

Brazil

Country Focus Report

2025



Credit: Gabriel Albernaz



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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 six 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.

The Country Focus Report (CFR) for Brazil 2025 presents an assessment of the enabling environment for civil society, based on the Expert Panel held on 26 July 2025 at the headquarters of Abong – the Brazilian Association of NGOs (Associação Brasileira de ONGs) in São Paulo. The report follows the consortium’s methodology and organises the results according to six principles, each composed of dimensions individually assessed by the experts. Scores were assigned on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 corresponds to a fully disabling environment and 5 to a fully enabling environment, reflecting the consensus reached during collective discussions.

We warmly acknowledge the contributions of all civil society representatives who participated in the Expert Panel. Their diverse perspectives and grounded insights were essential to the assessment and greatly strengthened the quality and depth of this report.

Brief Overview of the Country Context

Reporting period covered: August 2024 to August 2025

Brazilian civil society is one of the most vibrant and diverse in the world, comprising almost [900,000 formally registered](#) organisations working across fields such as human rights, environment, education, health, culture, and community development. Over the past decade, however, the enabling environment has undergone substantial fluctuations. The 2019–2022 period was marked by significant setbacks, including attacks on organisations, widespread disinformation, and political efforts to delegitimise NGOs. Since 2023, the new federal administration has signalled a shift toward reopening participatory spaces, reinstating national councils, and renewing structured dialogue with civil society.

Despite these advances, the process of democratic restructuring continues to face considerable challenges. Persistent regulatory instability, uneven implementation of participatory mechanisms, limited access to public resources, public distrust, and deep regional inequalities all constrain the full realisation of an enabling environment. In 2025, Brazil finds itself in a phase of ongoing institutional reconfiguration largely triggered by the 2023 change in administration, as the federal government works to [rebuild participatory governance](#) mechanisms that had been weakened and, in some cases, [dismantled in previous years](#).

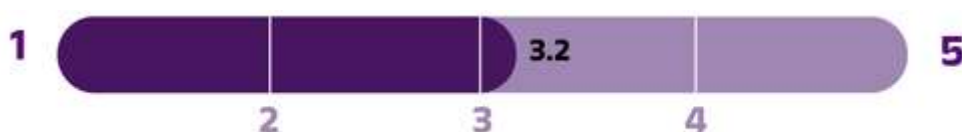
Civil society remains resilient and active, mobilising in defence of rights and participating in both public and institutional arenas. However, the enabling conditions required for this role to be fully exercised are still consolidating. The CFR captures this transitional moment through the insights and assessments of the Expert Panel, offering a grounded and context-sensitive analysis of the opportunities and limitations that shape Brazil’s civic space today.

B) Assessment of the Enabling Environment

PRINCIPLE SCORE

1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms

Score:¹



The score of 3.2 reflects a context in which respect for fundamental freedoms in Brazil has shown measurable improvement since 2023, while still falling short of a fully enabling environment. Freedom of association, peaceful assembly, and expression are formally guaranteed by the [Federal Constitution](#), and the current political context has contributed to a partial reopening of civic space. There is a [less confrontational federal posture](#) and a renewed emphasis on [social participation](#); however, [risks of intimidation and criminalisation persist](#), especially against Indigenous peoples and environmental defenders involved in territorial conflicts.

Despite these advances, structural risks to civic freedoms persist. The [CIVICUS Monitor](#) continues to classify Brazil's civic space as *obstructed*, highlighting ongoing concerns related to political violence, including killings and detentions of indigenous people and human rights defenders, and selective criminalisation of protest. Environmental defenders, Indigenous leaders, and social movement activists remain [particularly exposed](#) to intimidation and stigmatisation, especially in contexts involving land rights, environmental protection, and extractive activities. Brazil thus remains a high-risk country for defenders, especially those working on land, environmental protection, and territorial rights, [who face threats, attacks and killings](#). Recent systematisation indicates [486 cases of violence against defenders in 2023–2024 and 55 killings](#) in the same two-year period, with a strong concentration among environmental/territorial defenders. In 2024 alone, Global Witness [documented](#) at least 12 killings of environmental defenders.

Freedom of expression has benefited from a less confrontational political climate, yet significant [challenges remain in the digital sphere](#), as illustrated by judicial interventions

¹This is a rebased score derived from the [CIVICUS Monitor rating](#) published in December 2025.

addressing risks to democratic processes and fundamental rights, including the Supreme Federal Court's 2025 [decision](#) to suspend the Rumble platform nationwide due to non-compliance with Brazilian law.

Investigative journalists and media outlets continue to face threats, harassment, and obstruction. Judicial harassment, including the proliferation of civil defamation and moral-damages lawsuits across multiple jurisdictions, has been documented as a recurrent tactic to intimidate the press. Recent monitoring by [Abraji maps hundreds of](#) such cases and highlights their chilling effect, while Brazil's legal framework still includes criminal penalties for defamation ("crimes against honour"), which can be mobilised against critical speech. In 2024, the Supreme Federal Court [adopted measures](#) aimed at curbing this type of lawfare by facilitating consolidation of multiple lawsuits and raising safeguards for media liability in civil defamation disputes.

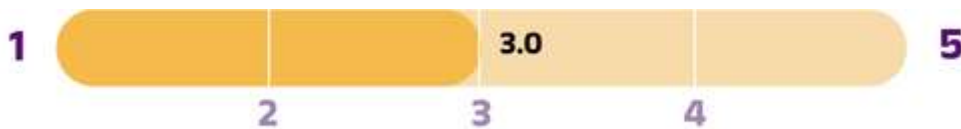
Overall, the score of 3.2 captures a scenario of partial recovery. While the current administration has contributed to improved institutional conditions and a reduction in overt restrictions on civil society, persistent risks related to violence, uneven enforcement of protections, and vulnerabilities in the digital environment prevent the full consolidation of an enabling environment for fundamental freedoms.

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PRINCIPLE SCORE

2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework

Score:



Brazil's legal framework broadly guarantees the creation and registration of civil society organisations (CSOs). The Federal Constitution, through Article 5, sections XVII and XVIII, ensures [freedom of association](#), and the [Civil Code](#) establishes the instruments necessary for the formalisation of entities. In addition, the Civil Society Regulatory Framework (MROSC), established through [Law 13.019/2014](#) and Decree [8.726/2016](#), reinforces this regime by consolidating [rules for partnerships with the State](#).

In practice, however, the registration process often [entails bureaucratic](#) and costly hurdles at notary offices, including repeated requests to revise statutes and supporting documentation. These obstacles disproportionately affect smaller organisations with limited technical capacity and resources. In some cases, notary offices, despite their expected neutral role, apply discretionary interpretations that go beyond clear legal requirements, leading to inconsistent decisions and, at times, political or discriminatory barriers to registration. Although Brazil has around [900,000 formally registered CSOs](#), this high number does not necessarily reflect an enabling environment. Many organisations remain less active or operate with significant restrictions, partly due to limitations in the registration process itself and the absence of institutional support to overcome them.

Regarding the operational environment, there is considerable freedom for CSOs to define their governance and objectives. The [Constitution](#) and the [Civil Code](#) guarantee institutional autonomy without imposing a single organisational model. However, when CSOs seek to enter into partnerships with public authorities or access public funds, the accounting, compliance and transparency requirements associated with the MROSC framework ([Law 13.019/2014](#) and its local regulations) can be disproportionately burdensome for smaller organisations. Implementation remains uneven across states and municipalities: while some jurisdictions have issued clearer local regulations (e.g., São Paulo's [Decree 63.541/2024](#)), in much of the country guidance is fragmented or absent, which increases uncertainty and transaction costs for CSOs engaging with the state

Additionally, Brazil's budget framework allows CSOs to access public funding through parliamentary amendments (emendas parlamentares)—budget allocations proposed by members of Congress that earmark federal resources for specific projects, municipalities, or

implementing entities, including civil society organisations. While such amendments can expand access to resources, their execution often depends on administrative requirements and political negotiation, which may introduce uncertainty, delays, and uneven procedures across sectors and levels of government.

On protection from interference, the Constitution guarantees freedom of association, but the political environment has seen recurring attempts to restrict or monitor CSOs. Since 2016, some legislative initiatives have sought to increase restrictions and oversight over foreign funding for civil society. A prominent recent example is [Bill 1.659/2024](#), which proposes creating a national registry for NGOs, expanding reporting and disclosure requirements, restricting certain foreign sources, and—under a substitute text approved in committee—moving toward a broad prohibition on foreign funding for a wide set of civil society entities. While these proposals have not been enacted, their progression in Congress suggests a continuing regulatory risk that could become a future advocacy priority.

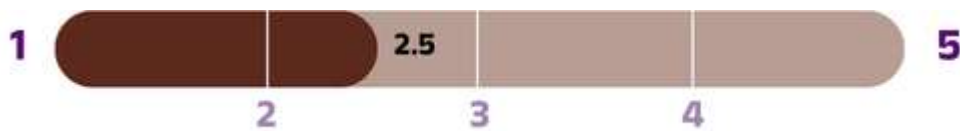
Even when restrictive initiatives are not enacted, high-profile oversight efforts, such as Parliamentary Inquiry Commissions (CPIs) [targeting NGOs](#), can foster insecurity in the sector by amplifying suspicion and triggering additional scrutiny and documentation demands, including in interactions with foreign donors and international partners. This dynamic tends to increase transaction costs and delays in accessing international resources, creating a disproportionate burden for smaller associations with limited administrative capacity and reduced ability to meet donor-facing requirements (including English-language communication and reporting). In this context, ABONG has documented cases of [“bureaucratic criminalization”](#), including retroactive accountability processes, excessive documentation requests, and arbitrary administrative procedures that can generate reputational and financial risks for CSOs.

Therefore, the score of 3 reflects a balanced scenario: a solid legal framework that guarantees freedom of association, but one whose practical application still presents bureaucratic obstacles, notary and banking barriers, and political pressures that make the environment only partially enabling for CSO activity.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources

Score:



Access to resources for civil society organisations (CSOs) in Brazil is marked by strong inequality and volatility. Although the country has a significant number of formally registered organisations, financial sustainability remains one of the sector’s greatest structural challenges. The expert panel highlighted that funding is highly concentrated in specific niches, with low predictability and strong dependence on external agendas, whether national or international. As a result, only a few organisations manage to consolidate with stable funding, while most face ongoing difficulties in [accessing resources and securing predictable, year-round financing](#) to sustain their operations.

Regarding accessibility, panellists noted that the majority of resources directed to CSOs come from private sources - individual, corporate, or community donations - with 80% of CSO funding [reported](#) to come from donations in 2016. In contrast, less than 0.6% of organisations [received federal funding in 2023](#), and domestic philanthropy represents [only about 0.2% of GDP](#)—well below levels observed in countries such as the United States (around 2%). In this context, CSOs often depend on a mix of public resources (including federal, state, and municipal streams) and private funding (domestic philanthropy and, in some cases, international donors).

International funding remains a volatile component of the global enabling environment for civil society, as [OECD data](#) indicate that official development assistance (ODA) fell in 2024 by 7.1% in real terms compared to 2023. 2025 Data are not available yet. The OECD also projected an additional [9%–17% drop in ODA in 2025](#), sustaining uncertainty for international cooperation budgets that often support civil society programming directly or indirectly.

Access to [these resources is uneven](#). Beyond the overall scarcity of funding, bureaucratic and compliance barriers (such as challenges in processing international transfers and opening or maintaining bank accounts) disproportionately affect smaller organisations, which frequently lack staff with the administrative and language skills (often English) required to navigate donor and financial-system procedures.

Inequalities are also shaped by Brazil’s federal structure and territorial disparities: CSOs in poorer states and municipalities face weaker local institutional support and fewer trained personnel to prepare proposals, meet reporting requirements, and manage partnerships,

which reduces their ability to compete for funds. Finally, access varies by area of activity, as some sectors are more likely to be prioritised in public calls or philanthropic portfolios and have more established intermediary networks, while others face fewer funding opportunities. Together, these factors create an environment in which resources may exist, but access is conditioned by region, administrative capacity, and thematic area.

Moreover, reliance on private donations (domestic and international) does not eliminate constraints: grants are often earmarked and subject to reporting and compliance requirements. Donations may also trigger state-level [taxation](#) (ITCMD), with rates varying across states (e.g., 4% in São Paulo), which can reduce the net value of philanthropic transfers and increase transaction costs—especially for smaller CSOs.

On the dimension of effectiveness, funding conditions were assessed as disabling. While public and private opportunities exist, donor requirements are often rigid and hierarchical, including external audits, detailed reports, and proof of results that demand specialised staff and additional costs. This dynamic compromises CSOs' autonomy, as they frequently need to adapt their agendas to donor priorities instead of following their own strategic plans. The asymmetry in donor relationships marked by low transparency in selection criteria and personalised partnerships, reinforces a dependency model that limits the effectiveness of civil society action in Brazil.

This asymmetry is not limited to foreign donors. Because a substantial share of available resources comes through private philanthropy (domestic and international), CSOs are also shaped by the conditions attached to private giving more broadly. Private funding is frequently earmarked for specific themes, geographies, or “deliverables”, may cap overhead costs, and typically requires intensive monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. In practice, this can privilege larger, more professionalised organisations that can absorb compliance costs, while smaller CSOs face higher transaction costs and reduced flexibility. As a result, even when funding is available, many organisations experience constrained autonomy and are incentivised to align activities with donor-defined priorities (such as the [climate change agenda in Brazil](#)) sometimes at the expense of locally defined needs and longer-term strategic planning.

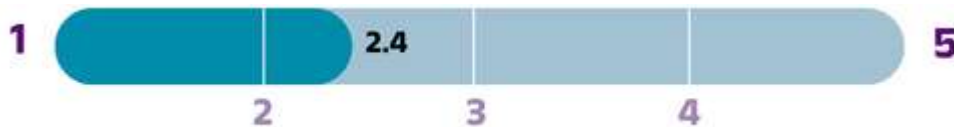
Long-term financial resilience strategies remain legally supported through the endowment framework (“fundos patrimoniais”) established by [Law No. 13,800/2019](#), which creates a structured vehicle for managing donations and sustaining public-interest purposes over time. Yet the panel emphasised that the main fragility of CSOs in Brazil is the lack of continuous and predictable funding. Financing is mostly episodic and project-based, which prevents long-term planning and makes it difficult to maintain stable teams. Many funders restrict their contributions to specific activities and do not cover basic institutional costs. This logic makes organisations highly [vulnerable to political, economic, or donor priority changes](#). [According to studies](#), about one-third of Brazilian CSOs have ceased operations due to financial and administrative difficulties.

Thus, the final score reflects a negative balance: although resources exist, their unequal distribution, rigid conditionalities, and irregular nature characterise an environment that is only partially enabling. The final score of 2.5 translates a scenario in which the sector has limited opportunities but lacks the conditions to ensure the stability and sustainability necessary for the democratic vitality of civil society.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

4. Open and Responsive State

Score:



The principle of an open and responsive state was evaluated by the experts as one of the most critical for the consolidation of an enabling environment in Brazil. Although relevant laws and instruments exist, such as the Access to Information Law and the General Data Protection Law, their practical implementation is highly uneven across levels of government and branches of power, resulting in partial advances alongside significant limitations in state–civil society interaction.

Important legal milestones in the field of transparency include the Access to Information Law ([Law 12.527/2011](#)) and the General Data Protection Law ([Law 13.709/2018](#)). In practice, however, the implementation of transparency and accountability standards remains uneven across subnational governments. According to the 2025 Transparency and Public Governance Index ([Índice de Transparência e Governança Pública – ITGP](#)), published by Transparency International – Brazil, the national average score among Brazilian states was 69.8 points, classified as “good,” yet significant shortcomings persist in strategic areas. Participation mechanisms showed the weakest performance among all evaluated dimensions, with an average score of only 52 points, indicating fragile conditions for social participation. Transparency related to parliamentary amendments and public works also emerged as a major bottleneck: only three states fully disclose information on state-level amendments, and most governments fail to provide complete and accessible data on the allocation and execution of federal amendments and public infrastructure projects.

[Open data programmes have been assessed as “properly institutionalised”](#), signalling efforts to make datasets publicly available. Brazil’s transparency ecosystem continues to include the federal [Portal da Transparência](#), which provides public information on federal spending and revenues and supports public monitoring. The same portal provides open downloads (e.g., CSV) of published datasets, supporting reuse for oversight and analysis. For open data infrastructure, Brazil maintains [dados.gov.br](#) as the national catalog/portal for open datasets published by federal (and other) public bodies. The federal [“Governo Digital”](#) pages explicitly

describe the portal as the central point for searching and accessing public data and as part of Brazil's open-data policy framing.

International benchmarking places Brazil in the middle tier of statistical open-data performance: [Open Data Watch's ODIN country profile \(year 2024\) ranks Brazil 50th with an overall score of 69](#). The IRM action-plan review further highlights commitments related to transparency, open data, access to information, and participation—including in infrastructure policy—[suggesting a practical policy pipeline](#) where openness commitments can be operationalised.

Regarding transparency and grievance/FOI channels, the federal government continues to operate [Fala.BR](#) as the integrated platform for both ombudsman services and access to information requests within the federal executive. Fala.BR's service description explicitly covers information requests as well as complaints, reports, suggestions, and other citizen submissions, reinforcing the “responsiveness” dimension of Principle 4.

Despite the existence of these portals, notable gaps remain in practice, such as information on land ownership. These gaps limit effective social oversight and undermine the practical exercise of transparency, despite formal advances in digital platforms and communication tools.

Furthermore, information from parliaments and the [judiciary remains](#) fragmented and often difficult to access. Although access-to-information procedures are formally established, experts noted that shortcomings stem less from the absence of legal frameworks and more from inconsistent compliance, limited standardisation across institutions, and weak enforcement mechanisms. In many cases, data are technically available but dispersed across multiple platforms, insufficiently updated, or presented in highly technical formats that limit usability for civil society and the general public. [Experts emphasised](#) that parliamentary and judicial portals frequently rely on highly technical taxonomies and interfaces, which makes targeted searches time-consuming and reduces the usability of data for civil society monitoring. In [the legislative branch](#), a recurring practical obstacle is the lack of harmonisation between the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate: the same bill may circulate under different identification numbers and tracking systems in each house, complicating follow-up, cross-referencing, and the reconstruction of legislative histories. In addition, datasets are not always updated consistently, and documentation is often insufficient to clarify how information is organised. These challenges disproportionately affect information related to financial oversight, parliamentary amendments, judicial administrative data, and decision-making processes, which limits effective public oversight even when access-to-information procedures are formally in place.

On participation, experts emphasised that the existence of formal spaces does not guarantee effectiveness. At the Presidency level, the [Council for Social Participation \(Conselho de Participação Social\)](#) remains the formal instance for hearing civil society. On the digital side, the federal government presents [Brasil Participativo](#) as its official digital space for social participation, allowing registered users to contribute to consultations, conferences, plans, councils, [and other participatory processes](#). The platform is publicly accessible at the Presidency's [participation portal](#) and is positioned as a central hub for participatory processes. Brazil's sixth OGP [national action plan \(2023–2027\)](#) includes [eight commitments](#) co-created by government and civil society, indicating continuity of the co-creation model in the current cycle.

Although the federal government has [reinstated public policy councils](#) and conferences since 2023, these processes are sporadic and selective, and civil society's contributions rarely influence final decisions. An example raised was the [São Paulo Women's Policy Conference](#), in which proposals collected did not result in concrete policy changes. While the initiative was designed to broaden access, it is important to note that it was precisely the shift to an online format that ended up limiting participation, and poor coordination among ministries and agencies further weakened the state's ability to incorporate civil society's input. Instead of

integrating civil society concerns, the São Paulo governor later [cut 54%](#) of the budget to women's social movement and organisations. [Institutional and political](#) barriers reinforce the [exclusion of certain groups](#), and poor coordination among ministries and agencies further weakens the state's ability to incorporate civil society's input.

This [situation undermines CSOs' trust in participatory processes](#) and weakens mechanisms of social oversight, particularly when participation is perceived as discontinuous, fragmented, or weakly connected to decision-making. Although recent efforts have focused on reinstating councils and participatory forums, experts emphasised that effectiveness depends not only on the formal existence of these spaces, but also on their institutional integration, continuity across political cycles, and availability of resources. Analyses of the federal participatory reconstruction process highlight persistent challenges, including insufficient budgetary support for participatory bodies, lack of system-wide coordination among different mechanisms, and unclear methodologies for incorporating citizen inputs into public policies. These limitations risk reducing participation to a consultative or symbolic role, reinforcing scepticism among civil society actors regarding the actual impact of engagement on policy outcomes.

The accountability dimension was considered disabling. Experts noted that government feedback to CSOs is rare, vague, or incomplete, undermining trust in and the effectiveness of participatory mechanisms. [The case of the public consultations held in the city of São Paulo for the preparation of the 2025–2028 Target Program](#) is illustrative. Although the City Hall organised in-person public hearings across subprefectures and provided digital participation channels, such as the Participe+ platform, the process was criticised for its limited capacity to foster broad participation and ensure diversity of voices. Moreover, contributions submitted by citizens and civil society organisations were not clearly incorporated into the final document, nor were transparent justifications provided when proposals were not adopted. This pattern reinforces the perception that institutional listening does not always translate into concrete influence over public decision-making. The fragmentation of responsibilities across different agencies and levels of government further contributes to inconsistent or unclear responses and, in many cases, to the complete absence of formal feedback on the contributions presented.

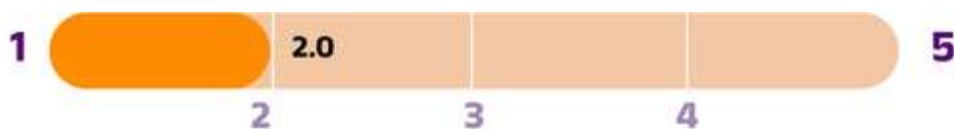
In summary, despite having legal frameworks that place Brazil in a strong position on paper, practice shows that transparency remains irregular, participation is limited, and accountability is fragile. The result was the assignment of a 2.4 score, reflecting an environment where legal advances do not translate into consistent practices of openness and responsiveness.

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PRINCIPLE SCORE

5. Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society

Score:



The cultural and discursive environment around civil society in Brazil was assessed as disabling. Despite some recent progress, such as the increased presence of leaders from historically excluded groups in institutional spaces, the public sphere remains dominated by stigmatising narratives, low levels of trust, and structural inequalities that hinder civic engagement and full inclusion.

Parliamentary initiatives such as the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission on NGOs ([CPI das ONGs](#)) in the Amazon region, together with media narratives such as the so-called “NGO scandal” ([farra or mamata das ONGs](#)), have reinforced a hostile discourse toward civil society organisations operating in the region. [Research and investigative journalism](#) show that these narratives are deeply rooted in colonial imaginaries that portray Indigenous peoples as primitive, incapable of self-representation, or manipulated by external actors. Such framings systematically delegitimise Indigenous organisations and those supporting their rights, associating them with corruption, foreign interference, or threats to national sovereignty without evidence. As documented in recent analyses on disinformation in the Amazon, these narratives weaken Indigenous struggles by eroding public trust, justifying heightened political scrutiny, and constraining advocacy efforts related to land demarcation, environmental protection, and self-determination.

Narratives of “oversight” and “suspicion” toward NGOs continue to circulate in the wake of the Senate’s CPI on NGOs in the Amazon, whose final report was approved in December [2023](#) and framed its outputs as legislative proposals and enforcement-oriented recommendations. In 2025, this discourse visibly migrated into routine legislative activity, including committee-level advancement of proposals associated with the [CPI’s agenda](#). For example, in March 2025 the Senate’s CTFC approved PL 6047/2023, which would [restrict politicians and public agents from serving on NGO boards](#) and would require expanded online transparency for financial statements, contracts, and remuneration in specified circumstances. [This type of agenda](#) can be framed publicly as “integrity and transparency,” while also amplifying a generalised suspicion toward civil society organisations, especially those working on

environment, land, and human-rights issues, thereby affecting civic legitimacy even when organisations comply with existing rules.

Pejorative terms used by political leaders in Congress, such as “promiscuity” to describe relations between NGOs and the government, were also recalled. Although cracks in this scenario have been opened by the [resistance of social movements](#) and the increased visibility of Black, Indigenous, women, and LGBTQIA+ leaders – who counter stigmatising narratives through public campaigns, strategic litigation, and community-based communication that highlight civil society’s role in defending rights – the overall environment remains negative, justifying the disabling score.

Public trust in NGOs is low: The most recent Brazil-specific Edelman data available show [NGOs in a “neutrality” band of trust \(58%\)](#), below business (62%) and above government (52%) and media (52%). The [same report](#) highlights large trust inequalities by income, with low-income respondents much less trusting than high-income respondents, reinforcing how legitimacy disputes often map onto socioeconomic divides.

Civic education remains insufficient, as [constitutional](#) and curricular provisions for [citizenship education](#) are only partially implemented and rarely translated into practical training on how to use participation mechanisms. While many CSOs conduct their own civic-engagement and voter-education initiatives, these efforts are fragmented and underfunded, limiting their reach. These factors feed the perception that participation is symbolic rather than effective and reduce society’s capacity to claim its rights.

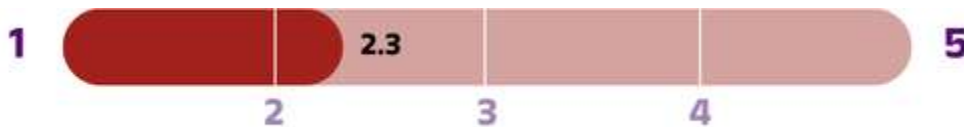
In the dimension of civic equality and inclusion, the panel noted that [deep barriers](#) remain related to gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. Women, Black people, Indigenous peoples, and LGBTQIA+ groups continue to be underrepresented in [legislative and executive positions](#), and face unequal access to resources, visibility, and decision-making spaces. For Indigenous communities in particular, marginalisation is reinforced by geographic isolation (in the most cases), structural discrimination, and recurrent stigmatisation that often intersects with territorial disputes and environmental conflicts, which can expose leaders and community-based organisations to heightened risks and limit their ability to engage safely in public life. Moreover, gender- and race-based political violence, along with attacks on [Afro-Brazilian religious sites](#), highlight a hostile and exclusionary environment. Although legal advances exist, such as [racial quota policies](#) in higher education, the evidence discussed by the panel indicates that formal equality still does not translate into equitable opportunities for [civic participation](#).

In summary, while some progress has been achieved and civil society continues to resist actively, public discourse, social perception, and conditions for inclusion remain dominated by hostility, disinformation, and structural inequalities. This justifies the score of 2 - disabling, reflecting a cultural environment that remains unfavourable to the full exercise of civil society action.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment

Score:



The digital environment in Brazil was assessed as disabling, despite the existence of [relevant legal frameworks](#) and institutional advances. The country has important norms that guarantee digital rights, but significant weaknesses remain in terms of platform regulation, privacy protection, and quality of connectivity. This results in a scenario where civil society faces constant risks online, while a significant portion of the population remains digitally excluded.

In the dimension of digital rights and freedoms, Brazil stands out for the adoption of the Civil Rights Framework for the Internet ([Law 12.965/2014](#)), considered a robust normative milestone because it enshrines key principles such as net neutrality, protection of privacy and personal data, and freedom of expression online, and establishes due-process guarantees and transparency obligations for content removal and access to user information. In addition, justice institutions and regulatory bodies have responded to the risks of online violations and threats, including [public hearings](#) and [judicial debates](#) on platform accountability. It is important to emphasise that these hearings do not focus on specific individual violations, but rather address more broadly the structural vulnerabilities of online platforms and the systemic risks associated with their operation. However, the lack of effective regulation of major digital platforms continues to [create a permissive environment for abusive practices](#).

Brazil does not promote systematic internet shutdowns. Nevertheless, persistent state inaction in the face of the concentrated power of big tech companies undermines digital sovereignty and exposes CSOs to opaque, arbitrary, and economically driven platform rules. A 2024 high-profile judicial measure provides a rare exemption to this overall situation of state inaction. In 2024, the Supreme Federal Court (STF) ordered the [suspension of X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) across the entire national territory until the company met legal requirements it had been failing to comply with, highlighting the possibility of abrupt interruptions to communication channels by decision of public authorities. Once the company regularised its legal status, access to the platform [was restored](#). This outcome indicates that, although legal instruments exist that can restrict access to the internet and digital services, their use in this specific case was grounded in objective legal criteria, pointing to the Judiciary's institutional role and to the exercise of national sovereignty in regulating the digital environment, since the operation of digital platforms in Brazil is conditional upon compliance with legal requirements.

Regarding digital security and privacy, experts assessed the scenario as disabling. Although the General Data Protection Law ([Law 13.709/2018](#)) exists, its practical application has proved insufficient to protect sensitive data of citizens and organisations. Recurrent cyberattacks against [universities](#) and civil society organisations, such as the case of [Repórter Brasil](#), illustrate the persistence of vulnerabilities. The business model of major platforms, based on the virality of extremist and misleading content, also [amplifies risks of digital harassment and undermines democratic functioning](#).

[Civil society organisations](#) have documented how opaque content moderation rules and recent policy changes by major platforms have facilitated the spread of disinformation and [hate speech](#), disproportionately affecting women, Black people, Indigenous peoples, journalists, and LGBTQIA+ communities. During recent electoral cycles, for instance, women candidates were targets of the majority of online offences, while Indigenous organisations warned that misinformation and online violence intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic and election periods. Moreover, the use and commercialisation of sensitive personal data for targeted advertising has been identified as reinforcing systematic disinformation campaigns, with impacts that extend beyond the digital sphere and translate into real-world threats.

A major jurisprudential change affecting the online safety landscape occurred in 2025 when the [Supreme Federal Court \(STF\) set parameters for platform liability](#) for third-party content and held Article 19 of the Marco Civil partially unconstitutional, reshaping incentives and obligations around content moderation and risk management in digital spaces. [This decision represents](#) an important institutional intervention in the absence of comprehensive legislative reform and signals a more assertive role by the Judiciary in addressing structural risks posed by digital platforms. However, it remains a judicially driven and case-based response, rather than the result of a coherent and systematic regulatory framework. As such, while the ruling may influence how platforms respond to unlawful content and judicial orders, with potential implications for the speed and scope of takedowns and for the predictability of online organising, it does not, by itself, resolve the broader regulatory gaps and structural asymmetries that continue to shape Brazil's digital environment.

Finally, digital accessibility was rated as disabling. Although Brazil has recorded an expansion in internet users ([6.1 million more in two years](#)), only [22% of the population](#) has what is considered "meaningful connectivity." In rural areas, traditional communities, and peripheral territories, digital exclusion is even more severe. Furthermore, the [low level of digital literacy](#) (53% of Brazilians have been assessed to possess medium digital literacy, 25% possess poor digital literacy) increases vulnerability to fraud, manipulation, and disinformation. Digital presence is conditioned by rules imposed by private platforms, which may unilaterally restrict content and pages.

In summary, Brazil's digital environment presents relevant normative advances, but gaps in platform regulation, weak data protection, and inequalities in access and digital literacy persist. The result was a 2.3 score, reflecting a scenario where, although formal rights exist, digital practice is marked by insecurity and structural exclusion.

C) Recommendations

Government:

- Strengthen protection and equality safeguards in civic participation, by reinforcing protection mechanisms for human rights defenders with adequate funding, rapid-response protocols, and intergovernmental coordination, particularly in territories marked by land and environmental conflicts, and by preventing and addressing gender- and race-based political violence through systematic monitoring, accountability, and targeted protection for women, Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+ leaders.
- Reduce structural and bureaucratic barriers affecting civil society operations, by simplifying registration and accounting requirements, ensuring the full and harmonised implementation of the Civil Society Regulatory Framework (MROSC) nationwide, establishing clear and standardised procedures for parliamentary amendments, and reviewing tax barriers affecting donations to CSOs (including ITCMD variations across states), while expanding fiscal incentives for domestic philanthropy.
- Strengthen transparency, participation, and institutional coordination, by introducing mandatory feedback mechanisms in participatory processes (with public reporting on how contributions are incorporated), improving harmonisation between the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, and other public institutions regarding legislative tracking and public data organisation, and reducing technical barriers to civic monitoring.
- Advance digital sovereignty and meaningful connectivity as democratic priorities, by investing in programmes that enhance citizens' and CSOs' capacity to identify disinformation, provide digital security training, and reduce digital exclusion in peripheral, rural, and traditional territories.

Donors & International Community:

- Strengthen financial sustainability with flexibility and local alignment, by providing predictable, long-term and multi-year funding that covers essential institutional and operational costs; reducing excessive conditionalities; aligning requirements with locally defined priorities; and supporting CSO-led financial diversification strategies, recognising that sustainability is a medium- to long-term process and should not impose disproportionate administrative burdens on smaller organisations.
- Invest in protection, equality, and civic resilience, by supporting comprehensive protection mechanisms for women and men human rights defenders, including physical security, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and digital protection, and by funding initiatives aimed at addressing gender- and race-based political violence, particularly in electoral contexts and territorial conflicts.
- Address stigmatisation and strengthen strategic connections, by supporting initiatives that counter disinformation and hostile narratives targeting civil society organisations, particularly those working in Indigenous, environmental, and human rights fields, amplifying locally produced narratives and acting as a bridge between Brazilian organizations, international networks, and thematic funders, in order to expand access to opportunities aligned with local needs.

Civil Society (CSOs):

- Strengthen collaborative advocacy strategies, including coalitions to monitor legislative proposals that may restrict civic space.
- Produce and disseminate evidence-based counter-narratives to address stigmatisation, particularly narratives targeting Indigenous, environmental, and human rights organisations.
- Invest in strategic public communication to strengthen social trust, particularly in territories and social groups with lower levels of institutional trust.
- Systematise evidence on violence against defenders, bureaucratic barriers, and digital exclusion, strengthening the capacity for informed advocacy.

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 panel for this report was convened in July 2025. 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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