

Botswana

Country Focus Report

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Credit: Justice Hubana



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A) An 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 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 Report, each enabling principle is assessed with a quantitative score and complemented by an analysis and recommendations written by our Network Members. 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.

Brief Overview of the Country Context

Botswana is recognised as one of Africa's stable democracies. The country has maintained a multiparty democracy since independence in 1966. It has a reputation for peaceful elections and, for the first time experienced a change of power, with the opposition winning the election in October 2024, which was characterised by a peaceful transition of power. Botswana has thus been a shining beacon of political stability and good governance in the region. Economically, the country is recognised as an upper-middle-income country, as classified by the World Bank. This upper-middle-income classification was a result of high diamond revenues and what was viewed as prudent management of these revenues, which were used to fund national development spanning social policies, health, education, and other sectors, as well as sound macroeconomic policies. However, beneath this strong economic performance lie persistent social challenges, including high poverty and inequality, unemployment - especially among youth - and a growing demand for more inclusive development and governance, as a result of the increase in instances of corruption and other governance and administrative lapses.

The enabling environment for civil society in Botswana is marked by both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, civil society organisations (CSOs) can register and operate within a clearly laid down formal legal framework, which provides a level of facilitation. On the other hand, the environment in which CSOs function remains constrained. While the Constitution guarantees freedoms such as expression, in practice the respect and protection of these fundamental civic freedoms are inconsistent.

A major challenge faced by civil society is access to sustainable resources, with many heavily dependent on external donor support. Although Botswana's middle-income status suggests that the government can support development initiatives, including CSOs, that is not the case. These funding constraints undermine the long-term sustainability of many civil society organisations. Despite this, civil society in Botswana continues to demonstrate resilience. CSOs play a critical role in promoting human rights, advancing inclusivity, and holding government accountable. For example, different civil society actors have raised strong concerns regarding the recent constitutional review process in Botswana, highlighting its lack of inclusivity, absence of meaningful public consultations, and failure to provide a clear and transparent roadmap for the envisioned process.

B) Assessment of the Enabling Environment

PRINCIPLE SCORE

1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms

=

Score: ¹



Section 3 of the [Botswana Constitution](#) provides for fundamental civic freedoms, including freedom of expression, assembly, and association. While these provisions are commendable, the practical realisation of these rights is inconsistent. For instance, the rights to collective bargaining and to strike are not entrenched, and some civic actors are [prevented](#) from exercising these rights in practice.

The [Public Order Act](#) requires that a permit be obtained before any public march or demonstration can take place. In some cases, such permits are not granted, limiting the effective enjoyment of freedoms of expression and association. For example, in August 2025, Student Power Botswana sought to hold a [march](#) in Gaborone to express grievances, including demands for an increase in student allowances. The Botswana Police Service denied approval for the demonstration, citing a clash with a national event requiring heavy police deployment. Students were advised to reschedule, highlighting how administrative decisions under the Public Order Act can restrict civic expression.

Furthermore, CSOs have reported surveillance and interference by security agencies in recent years. In 2024, BOCONGO experienced [visits](#) from the Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) following its advocacy against the constitutional review process and [Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 4 of 2024](#), which civil society argued was not inclusive and failed to reflect

¹This is a rebased score derived from the [CIVICUS Monitor rating](#) published in December 2024.

the aspirations of Batswana. Similarly, the Botswana Centre for Public Integrity (BCPI) was questioned by the police in 2024 while conducting civic education activities on the Constitution and the review process during a ["World Café" event](#) held in a public space. Such actions have raised concerns about shrinking civic space and the practical limitations placed on fundamental freedoms in Botswana, particularly the freedom of expression. While judicial remedies exist for violations of civic freedoms, access remains limited for many CSOs due to high litigation costs, constraining their ability to seek redress effectively.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework

Score:



In Botswana, the [Societies Act](#) governs the registration of NGOs and other associations, requiring organisations to register and obtain a certificate annually. While the law provides a framework for registration, the process itself presents several challenges. The introduction of a digital system was intended to simplify procedures, but its inefficiencies have created new obstacles. Organisations are still required to physically collect their login details from the Registration office and the system frequently malfunctions, forcing them to submit documents in person. This is especially burdensome for organisations outside Gaborone, where registration remains largely centralised.

The Societies Act also grants the registrar broad discretion over organisational names. Groups proposing names in native languages are often asked to justify them, and the registrar can reject or alter the names, sometimes changing the intended meaning and purpose of the organisation.

Certain requirements are considered discriminatory. For example, faith-based organisations are required to have a minimum of 250 members to register, compared to only 20 for other societies. Furthermore, NGOs registered under the Societies Act are prohibited from generating income, which undermines their sustainability. Some organisations choose instead to register as [companies limited by guarantee](#), which allows them to generate income for social purposes. However, this creates further complications, as donors often misinterpret them as for-profit companies, reducing their access to funding.

Marginalised groups have also faced barriers to registration. From 2012, the Government repeatedly denied registration to [LEGABIBO](#) (Lesbians, Gays & Bisexuals of Botswana), arguing that its objectives were incompatible with peace, welfare, and good order. In 2016, the courts [overturned this decision](#), ordering the state to recognise the organisation, a [landmark victory](#) that demonstrated how restrictive interpretations of the law can be used to

suppress certain groups. Similarly, the [Sisonke Association](#), a sex worker led organisation, initially faced [refusal](#) before finally [securing registration](#) in 2019.

The [Trust Property Control Act of 2022](#), which governs trusts, also imposes stringent requirements. Trusts must declare, for all income received, that funders are not linked to terrorism. This places a heavy compliance burden on CSOs and makes legal expertise essential, meaning many organisations must rely on costly legal services to register and for the declaration of income process.

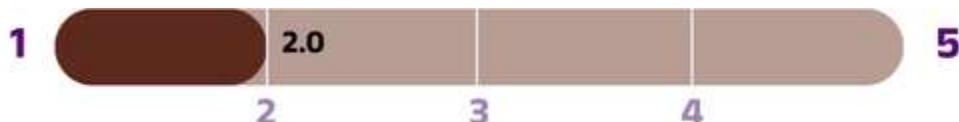
The above shows that the operational environment for CSOs is constrained by both legal and structural barriers. Moreover, the [Public Order Act](#) (Cap. 22:02) restricts freedom of assembly by requiring organisations to obtain a permit from the police before holding demonstrations, marches, or public gatherings. This requirement is inconsistent with international human rights standards, specifically the [Amnesty International Guidelines on the Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly](#), which recognise peaceful assembly as an entitlement, not a privilege. In practice, the need for prior authorisation as well as the administrative burden associated with applying for a permit creates a barrier to mobilisation and advocacy, thereby restricting operational freedom of CSOs.

Although CSOs have the right to seek redress through the courts in Botswana, the high costs of litigation make legal recourse inaccessible for many. The Constitution (Section 3) guarantees fundamental freedoms, including freedom of association, while the Societies Act provides a legal framework for the registration and operation of organisations. These laws, in principle, protect CSOs from undue interference. However, in practice, organisations sometimes face administrative interference and surveillance by security agencies that limit their operational independence.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources

Score:



Botswana's legal framework allows registered CSOs to open bank accounts. As a result, CSOs in Botswana can receive international funding, yet the overall resource environment is still highly constrained. The country's classification as an [upper middle-income economy](#) has resulted in a withdrawal or reduction of traditional donor support, with development partners redirecting resources to lower-income countries. This has left CSOs grappling with severe funding gaps, even in areas where they provide critical services such as child protection.

Domestic support in the form of calls for proposals for CSOs from the government is minimal and is largely concentrated in the health sector, particularly HIV/AIDS interventions. Organisations working in other important areas, including human rights, governance, environmental justice, and accountability, remain underfunded and vulnerable. [CSOs also face internal capacity challenges, with limited technical expertise, staff, and resources to compete effectively for funding opportunities](#). The enactment of the [Access to Information Act](#) was a positive development, but weak implementation and a lack of proactive information sharing from government institutions continue to hinder civil society actors from accessing information, including about potential funding sources.

Donor practices further complicate the funding landscape. Many donors align support with their government-defined priorities or impose conditions that restrict CSO independence. Panel experts highlighted that some external funders, such as those from the UAE, allow programming on non-sensitive issues (e.g., women's education) but discourage engagement on politically sensitive areas such as women's political participation. Other funding requirements, like mandatory cash contributions, exclude smaller or emerging CSOs. While donor expectations around audits and reporting are generally reasonable, a major gap lies in the neglect of security-related support. Because Botswana is not regarded internationally as a high-risk context, donor programmes rarely fund security or risk mitigation measures. As a result, CSOs working on governance, democracy, or human rights remain exposed to surveillance, intimidation, or interference without adequate protective resources.

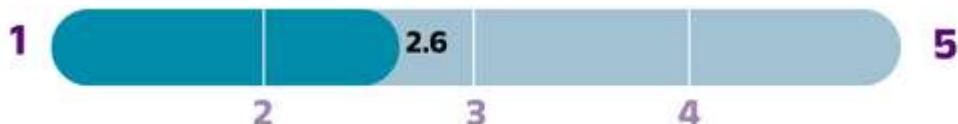
Sustainability is a serious concern. Funding is largely short-term and project-based, which undermines institutional stability, staff retention, and long-term planning. The recent suspension of US funding has had devastating ripple effects across multiple sectors. A [rapid assessment](#) conducted by BOONGO showed severe impacts on healthcare (including HIV testing, TB screening, and GBV response), education, social protection for vulnerable children, LGBTQIA+ advocacy, and democratic governance initiatives. Many CSOs were forced to scale down, retrench staff, suspend programmes, or close operations altogether, with some only temporarily surviving under 90-day waivers. Following the expiration of these waivers, some organisations lost their funding, leading to programmes being stopped altogether and some organisations having to close.

Compounding these challenges, opportunities for domestic resource mobilisation remain very limited. Philanthropy and a culture of local giving are almost non-existent, leaving CSOs highly dependent on external funding. The above factors illustrate that while the legal framework nominally allows access to resources, in practice CSOs in Botswana face significant barriers in the accessibility, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability of resources.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

4. Open and Responsive State

Score:



Botswana has taken some important steps towards transparency and openness, including the enactment of the [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Data Protection Act of 2024](#), which seek to guarantee public access to government information and safeguard personal data. While these developments are positive, their implementation has been inconsistent. Botswana lacks a strong institutional culture of information sharing, and the Access to Information Act, though promising, remains new and procedurally weak. More significantly, the Constitution does not entrench access to information as a fundamental right, weakening civil society's legal basis for demanding transparency.

Although some government information is made available online, the platforms are not well-publicised, and the public often does not know where to find them. Most available material is only published in English, excluding non-English speakers and people with disabilities, as resources are not translated into local languages or provided in formats such as Braille. Timeliness is another recurring issue. Information is frequently published late, undermining opportunities for meaningful participation. For instance, during the 2024 constitutional review process, the [Constitution \(Amendment\) Bill No. 4 of 2024](#) was gazetted with only 30 days provided for public comments, yet the Bill was not immediately uploaded online at the commencement date, limiting the ability of the public and CSOs to respond adequately.

The [Access to Information Act](#) itself contains significant procedural gaps. It does not specify how a member of the public can compel a public officer to release information, what remedies exist when requests are ignored, or where complaints should be lodged. These omissions weaken the law's effectiveness and limit its potential to promote transparency and public participation.

When it comes to participation, consultations with civil society are often tokenistic, serving as tick-box exercises with little influence on final decisions. A notable example was Botswana's

[removal as co-chair](#) of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) platform under the Beijing Declaration, with one of the reasons for removal being that the government is found not to be engaging civil society adequately, showing signs of shrinking space for meaningful engagement. Similarly, during the 2024 constitutional review, CSO representation and participation was irregular, with government not being intentional with engaging civil society.

In its public discourse, the new government frequently emphasises that it recognises CSOs as important stakeholders in national development. However, the 2024 political transition and change in leadership have not yet resulted in meaningful reforms or improved engagement with civil society. The new government remains exclusionary in key national development processes, such as the proposed Constitution (Amendment) Bill of 2025, where CSOs were [not consulted or engaged](#). While the new government continues to use mechanisms such as stakeholder workshops or invitations to technical working groups in some cases, these opportunities are selective. There is a pressing need to establish mandatory, legally grounded, and structured engagement mechanisms that are inclusive, ensure CSO contributions are actively sought from the outset, and are not reactive or selective, thereby strengthening trust and improving the quality of policymaking in Botswana.

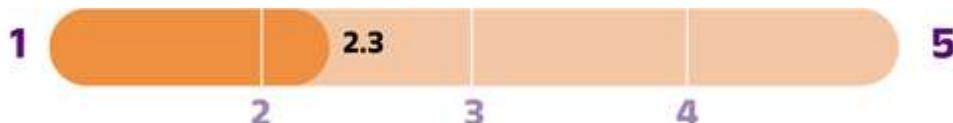
A significant legal gap exacerbates this problem: no legislation explicitly mandates meaningful CSO participation in governance processes. The Constitution itself does not enshrine participatory rights, even at the community level. This results in a dynamic where CSOs react to government decisions rather than actively shape them. Furthermore, CSOs representing marginalised groups, such as sex workers, are often excluded from participation, while more conformist organisations aligned with government positions are given preference. This selective engagement undermines inclusivity and weakens democratic responsiveness.

Accountability mechanisms are particularly weak. The government provides no systematic feedback to CSOs on how their input has been considered or used in decision-making. There is no public documentation or reporting on the outcomes of consultations, leaving CSOs unable to track the influence of their contributions. Moreover, there are no formal avenues for CSOs to appeal decisions or demand accountability on the integration of their feedback. As a result, participation remains superficial, and accountability is virtually absent. As a result of the above structural weaknesses, the enabling environment in Botswana is not yet conducive to genuine and realistic civil society participation, as accountability, inclusivity and responsiveness remain largely absent.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

5. Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society

Score:



In Botswana, civil society is nominally recognised by government and political leaders as an important stakeholder in national development, but in practice, CSOs are often treated as peripheral actors. Their contributions are rarely sought in policy processes, and when CSOs present alternative views or hold the state accountable, they are frequently met with resistance, suspicion, or hostility. This was evident during the 2024 constitutional review process, when CSOs openly criticised the government for failing to consult the public, among many other concerns, and opposed the proposed [Constitution \(Amendment\) Bill No. 4 of 2024](#). Instead of being embraced as legitimate voices in the debate, many CSOs were portrayed by the then-ruling party-political actors and state aligned narratives as oppositional or troublemakers rather than legitimate stakeholders in governance. Organisations that raised concerns about the lack of inclusivity, limited public consultations, or proposed provisions in the Constitution (Amendment) Bill No. 4 of 2024 were often depicted as aligned with opposition interests, despite their focus on public accountability and citizen participation. These narratives undermined the credibility of civil society actors, delegitimised their advocacy, and reinforced a perception that CSOs challenging government proposals were adversarial rather than partners in advancing public interest.

The media landscape mirrors the ambiguous dynamic of narratives about civil society. While private media outlets provide relatively balanced coverage and give space to civil society perspectives, state-owned media largely amplifies government positions, leaving CSO voices underrepresented. Public discourse continues to reflect scepticism toward CSOs. For instance, during a 2024 Constitution World Café event hosted by CSOs, police questioned organisers on allegations of disrupting public order, as was witnessed by BOCONGO. Such incidents foster a climate of distrust that undermines the constructive role of civil society in driving accountability, shaping policy, and representing marginalised voices.

At the societal level, public perception of civil society and civic engagement remains weak. Many Batswana view their agency as confined to voting during elections, with little awareness of their broader right to influence policy and governance between electoral cycles. This sense of disempowerment contributes to weak civic engagement. While CSOs are generally open to the public, overall engagement of the public with CSOs remains low. Many citizens interact with CSOs only occasionally, such as attending public events or following media coverage, rather than through sustained participation, reflecting low awareness of civic rights and the role of civil society in governance. For example, despite the national significance of the 2024 constitutional review, public commentary was minimal. When the 2024 elections resulted in a change of government for the first time since independence, many citizens expressed surprise, illustrating how unfamiliar they are with their own collective power. Civic education, largely led by CSOs, is limited and remains under-resourced, and the absence of sustained efforts to promote citizen participation leaves a gap in meaningful and continuous civic engagement.

Structural barriers also limit civic equality and inclusion. While the [Constitution](#) contains a Bill of Rights, its protection against discrimination is narrow. Section 15 does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexuality, sex and gender, among others. This legal gap leaves minority groups, particularly LGBTQIA+ persons and women, without adequate protection. For women, [persistent gender inequalities and barriers to representation in political and public leadership limit their influence in governance and policy-making](#). Despite national commitments to gender equality, women remain underrepresented in decision-making spaces and continue to experience gender-based violence, which constrains their full participation in civic and political life. Similarly, [LGBTQIA+ individuals lack explicit legal recognition and continue to face social and institutional exclusion](#), which makes advocacy and participation in public life extremely difficult. Rural communities often face limited access to information, civic education, and decision-making spaces due to centralised governance structures and the concentration of key consultations and opportunities in urban centres. These gaps reinforce systemic exclusion and weaken the ability of marginalised groups and communities to contribute meaningfully to governance and national development. The above intersecting challenges weaken an enabling environment for civil society in Botswana, undermining the ability of civil society to contribute meaningfully to governance in Botswana.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment

Score:



Botswana has maintained an open and relatively secure digital environment, with no reported cases of internet shutdowns or government censorship of online content. Internet access is largely unrestricted, and government initiatives to expand connectivity such as providing free public Wi-Fi in government buildings and public spaces have improved access for citizens and CSOs. This has enabled civil society to use digital platforms for communication, advocacy, and mobilisation.

However, there are concerns regarding surveillance. While no official cases of content takedown or direct censorship have been reported, instances of monitoring for intelligence purposes have been noted by civil society actors in the field. This creates apprehension among CSOs and activists working in sensitive areas such as human rights, as the potential for surveillance may discourage free expression and advocacy online.

Several legislative and policy developments are currently under way that will shape the digital landscape. These include the proposed [Digital Services Bill](#) and the [Cybersecurity Bill](#), which are [expected to regulate digital platforms and security more comprehensively](#). These bills have the potential to protect civil society online, particularly by safeguarding freedom of expression, supporting CSOs in their online advocacy, and providing measures against surveillance or cyberattacks targeting CSOs' communications and digital platforms. The Data Protection Act is already in place, providing safeguards for personal information, but its enforcement and practical application remain key to ensuring robust digital rights.

In terms of digital security and privacy, there is no evidence that the government or other actors have engaged in cyberattacks, spyware use, or hacking to infiltrate CSOs' devices, networks, or communication platforms. Similarly, there are no documented cases of government-linked accounts spreading disinformation or intimidating civil society online.

Digital accessibility is generally fair, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas, with internet availability, affordability, and quality of service at satisfactory levels. As of January 2025, [internet penetration in Botswana](#) stood at 81.4%, with about 2.07 million users, while roughly 18.6% of the population remained offline. However, accessibility is low or limited for rural areas, showing that there is some level of digital divide in Botswana. Government initiatives to expand connectivity and public Wi-Fi have further enhanced civil society and the public's ability to engage online. The CSO workforce and the general population possess basic ICT and data literacy skills, which support their ability to participate in the digital environment. Nonetheless, capacity gaps remain, with limited training opportunities, outdated equipment, and restricted access to advanced digital tools constraining CSOs' ability to fully leverage digital platforms for advocacy, communication, and organisational development. Overall, Botswana's digital environment offers notable strengths such as open access, improved connectivity, and absence of censorship that create space for civil society to operate, while concerns over surveillance, capacity gaps, and rural digital divide present challenges that constrain the full realization of an enabling environment.

C) Recommendations

To the Government

All Ministries & Agencies:

- Institutionalise a culture of proactive information sharing across all government departments, ensuring timely publication of laws, policies, and reports.
- Ensure information is accessible in multiple formats and languages, including Setswana, Braille, and other accessible formats for people with disabilities.
- Publish clear timelines for public consultations and ensure draft bills and policies are uploaded online immediately at commencement.
- Establish formal feedback mechanisms to communicate how CSO input is considered and integrated into policy and decision-making.

Government / Parliament:

- Amend the Public Order Act to align with international human rights standards by recognising peaceful assembly as an entitlement rather than a privilege.
- Entrench the right to strike and collective bargaining in labour law and constitutional provisions.
- Fully digitise and decentralise the CSO registration process to eliminate the need for physical collection of login details and to reduce burdens on organisations outside Gaborone.
- Review and amend discriminatory provisions in the Societies Act, such as the unequal membership thresholds for faith-based vs. other organisations.
- Remove restrictions prohibiting NGOs from generating income and create a legal framework that allows them to engage in social enterprise models while maintaining non-profit status.
- Review the Trust Property Control Act of 2022 to streamline compliance requirements and ensure proportionality, while still addressing terrorism financing risks.
- Establish a dedicated CSO funding / NGO Development Fund mechanism that goes beyond health and HIV/AIDS, to include governance, human rights, environmental justice, and accountability.
- Institutionalise tax incentives for corporate and individual giving to encourage a culture of philanthropy and local resource mobilisation.
- Strengthen the implementation of the Access to Information Act, ensuring proactive disclosure of information, including on funding opportunities.
- Develop a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) law or legislation that encourages businesses to contribute systematically to civil society development, including funding for governance, human rights, and social accountability initiatives.
- Promote public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of civil society in governance and national development.

- Enact or amend legislation or review the constitution to explicitly protect minority rights, including LGBTQI+ persons, and to safeguard freedom of expression, assembly, and participation.
- Strengthen implementation and enforcement of the Data Protection Act to ensure citizens' and CSOs' personal data is adequately safeguarded.
- Expand internet access and connectivity in rural and underserved areas to bridge the digital divide.
- Fast-track the enactment of the Digital Services Bill and Cybersecurity Bill with strong provisions for protecting civil society rights online.

Parliament (specific):

- Amend the Public Order Act (Cap. 22:02) to recognise peaceful assembly as an entitlement and to reduce barriers caused by permit requirements.
- Review and amend laws to enable CSOs to engage in income-generating activities without being misconstrued as for-profit entities.
- Mandate regular reporting from government ministries on funding allocations and opportunities for CSO partnerships.

To the Judiciary

- Ensure impartial and accessible remedies for violations of civic freedoms.

To Donors / Development Partners

- Provide core and flexible funding to support institutional stability, not only project-based grants.
- Align funding with local priorities identified by CSOs, not just government-defined agendas.
- Remove restrictive conditions such as mandatory cash contributions, which disadvantage small and emerging CSOs.
- Integrate security and risk-mitigation resources into grants for CSOs working on governance, democracy, and human rights.
- Explore longer-term partnerships (3–5 years) to strengthen sustainability and staff retention.

To Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

- Form coalitions to collectively advocate for reforms to the Societies Act, Public Order Act, and Trust Property Control Act.
- Share compliance knowledge and legal resources to reduce costs for smaller or marginalised organisations.
- Build coalitions to increase competitiveness for large-scale funding opportunities and reduce duplication.
- Invest in internal capacity strengthening, including proposal writing, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation.
- Diversify income streams by exploring social enterprise models, membership contributions, and partnerships with the private sector.
- Document and publicise the impacts of funding cuts (e.g., US funding suspension) to advocate for more resilient and diversified financing structures.
- Conduct civic education and outreach programmes to raise public awareness of citizens' rights and the role of civil society in policy and governance.
- Strengthen engagement with communities, particularly marginalised groups, to enhance participation and representation in national development processes.

- Document and publicise CSO contributions and impact to build public trust and improve perception of civil society.
- Conduct digital literacy and cybersecurity training for staff to improve secure use of online platforms.
- Advocate for stronger safeguards against surveillance and the protection of digital rights in ongoing legislative processes.
- Leverage existing digital platforms strategically to increase civic engagement and advocacy while maintaining security protocols.

To the Media (Private and Public)

- Provide balanced coverage of civil society activities, ensuring diverse voices, including marginalised groups, are represented.
- Collaborate with CSOs to create content that educates the public about civic rights, participation mechanisms, and the role of civil society in governance.

D) 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 (1), disabling (2), partially enabling (3), enabling (4), and fully enabling (5). 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 EUSEE programme are either limited or non-existent. To address this, Network Members convene a panel of representatives of civil society and experts once a year. 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.

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