indonesia 6 out of 10 for civil society participation, marking a downward trend in meaningful CSO engagement. The score indicates intermittent consultation with limited influence on final outcomes, often skewed in favour of actors whose perspectives align with prevailing government positions.

Despite these challenges, CSOs in Indonesia actively engage with a wide range of national policy issues, [offering recommendations](#) on matters such as the Second Nationally Determined Contribution (SNDC), an [inclusive and just renewable energy transition](#), the [EU Deforestation Regulation](#), [revisions to the Military Law](#), the [National Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism \(RAN PE\)](#), and the [Indonesia Gelap movement's 28 demands](#). This breadth of involvement illustrates the vitality and potential of civil society in shaping Indonesia's policy landscape.

4.2 | Accountability mechanisms between the government and CSOs in Indonesia are significantly weak.

Panellists frequently cited the lack of transparency in government feedback to CSOs, with stakeholders noting vague, minimal responses that obscure how public input shapes policy, reducing engagement to a symbolic exercise. This opacity undermines meaningful civil society participation.

The absence of a robust regulatory framework further hampers accountability, as no formal laws mandate government responses to CSO inputs. Interactions remain sporadic, reliant on individual agency discretion, leading to inconsistent and unreliable engagement.

Structural barriers exacerbate these issues, with inaccessible, digital-only complaint mechanisms, available solely in Bahasa Indonesia, limiting access for marginalised groups such as persons with disabilities or remote communities. There are limited avenues for CSOs to challenge decisions and curated, closed-door dialogues restrict open, meaningful exchange.

Nevertheless, there are some encouraging developments. According to the [2024 Ombudsman report](#), there was a significant increase in the number of institutions, both local governments and national ministries, earning Green Zone ratings for compliance. Moreover, in some instances, such as the [National Strategy for Corruption Prevention \(Stranas-PK\)](#), civil society input has been meaningfully incorporated into policymaking. These examples highlight the potential for more constructive engagement.

Despite a legal framework supporting transparency and participation, bureaucratic opacity, selective enforcement, and limited civic space hinder their application. Public participation remains largely symbolic, with both state and non-state actors struggling to achieve meaningful transparency and accountability. A shift toward a political culture of openness, responsiveness, and shared responsibility across society is essential to address these challenges.

Principle 5: Supportive public culture and discourses on civil society

Score: 2.3

A dominant concern by the panellists is the public perception of CSOs as adversarial or politically motivated, rather than as legitimate partners in development. This stigmatization,

frequently reinforced by government rhetoric and echoed in parts of the media, continues to erode civic space and hinder inclusive dialogue.

As highlighted by an expert panellist (8), President Prabowo Subianto [alleged](#) that foreign actors were using CSOs and media to divide the nation. Similarly, former Coordinating Minister Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan [publicly questioned](#) foreign influence and proposed audits of CSOs. These statements, amplified in mainstream media, reflect a broader pattern of scepticism and control, despite some formal acknowledgments of CSOs' importance. [A 2021 study by The Prakarsa](#) identified this public distrust as a major obstacle for CSOs.

While CSOs are sometimes recognised as collaborators, their inclusion in policymaking is often superficial, limiting their impact. Panellists noted that civic participation is largely confined to national elections, with minimal engagement in local or issue-based initiatives due to weak civic education. Despite its inclusion in the national curriculum under [Law No. 20 of 2003](#), civic education remains narrow, focusing on electoral periods and neglecting broader political education, particularly for youth.

This results in stagnant political education, weak critical thinking, and political apathy, exacerbated by polarization and performative social media engagement. Vulnerable groups, like women with disabilities, are often seen as aid recipients rather than active participants. Mainstream media censorship further marginalises critical voices, undermining CSO legitimacy.

Secondary data confirm that while public trust in CSOs in Indonesia remains relatively strong, it is slightly lower compared to other actors. According to the [2025 Edelman Trust Barometer](#), 73% of panelists expressed trust in NGOs, the lowest among the actors surveyed, compared to 75% for government and media, and 80% for business. Moreover, data from the [2024 V-Dem Institute](#) shows the CSO participatory environment scored 1.71, indicating that although diverse CSOs operate within the country, active involvement by the general population is still modest. Participation in independent political associations, such as environmental or human rights groups, scored even lower at 1.35, while participation in non-political associations, such as sports clubs or charities, was marginally higher at 1.73. Collectively, these findings suggest that while CSOs maintain a visible presence, broad-based or habitual engagement from the wider population remains an area for significant growth.

Despite these barriers, there are signs of growing civic mobilization. CSOs have responded by launching grassroots initiatives such as [ICW's Anti-Corruption School](#), [KontraS' Human Rights School \(SeHaMa\)](#), [LBH's Kalabahu](#), and [Jatam's community-based schools](#). Civic action has also emerged through public protest: [mothers' groups](#) mobilised under the #EmergencyReminder campaign, and [private sector employees participated in the](#)

[#DarkIndonesia movement](#). These examples suggest that, while limited in scale, there are emerging pockets of meaningful civic engagement across diverse segments of society.

5.1 | Equality and inclusion: persisting discrimination limits marginalised groups

Although constitutional guarantees of equality and freedom from discrimination exist, persistent misconceptions about inclusivity undermine efforts to achieve genuine equality. Indonesia has made modest progress in promoting civic inclusion, particularly for women, with the [2024 V-Dem dataset](#) reporting a score of 1.36 for women's participation in civil society organizations, the highest since 1985. However, structural and cultural barriers continue to limit meaningful participation for vulnerable groups, including women, persons with disabilities, religious minorities, and rural populations.

These groups face significant disparities, such as economic marginalization, gender inequality, and inadequate accessibility in public spaces. For instance, only 113 of 548 local governments have enacted disability-related regulations, reflecting limited commitment to disability inclusion (Speaker 5). Representation of marginalised groups in public and political spheres is often tokenistic, lacking the influence needed to shape decisions. Social distrust and biases further entrench inequalities, while agrarian conflicts disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, exacerbating economic and social disparities.

CSOs play a crucial role in advocating for vulnerable groups, and platforms like the Indonesia Civil Society Forum 2024 and alternative media outlets, such as Project Multatuli and Tempo.co, provide visibility for inclusive perspectives. However, these efforts have yet to shift dominant narratives or reach broader audiences. [The 2024 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index](#) ranked Indonesia 110th out of 142 countries on Equal Treatment and Absence of Discrimination, highlighting systemic barriers across socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. These challenges reduce trust in institutions, weaken democratic accountability, and hinder inclusive governance.

This data reflects that while some progress exists, especially in increasing women's civic participation and legal recognition, deep-rooted social and economic barriers continue to disable full equality and inclusion. Overall, public distrust, stigmatization of CSOs, and limited civic education continue to constrain meaningful participation and reinforce exclusion. These challenges are deeply interlinked with broader issues of inequality and directly weaken other enabling factors such as legal protection and accountability. Addressing them requires not only policy reform but also a cultural shift toward trust, civic literacy, and inclusive dialogue.

Principle 6: Access to a secure digital environment

Score: 2

Indonesia's digital rights face significant restrictions due to government control and weak legal frameworks, such as [Law Number 1 of 2024](#) amending Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions. These laws are inconsistently enforced and often used to suppress dissent rather than protect freedoms. Authorities frequently limit social media and internet access during politically sensitive events, hindering public engagement and access to information.

Pervasive surveillance targets activists and political content, with censorship silencing critical voices, stifling pluralistic discourse. Social media companies worsen this by removing content without transparency or accountability, further limiting open dialogue and undermining civic engagement in Indonesia's restrictive digital environment.

In 2024, Indonesia received a [Freedom on the Net score of 49 out of 100 from Freedom House](#), classifying the country as "Partly Free." The score reflects ongoing challenges across three key areas: Obstacles to Access, Limits on Content, and Violations of User Rights. While Indonesia did not experience any full internet shutdowns, government interference in online spaces persists through [frequent and selective restrictions](#). Indonesia has experienced regular social media interruptions, particularly during periods of political tension.

The state of digital security and privacy in Indonesia is of highest concern, characterised by widespread cyber threats, insufficient legal protections, and ineffective enforcement mechanisms. Government agencies, along with other actors such as private companies and non-state groups, frequently deploy cyberattacks using spyware, malware, and other hacking tools to infiltrate the devices, networks, and communication platforms of CSOs. These intrusions significantly undermine the ability of activists and organizations to operate securely online, exposing them to risks such as doxxing, impersonation, and targeted harassment. [Indonesia Corruption Watch](#) recorded 50 doxxing cases targeting 123 anti-corruption activists during President Joko Widodo's two terms. Perludem, a civil society group focused on elections and democracy, had its website [hacked](#) on 31 August 2024 and replaced with online gambling content. Likewise, YLBHI (Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation) experienced a [cyberattack](#) on 6 January 2025, also displaying gambling ads and later showing a Kominfo blocking notice. This was the third such attack since October 2024, disrupting access to several affiliated regional LBH websites.

Moreover, the criminalization of activists and critics under the UU ITE law significantly restricts digital rights, creating a chilling effect on freedom of expression. Charges and detentions target civil society voices, stifling dissent. While CSOs attempt to monitor social media operators, these efforts fall short against widespread restrictions and repressive measures, undermining citizens' access to safe, open, and secure online spaces for civic engagement.

Legal frameworks to protect digital privacy and security are minimal and poorly implemented. [The Personal Data Protection Law \(UU PDP\)](#) exists but [lacks detailed implementing regulations and robust institutional structures](#), such as a dedicated data protection authority. Consequently, redress mechanisms for violations of digital privacy, including hacking, surveillance, and unauthorised data use, are either completely absent or ineffective. This legal vacuum exacerbates vulnerabilities, especially for marginalised groups such as women with disabilities, who receive minimal protection against digital privacy violations.

Further complicating this situation is the government's use of social media manipulation tactics, including the deployment of bots and paid online influencers (buzzers), to spread disinformation, control narratives, and intimidate civil society actors. [An investigative report by Kompas](#) (2025) revealed the existence of at least seven major political buzzer networks linked to those in power during the 2024 elections. Each cluster included opinion leaders, technical operators, and hundreds of anonymous accounts used to amplify coordinated messages. These networks were closely tied to political figures and communication consultants, with digital campaign spending increasing significantly compared to 2019.

These efforts contribute to an atmosphere of fear and self-censorship among activists and journalists, limiting their capacity to freely express dissenting opinions or expose abuses. Overall, Indonesia's digital security and privacy landscape is highly precarious. The combination of aggressive cyber operations against civil society, weak regulatory frameworks, and the absence of effective enforcement mechanisms results in a digital environment where freedom, safety, and privacy are systemically compromised.

In 2024, [Indonesia's internet penetration reached 79.5%](#), reflecting broad access to digital platforms and services nationwide. However, the digital access gap remains a critical barrier as connectivity improvements are uneven and largely concentrated in urban centres, leaving remote areas such as the Kepulauan Sangihe Islands with severely limited digital access. Additionally, the quality of connectivity is inconsistent, while internet penetration has increased in 2024, these gains have not translated evenly across regions or communities.

Further compounding the problem is the limited digital literacy, which restricts the capacity of both the general population and CSO staff to effectively utilise digital tools and content. To track digital development, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo)

introduced the Digital Society Index (IMDI). The [2024 IMDI score](#) was rated at a moderate level based on four pillars: infrastructure and ecosystem, digital skills, empowerment, and employment. The assessment highlighted increasing proficiency in digital communication as well as the need to [strengthen local initiatives](#) that leverage digital tools for economic inclusion. Persons with disabilities also face heightened barriers, with limited access to digital devices and literacy, underscoring the need for inclusive digital solutions.

Moreover, there is concern about the expanding digital divide, particularly in adopting emerging technologies like AI, threatens to further marginalise CSOs if significant gaps in digital skills remain unaddressed. Despite some CSOs initiating efforts to enhance digital literacy among their members and communities, these initiatives are insufficient to overcome the widespread disparities in access and effective technology use. Robust, targeted support is urgently needed to equip CSOs with the necessary skills and resources to bridge these accessibility and usage gaps effectively.

Overall, despite expanding internet access in urban areas, digital rights to freedom, privacy, and security are threatened by misused or weakly enforced legal frameworks, particularly affecting marginalised groups and CSOs. Surveillance, censorship, and manipulated online discourse undermine digital spaces for civic engagement and inclusive participation. Urgent reforms are needed to ensure robust protections, equitable access, and digital literacy for all, especially vulnerable populations, to prevent the digital realm from reinforcing inequality and repression.

D) Recommendations

I. Recommendations to the Government of Indonesia

1. Strengthen and Safeguard the Legal Framework

- Revise or repeal repressive laws, such as Perppu No. 2/2017, to ensure CSO dissolutions follow due process and prevent misuse of power. Establish independent oversight bodies to monitor and provide accessible legal protections for CSOs facing threats or repression from state or non-state actors.
- Streamline CSO registration laws to eliminate ambiguities, standardise procedures, and ensure timely, transparent appeal mechanisms, reducing bureaucratic barriers for all CSOs.
- Train security forces in non-violent, human rights-based law enforcement, emphasizing conflict de-escalation, prohibition of excessive force, and transparent standard operating procedures.
- Ensure law enforcement and policymakers adhere strictly to constitutional frameworks to prevent abuse of power.

2. Develop a Transparent and Inclusive Public Funding System for CSOs

- Create a National CSO Endowment Fund to provide long-term, flexible institutional support for CSOs, particularly those in underfunded or sensitive sectors. The fund should be co-financed by government, philanthropy, and development partners, and governed by a transparent, multi-stakeholder body to ensure accountability and strategic oversight.
- Reform state funding allocation to be based on performance, mission alignment, and public interest, rather than political proximity or bureaucratic segmentation.

3. Institutionalise Meaningful Public Participation in Policymaking

- Establish structured and institutionalised mechanisms for public participation across all levels of government from planning, implementation, and evaluation phases.
- Strengthen the capacity of government officials to partner with CSO in development.
- Require the government to provide responsive reports detailing how CSO inputs have been considered, modified, or integrated into final policy decisions.
- Facilitate community-level forums to ensure marginalised and minority groups' aspirations are represented in public policy agendas.

4. Promote a Positive and Inclusive Narrative on Civil Society

- Proactively communicate the government's commitment to civil society plurality, including the success stories and the role of critical voices in a healthy democracy.
- Engage CSOs in public communication channels and state media platforms to challenge the harmful dichotomy between "constructive" and "disruptive" CSOs.

5. Foster a Safe and Democratic Digital Ecosystem

- Fully implement the Personal Data Protection Law and establish an independent redress mechanism for CSOs affected by digital rights violations.
- Cease unlawful digital surveillance and repeal or revise regulations that enable arbitrary censorship and restrict online civic space.
- Protect journalists and digital activists from excessive legal threats or criminalization related to public policy criticism.

II. Recommendations to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

1. Strengthen Institutional Capacity and Financial Sustainability

- Diversify funding streams beyond single sources to include grants, crowdfunding, paid training, private sector partnerships, and community contributions to enhance financial resilience and sustainability.

2. Build Cross-Issue and Cross-Regional Coalitions

- Form cross-issue and cross-sector coalitions locally, nationally, and internationally to enhance legitimacy, public support, and collective protection
- Map modalities, such as expertise, networks, advocacy tools, and funding strategies, to identify strengths and gaps. This enables more strategic action, stronger collaboration, and greater resilience amid a shifting civic space. CSOs should jointly advocate for legal reforms that protect and expand civic space.

3. Leverage Digital Platforms Strategically and Securely

- Improve digital literacy, cybersecurity, and evidence-based public communication strategies to counter disinformation and protect online reputations.
- Utilise digital tools for civic engagement, policy monitoring, and community organizing.
- Develop emergency protection protocols, including secure data evacuation, communication systems, and rapid coordination.

4. Foster Sustained and Inclusive Citizen Participation

- Promote positive, data-driven, and solution-oriented public narratives that avoid stigmatization by showcasing tangible impact through media, campaigns, and public reports.

- Use creative and symbolic communication channels such as art, satire, popular culture, and digital campaigns as resilient forms of peaceful resistance.
- Build strategic alliances with academics, journalists, and professional networks to broaden public support and strengthen advocacy efforts.
- Invest in critical civic education at the community level, especially among youth, to nurture a culture of long-term democratic participation.
- Reconnect with grassroots communities by listening to local needs, aligning programs with lived experiences, and revitalizing participatory approaches.
- Establish practical participatory mechanisms such as citizen forums, public dialogues, and collaborative monitoring initiatives.

III. Recommendations to Donor Agency

- Institutionalise multi-year, flexible funding to support long-term planning and sustainable impact for CSOs, especially those addressing complex challenges.
- Establish capacity-building programs to enhance CSO skills in financial management, proposal writing, monitoring, and donor compliance, prioritizing accessibility for grassroots organizations and simplifying application processes.
- Incorporate contextual and political economy analyses into donor programming to ensure risk-informed, locally relevant engagement with CSOs in sensitive environments.
- Implement equitable funding mechanisms to prioritise CSOs in underfunded regions and sectors, addressing geographic and thematic imbalances.
- Promote participatory co-creation in program design and evaluation to enhance CSO ownership and alignment with local priorities.

IV. Recommendations to the International Community

- Promote ongoing international oversight of Indonesia's civic space, focusing on the country's commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its responsibilities as a member of the UN Human Rights Council.
- Support technical assistance programs aimed at institutionalizing thorough human rights training for law enforcement, government officials, and other key actors to ensure compliance with global human rights norms.
- Encourage South–South collaboration and cross-sector partnerships among CSOs to advocate for the amendment or abolition of restrictive laws, combat negative perceptions of civil society, and raise public awareness about the essential contributions of CSOs to democratic processes.

Research process

Each principle encompasses various dimensions which are assessed and aggregated to provide quantitative scores per principle. These scores reflect the degree to which the environment within the country enables or disables the work of civil society. Scores are on a five-category scale defined as: fully disabling, disabling, partially enabling, enabling, and fully enabling. To complement the scores, this report provides a narrative analysis of the enabling or disabling environment for civil society, identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as offering recommendations. The process of drafting the analysis is led by Network Members, the consortium provides quality control and editorial oversight before publication.

For Principle 1 - which evaluates respect for and protection of freedom of association and peaceful assembly - the score integrates data from the [CIVICUS Monitor](#). However, for Principles 2–6, the availability of yearly updated external quantitative indicators for the 86 countries part of the EU SEE programme are either limited or non-existent. To address this, Network Members once a year convene a panel of representatives of civil society and experts. This panel uses a set of guiding questions to assess the status of each principle and its dimensions within the country. The discussions are supported by secondary sources, such as [V-Dem](#), the [Bertelsmann Stiftung Governance Index](#), the [RTI Rating from the Centre for Law and Democracy](#), and other trusted resources. These sources provide benchmarks for measuring similar dimensions and are complemented by primary data collection and other secondary sources of information available for the country. Guided by these deliberations, the panel assigns scores for each dimension, which the Network Members submit to the Consortium, accompanied by detailed justifications that reflect the country's specific context. To determine a single score per principle, the scores assigned to each dimension are aggregated using a weighted average, reflecting the relative importance of each dimension within the principle. This approach balances diverse perspectives while maintaining a structured and objective evaluation framework.

This publication was funded/co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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