

Liberia

Country Focus Report

2026

Credit: Bethany Laird



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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



Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms



Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework



Accessible and Sustainable Resources



Open and Responsive State



Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society



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.

WONGOSOL extends its sincere appreciation to all participants and partners who contributed to the success of the national dialogue and to the development of this Country Focus Report.

Brief Overview of the Country Context

Reporting period covered: February 2025 – February 2026

Liberia continued to consolidate its democratic transition in 2025 following the peaceful transfer of power to President Joseph Nyuma Boakai in January 2024. The country maintained a generally stable political environment while continuing to address governance challenges inherited from years of institutional fragility. Although Liberia has made significant progress in rebuilding democratic institutions since the end of the civil war in 2003, [persistent challenges remain](#), including corruption, weak public institutions, limited accountability, and unequal access to public services.

Economically, Liberia recorded modest growth driven by the mining, agriculture, and services sectors. However, widespread poverty, unemployment, inflationary pressures, and inadequate infrastructure continued to affect livelihoods, particularly for women, youth, and rural communities. These socio-economic conditions continued to increase reliance on civil society organisations (CSOs) to provide essential services, promote accountability, and support peace-building and community development.

In November 2025, Liberia underwent its Fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) before the United Nations Human Rights Council. The [review](#) highlighted progress in democratic governance while identifying continuing concerns regarding civic freedoms, access to justice, discrimination, corruption, and accountability for past human rights violations. The review also emphasised the importance of strengthening the rule of law, protecting human rights defenders, and implementing outstanding recommendations from previous review cycles.

Although Liberia's Constitution guarantees freedom of association, expression, and peaceful assembly, civic actors have continued to report constraints on civic space. These pressures have taken the form of burdensome registration and [accreditation requirements](#) for civil society organisations, corruption, declining financial opportunities, intimidation of journalists and activists, and administrative hurdles that weigh especially heavily on grassroots and women-led groups.

Organisations working on accountability, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and LGBTQI+ rights have also faced stigma, online harassment, and security risks. In addition, the

continued criminalisation of consensual same-sex relations under Liberia's Penal Code has contributed to a restrictive environment for organisations advocating for LGBTQI+ rights.

At the [Liberia Business Registry](#), any individual or organisation seeking to conduct commercial or industrial activity in Liberia, whether incorporated or not, must register with the Liberia Business Registry before commencing operations. Registration can be completed at the Registry's office or online through its official website. New organisations are required to submit all necessary documents including articles of incorporation, and pay the prescribed fees. The registration certificates are valid for 12 months and must be renewed annually, which causes additional burden for CSOs.

Transitional justice remained an important national priority. While the Government took symbolic steps toward reconciliation, including acknowledging historical injustices, civil society organisations continued to advocate for the operationalisation of the War and Economic Crimes Court (WECC), implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations, and access to reparations for victims. These priorities were also reflected in [stakeholder submissions](#) to Liberia's Fourth UPR, which emphasised the need to address impunity for serious human rights violations committed during the civil wars.

Against this backdrop, civil society continued to play a central role in strengthening democratic governance, advancing women's leadership, promoting accountability, supporting transitional justice, and protecting civic freedoms. Women-led organisations, in particular, remained at the forefront of peacebuilding, community mediation, service delivery, and advocacy despite facing persistent financial, institutional, and operational constraints.

B) Assessment of the Enabling Environment

PRINCIPLE SCORE

1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms

Score: ¹



While Liberia's [Constitution](#) guarantees fundamental rights, the legal environment presents severe gaps for marginalised groups. Under Section 14.74 of the [Liberian Penal Law](#), consensual same-sex relations remain [criminalised](#) as "voluntary sodomy", a first-degree misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in prison. This criminalisation [severely restricts](#) the operational space for queer civil society organisations (CSOs). LGBTIQ individuals, including activists, face severe security concerns, including physical harassment, extortion, and targeted violence, and it is prohibited to register an LGBTIQ-focused CSO. Furthermore, because of the legal framework, activists and victims are deterred from reporting abuses to law enforcement out of fear of arbitrary arrest or exposure.

Liberia's 1986 [Constitution](#) guarantees freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. These rights provide the legal basis for civil society activities including advocacy, community mobilisation, and policy monitoring. Despite these constitutional foundations, several practical challenges continue to affect the exercise of civic freedoms. Among broader rule of law-related concerns affecting the full protection of rights more generally, such as widespread impunity and corruption, panellists also noted that patronage systems negatively impact the exercise of fundamental freedoms. They specifically noted ongoing attempts to influence civil society organisations through established patronage networks, which create significant structural hurdles to the exercise of freedom of association. While these issues do not represent a pattern of systematic state repression, they contribute to a restrictive climate in which some organisations practice self-censorship, particularly when engaging in sensitive governance, transparency, or human rights issues.

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

Freedom of assembly remains constrained in practice, particularly through assembly notification requirements under the [2015 National Police Act](#), which grants the County Attorney the power to cancel an assembly on several grounds, including risks to public order. This discretionary authority can create uncertainty for organisers and discourage participation, especially when groups fear last minute restrictions or police intervention. Use of excessive force against protesters has also been [reported](#), further limiting the safe exercise of peaceful assembly.

Dialogue participants further highlighted notable concerns regarding political pressure targeted at advocacy organisations, alongside [instances of intimidation and harassment](#) of activists on social media platforms. These patterns are especially concerning for organisations and individuals working on sensitive governance, anti-corruption, and accountability issues, where online threats and reputational attacks may create a chilling effect and reduce public engagement.

In addition, overly broad provisions of the [Penal Code](#) have been used to target and detain activists. Particularly, sections 11.11 on public accusations against the president, 11.12 on sedition, and 11.14 on criminal malevolence continue to [criminalise](#) forms of expression and deter investigative journalism and public accountability. These provisions contribute to self-censorship, particularly among journalists and civic actors reporting on politically sensitive issues.

Freedom of expression and press freedom have come under particular pressure with frequent instances of [intimidation against journalists](#). The Press Union of Liberia has [warned](#) of eroding free speech and shrinking civic space, citing continued pressure on independent media and civic actors. A recent case illustrating these risks is the situation involving journalist Rodney D. Sieh, who has faced intimidation and discrediting attempts in response to his reporting on a major drug scandal. The [case](#) has drawn attention to ongoing threats to media freedom and accountability in Liberia.

Overall, while Liberia maintains a strong constitutional framework for the protection of fundamental freedoms, gaps in implementation, restrictive legal provisions, and patterns of intimidation continue to undermine the effective realisation of these rights.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework

Score:



While Liberia's [Constitution](#) guarantees freedom of association and the legal framework permits CSO registration, recent studies highlight significant [barriers](#). Civil society organisations are required to first register via the Liberia Business Registry (LBR), which is also a mandatory requirement to access foreign funding. The National Aid and NGO Policy (2020) and [PVO Act](#) further require accreditation via the NGO division of the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Finance and Development Planning](#), including fees of US\$150-350 and annual registration renewal.

Freedom of association is guaranteed under the Constitution, and there is no documented precedent of individuals or groups being explicitly barred or restricted from registering an organisation based on their identity or mandate. However, significant administrative and structural inefficiencies prevent the framework from being fully enabling. The registration process remains slow, multi-layered, and complex. The [Global Philanthropy Environment Index \(2025\)](#) documents costly, multi-step accreditation processes and renewal requirements that many organisations fail to comply with, leaving many grassroots associations unregistered or operating informally. While larger NGOs are able to navigate processes and absorb the associated costs, grassroots and rural CSOs face barriers due to lengthy procedures, costs, and limited decentralisation. Both LBR registration and accreditation need to be renewed annually, which means that organisations with limited capacities, such as grassroots organisations or women's organisations, are frequently unable to maintain their legal status and lose access to funding. [PILnet's 2025](#) regional study underscores opaque compliance frameworks that expose smaller CSOs to fines and suspension.

In addition, civil society organisations implementing sector-specific programmes are required to obtain operational clearances from relevant line ministries, such as the Ministries of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Youth and Sports, Health, or Education. Anchored in the National NGO Policy Guidelines (administered through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning), accredited NGOs must enter into sector-specific Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and secure technical approvals from line ministries prior to project

execution. While basic activity execution does not require individual activity permits, this requirement for sector-level MoUs creates a dual-layered regulatory process in practice, as CSOs must navigate decentralised line-ministry approvals in addition to central NGO accreditation.

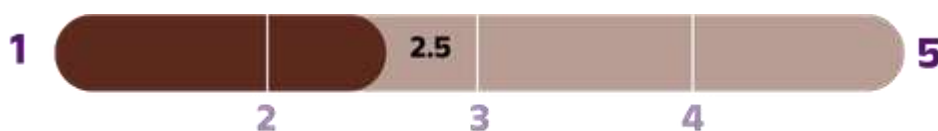
Additionally, statutory safeguards against arbitrary state interference are weakened by gaps within the regulatory framework. Notably, as highlighted in comparative benchmarks such as the [Global Philanthropy Environment Index](#), the National NGO Policy and Guidelines contain no explicit legal provisions governing the formal structural termination or dissolution of an NGO, relying instead almost exclusively on the re-accreditation mechanism. Under this framework, government oversight centres on enforcement, compliance, and periodic re-accreditation, where failure to secure re-accreditation or suspension for alleged non-compliance or deviation from national priorities results in an organisation losing its legal right to operate. Because the policy framework lacks explicit, objective parameters defining dissolution procedures and relies on administrative re-accreditation decisions, it leaves significant discretionary room for potential state interference and inconsistent application, even if such powers are not routinely abused in daily practice.

These challenges illustrate how administrative inefficiencies undermine the enabling environment for civil society, despite the absence of routine arbitrary dissolution.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources

Score:



Civil society organisations in Liberia are legally permitted to access both domestic and international funding streams without significant statutory restrictions, allowing for regular collaboration with development partners and international NGOs. CSOs generally maintain unhindered physical access to banking and financial services to support their regular operations. International cooperation has been a major source of resources for civil society organisations, particularly during the post-war reconstruction period. In 2024, Liberia received USD 463 million in [official development assistance](#) with 51.9% of the assistance provided by multilateral organisations, such as several UN programmes.

Nevertheless, resource accessibility and long-term financial sustainability remain among the most severe constraints facing the Liberian civil society sector. Liberia's \$2.5 billion [debt burden](#) consumes up to 17% of the national budget annually, limiting fiscal space for social investment and leaving virtually no room for domestic public funding mechanisms for civil society. As a result, CSOs remain heavily dependent on international donor funding, which is subject to [increasing volatility](#) and domestic shifts in donor countries. Relationships between donors and CSOs are often constrained because donor priorities do not always align with locally identified community needs. Furthermore, international funding is frequently tied to stringent compliance frameworks, complex financial reporting standards, and co-funding conditions that smaller, grassroots organisations lack the institutional capacity to fulfill. As a result, access to resources is skewed towards larger organisations based in the capital, while there is little done to reach out to rural organisations. [Aid volatility and donor prioritisation](#) further create fragile planning horizons, leaving NGOs dependent on restricted project-based financing.

The environment for civil society is further restricted by the severe underdevelopment of domestic philanthropy, private-sector corporate social responsibility, and independent income-generating mechanisms. Under the [Liberia Revenue Code](#), while accredited CSOs enjoy duty-free privileges and basic tax exemptions, Section 205(b) explicitly permits individual and corporate taxpayers filing under Sections 900 or 901 to claim a charitable contribution deduction, capped at 15 percent of taxable income, for donations made to qualifying

organisations under Section 200(d), though administrative and compliance challenges continue to limit its practical utilisation by the private sector.

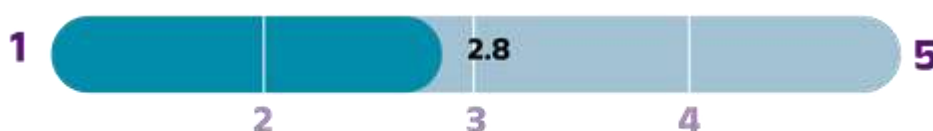
This absence of flexible financing options leaves the vast majority of local organisations structurally vulnerable and dependent on external grant cycles. To mitigate this vulnerability, panellists and sector experts highlighted the emerging potential of social enterprises - ventures that combine a social mission with commercial revenue generation - as a viable mechanism for CSOs to build operational resilience, decrease absolute donor dependency, and diversify baseline income streams.

While Liberia's legal framework permits CSOs to access international and domestic funding, recent studies highlight deeper structural vulnerabilities. Civil society leaders have responded by advocating for progressive tax reforms, curbing illicit financial flows, and exploring social enterprise models to diversify revenue streams. These efforts underscore the urgent need for both institutional adaptation and systemic fiscal reform to strengthen the sustainability of Liberia's civil society sector.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

4. Open and Responsive State

Score:



Liberia has established definitive legal and institutional mechanisms designed to promote transparency and accountability in governance, notably becoming the first country in West Africa to pass a comprehensive [Freedom of Information \(FOI\) Act in 2010](#). While statutory provisions and institutional mandates grant individuals the right to request public records orally, in writing, or electronically, a significant gap persists between legal guarantees and [operational reality](#). Public awareness of the Act remains low, proactive disclosure by state entities is limited, and CSOs frequently experience prolonged administrative delays and extended processing times when requesting public documents and government data required for policy monitoring. Consequently, while transparency institutions and legal rights exist, practical access to information remains constrained by bureaucratic inertia and unpredictable response timelines.

Additional oversight bodies intended to enhance governance transparency include the [Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission \(LACC\)](#), the [General Auditing Commission \(GAC\)](#), and the [Governance Commission](#). Civil society organisations routinely utilise public audit reports, statutory disclosures, and policy frameworks issued by these entities to support evidence-based advocacy regarding public financial management. However, these specialised bodies face persistent capacity, technical, and resource constraints that frequently delay the publication and release of vital audit and investigation findings. Consequently, while information generated by these oversight institutions provides a crucial basis for CSO policy monitoring, access remains subject to extended processing timelines and delayed reporting cycles, echoing the broader administrative bottlenecks observed under the Freedom of Information framework.

Practical engagement between the state and civil society remains highly inconsistent and uneven across sectors. CSOs continue to report delayed and unpredictable access to vital public documents and government data required for policy monitoring. National sector reviews indicate that stakeholder consultation is often ad-hoc rather than systematic, and local grassroots groups frequently report that their substantive inputs are rarely integrated into final

policy budgets or implementation frameworks. While [some laws](#) require CSO consultation in specific governance processes and there have been instances of civil society consultation, overall civil society participation in decision-making processes has not been effectively institutionalised.

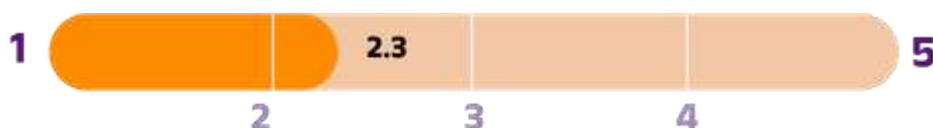
Furthermore, while CSOs regularly present formal policy recommendations to government institutions through national dialogues and communiques, such as the public resource management and financing reform [communique](#) published via ActionAid Liberia, the government's follow-up responses and concrete policy implementation are frequently slow. At the sub-national level, recent local governance reforms, particularly the operationalisation of the [Local Government Act \(LGA\) of 2018](#) and the establishment of County Councils, have created new legal pathways to enhance citizen and civil society participation in local planning, budgeting, and development monitoring. However, the extent to which these decentralised structures translate into meaningful civic influence remains constrained by uneven roll-out across counties, limited local fiscal devolution, and persistent administrative bottlenecks at the central level.

Recent assessments reinforce the inconsistency of state civil society engagement in Liberia. The [Open Budget Survey \(2023\)](#) conducted by the International Budget Partnership indicates that while budget transparency has seen modest incremental gains, public participation in the national budget process remains severely limited, scoring just 15 out of 100. Key fiscal documents, such as Pre-Budget Statements and Audit Reports, face publication delays or limited public distribution, hindering timely monitoring by CSOs. Furthermore, evidence from civil society policy dialogues confirms that slow government responsiveness to CSO policy recommendations leaves civil society engagement fragmented and uneven across national accountability frameworks.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

5. Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society

Score:



Public perception of civil society in Liberia is generally positive, reflecting widespread citizen recognition of the historical and ongoing contributions of CSOs to peacebuilding, post-war reconstruction, democratic governance, and community development. Civil society actors actively participate in public dialogue through media platforms, policy forums, and direct community engagement. Media organisations and independent journalist networks serve as vital partners, providing essential platforms to amplify civic voices and sustain democratic discourse.

Public trust and the depth of civic culture vary across sectors and geographic areas. [Afrobarometer](#) Round 10 (2025) found that citizens value CSO contributions, with 60.1% of rural residents expressing trust compared to 53.1% of urban residents. Women reported slightly higher trust levels (57.4%) than men (55.2%). While these figures demonstrate broad recognition of civil society, confidence has occasionally been affected by concerns regarding internal accountability, transparency, and perceived fragmentation within the sector.

Public discourse in Liberia remains mixed with periods of highly adversarial and hostile rhetoric, particularly during [election periods](#). Activists often face [delegitimisation and smear campaigns](#), portraying them as “noisemakers” or politically biased actors attacking the state rather than promoting accountability. Such rhetoric discourages activism and leaves CSOs in a dilemma: advocate quietly and risk irrelevance or speak loudly and face delegitimisation. This dynamic erodes trust and fuels harassment, particularly against Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and grassroots groups.

Citizen participation, however, remains relatively strong. The [Afrobarometer Flagship Report](#) on Citizen Engagement (2025) shows high levels of civic involvement, contradicting assumptions of low engagement. Civic and voter education campaigns, such as the [Liberia Electoral Support Project](#) (a collaboration between the National Elections Commission, UNDP,

and UN Women), have expanded citizens' awareness of governance processes, though coverage remains uneven across rural areas.

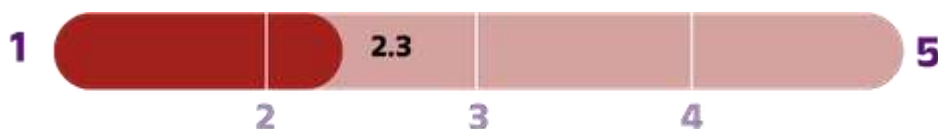
Inclusiveness remains a critical challenge. [UN Women's Liberia Country Gender Equality Profile \(2025\)](#) and the [Spotlight Initiative 2.0](#) (2025–2028) note deeply entrenched gender inequalities, with women facing exclusionary societal norms, gender stereotypes, and alarmingly high levels of gender-based violence, that constitute persistent and structural barriers to their full participation. Civil society actors also [warn](#) that proposed recentralisation of control over local development plans risks marginalising local priorities, especially for women and youth.

Together, these findings illustrate that while civil society enjoys civic trust and participation is relatively high, sustained investment in inclusive dialogue, civic education, and protection of Women Human Rights Defenders is essential to deepen Liberia's democratic culture.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment

Score:



Liberia maintains a relatively open digital environment, characterised by the absence of routine nationwide internet shutdowns or systematic blocking of online civic content. There have been individual instances of internet shutdowns, such as during the [Nimba County by-elections](#) in April 2025. Despite this, civil society organisations actively leverage digital platforms, social media, and online spaces for public education, human rights advocacy, and citizen mobilisation.

Despite relatively open internet access, the digital environment presents growing risks as institutional and legal protections remain limited. Liberia validated a draft Data Protection Law in 2024, which has yet to be enacted. In November 2025, the Legislature [passed](#) the Cyber-crime Act of 2025 (awaiting presidential assent), which establishes critical infrastructure protections and creates the Liberia National Cyber Security Council to combat digital threats. However, civil society actors have [raised significant concerns](#) regarding specific provisions such as mandatory SIM card registration frameworks and broad executive discretion in monitoring digital spaces, warning that without strict judicial safeguards, these measures risk encroaching on free expression, civic privacy, and digital rights. Consequently, while the legislation promises an updated legal basis for national cyber security, its ultimate impact will depend on establishing robust oversight mechanisms, building institutional enforcement capacity, and raising digital rights awareness among CSOs.

Without a designated data protection authority and in the absence of legal remedies in case of attacks, data of individuals and civil society actors is [vulnerable](#) to digital abuse. CSOs and independent activists increasingly face online harassment, targeted misinformation campaigns, and cyber-security threats. IFEX [found](#) that intimidation, arrests, and violent attacks against journalists and activists have had a chilling effect on freedom of expression in digital spaces, leading critical voices to self-censor online. Rising cases of [cyberbullying and](#)

[image-based violence](#), particularly against women activists, further impact freedom to engage online. These emblematic cases highlight that digital abuse is not only general but specifically directed at activists and defenders. Beyond harassment, rising [levels of misinformation and disinformation](#) are constraining Liberia's digital civic space. False narratives and manipulative online content erode public trust, polarise communities, and amplify intimidation of activists and journalists. Misinformation has thus become a structural threat to the enabling environment, forcing defenders to self-censor and weakening the potential of digital platforms for advocacy.

Structural barriers persist regarding digital accessibility. At the end of 2025, Liberia had [1.73 million internet users](#) (approximately 30% penetration), with access concentrated in urban centres. Accessibility is further constrained by [limited affordability](#) both of internet-enabled devices as well as internet data, excluding marginalised communities such as rural youth and women from accessing the internet, and restricting rural CSOs' capacities for digital advocacy. Mobile connectivity is widespread, but service quality and affordability vary drastically between urban and rural communities.

Weak internal digital security practices among grassroots CSOs amplify vulnerabilities, leaving them exposed to phishing, surveillance, and data breaches. Many organisations lack training in cyber-security, which increases risks of privacy violations and undermines trust in digital civic space.

Liberia's digital environment is open and widely used by CSOs, but harassment of activists, weak protections, affordability gaps, and low cyber-security capacity constrain its enabling potential. Sustained investment in digital safety, legal enforcement, and equitable access is essential to strengthening civic space.

C) Recommendations

To the Government

- Establish a centralised, digital "single-window" CSO registration system under the Liberia Business Registry to eliminate administrative delays and reduce duplication across line ministries.
- Publish clear, standardised legal requirements and guidelines regarding line ministry approvals to remove bureaucratic uncertainty for grassroots organisations.
- Formally embed civil society participation within mandatory state planning, budgeting, and policy monitoring frameworks across all line ministries to address uneven sectoral engagement.
- Ensure timely, consistent, and proactive public disclosure of national budget documents, audit data, and policy documentations to support civil society monitoring.
- Enact robust statutory safeguards against online harassment, arbitrary state surveillance, and inconsistent administrative interference or dissolution.

To International Donors and Development Partners

- Modify stringent financial compliance frameworks and co-funding conditions to accommodate the operational realities and institutional capacities of smaller grassroots CSOs.
- Align donor funding priorities directly with locally identified community needs and incorporate institutional flexibilities to allow CSOs to adapt projects to changing local contexts.
- Support Sustainable Financing Mechanisms: Invest in long-term, consortium-based funding partnerships and support the establishment of localised financing mechanisms to reduce emergency donor dependency.

To Civil Society Organisations and the WONGOSOL Network

- Develop and enforce internal transparency and financial accountability standards within the civil society sector to reinforce public legitimacy and combat fragmentation.
- Establish shared administrative infrastructures and resource hubs among networks to reduce operational costs for smaller community-based organisations.
- Design and implement sustained civic education and public communication initiatives, specifically targeting rural and marginalised populations to bridge geographic participation gaps.
- Increase institutional investment in digital security training, cyber-security awareness, and secure communication tools for staff and human rights defenders.

- Cultivate strategic partnerships with the domestic private sector and media institutions to diversify resource bases and amplify public advocacy campaigns.



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 February 2026.** 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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