



2022 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (WEST AFRICA)
NOVEMBER 2023



2022 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (WEST AFRICA)

14th EDITION - NOVEMBER 2023

Developed by:

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In Partnership With:

**FHI 360
International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)**

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INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is pleased to present the fourteenth edition of the *Civil Society Organization (CSO) Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa*, which chronicles developments in 2022. Unlike previous years, when the Index covered as many as thirty-two countries, this year's Index reports on the state of CSO sectors in six countries of West Africa (Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone). This Index will be the final in the series for the foreseeable future. All fourteen editions of the *CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa* will continue to be available at the CSO Sustainability Index Explorer at csoi.org.

The Index is intended to be a useful source of information for local CSOs, governments, donors, academics, and others who want to better understand and monitor key aspects of CSO sustainability. It addresses advances and setbacks in seven key components or “dimensions” of civil society sustainability: the legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, the sectoral infrastructure, and public image. The Index's methodology relies on teams of CSO practitioners and researchers in each country covered. These teams form expert panels that assess and rate developments in the dimensions of CSO sustainability during the year. The panels agree on scores for each dimension, which range from 1 (the most enhanced level of sustainability) to 7 (the most impeded). The dimension scores are then averaged to produce an overall sustainability score for the CSO sector of a given country. An international editorial committee composed of technical and regional experts reviews each panel's scores and the corresponding narrative reports with the aim of maintaining consistent approaches and standards to facilitate cross-country comparison. Further details about the methodology used to calculate scores and produce narrative reports are in Annex A.

The *CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa* complements similar indexes covering other regions. For 2022, a regional edition of the CSO Sustainability Index assessing the civil society sectors in nine countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia is also available.

A publication of this type would not be possible without the contributions of many individuals and organizations. We are grateful to our local implementing partners, who play the critical role of facilitating the expert panel meetings and writing the country reports. We also thank the many CSO representatives and experts, USAID partners, and international donors who participate in the expert panels in each country. Their knowledge, perceptions, insights, and contributions are the foundation upon which this Index is based.

Special thanks are due to David Lenett of FHI 360, the project manager; Marilyn Wyatt and Jennifer Stuart of ICNL, the report's editors; and Kellie Burk of USAID. A full list of acknowledgments is on page ii.

Sincerely,



Lisa Peterson
Director, Civil Society and Peacebuilding Department, FHI 360
November 20, 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This edition of the *CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa* records developments in 2022 in civil society in six West African countries—Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.

In all six countries, the year 2022 was relatively productive after two years of economic and social upheaval caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. In Nigeria, The Gambia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, the political season was busy as preparations got underway for elections in 2023. A controversy over the elections erupted in Sierra Leone as doubts arose about the accuracy of a mid-term housing census, which would be used to allocate parliamentary and local council seats in the elections. Elsewhere the preparations for elections were generally smoother, and many CSOs engaged in voter education, voter registration, and other election-related services.

Liberia, Ghana, and Cameroon celebrated important anniversaries in 2022—Liberia the bicentennial year of its founding, Ghana the thirtieth anniversary of the referendum that returned the country to a constitutional democracy, and Cameroon the president's fortieth year in office. The mood was upbeat in Liberia but less so in Cameroon, where opposition parties complained about the government's crackdown on dissent, and Ghana, which was riven by demonstrations over the country's collapsing economy. The Gambia continued to work on transitional justice in the aftermath of the Yahya Jammeh dictatorship, which ended in 2016, while Nigeria and Cameroon grappled with ongoing hostilities involving separatists and other insurgents.

In all six countries, national economies struggled to regain momentum after being badly hit during the pandemic. The economies of Liberia, The Gambia, and Cameroon showed resilience and recorded growth rates of 4 percent or higher. But persistent inflation hampered recovery across the region, particularly in Ghana (where it reached 54.1 percent), Sierra Leone (40 percent), and Nigeria (21 percent). Contributing to the economic distress were fuel and food shortages caused by the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine.

CSO SUSTAINABILITY IN 2022

While the small sample of countries in this year's Index discourages generalization, the positive trajectory of developments in each country's civil society is striking. Among the forty-two scores rating seven dimensions across the six countries, sixteen, or nearly 40 percent, showed improvements. The sole dimension score showing decline was the legal environment in Sierra Leone. The largest improvement was in the financial viability of Liberian CSOs, which strengthened moderately. The dimension with the greatest number of countries reporting improvement was service provision, which strengthened in four countries.

All six countries had overall scores in the Sustainability Evolving range, the middle range of sustainability (with scores between 3.1 and 5.0). Three countries—Cameroon, Ghana, and Liberia—showed slight improvements in overall sustainability, and no country recorded a decline. Ghana and Nigeria had the highest overall sustainability scores at 4.2, followed by The Gambia and Sierra Leone at 4.7, Liberia at 4.8, and Cameroon with the lowest score, at 5.0.

Nigeria's advocacy score of 2.5 was the only dimension in the highest level of sustainability, the Sustainability Enhanced range (scores between 1.0 and 3.0). The financial viability scores for Cameroon (5.1) and Ghana (6.2) put both dimensions in the lowest level of sustainability, the Sustainability Impeded range (scores between 5.1 and 7.0). Otherwise, the scores for all dimensions across the six countries were, like their overall sustainability, in the Sustainability Evolving range.

Summaries of the main findings for each dimension of sustainability in 2022 follow.

Legal Environment. The legal environment in countries covered by this year's reports was largely steady in 2022. Only Sierra Leone reported a slight deterioration as CSOs were harassed with bureaucratic red tape such as audits, parliamentary summons, and the replacement of the leaders of organizations on the grounds that their mandates had expired. Liberia noted a slight improvement in CSOs' legal environment as cost-free legal services became available at some government agencies. The four other countries reported no change, although the legal environment in Nigeria was more fluid than elsewhere, as federal laws beneficial to CSOs were offset by increasingly stringent registration requirements at the state level.

Organizational Capacity. The organizational capacity of CSOs in West Africa showed some improvement in 2022. Although Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone recorded no change, Cameroon, The Gambia, and Liberia noted slight improvements, which was a particularly hopeful development as these three countries are at the lower end of the sustainability spectrum. Cameroon's improvement was due to CSOs' outstanding work with rural constituencies, while Gambian CSOs showed stronger capacity as groups operated with more solid financial and human resources. In Liberia, organizational capacity improved as larger urban CSOs engaged in effective strategic planning. Throughout the region, informal social movements were increasingly effective thanks to the strategic use of digital technologies to reach constituencies and organize events.

Financial Viability. Traditionally the weakest area of CSO sustainability in sub-Saharan Africa, financial viability showed little change in 2022. Four countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone) had the same scores as in 2021, while Liberia and The Gambia recorded moderate improvements. Although the Liberian funding environment remains constrained, it was strengthened by training for CSOs in resource mobilization, the diversification of funding sources, and the development of financial management systems. The financial viability of Gambian civil society improved as CSOs were able to access foreign funding for projects in crucial areas such as transitional justice, human rights, and governance.

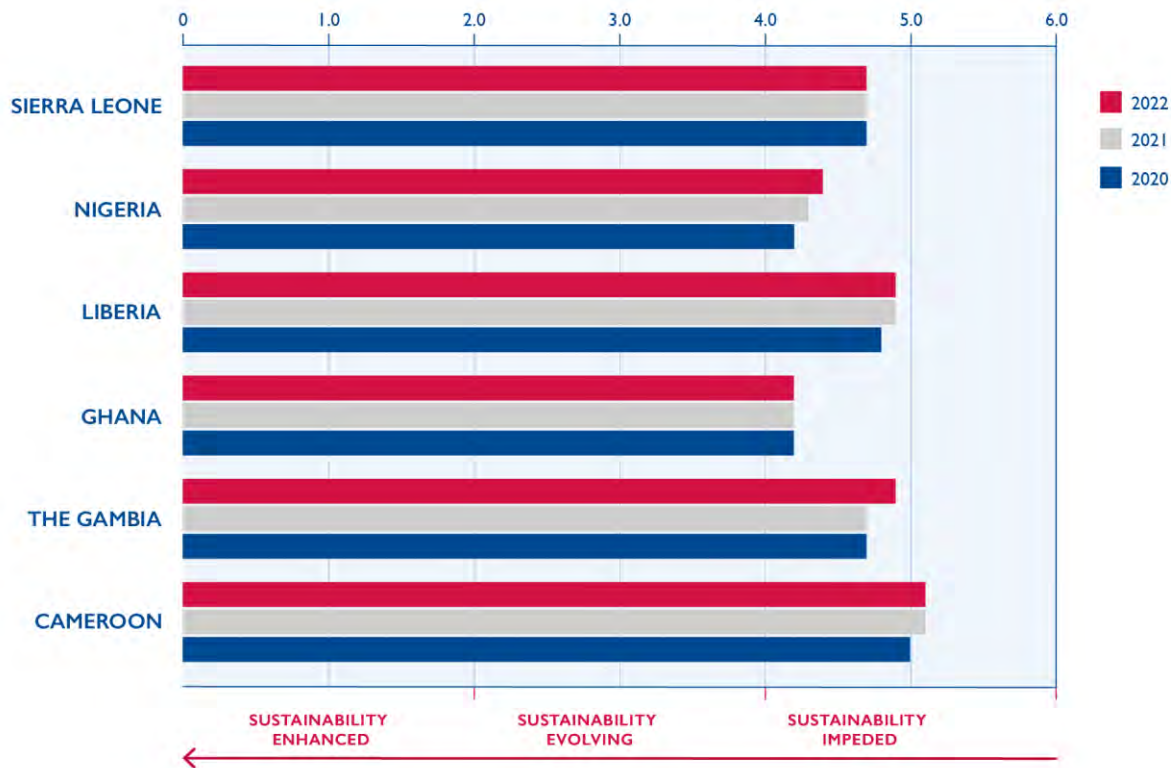
Advocacy. The scores for the advocacy dimension in 2022 were stronger than those for all other dimensions, except in Cameroon, where advocacy and service provision were tied in first place. The Gambia, Ghana, and Liberia showed no change in score, while Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Cameroon reported slight improvements. Advocacy by Nigerian CSOs was particularly strong and resulted in the highest score for any dimension among the six countries. Nigeria's slight improvement in score in 2022 was driven by CSOs' work to ensure the enactment of important legislation, including the Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill and, on the state level, the Child Rights Act. Advocacy by Sierra Leonean CSOs is also very effective, and years of effort finally resulted in the passage in 2022 of several bills to improve women's rights. In Cameroon, where advocacy is still in its infancy, CSOs worked constructively with the government on new initiatives such as a forum on public finance management reform.

Service Provision. Service provision is usually among the strongest and steadiest dimensions of sectoral sustainability in West Africa. In all countries covered by this year's Index, CSOs provide essential services such as health care, education, assistance to families and communities devastated by conflict and other disasters, and training and counseling. No country reported a deterioration in this dimension in 2022. While Sierra Leone and Ghana reported no change, Cameroon, The Gambia, Liberia, and Nigeria acknowledged slight improvements as CSOs' services to vulnerable and impoverished populations were enhanced in cooperation with government agencies or, in Nigeria, by filling the gap created by the state's gradual transfer of social service provision to the private sector. CSOs in Liberia, which have relatively few partnerships with the authorities, began to develop relationships with government service providers.

Sectoral Infrastructure. The infrastructure supporting the CSO sector in these six West African countries is strengthening slowly, and two countries in this year's Index—Cameroon and Nigeria—reported slight improvements. The Nigerian infrastructure was stronger thanks to training opportunities offered by intermediary support organizations and the expansion of networks and coalitions. Cameroonian CSOs made headway in coordinating their work, especially on rural development, through various new platforms. The four other countries reported no change.

Public Image. Overall, CSO sectors' public image was largely stable in 2022. Nigeria reported some progress as CSOs' pre-election activities and other services were positively covered in the media and public perceptions improved. In other countries, CSOs' public image was affected by both positive and negative developments, resulting in no overall change. For example, in Ghana, public perceptions of CSOs were positive but local terminology describing CSOs as charitable entities hindered public understanding of their role. In Cameroon, the public viewed organizations engaged in rural development in a good light because of their direct impact but considered other CSOs to be mostly ineffective or corrupt.

Figure I. West Africa Overall CSO Sustainability Score Over Last Three Years



MULTI-YEAR TRENDS IN CSO SUSTAINABILITY

Changes in scores in recent years offer a useful snapshot of the trends in civil society in each of the six countries covered in this year’s Index. Nigeria’s overall sustainability, for example, has improved moderately (4.6 to 4.3) since 2016, despite a legal environment that has deteriorated very seriously (4.9 to 5.4) as the Company and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020 imposed stringent new regulations and individual states began to introduce separate registration requirements. The improvement in overall sustainability is attributable mainly to outstanding advocacy by Nigerian CSOs, which has made huge strides since 2019 (3.9 to 2.5). Nigerian CSOs have also achieved transformational improvement in service provision (4.2 to 3.6) and extreme improvement in the sectoral infrastructure (5.0 to 4.6) and public image (4.0 to 3.6) over the same period.

Although Ghana’s overall sustainability score of 4.2 is tied with that of Nigeria, this score has changed minimally since 2014. Significant gains in the legal environment (4.0 to 3.7) and service provision (3.8 to 3.5) have been offset by a devastating deterioration of CSOs’ financial viability (5.7 to 6.2) as foreign funding dwindles and CSOs have yet to discover adequate domestic sources of income. In addition, the organizational capacity of Ghanaian CSOs recorded extreme deterioration (3.9 to 4.3) as the pandemic depleted resources and exposed CSOs’ lack of resilience to unexpected emergencies.

A full half-point separates Ghana’s and Nigeria’s overall sustainability scores from those of The Gambia and Sierra Leone, which were both rated at 4.7 in 2022 but show distinctly different sustainability trends. Since 2016, when its transition to democracy began and controls on civil society were loosened, The Gambia has made the greatest overall improvement in sustainability (5.5 to 4.7) of any of the six countries and, indeed, of any country covered by the 2022 Index. Individual dimensions displaying remarkable gains include advocacy (4.9 to 3.6), the legal environment (6.2 to 5.1), organizational capacity (5.6 to 4.8), and service provision (5.0 to 4.2). CSOs’ public image (4.9 to 4.3) and sectoral infrastructure (5.3 to 4.8) also showed notable improvements over this period.

On the other hand, the overall sustainability of Sierra Leonean CSOs, also at 4.7, has improved only slightly since 2009. Despite a transformational improvement in advocacy (4.5 to 3.3) and an enormous step forward in public image (4.5 to 4.0), the legal environment experienced a severe regression (5.0 to 5.9) with the introduction of the Development Cooperation Framework, which forces CSOs to align their programs with government priorities and allows the government to micromanage their work. This weakening of the legal environment was enough to offset gains in other dimensions.

At the lower end of sustainability among the West African countries is Liberia, whose overall score has hovered at 4.8 or 4.9 since 2009. Advocacy has improved notably (from 4.3 to 3.5) but service provision has, unusually for the region, deteriorated dramatically (4.4 to 4.9) as funding shortages hit service-providing CSOs, especially those providing health-care services. Except for CSOs' financial viability (5.8 to 6.1), which has worsened significantly, the other dimensions of sustainability show little change.

Cameroon, which has been tracked since 2019, has shown minor change except in financial viability, which has deteriorated significantly (5.8 to 6.1). The only dimension reporting improvement is the sectoral infrastructure (5.3 to 5.2) as CSOs increasingly formed coalitions, used digital technologies, and had access to a new local grantmaker and more varied training opportunities. The legal environment, organizational capacity, and service provision stood at the same levels in 2022 as in 2019, while poorer scores were reported for advocacy (4.5 to 4.6) and public image (4.7 to 4.9).

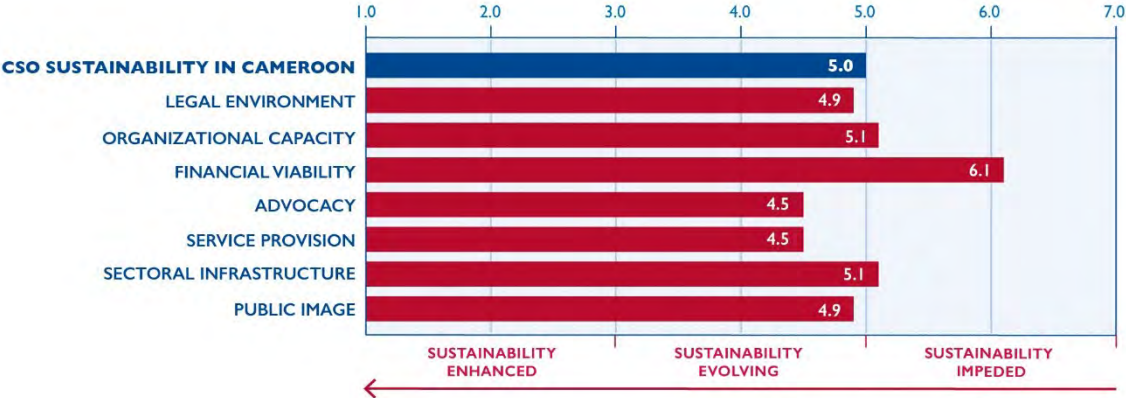
CONCLUSION

The country reports that follow provide an in-depth look at the CSO sectors in six countries in West Africa during a challenging but productive year. They reflect the value and resilience of the CSO sector and its role in advancing the development of societies across the African continent. We hope that this annual survey captures useful information that will support the work of civil society actors, governments, donors, and researchers who seek to advance the region's CSO sectors. We would again like to thank our many partners, collaborators, and friends who have contributed to the *CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa* since 2008. The development of the region's civil society during this period has been remarkable, and we look forward to its continuing success.

CAMEROON

Capital: Yaoundé
Population: 29,321,637
GDP per capita (PPP): \$3,600
Human Development Index: Medium (0.576)
Freedom in the World: Not Free (15/100)

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 5.0



Cameroonian president Paul Biya celebrated forty years in office on November 6, 2022. At age 89, he was the fourth longest-serving and oldest head of state in the world. While his political party, the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM), organized celebrations of the occasion across the country, opposition parties voiced complaints about rigged elections, the government’s crackdown on dissent, and its failure to address corruption. At the end of the year, at least sixty-two members and supporters of the opposition Cameroon Renaissance Movement remained in prison after their conviction in military courts of attempted revolution, aggravated assembly, and other offenses stemming from their participation in 2020 in banned demonstrations calling for Biya’s departure. Independent journalists continued to experience threats such as arbitrary detentions and arrests, police raids, and kidnappings.

A major cholera epidemic that started in late 2021 was still active in eight regions of the country in late 2022. Nearly 15,000 cases and 298 deaths were reported. Many victims were prison inmates living in unsanitary, overcrowded conditions, including a man detained since September 2020 for participating in a peaceful demonstration against the poor state of the country’s sanitation system. The Littoral office of the Ministry of Public Health provided vaccines and assisted in the care of patients evacuated to public hospitals. CSOs helped sensitize the population to safe hygiene practices.

Armed violence between separatist groups and the armed forces continued in Northwest and Southwest regions in 2022. The deadlocked conflict had devastating consequences for the nearly 1 million internally displaced people (IDPs) coping with food insecurity. The efforts of humanitarian organizations were compromised by security threats and the government’s evident mistrust of them. Boko Haram militants continued to terrorize communities in Far North Region. On July 2, 2022, suspected Boko Haram fighters attacked the Mada Hospital in Logone-et-Chari Division, killing one civilian and forcing the temporary closure of the facility, which left thousands of people without essential health care.

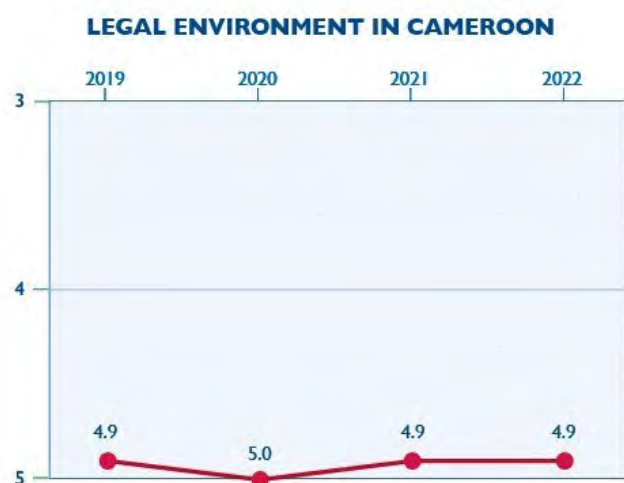
The Cameroonian economy showed signs of recovery in 2022. The World Bank estimates that the real gross domestic product grew 4 percent, buoyed by the rising price of oil. Overall inflation was estimated at 6.2 percent. According to the 2021–2022 United Nations (UN) Human Development Index, which measures average achievements in life expectancy, education, and standard of living, Cameroon ranked 151 out of 191 countries.

The overall sustainability of Cameroon’s CSOs improved slightly in 2022. Organizational capacity was slightly stronger as CSOs expanded their involvement with constituencies in rural areas. Advocacy improved slightly as CSOs and the government came together to address issues of common concern, including public finance management reform. Service provision was slightly enhanced as CSOs worked intensively with the government to fill gaps in state services, especially in conflict-affected regions. The sectoral infrastructure was slightly stronger as

CSOs showed promise of coming together in a better organized sector. CSOs' legal environment, financial viability, and public image did not change.

The number of associations registered in Cameroon did not change appreciably in 2022. According to the National Governance Program, about 56,000 associations were registered at the end of 2021, of which 17 were recognized as being of public utility. The Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINAT), which oversees CSOs, reported that about 50 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a separate legal form, and 40 international CSOs were registered in 2022. According to MINAT, approximately 500,000 grassroots community organizations, private associations, joint initiative groups, development committees, and economic interest groups operated in 2022, many of which were not registered.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 4.9



The legal framework for CSOs was stable in 2022.

Law No. 90/053 of 1990 on freedom of association governs all CSOs. NGOs, defined as associations “accredited by administrative authorities to participate in execution of missions of general interest,” are additionally governed by Law No. 99/014 of 1999 on NGOs. International CSOs are similarly governed by the NGO law. Other laws govern sports associations, trade unions, cooperatives, common initiative groups, interbranch professional organizations, artistic and cultural associations, and trade and professional unions.

All organizations must register to acquire legal personality. The usual process is for organizations to submit applications with their statutes, internal regulations, leaders' names, and minutes of their

constitutive assemblies to the MINAT office in their home district. The registration process is usually straightforward, although MINAT is less than diligent in processing applications from CSOs working in human rights and governance. Registration is sometimes denied, usually because the applicant does not provide all requested documentation. In some cases, organizations may appeal a denial of registration in court, although their success rate is low. Community-based and cultural organizations may operate without registration, but unregistered organizations may not interact with the government or donors.

Registered associations in operation for at least three years and working in the priority areas of law, health, sports, environmental protection, or economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian affairs may apply to MINAT for an agreement recognizing their NGO status. The agreement requires the consent of the Ministry of External Relations. Whereas associations receive funding solely from their members, NGOs, which tend to be larger organizations, may receive public subsidies, private donations, and funding from local and foreign partners and may enter into contracts with third parties to perform services for remuneration. NGOs may additionally apply for public utility status, which allows them to benefit from reduced rates for certain taxes and provides credibility in the eyes of potential beneficiaries, partners, and donors. Public utility status is granted exclusively by presidential decree. Recognition as a public utility is for an unlimited duration, whereas NGO status has a maximum duration of five years.

CSOs are required to file activity reports with MINAT at the end of each year. In practice, only CSOs with NGO status file reports so that they can continue to access international funding. International CSOs working in Cameroon are evaluated regularly by MINAT. MINAT has the authority to dissolve any organization that it deems to undermine public order or state security but is not known to have done so in 2022.

Civil society continued to be constrained in 2022. On April 22, four UN special rapporteurs sent a letter to President Biya stating their concern about repeated death threats against the president of Organic Farming for Gorillas, a Cameroonian CSO that has accused businesses in Northwest Region of encroaching on land owned by

small farmers. The government is not known to have responded to the letter. On August 11, soldiers arrested a prominent Anglophone peace activist and, without charging him, told him that he was accused of “encouraging terrorism” because of a video in his cell phone showing a Cameroonian soldier in the English-speaking regions allegedly committing human rights abuses. As of December 2022, the activist was still in detention awaiting trial. On April 6, Doctors Without Borders officially announced the cessation of its activities in Southwest Region after the government accused it of supporting secessionism and arrested two employees.

Registered CSOs are exempt from customs duties, value-added tax, and social charges for non-contributory social protection programs. They also benefit from tax deductions on revenues from grants, donations, fees, and economic activities in conflict-affected areas of Northwest, Southwest, and Far North regions. Unregistered CSOs are not eligible for these exemptions, but they sometimes benefit from other tax incentives, such as donor’s ability to deduct donations and sponsorships from their taxable income. NGOs and organizations with public utility status are entitled to additional tax benefits.

Registered associations depend solely on their members' contributions for funding. NGOs, including organizations with public utility, may accept private donations, bequests, and funding from foreign partners. NGOs may also engage in public procurement and enter into contracts with public authorities and businesses. Only organizations with public utility status may receive public subsidies, which are generally granted in a transparent manner. Law No. 99/014 allows NGOs to charge fees for goods and services, but most other CSOs may not carry out income-generating activities. Cameroonian law is silent on the creation of social enterprises.

CSOs have access to legal advice in Yaoundé and elsewhere but usually consider it unaffordable. Pro bono legal counsel is not available.

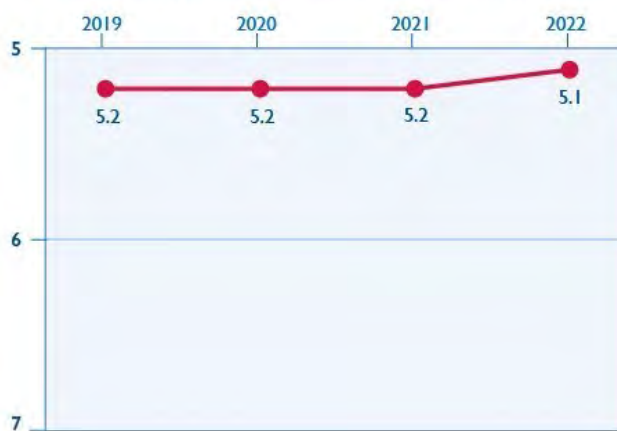
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 5.1

CSOs’ operational capacity improved slightly in 2022 as CSOs extended their involvement with constituencies in rural areas.

Cameroonian CSOs have improved their outreach in many sectors, particularly rural development. National NGOs such as Support Service for Local Development Initiatives (Service d'appui aux initiatives locales de développement, SAILD), Association for the Promotion of African Community Initiatives, and African Institute for Economic and Social Development opened branches in North, Adamawa, East, South, and Southwest regions, where they have traditionally been underrepresented. These centers provide training in agricultural, fishing, and farming techniques and business management. In 2022, USAID launched the five-year Strengthening Civil Society and Community Resilience (PARC) project, which will provide thirty strategic Cameroonian partners with mentoring, training, and learning along with networking and advocacy opportunities so that they can respond flexibly to community needs and violent extremism in the Far North.

On the grassroots level, new professional organizations and grassroots groups worked with agricultural producers, livestock breeders, and other actors to conduct joint economic activities. For example, dairy farmers in the Ngaoundéré area of Adamawa Region have formed a federation to provide a single point of contact for the dairy factory. Village development committees are making important contributions to the development of their communities by opening and maintaining rural roads, supplying drinking water, and constructing and equipping schools and health facilities. Women and young people organized themselves into associations and networks to carry out successful projects in areas such as poultry farming, cattle breeding, and market gardening. Cameroon Gender and Environment Watch, a community-based organization in Oku that has expanded to Northwest and West regions, held a two-day celebration of World Youth Day at which young people and organizations, including Eco-Friendly Generation, World Economy Skills, and Agro Development, and North West Bee Farmers

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN CAMEROON



Messenger, exhibited eco-products. Although agricultural producers remained poorly organized in Cameroon, these new initiatives helped them improve their incomes and protect themselves against administrative and police abuses. They also buttressed the efforts of the government and donors to structure the beginnings of a livestock sector.

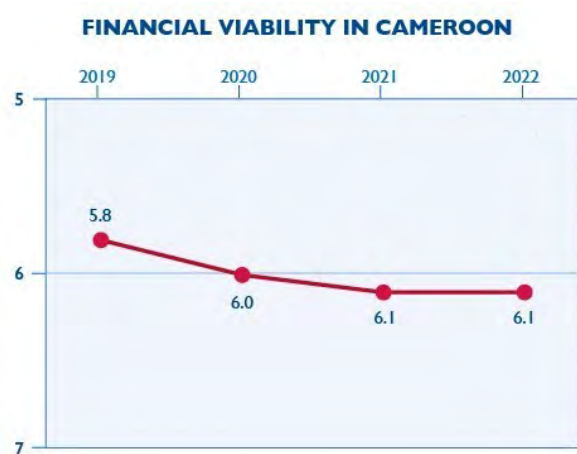
CSOs are normally expected to adhere to their missions as defined at the time of registration. In practice, organizations sometimes step into other areas if funding is available. This happened, for example, in Northwest and Southwest regions, where most organizations now focus solely on humanitarian activities, no matter what their original missions, because of the availability of donor support. While most CSOs do not engage in meaningful strategic planning, some organizations are beginning to integrate strategic plans into their decision-making processes and define organizational values.

Although the law does not prescribe specific organizational structures, at the time of registration the authorities confirm that CSOs' internal structures comply with democratic principles. CSOs typically consist of a management body and one or two decision-making bodies, such as a general assembly and a board of directors, working alone or in tandem. With the establishment of national and regional tiers, certain CSOs, such as the Group of Businesswomen of Cameroon (Groupement des femmes d'affaires du Cameroun, GFAC) and the Cameroonian Entrepreneurs Movement (Mouvement des entrepreneurs du Cameroun, MECAM), have taken on denser managerial structures. A small number of NGOs and larger CSOs that receive donor funding have statutes and defined internal policies prescribing administrative and financial management procedures.

Well-established organizations usually offer staff contracts and job descriptions, which they design themselves or adapt from online sources. Most organizations lack human resource manuals. Most CSO employees work at reduced wages, which can undermine staff performance and motivation. Staff are often looking for better opportunities elsewhere, and once they leave an organization, less experienced staff take their place, causing organizations to have to continuously reinvest in capacity building. The majority of CSOs rely on volunteers to reduce their operating costs.

The majority of CSOs face a fairly large infrastructure deficit coupled with weak technical capacity. Many CSOs lack acceptable offices with sufficient space, equipment, and internet access. Some organizations lack offices altogether and work out of private houses. Many offices do not accommodate people with disabilities.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 6.1



CSOs' financial viability was unchanged in 2022.

Most NGOs in Cameroon depend on support from foreign partners. The major donors include the UN, European Union (EU), and United States. Much of the funding goes to humanitarian assistance for IDPs, their host communities, and other populations in conflict-affected areas. In 2022, USAID and UN agencies partnered with international CSOs, such as the International Rescue Committee, Alliance for International Medical Action, and Première Urgence Internationale, to provide health care, water, hygiene products, and other critically needed services. In March 2022, USAID launched the \$11 million PARC project to strengthen CSOs' ability to advocate for citizen rights and service provision, address the marginalization of women

and youth, and respond to the restriction of civic space in northern communities. PARC is implemented by FHI 360 in cooperation with local partners.

Cameroonian CSOs sometimes receive funding directly from foreign donors. For example, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation (LUKMEF) and Community Initiative for Sustainable Development serve as implementing partners of the UN Population Fund in assisting vulnerable groups, especially women, in Northwest and Southwest regions. Funded projects focused on natural resource governance, the monitoring of local public finances, the

quality of public services, and free access to primary education. The program's COVID-19 component, which provided financial support to eleven CSO networks during the pandemic, closed in July 2022.

Funding from the government is very limited. Experienced NGOs compete for government contracts but often lose out to companies tied into corrupt networks and lacking qualifications. CSOs that manage to obtain government contracts are often not paid because of corruption, funding shortages, or poor management at government agencies.

Most CSOs are membership-based and depend on membership fees for income. Because of the high cost of living, many CSOs experienced a drop in the payment of membership fees in 2022. Some organizations carry out income-generating activities, such as the production and sale of embroidery, paid consultancies, or the leasing of office space, to help realize their objectives. CSOs occasionally obtain sponsorships from celebrities or other public figures or support from international firms such as Orange and MTN.

CSOs rarely have specialized financial departments. They sometimes rely on external service providers, especially if they engage in large projects involving foreign donors. Large CSOs have accounting manuals and perform external audits. NGOs must be audited annually by independent private auditors and submit activity reports with financial statements to the government. Smaller organizations carry out self-evaluations because they cannot afford the cost of external audits.

ADVOCACY: 4.5

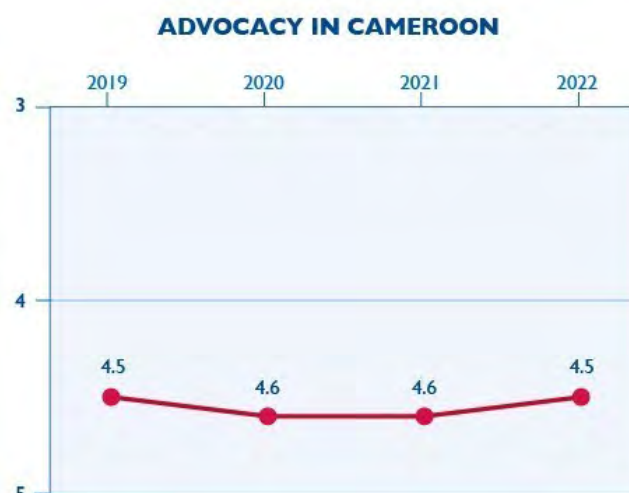
Advocacy improved slightly in 2022 as CSOs and the government worked together on several new initiatives, including a forum on public finance management reform. Advocacy by CSOs in Cameroon is still in its infancy. Platforms are occasionally created to bring together citizens' groups, but they remain informal and poorly organized and are not yet able to interact effectively with authorities at the national or local levels. Cameroonian law prohibits CSOs from conducting activities to influence public opinion, policy, or legislation. These constraints limit CSOs' ability to engage in advocacy, especially on issues that the government sees as politically sensitive or as challenging its authority.

Nevertheless, CSO-government relations took a step forward in October 2022 with a forum on

public finance management reform and the welfare of citizens organized by the Ministry of Finance. The forum was attended by ministry officials and organizations such as the Collective of NGOs for Food Security and Rural Development (Collectif des ONG pour la sécurité alimentaire et le développement rural, COSADER), Afro Leadership, and National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs (Plateforme nationale des organisations de la société civile du Cameroun, PLANOSCAM). Meeting participants discussed ways to better include CSOs in the oversight of public finances and build partnership between CSOs and the Ministry of Finance. The ministry acknowledged that CSOs are important actors, and participants agreed to continue the discussion and follow up on reforms.

CSOs hope that the forum will lay the foundation for a more structured dialogue between civil society and the government and more effective CSO interventions in public financial management. In addition, CSOs such as the Association for Integrated Development and Interactive Solidarity (Association pour le développement intégré et la solidarité interactive, ADISI-Cameroon) sit on the Public Investment Budget Oversight Committee, where they help oversee the implementation of projects.

In environmental advocacy, two accredited members of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, SAILD in Yaoundé and Ajemalebu Self Help in Limbé, organized a workshop in March 2022 to develop an advocacy plan for agroecology in Cameroon. The workshop was undertaken in partnership with the Centre d'actions et de



réalisations internationales in France. In addition to CSOs, representatives of the ministries of agriculture and rural development, environment and nature protection, and scientific research and innovation also attended. Meeting participants agreed to urge state and local authorities to include agroecology in their efforts to combat desertification.

Law 2019/024 on the general code of decentralized local authorities recommends that CSOs be involved in decision making in a consultative capacity, and the law seems to be bearing fruit. Several CSOs worked with local councils in 2022. For instance, the Independent Platform of Youth for Democracy and an Active Citizenry (Plateforme indépendante des jeunes pour la démocratie et la citoyenneté active, PIJEDECA) collaborated with local councils in Douala to provide new and effective responses to problems associated with civic participation and the social and political mobilization of young people. Many CSOs continued to partner with local councils on using community radio to broadcast information on various issues, such as gender-based violence.

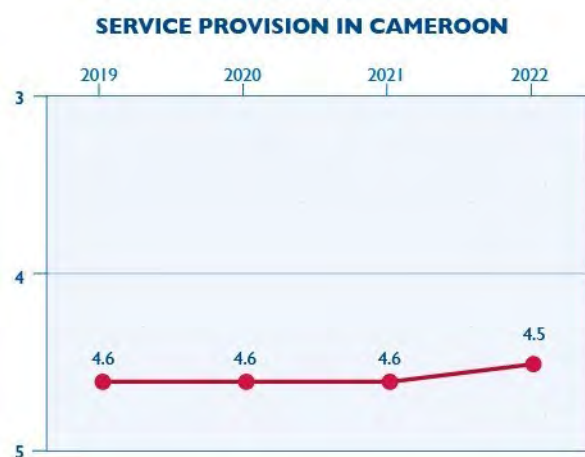
Women's organizations engaged in active advocacy in 2022. A major event was an intergenerational communal dialogue on promoting a culture of peace in conflict-affected regions, which took place in January 2022. The event was organized by the Cameroon Women's Peace Movement and brought together participants of diverse backgrounds and religious orientations to map out endogenous strategies for building peace in local communities in Southwest Region. The information captured during the event was used to produce manuals and handbooks for peacebuilding. The project was funded by the Canadian High Commission in Cameroon. The Center for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in Africa organized two capacity-building workshops in Northwest Region in May 2022 to strengthen community leaders' involvement in combating violence against women and girls. The workshops concluded with participants' commitment to work together to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in their communities and to share the knowledge and skills they had acquired with other community members.

Cameroonian CSOs did not take action to change the legal framework for their work in 2022.

SERVICE PROVISION: 4.5

Service provision improved slightly in 2022 as CSOs worked more intensively with the government to fill gaps in state services.

CSOs provide services in areas such as education, health care, housing, water, energy, environmental protection, local development, and population control. Smaller organizations tend to focus on capacity building, health care, and finance. In 2022, many organizations, including the Alliance for International Medical Action, INTERSOS, LUFMEF, and Reach Out, cooperated with the government to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, including children, women, persons with disabilities, and IDPs and others in conflict-affected areas. For example, the



Cameroonian Red Cross Society and the Ministry of Health partnered to provide COVID-19 vaccination services to people in remote areas of Northwest and Southwest regions. The Cameroonian Association for the Promotion of Education and Development (CAPED) and the Ministry of Education collaborated in providing educational support to children in rural areas of East Region. The Cameroonian Network of Human Rights Organizations (Réseau camerounais des organisations de défense des droits de l'homme, RECODH) and the Ministry of Justice worked together to provide legal aid to people who had been victims of human rights abuses in Douala.

With the end of the pandemic, most organizations were able to pursue their normal activities in water and

hygiene and other areas. However, the United Nations Children's Fund was forced to suspend its water and sanitation programs and food assistance in Northwest and Southwest regions because of security-related lockdowns in May, which affected as many as 1 million people.

CSOs usually provide goods and services that target community priorities. They often determine these priorities through sociological analysis based on direct observation or discussions with community leaders and other groups.

Membership associations usually provide goods and services exclusively to their members. NGOs target larger audiences based on factors such as need or geographic location. CSOs do not discriminate on the basis of gender or race in providing goods and services.

As nonprofit entities, CSOs offer their products and services free of charge and usually do not engage in commercial activities. Although registered associations are supposed to depend solely on their members' contributions for funding, informally, they increasingly sell their services or contract with private companies, international organizations, and other partners. CSOs are somewhat aware of market demand and the ability of target groups to pay for their services.

The technical ministries with which CSOs work regularly send letters of congratulations and encouragement to their civil society partners. MINAT sends letters to acknowledge the receipt of CSOs' activity reports at the end of each year. Government officials occasionally make public statements praising CSOs.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 5.1

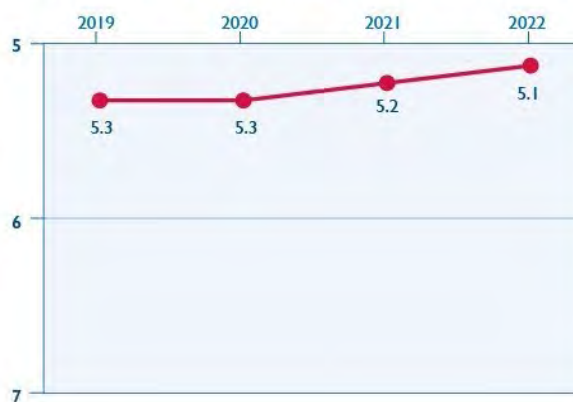
The sectoral infrastructure was slightly stronger in 2022 as CSOs showed promise of coalescing into a better organized sector.

No resource centers serve CSOs in Cameroon. Intermediary support organizations serving CSOs at the national level include the EU's Support for Active Citizenship (PROCIVIS) program and international CSOs authorized to operate in Cameroon, including the International NGO Safety Organization and Norwegian Refugee Council. These organizations offer internet access and training, but the internet services are typically paid. CSOs located in remote areas often find it expensive in terms of time and money to travel to access services offered by these organizations, which are based in Yaoundé. CSOs also rely on telecenters operated by mobile telephone companies such as MTN, Orange, and Nextel and community radio stations that serve as communications relays.

CSOs made headway in coordinating their work through networks and other platforms in 2022. Their progress was particularly evident in the growing number of grassroots organizations focused on rural development. The work of these groups was complemented and strengthened by professional federations and interbranch professional organizations, such as the Cameroon Network of Horticulturists (Réseau des horticulteurs du Cameroun, RHORTICAM), Interprofessional Council for Cocoa and Coffee (Conseil interprofessionnel du cacao et du café, CICC), National Confederation of Cotton Producers of Cameroon (Confédération nationale des producteurs de coton du Cameroun, CNPC), and Association of Banana Growers of Cameroon (Association bananière du Cameroun, ASSOBAACAM), which organized trainings for their members and facilitated the sale of their products. The PROCIVIS program offered workshops to twenty-two networks to share good practices on functioning effectively as a network and to strengthen knowledge about various areas of intervention.

The sector enjoyed several important training opportunities in 2022. The Digital Activism for Resilient Communities program, which aims to help networks and organizations use digital platforms more effectively, brought together CSOs, activists, journalists, and trainers to form a strong community able to engage in advocacy for democratic rights and norms. Under this program, the West Africa Civil Society Institute, in partnership with TechSoup Europe, launched a French version of Hive Mind, an online training and community of practice platform for social activism, with relevant localized educational content for Cameroonian CSOs. The Cameroon Association of Senior Technicians and Rural Engineers benefited from a training course offered by a gender mainstreaming project of the International Organization of la Francophonie. USAID's PARC project began to offer capacity

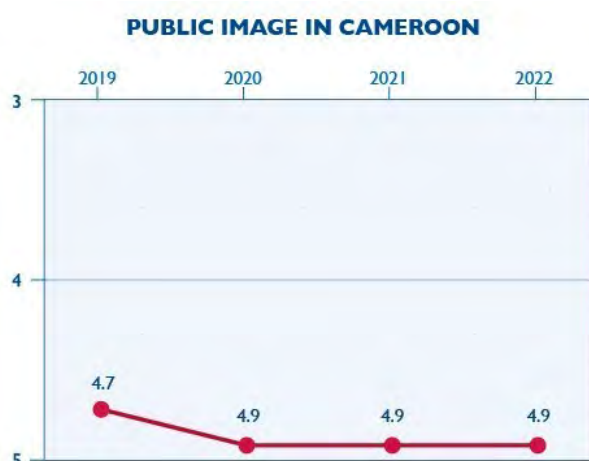
SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN CAMEROON



building to help CSOs in Far North region counter the marginalization of women and youth and build resilience to violent extremism.

In intersectoral partnerships, the Sixteen Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence attracted many women-led CSOs across the country, including Women's Horizons (Horizons Femmes) and Woman's Smile (Sourire de femme) in Yaoundé and LUKMEF in Buea. The event was organized by the Ministry of Women Empowerment with technical and financial support from the UN Population Fund. At a workshop in 2022 attended by government representatives and media, Horizons Femmes presented an activity report describing types of violence against sex workers and cataloging the number of cases between September 2021 and October 2022.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.9



The public image of CSOs was stable in 2022.

CSOs typically receive little coverage in public or private media, which are more concerned with the country's insecurity than with civil society activities. However, human rights groups such as Un Monde Avenir have begun to report to the media in the same way as politicians, and mainstream media are beginning to cover their issues. The activities of cultural associations are often given space in both state and private media. Many CSOs view private news outlets as being more independent than state-run media. CSOs that lack financial resources find it difficult to obtain coverage, since it is usually paid.

The public's view of CSOs is mixed. Organizations such as the Network of Local NGOs in Southeast Cameroon

(Réseau des ONG locales du sud-est du Cameroun, ROSE), which focuses on local involvement in rural development and natural resource management, are seen as having a direct and positive impact on the lives of beneficiaries. Other organizations are considered useless, in part because of the public's still limited understanding of the sector's nature and role. In addition, the large number of organizations created in recent years in Far North, Northwest, and Southwest regions has created the impression that CSOs do not serve the public interest but are instruments to enrich the few. After hearing comments on social media and the government's allegations against Doctors Without Borders, some people doubted CSOs' impartiality and believed that their involvement in peacebuilding efforts in Northwest Region were actually contributing to the war economy.

Government and business views of CSOs are similarly mixed. Some human rights CSOs, such as the Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (Réseau des défenseurs des droits humains en Afrique Centrale, REDHAC), are accused of being political actors seeking to destabilize the government. Organizations working in fields of interest to the government, especially service provision, are generally tolerated by government officials and rarely seen as a threat.

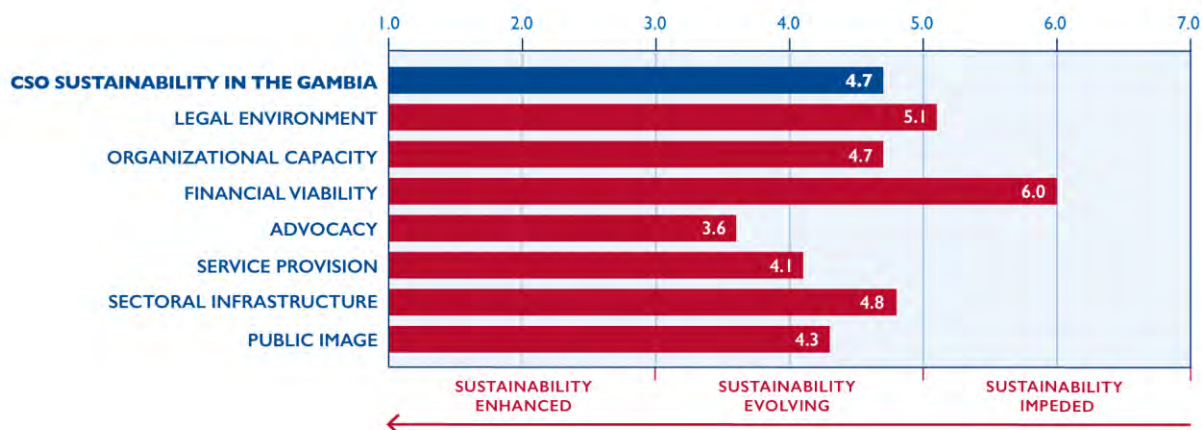
Many CSOs inform the public about their work through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp. CSOs in urban areas often live-stream their training workshops and conferences on Facebook or YouTube. Cameroonian CSOs increasingly organize press conferences and invite journalists to cover their activities. For instance, on April 5, 2022, the Collective of Civil Society Actors, the Informal Sector, and Opinion Leaders (Collectif des acteurs de la société civile, du secteur informel et des leaders d'opinion) organized a press conference to denounce the high cost of living and appeal for a general strike if the authorities did not act.

A few organizations make their activity reports available to the authorities. Otherwise, there are few self-regulatory mechanisms to ensure CSO transparency. Few organizations distribute their financial records or share their activity reports with the public.

THE GAMBIA

Capital: Banjul
Population: 2,468,569
GDP per capita (PPP): \$2,509
Human Development Index: Low (0.500)
Freedom in the World: Partly Free (48/100)

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.7



The Gambia was in the midst of an election cycle in 2022, with parliamentary elections in April and local council elections scheduled for April and May 2023. President Adama Barrow’s National People’s Party (NPP) won the greatest number of seats in the parliamentary elections, which observers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the CSO Coalition on Elections, Gambia Participates, Elections Watch Committee, and other groups regarded as free, fair, and transparent. In the run-up to the polling, several organizations, including the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)–The Gambia, Gambia Bar Association, and The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Gambia (TANGO), staged a “Rock the Vote” concert to encourage young people and women to register to vote.

The Gambia continued to undergo a process of transitional justice in 2022, six years after the end of the Yahya Jammeh dictatorship. In May 2022, the government released a white paper addressing the final report submitted by the Truth, Reparations, and Reconciliation Commission (TRRC) in May 2021. The government accepted 263 of the commission’s 265 recommendations, but by the end of the year, it had yet to produce an implementation plan as required by the TRRC Act. CSOs continued to be major contributors to the transitional justice process, in particular by documenting the identities of victims, conducting public awareness activities to encourage participation in the process, and advocating for support from critical stakeholders, such as the parliament and the police. Victim-led and victim-focused organizations praised the TRRC’s recommendations and encouraged the government to implement them.

Work continued on a draft constitution in 2022. In October, the minister of justice informed the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission that the government was working with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance to revive a draft that had failed to pass in the National Assembly in 2020. In December, the government announced that it had foiled a coup plotted by a military sergeant, four other soldiers, and unidentified civilians, who were arrested.

The country faced several severe crises during the year. Heavy rains in the summer caused widespread flooding that left hundreds of people homeless. In the Tobacco Road area of Banjul and several other localities, observers noted that the flooding was exacerbated by road construction and inadequate drainage systems. A major tragedy occurred when sixty-six children (a number later revised to eight-three) died after consuming contaminated cough syrup manufactured in India. Many families found the government’s response to be late and misleading, especially when, in his only national address on the subject, the president commended the Ministry of Health for its work. CSOs staged several protests and organized the children’s parents into the Justice for 66+ Campaign, which demanded that the government investigate the circumstances surrounding the medication’s import and sale. As the

police launched an investigation, the National Assembly convened an extraordinary session and mandated the health committee to investigate while the president established his own task force to examine the incident. The outcomes of these investigations were still pending at the end of the year.

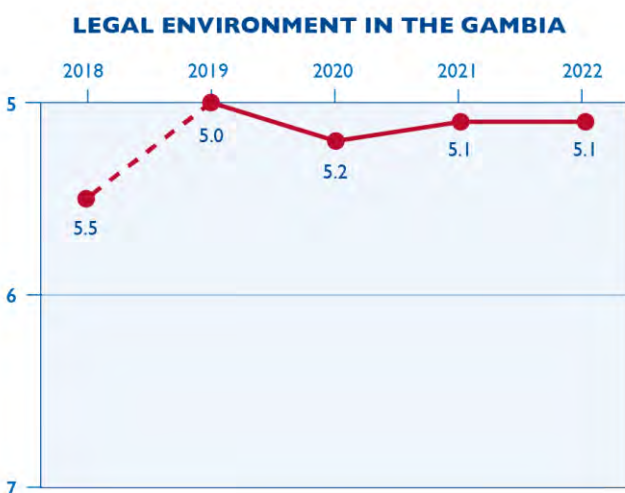
The case generated public outcry about corruption and the inefficiency of public institutions in The Gambia. Many people believe that there is little political will to combat corruption, especially as an anti-corruption bill has been stalled in the parliament since 2019. Since assuming office seven years ago, the government had tried only one public official for corruption by 2022, despite numerous reports of public-sector corruption from the auditor general and other government-commissioned investigatory bodies and the media.

The Gambian economy grew by 4.3 percent while inflation averaged 11.6 percent in 2022, according to the World Bank. Poverty increased to 20.3 percent from 18.41 percent in 2021. The delivery of basic services such as water and electricity was poor. As the country prepared to host the summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 2023, several large road, drainage, and hotel construction projects complicated movement in the greater Banjul and surrounding peri-urban areas.

Overall CSO sustainability was stable in 2022. Organizational capacity improved slightly as a significant number of CSOs showed themselves to be better organized and more competent. Financial viability showed slight improvement as major donors provided support for projects addressing pressing issues such as the elections and transitional justice. Service provision was stronger with CSOs' expansion of their range of services. The other dimensions of sustainability were largely unchanged.

While the total number of organizations is unknown, the Ministry of Justice last reported in 2021 that more than 5,000 CSOs were registered under the Companies Act. TANGO reported that it approved six new members in 2022, for a total of 90 registered members. As the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Affairs Agency did not report any newly registered NGOs, the number of NGOs remained at 125, as in 2021.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 5.1¹



The legal environment was stable in 2022.

CSOs register with the Ministry of Justice as charitable organizations under the Companies Act. CSOs do not have to register to operate, but registration is required if an organization wishes to open a bank account, undertake certain legal actions, or enjoy benefits such as funding. CSO registration is easy and straightforward, although the processing of applications can be slow. After two years of operation, organizations may apply to the NGO Affairs Agency to obtain NGO status under the NGO Act. Few organizations bother to do so, as NGO status offers no substantial benefits. No difficulty with or rejection of registration was reported in 2022.

Both the Companies Act and NGO Act provide few rules for internal governance. The NGO Act stipulates that an organization must have a constitution and provide the NGO Affairs Agency with annual activity reports and financial information, including sources of funding. The Protocol of Accord and Code of Conduct that are part of the NGO Act define the scope of activities and nature of relationships between CSOs and other stakeholders, including the government, communities, and donors.

CSOs may engage in all lawful activities and have the right to legal recourse. No harassment was reported in 2022. The police denied several organizations permits to protest. For example, in May, the Coalition of Progressive

¹ The score for the legal environment was recalibrated from 5.5 in 2018 to 5.0 in 2019 to better reflect the situation in the country and align it with other scores in the region. The score for 2019 did not reflect a change in the legal environment, which remained largely the same as in 2018.

Gambians was denied a permit to protest the high cost of living, corruption, and human rights violations. The group intended to stage the protest without a permit but did not do so after the Supreme Islamic Council intervened to facilitate a postponement to allow the government to address the organization’s concerns.

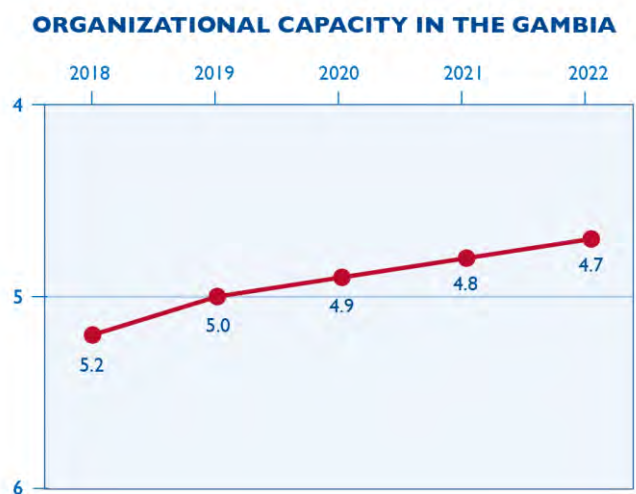
Registered CSOs are automatically exempted from taxes on grants, endowments, and income from the sale of products and services. They may apply for duty waivers for materials imported for use on activities to advance their objectives. There was no report of any organization being denied duty waivers in 2022. Corporations and individuals do not receive tax deductions on their donations to CSOs.

Organizations may compete for government contracts, although no such effort was reported in 2022. CSOs may operate social enterprises, engage in fundraising activities, and receive foreign funding.

Most lawyers have sufficient expertise and experience to represent CSOs. Some well-established CSOs retain lawyers on a permanent basis, but most organizations are unable to pay the high fees.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.7

The organizational capacity of Gambian civil society improved slightly in 2022 as a significant number of organizations showed themselves to be better organized and more competent. General advances in organizational capacity were evident in the number and type of CSO projects and even CSOs’ office space. This was especially true of some organizations established since the end of the Jammeh regime in 2016. For example, organizations involved in transitional justice, including Gambia Participates, Beakanyang, Women in Leadership and Liberation (WILL), African Network Against Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances (ANEKED), Women’s Association for Victims of Empowerment (WAVE), and Commission on Political Debates, have been able to access funding and establish themselves quickly. They are already able to hire professional staff, occupy their own offices, and carry out activities nationwide. These and many other organizations are adeptly building their visibility and influence with stakeholders. For example, ANEKED, which was founded in 2019 and is run mainly by women human rights activists, has succeeded in building an internationally recognized memorial house to document and inform the public about enforced disappearances.



CSOs usually have close connections with their target populations. Youth groups such as Peace Ambassadors The Gambia (PAG) are usually formed by young people themselves, which allows them to reach youth in both urban and rural areas with services such as civic education. Most CSOs, including United Purpose (UP), ChildFund, and 4H Gambia, target beneficiaries rather than their own members. Several organizations, such as PAG, Gambia Federation of the Disabled (GFD), National Women Farmers Association (NAWFFA), and youth groups such as the National Youth Parliament (NYP) and Activista, organize constituency bases across the country into national and regional structures. In August 2022, after years of building networks nationwide through regional youth parliaments, NYP inaugurated sixty-four youth parliamentarians in a ceremony held in the main chamber of the National Assembly in Banjul.

Larger and more established CSOs, including ActionAid International The Gambia (AAITG), TANGO, WANEP–The Gambia, and Gambia Press Union (GPU), have mission statements and strategic plans, which they usually seek to follow. Smaller and less well-funded CSOs either do not have strategic plans or have plans that they fail to update regularly, mainly because they lack funding or capacity.

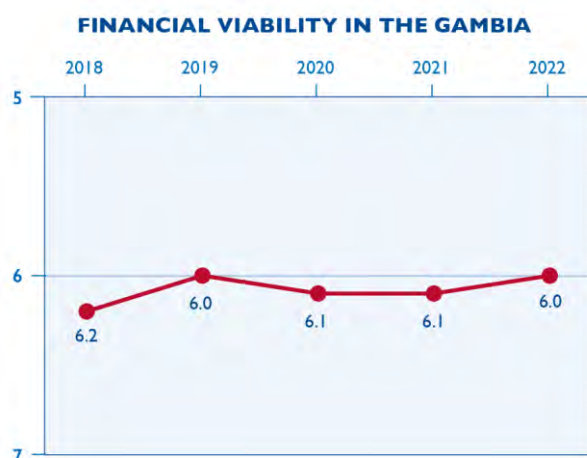
The CSO sector’s overall management and operations capabilities are generally weak due to limited staff capacity, ineffectual boards, and poor adherence to institutional instruments and policies. Well-established CSOs may have management and governance structures with responsibilities defined in their constitutions or manuals and observe

effective governance and management practices. However, many CSOs, especially smaller organizations, do not hold regular general meetings of members to elect board members, usually because they have insufficient funding or poor board leadership.

Well-established CSOs usually have a full complement of employees. For example, AAITG, UP, WANEP–The Gambia, and Child Protection Alliance (CPA) have executive directors, program managers, program officers, and accountants. Most CSOs provide job descriptions to staff, and larger CSOs have personnel policies and hire professional services. Smaller CSOs often lack human resource policies and tools. Staff attrition is high throughout the sector because of low salaries and poor work conditions. Most organizations are highly dependent on volunteers, who are often recent graduates or university students. TANGO, for example, had five staff volunteers in 2022. Some CSOs host international volunteers, usually students or recent graduates from Europe, North America, or Japan. CSOs also depend on volunteers from the communities in which they work.

CSOs usually have basic office equipment and access to the internet. Digital technologies are increasingly used throughout the CSO sector thanks to expanding internet services and better funding opportunities. There have been few cybersecurity threats against CSOs in The Gambia, and cybersecurity is not a major concern for most organizations.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 6.0



The financial viability of CSOs improved slightly in 2022 as major donors provided support for projects addressing pressing issues such as the elections and transitional justice.

Gambian CSOs depend almost entirely on foreign funding. In 2022, major donors included the United Nations Development Program, several western embassies, and foreign foundations and agencies such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), International Republican Institute (IRI), and National Democratic Institute (NDI). They made funding available for issues of importance to the Gambian people, including transitional justice, constitution building, human rights, and governance. For example, Elections Watch Committee, which is a coalition of PAG, Activista, and

NYP, received funding from NDI and NED for work on the elections, and Gambia Participates received funding from IRI for its election observation mission. Catholic Relief Services in The Gambia received a multimillion-dollar grant from the US Department of Agriculture to provide school meals over a five-year period, while Future in Our Hands, TANGO, and the Forum for African Women Educationists Gambia Chapter jointly received funding from the EU to promote transparency, accountability, and resilience in communities. Some local CSOs, such as Elections Watch Committee, obtained funding from multiple donors that were particularly interested in their area of work. The US and UK embassies also provided grants of modest size.

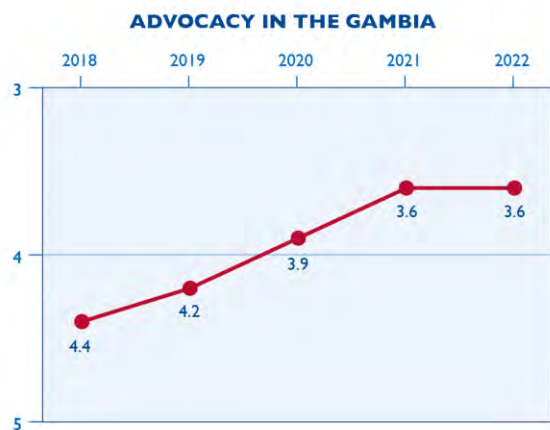
Local funding is extremely limited in The Gambia. Gambian businesses lack a tradition of supporting CSOs and rarely provide them with funding. Among the few businesses that have provided some support to CSOs are Access Bank, Ecobank, Trust Bank, and TAF Africa Global. Their donations were usually one-off and event related. The government sometimes contracts with CSOs to deliver services in social sectors but did not do so in 2022.

Some CSOs engage in fundraising activities, including donation collections, events such as gala dinners, the sale of services and products, and the leasing of premises. TANGO hires out its conference hall to event organizers, while the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) operates hostels and has a restaurant and conference hall for hire. Membership CSOs and networks such as TANGO and GPU collect membership fees, although such income is usually limited. CSOs do not take part in crowdfunding.

More established CSOs, such as AAITG, UP, WANEP–The Gambia, and Gambia Participates, have sound financial management systems and experienced staff with needed skills. Most other organizations lack financial management

capacity because of inadequate funding. CSOs often fail to act transparently by producing regular financial statements and audits and sharing them with their members.

ADVOCACY: 3.6



CSO advocacy was stable in 2022. Gambian CSOs continued to be heavily involved in advocacy on a wide range of issues and engaged with the government at various levels. Delays in implementing TRRC recommendations and introducing legal reforms, including the new constitution, impeded some CSO efforts.

Government institutions regularly invite CSOs to discuss the creation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of laws, policies, programs, and other governance issues. In 2022, the government invited CPA to take part in a presidential task force investigating the deaths of more than sixty-six children linked to tainted cough syrup from India. After the Justice for 66+ Campaign called for accountability in the children's deaths, the Ministry of Health and the National Assembly Select Committee on Health engaged with the group as the

legitimate voice and representative of the victims' families. The Ministry of Information partnered with GPU to develop a plan to implement the 2021 Access to Information Act, while the Department of Social Welfare worked with GFD to implement the Disability Act and the GFD president served as chair of the advisory council. Despite repeated requests since 2018, CSOs were unable to obtain a face-to-face meeting with the president in 2022.

Among the most contentious issues in The Gambia is the implementation of recommendations of the TRRC. In 2022, TANGO, the Victims Center, WILL, WAVE, ANEKED, and other transitional justice organizations worked with the Ministry of Justice and the National Human Rights Commission to push for implementation of the recommendations. The Ministry of Justice launched a special platform, co-chaired by TANGO, to coordinate the participation of CSOs in this work. Victim-led and victim-focused organizations such as the Victims Center, ANEKED, WAVE, Solo Sandeng Foundation, and Fantanka pushed for justice regarding human rights violations committed under the Jammeh dictatorship. In June 2022, Fantanka produced the first simplified children's version of the TRRC report and produced a TRRC shadow report on violence against women. In addition, Beakanyang, Team Gom Sa Bopa, Activista, and PAG worked with the National Human Rights Commission to promote human rights protections and constituted a joint forum with more than a dozen human rights organizations.

CSOs' work on government accountability was energetic in 2022, although their efforts did not always produce concrete results. Organizations such as Gambia Participates, Team Gom Sa Bopa, and WILL raised concerns about corruption and service delivery, particularly in health care, education, utilities, and security. Their approaches included protests and awareness raising in print, broadcast, and social media, but they seemed to have little impact. Gambia Participates engaged extensively with lawmakers on a draft anti-corruption law but saw little progress during the year. AAITG's pressure on the government to adopt measures to address climate change and food security had little noticeable impact.

CSOs were in the forefront of other issues, including environmental protection, women's political participation and representation, and the protection of the rights of people with disabilities. The Gender Platform and the Female Lawyers Association of the Gambia (FLAG) supported a bill proposing a constitutional amendment to increase the number of parliamentary seats for women and persons with disabilities. GEA was exceptionally vocal in advocating for the US government to refrain from building a new chancellery on the grounds of the Bijilo Forest Park so as not to threaten the forest and its animals, especially the endangered red colobus monkey. GEA's campaign, which included a social media component, targeted local communities, the Ministry of Environment, and other environment-focused institutions as well as the embassy.

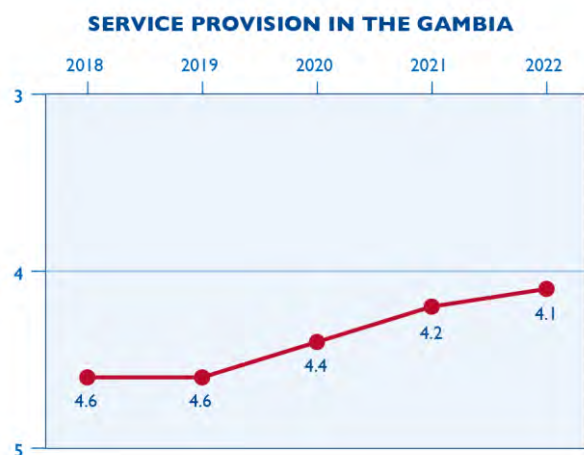
The country's intense social and political polarization poses some challenges for CSO advocacy. Partisan interests as well as ethnic, cultural, and religious sentiments not only divide the country but can divide CSOs and pressure

them to self-censor. Divisive issues include the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, secularity, constitution building, and transitional justice.

CSOs do not engage in direct lobbying in The Gambia, although they do engage with members of the National Assembly to influence legislation. For example, Gambia Participates conducts advocacy seminars on accountability for lawmakers while GPU promotes press freedom and GFD advocates for disability rights with the National Assembly.

CSOs made no effort to reform the Companies Act, the NGO Act, or other laws affecting the sector in 2022. CSOs have expressed their desire for a single law to guide registration and regulation but have yet to begin work on the issue.

SERVICE PROVISION: 4.1



CSO service provision improved slightly in 2022 as CSOs expanded their range of services.

CSOs provide a wide range of services to local communities, including health care, education, and relief assistance. In fact, most communities in The Gambia enjoy social services thanks mainly to CSOs. CSOs with longstanding ties to communities include Freedom from Hunger Campaign, Gambia Family Planning Association, Agency for Village Support, Tostan, AAITG, Wuli and Sandu Development Association, Agency for the Development of Women and Children, and NYP. Their services include seed distribution, the provision of tools and training to unemployed youth and women, the operation of schools, health-care services, and measures to build the resilience of communities against the effects

of climate change. The Gambia Environmental Alliance (GEA) continued its tree planting and beach cleaning exercises in 2022, and ChildFund provided a huge quantity of materials to the Ministry of Education to distribute to schools. After flash floods hit the country in 2022, CSOs aided families by distributing cash, food, and other non-monetary items in cooperation with the National Disaster Management Agency in the Office of the Vice President. For example, Adventist Development and Relief Agency distributed approximately \$100 to fifty-four households to help with recovery efforts.

Most CSOs target specific groups. Women's rights groups such as the Gambia Committee against Harmful Traditional Practices, TYW, and FLAG educate girls and women on issues ranging from political participation to gender-based violence, including harmful traditional practices. Child rights organizations such as CF provide education, sponsorships, and food items to children in the West Coast region. Some CSOs, such as AAITG, WANEP–The Gambia, and the YMCA, serve all of society with services in multiple areas, including education, health care, and agriculture. In the wake of the deaths of dozens of children after consuming tainted cough syrup, CSOs such as CPA, Activista, Gender Platform, and NYP helped to organize the victims into a campaign and provided them with solace and support.

CSOs sometime seek to recover costs by charging for services and products. But this is becoming less common as organizations increasingly depend on donors, memberships dues, and rentals as sources of income.

The government offers civil society generous recognition. In 2022, the Ministry of Health commended the Justice for 66+ Campaign in calling for accountability in the deaths of children from tainted cough syrup.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 4.8

The infrastructure supporting the CSO sector was unchanged in 2022.

No resource centers support CSOs in The Gambia. Several intermediary support organizations, including Freedom House, American Bar Association, NDI, and IRI, offer financial and technical assistance, mostly concerning elections and governance. There are no local grant-making organizations in The Gambia.

Several coalitions and networks share information and encourage collaboration among their members. Aside from TANGO, these groups are usually thematic in focus. Their services include capacity building, advocacy, and the coordination of activities. For example, TANGO, CPA, and Gender Platform provide training to their members and the larger community of CSOs on the thematic areas in which they work. Networks also support and partner with their member CSOs. Most networks and coalitions have constitutions and well-defined structures.

CSOs usually address their training needs using experts from the sector. Occasionally, organizations such as the United Nations, European Union, African Union, or ECOWAS provide training to CSOs in areas related to their own activities in The Gambia. For example, in February 2022, ECOWAS trained CSOs on security-sector reforms and governance, two areas in which ECOWAS supports the government. In September, the International Center for Transitional Justice trained women’s rights organizations on building alliances to press for the implementation of TRRC recommendations. CPRD, a local research organization, provided training on advocacy in partnership with Freedom House. Public and private training and educational institutes, including the University of the Gambia and the Management Development Institute, also offer training relevant to CSOs. Training materials are available on a wide range of issues, including strategic planning, resource mobilization, advocacy, financial management, and board development. These materials are sometimes available in local languages in print or audiovisual formats.

CSOs often partner with the government to achieve common objectives. In 2022, GEA worked with the Ministry of Environment on environmental protection projects such as beach clean-ups. CSOs have cordial working relationships with the media and often broadcast funded programs on radio stations. There is limited engagement between CSOs and the private sector.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE GAMBIA



PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.3

PUBLIC IMAGE IN THE GAMBIA



CSOs’ public image was largely unchanged in 2022.

The media landscape in The Gambia is diverse, and the number of media houses and journalists is growing as new print, broadcast, and online platforms proliferate. Media coverage of CSO activity was extensive and largely positive in 2022. The media provided analyses of CSOs’ work and invited organizations to participate in major primetime shows and newscasts. CSOs themselves hosted weekly programs on various radio stations across the country. For example, CPA had a weekly program on child rights on Capital Radio in Kanifing.

Public perceptions of CSOs continued to improve in 2022, driven by the improvement in services that they provide as well as their advocacy on issues such as corruption, transitional justice, and the environment,

as detailed in the previous sections. The public is becoming better informed about CSOs’ role, and there is a higher level of engagement between CSOs and individuals and communities. At the same time, the public remains

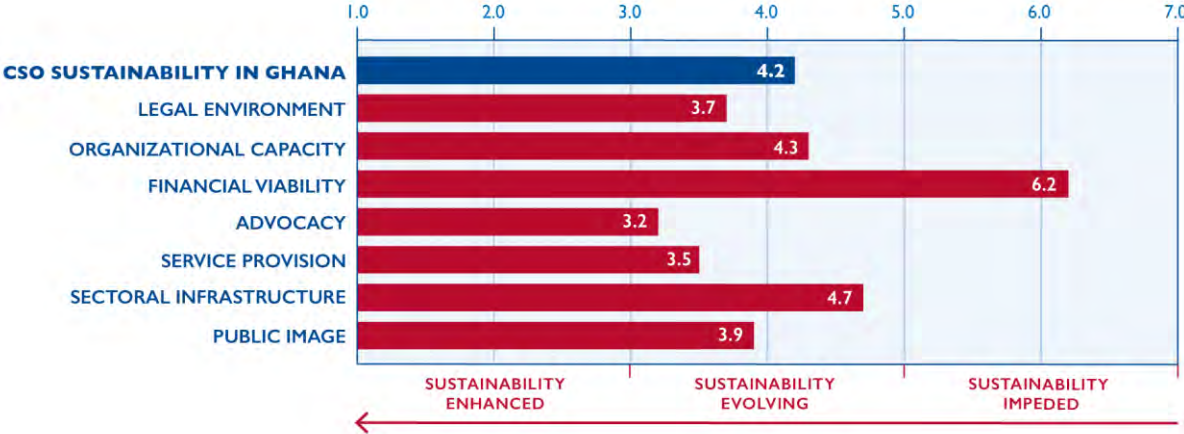
somewhat apprehensive about CSOs' work and has lingering concerns that they are corrupt, putting the country into the hands of foreign donors, or destabilizing the country by promoting issues considered un-Gambian and anti-religious.

Government perceptions of CSOs remained mixed. While recognizing that CSOs have the capacity and resources to contribute to its national development objectives, the government is wary of CSOs' advocacy for accountability. Businesses perceive CSOs mainly in terms of marketing opportunities.

CSOs do not actively showcase their work to raise their public image. While many CSOs have websites and social media accounts, they do not update them regularly. They rarely produce purposely created media materials about their work. Among the few organizations savvy about the use of technology to promote their work are Gambia Participates, Team Gomsa Bopa, and GPU. Most CSOs enjoy cordial working relationships with media and journalists.

Individual CSOs self-regulate through their constitutions and internal policies. A few coalitions such as CPA have codes of conduct for their members, but there is no universal code of conduct for the sector. Leading CSOs publish annual reports. Most CSOs do not share their financial statements or audit reports publicly, although some organizations provide them when requested.

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.2



In 2022, Ghana commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of the referendum that returned the country to a constitutional democracy. President Nana Akufo-Addo delivered a public speech celebrating the anniversary, in which he emphasized the importance of strengthening democracy and ensuring greater participation by civil society. Former president John Dramani Mahama and the leader of the major opposition party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), made public statements commending the country’s achievements and calling on citizens to continue them.

In the course of this historic year, several unfavorable events raised public concerns. The economy suffered a near meltdown that was widely attributed to the failure of the government’s fiscal policies. The Ghana cedi depreciated by 40 percent, and year-over-year inflation reached 54.1 percent in December, according to the World Bank. Despite calls from economists and the opposition for the government to seek a bailout from the International Monetary Fund, the finance minister and other government leaders vehemently opposed the idea. In the face of overwhelming public resistance, in April the government introduced an electronic transaction levy (or e-levy) to help raise revenue. After the e-levy failed to generate needed revenue, fifty-six parliamentarians from the ruling New Patriotic Party expressed dissatisfaction with the country’s precarious economic situation and urged the president to sack the finance minister. In December, NDC parliamentarians brought a censure motion against the minister, accusing him of reckless management of the economy. The censure motion failed, and the finance minister remained in office.

Growing dissatisfaction with the economy dominated public life in the second half of the year. In June, Arise Ghana organized a two-day demonstration criticizing government policies and demanding economic relief. On November 5, protesters demanded the president’s resignation because of bad governance. In December, a public outcry greeted the launch by the Ministry of Finance of a domestic debt exchange, which sought to postpone the payment of government debt to bond holders upon maturity by offering new bonds with lower coupons, contrary to the established terms of the bonds. On December 30, the auditor general published a damning report about the government’s COVID-19 expenditures. The report attracted public attention after it was published by the media in January 2023, heightening tensions over the use of public funds. As part of its anti-graft campaign, the Coalition for Democratic Accountability and Inclusive Governance (also known as the Citizens’ Coalition) organized street demonstrations demanding that the auditor general prosecute or impose surcharges on the institutions responsible for the lost revenue.

Ghana also faced significant social pressures in 2022. The alarming increase in illegal mining activities known as *galamsey* dominated public discussion for weeks. The Ghana Water Company Limited warned that it would have

to shut down operations in areas where the cost of treating water was not economically viable because of galamsey, and the president issued an ominous statement about the involvement of foreign nationals in galamsey activities. Police brutality was another concern, especially after the police were accused on three separate occasions of infringing political rights and freedom of expressions by harassing political activists and commentators. In an especially worrying incident, a political activist was arrested and charged with treason after frequently criticizing the government and the ruling party on Facebook. His arrest raised significant concerns about freedom of expression in Ghana. Several other incidents of brutal police treatment of journalists were reported.

CSO sustainability was stable in 2022, with no changes in score recorded.

A total of 11,161 CSOs were registered with the Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat (NPOS) at the end of 2022. Of this number, 687 organizations renewed their operating permits during the year, far fewer than the 4,840 organizations that renewed in 2021. The decline is attributable to the initial rush for operating permits after the launch of the new NPO Policy in 2020. Since then, fewer organizations have bothered to renew their operating permits.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 3.7



CSOs' legal environment was unchanged in 2022.

The laws for CSO registration remained favorable. Under the revised Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992) and the NPO Policy approved in 2020, CSOs, like other business entities, are required to register with the Office of the Registrar of Companies as companies limited by guarantee. They must then register with the NPOS as not-for-profit organizations to obtain operating licenses. The registration process requires organizations to submit information about their governance structures, including personal details about all directors and beneficial owners. The process should take about one week, although in practice more time is required to fulfill all requirements, especially those related to beneficial ownership. The registration process is usually somewhat faster for CSOs

in urban areas than in rural areas, mainly because they enjoy easier access to branch offices of the Registrar of Companies.

The Companies Act provides clear accountability guidelines for CSOs. All CSOs must renew their operating licenses annually with the NPOS and submit annual activity and financial reports as part of the renewal process. Most registered CSOs must also submit annual audit reports, although community-based organizations (CBOs) need only to submit financial reports to renew their permits. CSOs must also report annually to the Registrar of Companies, Ghana Revenue Authority, and other regulatory institutions. They must update their records on their directors and beneficial ownership as needed in accordance with guidelines for combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism. New CSOs sometimes find these multiple reporting requirements burdensome. The Registrar of Companies has started to delist companies that are not in compliance. Informal groups such as social movements may operate without registration, although entities without legal identity may not open bank accounts or engage in fundraising.

CSOs are free to operate under the laws of Ghana and have the right to participate in public protests. They face no restrictions on engaging in advocacy issues unless a national law expressly bars work on a particular issue. Although Ghana has laws prohibiting homosexuality, CSOs are not barred from carrying out advocacy activities on the issue. However, several negative comments were made in the media about CSOs advocating against the Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill, which was introduced in the parliament in 2021 and seeks to criminalize same-sex sexual relationships and the promotion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) rights. Political interference in CSOs' activities is not a major concern. There were no notable instances of state harassment of or threats against CSOs in 2022. CSOs have recourse to the courts for judicial review and access to justice.

CSOs can apply through the NPOS for exemptions on taxes for imported goods. Few CSOs, including those engaged in humanitarian activities, bother to seek such exemptions because of the burdensome application requirements and past abuses of the application process. As companies limited by guarantee, CSOs do not pay corporate taxes, but they are obliged to pay withholding taxes on goods and services procured.

CSOs are free to undertake fundraising, including through crowdfunding. They may accept funds from donors provided the funds are used mainly for development work and do not go to political activities, money laundering, or terrorism. Although legislation on social enterprises does not exist and a government policy on social enterprises is still in draft form, some CSOs have registered social enterprises that engage in for-profit activities to support their operations.

There are no specialized lawyers serving only CSOs. Organizations may access legal services from corporate lawyers and advocates, who operate mainly in regional capitals and major urban centers. A few lawyers offer services to CSOs on a pro bono basis, usually in cooperation with other CSOs.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.3

CSOs' organizational capacity was stable in 2022.

CSOs' activities are informed by the needs of targeted beneficiaries. The targets are usually not a fixed list of people but rather are determined by the issues, funding, location, gender, or other aspects of a given project. Organizations usually identify their potential constituents through research and engagement with community leaders, including chiefs, assembly members, and representatives of women and youth. Informal social movements rely on constituents to support their actions in various ways, including by offering in-kind support. For instance, people taking part in demonstrations in 2022 arranged transportation to and from the venues. Social movements often use social media platforms to mobilize supporters.



CSOs largely adhered to their missions and strategic plans in 2022, in contrast to the pandemic period, when almost all organizations had to adopt new strategies. CSOs normally have clear mission and vision statements and standard operational procedures, which are usually outlined at the time of registration. The development and use of strategic plans is common except among informal social movements, which tend to focus on issues-driven activism and seek a direct response from the government rather than implementing a broad-based set of programs. Most organizations attempt to adhere to their plans, although they sometimes venture into areas that are tangential to their defined missions. While there are no standard metrics for measuring CSOs' success in their work, most organizations assess their progress and impact through activity reports and feedback from beneficiaries and donors, which they use to inform future activities. For example, Adanu, an organization focused on community development in the Volta Region, marked its twenty-year anniversary by reviewing some of its key achievements, including the establishment of Adanu Radio, a medium for community development.

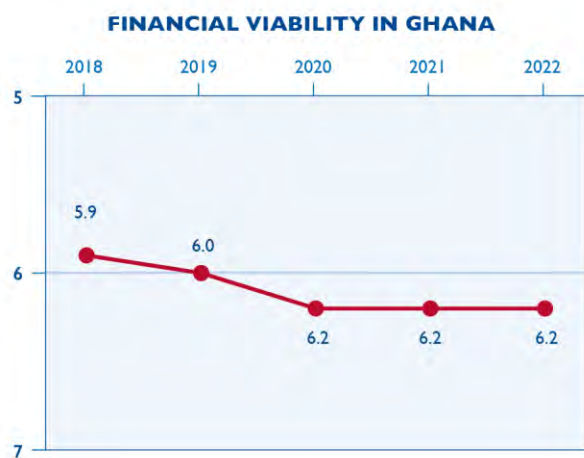
CSOs usually have clearly defined management structures and boards, which provide operational and policy guidance. Most CSOs have policies and guidelines to guide their activities; these include their founding constitutions, operating manuals, and financial, management, gender, and communications policies. Currently, some donors require CSOs to embrace principles addressing issues such as sexual misconduct, exploitation, abuse, and harassment. For instance, all CSOs in Ghana that received USAID grants in 2022 signed onto a policy to offer protection from sexual exploitation and abuse as part of their contracts.

Because they lack core funding, most CSOs hire staff on contracts for periods determined by the duration of projects. The limited periods of employment and resulting job insecurity make it difficult for people to continue working in the sector. Staff turnover is becoming a major challenge as project-based funding dries up. The use of volunteers and interns has become a common practice among both urban and rural CSOs, and many larger CSOs

outsource professional services such as accounting, information technology, and, in some cases, communications. Some CSOs adhere to proper human resource practices, such as granting annual and maternity leave and avoiding discrimination in employment, especially of women.

Online technologies have encouraged CSOs to work virtually and reduce in-person engagement, which costs more in terms of money and time. Many organizations rely on social media for timely and efficient internal and external communications. For example, the organizers of a major social protest in 2022 rallied support through Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. Awareness of cybersecurity issues differs between large or urban organizations and small or rural CSOs. Some urban CSOs have policies that restrict the use of external devices on company laptops and equipment, but most rural or small CSOs lack such restrictions.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 6.2



CSOs' financial viability was stable in 2022.

Foreign donors remained the main source of funding for most CSOs. The major donors in 2022 included bilateral and multilateral bodies such as USAID, UK Aid Direct, European Union, German Agency for International Cooperation, Embassy of the Netherlands, Danish International Development Agency, and United Nations Development Programme. Ongoing changes in the funding landscape, including the shift of donors' focus to areas lacking a strong civil society component, such as trade, continued to reduce the pool of funding available to CSOs. For instance, a substantial portion of USAID funding now goes to agri-business projects (though some of this includes work with civil society, such as supporting professional associations and farmers groups).

Although a few CSOs have diversified funding, there are limited opportunities for most organizations to develop multiple funding sources. To overcome this gap, local philanthropy has attracted considerable attention in recent years. Norsaac, a Tamale-based CSO, is piloting participatory grant making with support from the STAR-Ghana Foundation, Oxfam, and the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI). This type of grant making cedes decision-making powers to affected community members and constituencies, and it is being tried in Ghana as a homegrown model that redefines the relationship between aid agencies in the global north and development actors in the global south. STAR-Ghana, the main local grant-making organization, earmarked GHS 10 million (approximately \$1.2 million) as grant support for CSOs, of which 5.2 million (approximately \$625,000) was disbursed in 2022. STAR-Ghana supported fourteen partners through its Conflict, Security, and Stability Fund, Giving for Change project, and Partnership Beyond Aid project in the 2021–22 financial year but did not advertise a major call for funding in 2022.

The government of Ghana does not normally give grants to CSOs. However, CSOs sometimes pool funding with government agencies to undertake joint activities at local and national levels. For instance, the US organization Advocates for Community Alternatives partnered with the assembly of Fanteakwa South District on a facilitated collective action process in thirty-four key towns in the district. Under this approach, the two sides contributed funding that allowed communities to develop and implement action plans reflecting their priority needs.

Community support for CSO projects is sometime available but usually not substantial. Corporate social responsibility programs sometimes benefit CSOs, but they are few in number and the grants are small. In 2022, with support from Tullow Oil, Youth Bridge Foundation coached 1,300 students in deprived communities on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics before they took their basic education certificate examinations.

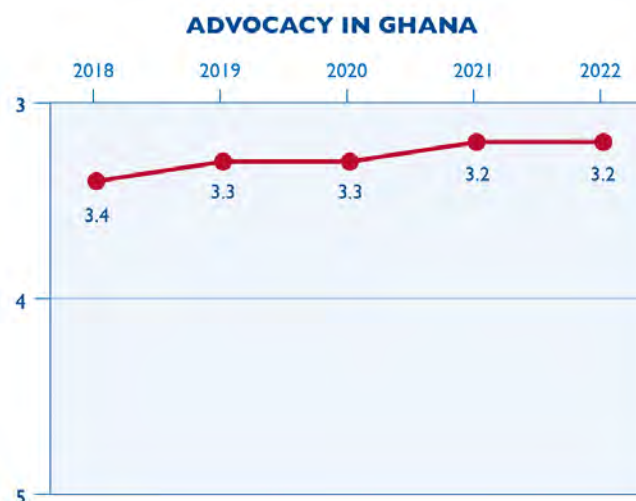
Only a few CSOs earn income from the provision of goods and services. CSOs established as social enterprises earn income from business entities associated with their organizations. The income streams from social enterprises support organizational activities but are usually not substantial.

Most large and urban CSOs have sound financial management systems with trained accountants to manage their finances. In fact, most organizations find it difficult to receive donor grants without a qualified financial officer. However, small organizations that do not receive donor grants directly usually manage their finances with simple records of income and expenditures. CSOs are required to submit annual financial reports and, except in the case of CBOs, audit reports to renew their operating licenses.

ADVOCACY: 3.2

CSO advocacy was largely unchanged in 2022.

CSOs in Ghana generally enjoy a cordial relationship with policymakers at all levels. In 2022, President Akufo-Addo met with CSO leaders to seek their opinion on government proposals for the country's economic recovery and negotiations with the International Monetary Fund. Several CSOs met with the speaker of the parliament to discuss their legislative and advocacy work. Many organizations worked with authorities at the regional and grassroots level on community development and public service delivery. For example, the Upper East regional minister met with Ghanaian and international CSOs and urged them to adopt a consortium approach to strengthen their working relationships with various district assemblies in the region.



Rights-based organizations seek to hold the government accountable by periodically reviewing the country's adherence to international protocols, agreements, and conventions, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In 2022, the Ghana CSO SDG-Platform issued a shadow report to accompany the country's voluntary national report to the United Nations on the implementation of the SDGs. In the report, CSOs highlighted the need for government bodies to coordinate their sectoral plans. CSOs also use mechanisms such as social audits to check public expenditures.

CSOs, including social movements, undertake both formal and informal advocacy campaigns. Policy issues are often based on research findings and emerging issues affecting community members in a particular sector. For instance, in September, the Institute for Democratic Governance revived public discussion about the need to amend the constitution and reform local government. Ghana Somubi Dwumadie, which focuses on disability issues, lobbied for a voluntary parliamentary group to become a formal caucus so that it could promote disability issues in national legislation.

CSOs serve as the mouthpiece or advocates for vulnerable communities. For instance, Tropenbos Ghana called on the government to introduce land restoration as a condition for small-scale miners to reduce the devastation of arable lands and ensure livelihoods for poor communities in mining areas. Similarly, the Cocoa Platform and its counterparts from Côte d'Ivoire made a joint call for reforms in the international pricing mechanism for cocoa to guarantee a viable income for farmers.

The Women's Rights Coalition, composed of Abantu, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), Network for Women's Rights in Ghana, Ark Foundation, Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Center, and other organizations, engaged with the Ministry of Gender in 2022 to support the Affirmative Action Bill, Property Rights of Spouses Bill, Intestate Succession Bill, and Criminal Offenses Bill 2022 (which would criminalize accusations of witchcraft). WiLDAF also collaborated with the Ghana AIDS Commission to submit a memorandum to the parliament as part of an ongoing advocacy campaign against the passage of a private member bill seeking to regulate issues related to LGBTQ persons. Youth-based CSOs were active participants in developing the new ten-year National Youth Policy launched by the president in September. CSOs also engaged in advocacy on the galamsey issue in 2022. For example, Tropenbos Ghana called for a five-year ban on small-scale mining and

the development of a complete restoration strategy, including an inventory of the condition of the country's forest reserves. Anti-corruption CSOs such as the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition and the Ghana Integrity Initiative called for transparency on assets declarations, including publication of those made by public officials.

The concept of lobbying has still not gained ground in Ghana, although CSOs use formal and informal channels to interact with legislators at all levels. In 2022, after a media report indicated attempts by some government officials to appropriate portions of the Achimota Forest Reserve, lobbying by Occupy Ghana resulted in the suspension of the reserve's reclassification. Other successful lobbying in 2022 included passage of the Exemptions Act after sustained efforts led by the Tax Justice Coalition.

The NPO bill is still under discussion. CSOs are for the passage of the bill and in 2022 continued to lobby the government to present the draft bill to the parliament for consultation.

SERVICE PROVISION: 3.5

CSO service provision was unchanged in 2022.

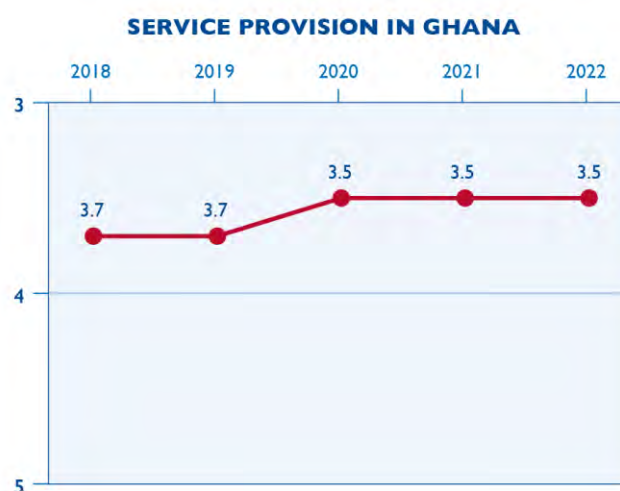
The CSO sector in Ghana is highly diversified. CSOs operate in almost all sectors, including governance, health, education, environment, mining, women's and child rights, human and animal rights, transport, energy, faith and traditional affairs, and new media. Most CSOs seek to address their constituents' identified needs or fill gaps in public service delivery. For instance, WILDAF has lawyers who provide victims of gender-based violence with legal representation in court and engage on the issue with other state agencies, such as the police, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, and the government-sponsored institution Legal Aid.

CSOs' services usually respond to the priorities of their constituents and communities as determined through community engagements, needs assessments, and direct requests from communities themselves. For example, Sancore Animal Rescue and Shelter is a nonprofit organization in the greater Accra region set up to help stray dogs and cats, which were a problem in the community. CSOs typically measure the effectiveness of their work through feedback from beneficiaries, donors, and government agencies.

CSO usually provide goods and services to everyone, not only their members. CSO networks and membership associations provide goods and services to their members. Generally, CSOs in Ghana do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, or ethnicity. However, some CSOs, particularly faith-based organizations, do not endorse activities that promote LGBTQ interests.

CSOs registered as social enterprises recover costs through their business initiatives. For example, the Sungbo Women Empowerment Organization based in the Upper West region has set up two shea butter processing mills that raise funds to support the activities of thirty-four women's groups. A few research and advocacy-based organizations recover costs from consultancy services. However, the demand for paid services is very low, especially in rural areas, where CSOs' constituencies are vulnerable groups without financial resources. A few CSOs distribute products such as publications at workshops and public events.

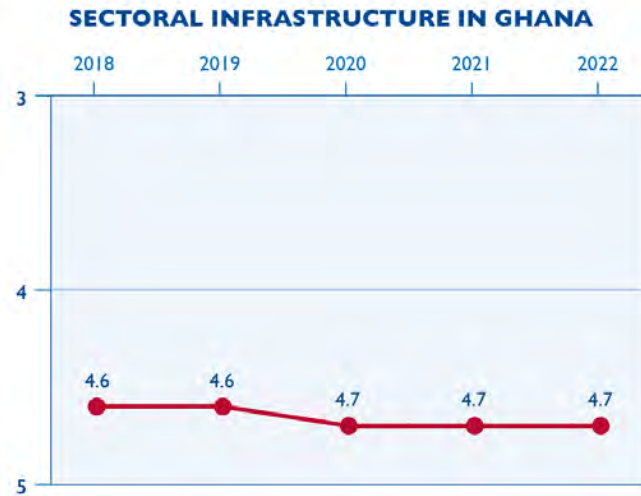
Government officials and agencies at both the national and local levels recognize and appreciate the work of CSOs. Government officials recognize CSOs' role in complementing the efforts of the state to provide goods and services and further national development. Public officials regularly issue statements of commendation. For instance, in 2022, the minister of information commended the Media Foundation for West Africa and its media affiliate, The Fourth Estate, for testing the Right to Information Act under its accountability journalism project. Government officials sometimes criticize CSOs for certain aspects of their work, particularly if they expose inefficiencies or corruption in government.



SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 4.7

The infrastructure supporting the CSO sector did not change in 2022.

Only a few organizations, such as WACSI and the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), serve as resource centers for CSOs. WACSI focuses on capacity development, while AWDF mainly provides resources on women's issues. Several intermediary support organizations provide training and other technical support. For example, STAR-Ghana Foundation, with support from WACSI and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized a workshop in July on building relationships with potential donors under its Giving for Change project. Otherwise, CSOs access information through peers and internet-based sources, such as the websites and social media platforms of donors, the government, and publications.



STAR-Ghana Foundation is the major local grant-making organization. In the 2021–22 financial year, STAR-Ghana supported fourteen partners, but it did not issue a major call for grant proposals in 2022. Very few CSOs access funds from other local foundations, such as the Vodafone and MTN foundations, because funding allocations for CSOs are usually small and sector- or geographic-specific. In recent years, several local funding schemes for start-ups and community development initiatives have emerged.

CSOs in Ghana have established strong relationships through coalitions and networking, which they use to share information and pursue joint projects. For example, Oxfam and its grantees have formed consortiums to have a stronger voice when engaging with the private sector on the cocoa and shea butter value chains. Networks have also helped form consortiums to raise funds. However, declines in funding have weakened most networks by driving them to compete with their members and their members to compete with each other for funding. The sector has struggled to establish a common platform to oversee and coordinate its affairs. The Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organizations in Development is no longer regarded as representative of most CSOs.

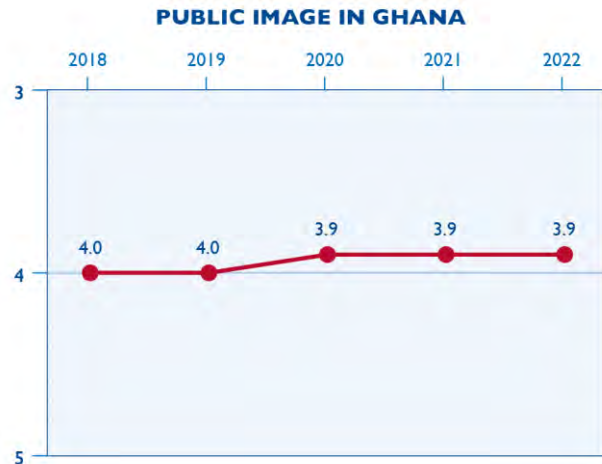
Many training programs help build the capacity of CSOs. Organizations offering training in 2022 included WACSI and some private and public institutions. For instance, the University of Cape Coast has a full program in CSO management, and the Institute for Chartered Accountants Ghana and Shawbell Consulting offer training on relevant topics. Other opportunities included short courses on topics such as management, governance, fundraising, and proposal writing offered by the Institute for Statistical Social and Economic Research, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, and the Institute of Directors. Local and foreign entities occasionally organize subject-area training programs. For example, Open Ownership, a US-based organization, collaborated with the Office of the Registrar of Companies to organize a series of trainings for CSOs on beneficial ownership in the extractive sector. Participants must pay to attend most trainings.

Partnerships between civil society and other sectors are few and often designed to meet short-term objectives. For instance, in 2022, the Media Coalition against Galamsey collaborated with urban and rural CSOs to carry out campaigns on the devastating effect of illegal mining on bodies of water and the environment. CSOs also collaborated with the ministries of interior and national security on issues related to border security. The Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center collaborated with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding to organize the annual stakeholder dialogue series, which seeks to strengthen partnerships among stakeholders to promote peace and security in the subregion.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 3.9

CSOs' public image was stable in 2022.

CSOs continued to enjoy positive media coverage on traditional and social media platforms. CitiFM and CitiTV provided live radio and television broadcasts of public forums on Ghana's debt organized by Imani and the Africa Center on Energy Policy in December. The activities of urban CSOs, particularly those based in Accra, usually receive prompt or same-day reportage, while rural CSOs must wait a day or two. CSOs pay for advertisements and prime-time public announcements of their activities unless the media house is a major sponsor or sole media partner for a particular event. Unmonitored social media platforms sometimes disseminate negative coverage of CSOs or are used to spread disinformation.



Public perceptions of CSOs are positive, especially in contexts in which people see the direct benefit of their work. Public understanding of the distinction between advocacy and service-oriented CSOs is blurred, particularly in rural areas. Although CSOs try to complement and improve government service delivery, local terminology describing CSOs as charitable entities hinders understanding of their role as advocacy-centered organizations.

The government has a generally positive perception of CSOs and engages with them in both policy making and service delivery. However, in the politically polarized environment of 2022, members of the ruling party often tagged CSOs criticizing government policies as working for the opposition. The relationship between the business sector and CSOs remains weak.

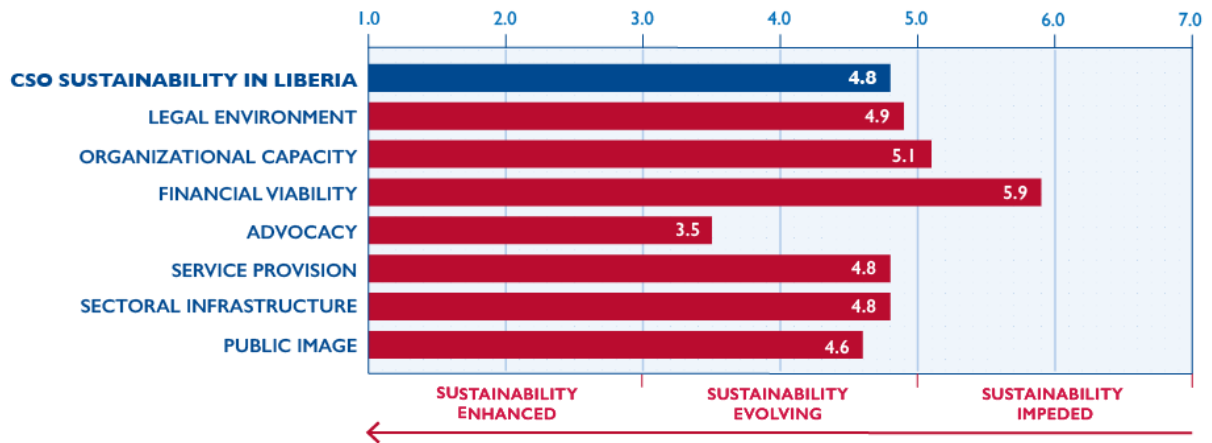
CSOs raise awareness of their activities through community media and social media campaigns. CSOs have developed relationships with the media and individual journalists and organize joint activities to enhance positive coverage. CSOs use social media often to publicize information, advertise for interns, or engage in other public communications.

The publication of annual reports is now common among CSOs, particularly urban organizations. As part of the implementation of the new NPO Policy, CSOs are required to establish independent forums of members that can defend their interests and ensure ethical conduct.

LIBERIA

Capital: Monrovia
Population: 5,506,280
GDP per capita (PPP): \$1,725
Human Development Index: Low (0.481)
Freedom in the World: Partly Free (60/100)

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.8



Liberia celebrated its bicentennial anniversary in 2022 under the theme "Liberia: The Land of Return—Commemorating 200 Years of Freedom and Pan-African Leadership." As the year-long celebration kicked off in February, President George Weah emphasized that Liberia belongs to all citizens no matter what their religious or political orientations. While the milestone was the occasion of much rejoicing, it also led to many reflections about the country's progress and the challenges it continues to face.

Corruption was widely seen as an intractable problem, despite the president's pledge to fight corruption in his inaugural speech in 2018. Three senior government officials—the minister of state for presidential affairs, the solicitor general, and the managing director of the National Port Authority—were sanctioned in 2022 by the US Department of the Treasury for bribes, kickbacks, the misappropriation of state assets for personal gain, and other forms of public corruption. CSOs such as the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL) condemned the activities of the sanctioned officials and called for their immediate dismissal. The country's ranking on Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2022 declined from 136 out of 180 countries in 2021 to 142 in 2022.

As the country geared up for presidential and general elections in October 2023, many people expressed dissatisfaction with the economy, leading to expectations that the elections would be hotly contested. Both houses of the legislature discussed and approved amendments to the New Elections Law of 1986 in September 2022. The proposed amendments would increase fees for candidates wishing to run for office and could strengthen government control over electoral jurisprudence. The amendments were sent to the president, but as of mid-2023, it was unclear whether he had signed them.

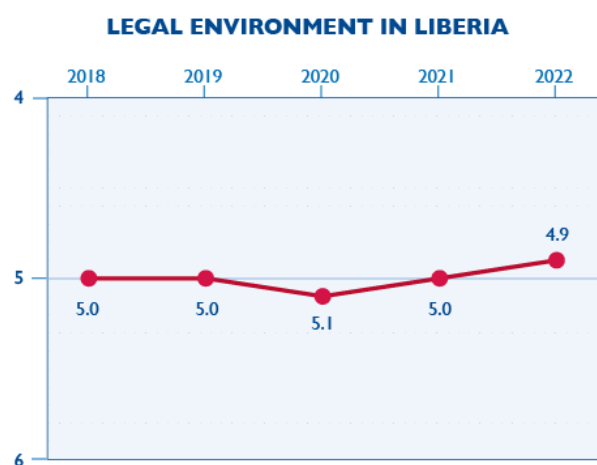
In July 2022, an amendment to the 1973 Alien and Nationality Act was passed that granted Liberians the right to hold dual citizenship with some limitations and gave dual citizens the right to vote. The law continued to require that Liberian citizens be of African descent with at least one parent who is a Liberian at the time of birth.

Liberia's economy grew by 4.8 percent in 2022, driven mainly by the mining and agricultural sectors. Inflation fell to 7.6 percent from 7.8 percent in 2021, according to the World Bank. Although macroeconomic projections remained relatively stable, Liberian consumers faced a difficult situation as increases in the cost of fuel, coupled with the economic impact of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, caused shortages of vital commodities such as rice. The country experienced an inflow of aid as development partners undertook interventions in water and sanitation, democracy, health, and education.

CSOs' overall sustainability improved in 2022. The legal environment was slightly more enabling as high-quality legal services were made available free of charge at some government agencies. Organizational capacity was slightly stronger as more CSOs adopted strategic plans and organizational goals in line with their stated missions. CSOs' financial viability improved moderately as training helped many organizations engage more effectively in resource mobilization, diversification of funding sources, and financial management. Service provision improved slightly as organizations began to work with the government on services aimed at solidifying democracy in the country. CSO advocacy, sectoral infrastructure, and public image were unchanged.

A mapping of CSOs conducted in 2022 by the National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCCL) with support from USAID found that many organizations registered with NCSCCL were dormant or no longer existed. As a result of the mapping exercise, the list of registered organizations was culled so that only active organizations were counted. The January 2023 final report identified 647 registered CSOs, faith-based organizations (FBOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs). Of this number, 54 organizations were newly accredited in 2022.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 4.9



The legal environment for CSOs showed slight improvement in 2022 as cost-free, high-quality legal services became available at some government agencies.

The main regulations governing the CSO sector are the Government-CSO Partnership Policy of 2006, CSO Accord of 2012, and National Aid and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Policy. The Government of Liberia–CSO Accord, a memorandum of understanding signed in 2016, outlines a partnership policy for realizing an enabling environment for civil society and integrating civil society into national development processes. The NGO Policy, launched in September 2020, sets forth the government's responsibilities to CSOs and the mechanisms by which CSOs can hold the government accountable.

Under the NGO Policy, CSOs must register before beginning operations. CSOs may register as various types of organizations, including associations, cooperative societies, and trade unions. Registration procedures are clearly defined. Most organizations register as associations, which requires obtaining articles of incorporation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Liberia Business Registry and then securing accreditation from all ministries responsible for the sectors in which they will work. For tax purposes they must register with the Liberia Business Registry before beginning operations.

In 2022, CSOs continued to view the policies governing CSOs as inconsistently implemented and in particular complained that corruption hindered the process of obtaining accreditations. CSOs that align themselves with the government or remain neutral on controversial issues usually face few barriers to accreditation. But organizations that the government considers to be critical of its actions or that work in sensitive areas can find the process of obtaining ministry clearances tedious, burdensome in terms of cost and time, and sometimes unsuccessful. Any lack of ministry accreditations will limit an organization's operations as CSOs cannot legally work in areas other than those for which accreditations have been obtained. In addition, the registration process does not distinguish between international CSOs, local CSOs, CBOs, and FBOs, and all types of organizations must pay the same amount to register. NCSCCL has conducted awareness-raising sessions with its members about gaps in the NGO Policy and has mobilized its membership to engage with national and county government agencies and policy makers to revise the policy. A coalition of CSOs led by NCSCCL with the close support of the Accountability Lab Liberia (ALab) is seeking to put implementation of the policy on hold and met with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to discuss the policy in March 2023. There has been no movement to date on the issues raised.

CSOs should be able to register at county-level service centers, but these centers generally do not function as well as they should. This has made registration difficult for CSOs outside of the capital city of Monrovia. In 2022, the

Ministry of Finance and Development Planning launched an automated online platform meant to ease the accreditation process. Nevertheless, the pace of CSO registration has dropped slightly in recent years, particularly in rural areas, where many organizations operate informally because they lack information about registration procedures, have no internet access, cannot afford to pay registration fees, or cannot obtain adequate legal advice. Organizations without legal status are unable to apply for funding from the government or foreign donors.

Registered associations may apply for NGO status by providing the NGO Coordination Unit with memoranda of understanding signed by the government ministries or agencies responsible for the sectors in which they will work. Compared to other types of organizations, organizations with NGO status tend to have greater freedom to design and implement their own interventions, which can increase funding possibilities. CSOs without NGO status usually find it difficult to obtain larger or flexible grant funding and thus operate mostly on the community level. NGOs must renew their accreditations yearly and submit annual program reports to the NGO Coordination Unit. Organizations with budgets of \$50,000 or more should submit annual audited financial statements as part of the reaccreditation process, but this rule is not strictly enforced.

There were no reports that CSOs' right to access information and protest were violated in 2022, unlike the previous year. However, student-led anti-government protests in late July 2022 were attacked by youths linked to the ruling party and allegedly encouraged by government officials. Several gang members were arrested, and President Weah disowned the group in August. Subsequent student demonstrations were peaceful, and the Liberian police showed more restraint in dealing with demonstrators. A December demonstration protesting the cost of living in which more than 1,000 Liberians took part was also peaceful.

CSOs are exempt from taxes on income that does not derive from profit-making business activities or other activities inconsistent with their charitable purpose. CSOs may apply for tax exemptions through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and the Liberia Revenue Authority. For example, in 2022, Den-Vera Medical Lab and Clinics obtained tax exemptions on income from grants, endowments, and fees after informing the authorities about its scope of operation.

CSOs must obtain permission to generate income by charging fees, operating social enterprises, or similar activities. CSOs may engage in fundraising campaigns, compete for government contracts, and accept funds from foreign donors and governments. The NGO Policy allows the government to investigate organizations' financing for the purpose of curbing money laundering. Government agencies may deny partnership agreements and grants to organizations whose work they do not condone.

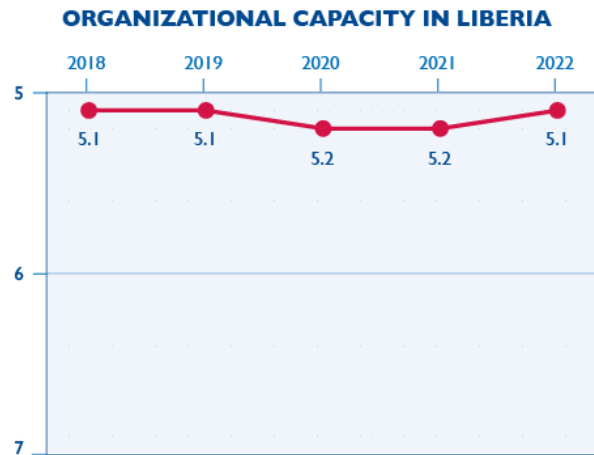
High-quality legal advice is available to CSOs in the capital city and some secondary cities provided they have the resources to pay for it. CSOs in rural areas tend to have inadequate legal support because of their limited resources to hire lawyers or law firms. However, some government agencies, including the Liberia Revenue Authority, offered legal assistance to CSOs that did not have access to lawyers in 2022. Their help includes developing documents needed for registration, such as articles of incorporation and bylaws. These services are free of charge.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 5.1

CSOs' organizational capacity improved slightly in 2022 as some organizations adopted clearly defined goals and strategic plans in line with their stated missions.

Liberian CSOs engage directly with many constituencies on a broad set of issues. For example, in 2022, the Community Healthcare Initiative (CHI), Paramount Young Women Initiative, and other CSOs used their online platforms to collect 20,000 signatures on a petition to the House of Representatives to suspend taxes and import duties on sanitary pads. The Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) offered workshops and community engagements to CSOs and community members on a joint Liberian-Indonesian community-based monitoring framework for the oil palm industry. SDI also offered training to traditional leaders in Shawbow District, Sinoe County, on land governance, followed by a women's only training aimed at empowering women to engage in customary land formalization and identify a strategy to secure their representation in community land development and management committees.

Most CSOs have clearly defined missions and visions because they are part of the articles of incorporation required for registration. Many organizations are able to articulate their visions and missions to external audiences but have not mastered the skill of long-term strategic planning. However, larger CSOs in urban areas are developing strategic plans. For example, the Youth Alliance for Rural Development in Liberia, Inc. (YARD–Liberia) has a five-year plan that focuses on organizational development and includes a timetable for project implementation developed in cooperation with the government and other funders. The timetable is flexible and changes slightly with the monitoring of project results. The Network of Youth Living Positive in Liberia adopted more clearly defined goals in 2022 by narrowing its focus from general concerns to specific health, safety, education, and advocacy issues, partly in response to donors’ focus on these areas. Strategic planning is much more challenging for CSOs in rural areas because the concept of planning and the need to align plans with organizational capacity and its development are less well understood. Rural CSOs tend to measure their results in terms of the achievement of planned activities rather than the realization of organizational goals over a defined period.



CSOs usually have clear management structures, including an explicit division of responsibilities between the board of directors and staff. Board members are usually selected on the basis of social status and financial means and typically remain uninvolved in supporting or overseeing their organizations. While some CSOs have defined policies and procedures, there are often gaps in their implementation, mainly because highly qualified staff are lacking at most organizations, which weakens internal management capacity.

The retention of both staff and volunteers is one of the sector’s biggest challenges. CSOs are often prevented by funding shortfalls or a lack of technical capacity from hiring qualified staff who could effectively manage their organizations’ activities. These constraints, as well as Liberia’s high unemployment rate, mean that most CSOs have more volunteers than permanent staff. Some CSOs rely exclusively on volunteers, who are usually brought on for the duration of a particular project and then let go immediately when the project ends. Volunteers are usually offered modest benefits such as transportation.

The technological capacity of CSOs continues to improve dramatically, especially in urban areas, where most CSOs use Facebook, WhatsApp, and Zoom for individual and group activities. For example, the West African ICT Action Network, a CSO focused on internet governance, relies heavily on Facebook and WhatsApp. In rural areas, where internet coverage is weak, digitally based communications are less common among CSOs. Few laws govern internet use in Liberia, and government policies address cybercrime only minimally. Cybersecurity has yet to become a major concern among CSOs, making organizations that are dependent on internet-based systems highly vulnerable to cybercrimes.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.9

CSOs’ financial viability improved moderately in 2022. While funding remained limited, training offered by USAID and other donors allowed CSOs to become more engaged in resource mobilization, diversify their funding sources, and incorporate more sophisticated financial management systems into their operations.

Liberian CSOs rely overwhelmingly on foreign-sourced funding, and most CSOs depend on a single donor for intermittent, project-based funding. USAID, the European Union (EU), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) are among the major donors that provide funding to Liberian CSOs directly or, more commonly, through large international organizations able to meet donor criteria. In 2022, USAID launched the five-year Civil Society Activity (CSA), which seeks to strengthen Liberians’ ability to advocate for policy reforms, policy implementation, and service delivery improvements. CSA is implemented by the US organization DAI in partnership with the Liberian organizations



Naymote Partners for Democratic Development, CENTAL, and ALab. In 2022, CSA awarded a grant to NCSCSL to map subnational CSOs and their advocacy priorities across Liberia’s fifteen counties. CSA also offered training to Liberian CSOs to help them diversify their funding sources and engage in more effective resource mobilization. Some participating CSOs applied their learning immediately. For example, YARD–Liberia expanded its approach to fundraising and generated income through ticket sales and donations to an awards ceremony recognizing prominent individuals.

The government rarely provides grants or contracts directly to CSOs other than small amounts to organizations providing services that complement its agenda. The government’s Non-State Actors subgrant

program provides funding to strengthen CSO capacity with support from international partners. The government is reported to have a draft plan to improve CSOs’ financial capacities.

Business organizations support CSO service delivery through their corporate social responsibility programs, while international companies are usually required to support CSOs in their concession agreements. For example, in 2022, ArcelorMittal, in cooperation with the Women Empowerment Forum Liberia, gave thirty women in Nimba grants of up to \$3,000 each to support job creation.

CSOs sometimes earn income through business activities, paid services such as capacity building and training, or the small-scale provision of goods and services. In 2022, various organizations generated income through fundraising campaigns on social media, community engagement activities such as clean-ups, and dinners and awards ceremonies.

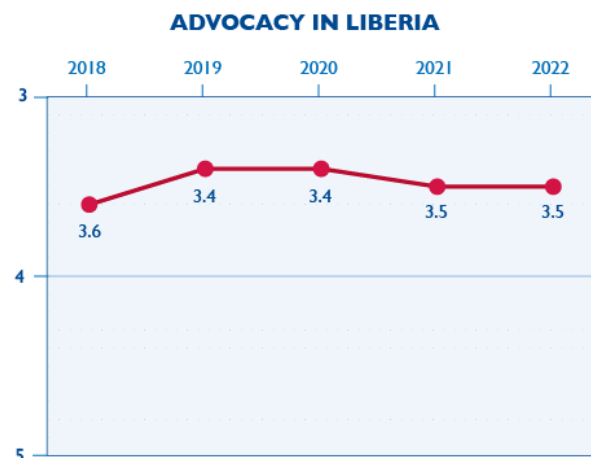
Some larger CSOs have sound financial management systems and trained staff or use professional financial management services. USAID’s CSA program helped CSOs improve their financial management practices in 2022. However, most organizations still find financial management a challenge, and financial malpractice sometimes occurs.

ADVOCACY: 3.5

CSO advocacy saw little change in 2022.

Most advocacy groups are not proactive when it comes to engaging state actors. For instance, although communities have complained for years about hazards such as exposed garbage heaps, Liberian laws intended to protect public health are not yet effective. Advocacy organizations involved in this issue have been unable to voice their concerns effectively due to either political constraints or fear of the government. In addition, some advocacy groups are slow to build up their advocacy approaches. Nevertheless, CSO advocacy is slowly advancing, and in 2022, CSOs played a major part in engaging with lawmakers to directly influence the legislative and policy processes.

CSOs take part in national and local government decision making through formal and informal channels. CSOs are usually invited to provide input about government programs and validate national policies, with their level of involvement varying by sector. In November 2022, the first-ever government-CSO national summit took place and was attended by government representatives, NCSCSL, and international partners such as the EU and African Development Bank. The aim of the



meeting was to deepen cooperation and promote a structured relationship as stated in the Government of Liberia–CSO Accord of 2016. A communique issued at the end of the summit called on both sides to engage as partners in genuine advocacy discussions while maintaining their independence.

Among notable advocacy actions in 2022, a coalition led by Integrity Watch Liberia, Foundation for Community Initiative, and the CSO Budget Platform expressed concerns over the many “ambiguous” line items in the draft 2023 national budget, including a \$10 million proposal to implement promises made by the president during a nationwide tour and a \$46 million proposal for the construction of new roads. CSOs developed a budget option paper aimed at enhancing the accountability and transparency of the use of government resources and held discussions with the government on participatory budgeting initiatives, which ended inconclusively. The final budget was passed after more than ninety days of scrutiny and adjustments but little certainty that the items raised by CSOs had been addressed.

CSOs used occasions such as United Nations Day, Labor Day, and CSO Day to conduct various advocacy initiatives in 2022. For example, for International Women’s Day on March 8, Activista Liberia carried out a three-day commemoration that focused on gender inequality and gender-based violence and their effects on communities. More than 300 participants attended the event, which was followed by continued education on women rights both online and in local communities.

On the local level, advocacy by the Foundation for International Dignity and Delta Human Rights Foundation, supported by USAID’s CSA program, resulted in the establishment of country councils compliant with the Local Government Act of 2018, which had been stalled for five years. In 2022, the two CSOs released the findings of an investigation into the use of development funds in Bong County, which confirmed gross mismanagement and the abuse of power by local authorities. The organizations called on the county to implement the Local Government Act of 2018 to stop the mismanagement, and their case made its way to the Liberian Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of the CSOs. The court ordered that development projects must be decided by county councils whose members include civil society representatives, women, youth, people living with disabilities, and chiefs, as mandated in the act. Later, in 2023, the Ministry of Internal Affairs validated nine-member county councils in thirteen electoral districts, with Bong County the first to introduce such a council.

CSOs continued to advocate on behalf of communities in need in 2022. In Farmington District, community members were unable to obtain information about an account of the Liberian Revenue Authority intended for the collection of fines from teachers and schools. YARD–Liberia intervened by taking the story to media such as Voice of America and Truth FM. The publicity resulted in immediate access to the requested information. During an investigation of the issue, the Liberian Revenue Authority discovered that the account in fact did not exist and quickly informed the Ministry of Education for follow-up. In efforts to address challenges hindering the growth of the cocoa sector in Liberia, the African Center for Economic Transformation, in partnership with the Institute for Research and Democratic Development, Center for Policy Action and Research, and Center for Democratic Governance, organized a one-day dialogue to explore policy options for artisanal chocolate manufacturing, links to regional and global markets, and certifications.

The CSO community understands the need to unite behind legal reforms to benefit the sector and demonstrated some commitment to advocating for these reforms in 2022. For example, the coalition led by ALab met with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to discuss changes to the NGO Policy in March.

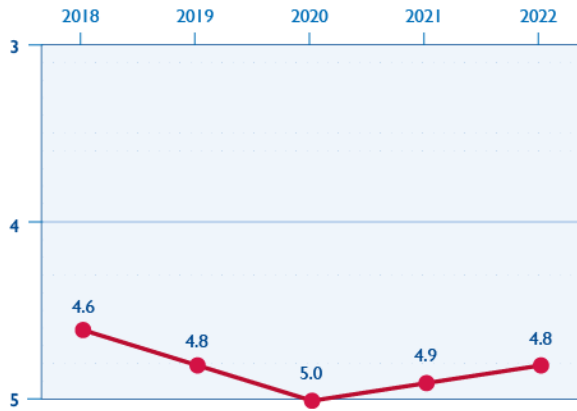
SERVICE PROVISION: 4.8

CSO service provision improved slightly in 2022 as organizations began to work with the government on services aimed at solidifying democracy in the country.

Liberian CSOs work in many areas, including health care, education, and energy. They provide development services and humanitarian relief, build local capacity, and help meet the needs of the vulnerable.

CSOs act alone or in groups with other CSOs but rarely in partnership with the government. Although increased democratization, reductions in conflict, and advances in information and communication technologies increase the potential for progressive partnerships between CSOs and policymakers, many CSOs have yet to take full advantage of these opportunities, thereby limiting the scope, scale, and sustainability of their service provision. However, cooperation between the two sectors is gradually developing. In 2022, the Ministry of Education and the

SERVICE PROVISION IN LIBERIA



organization Umovement worked together to roll out a nationwide civics education curriculum as part of a USAID-funded project to help Liberia overcome the most serious threats to its democracy and foster inclusive, sustainable political development. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning organized a two-day dialogue with CSOs on the 2022 budget, which allowed CSOs to develop a shadow budget emphasizing government accountability and transparency in spending to better the lives of the Liberian people.

CSOs determine the needs for their services through data collection and needs assessment. In 2022, some organizations collected data about targeted communities using multiple means. For example, in seeking to understand the incidence of gender-based violence and

its effects on sexual and reproductive health and rights advocacy in Liberia, CHI conducted key informant interviews with community authorities and focus group discussions with adolescent girls and young women. CHI also conducted a needs assessment to understand gaps in livelihoods in the community. This research helped the organization understand the need for more awareness raising and spotlighted some key community concerns. CHI later organized workshops on ways to report cases of gender-based violence, whistleblowing, and related topics.

Most CSOs do not discriminate in their delivery of services. An exception is membership-based associations, which rarely extend their services to beneficiaries beyond their members.

Few CSOs market their products and services or seek to recover their costs, since they usually work with constituencies that cannot afford to pay. In 2022, capacity building through USAID's CSA program was somewhat helpful in increasing CSOs' understanding of how to market their products effectively.

The government recognizes CSOs' contribution by occasionally offering grants for activities to benefit local communities. For example, the Network of Youth Living Positively in Liberia received a government grant to organize a youth sports tournament in 2022.

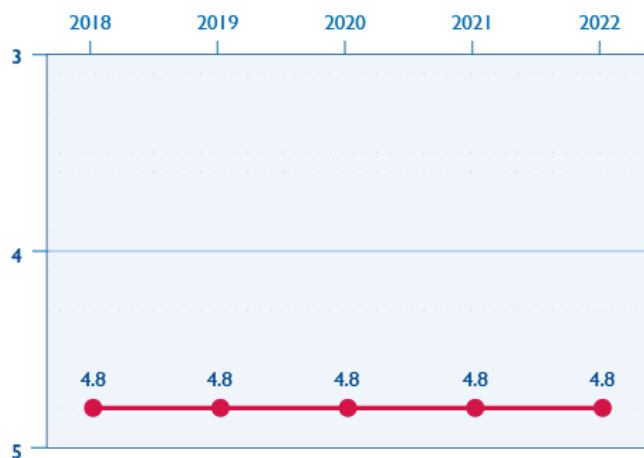
SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 4.8

The sectoral infrastructure of CSOs did not change in 2022.

A limited number of resource centers and intermediary support organizations provide some help to Liberian CSOs. The major resource centers include iCampus and the Development Education Network-Liberia (DEN-L), which offer training, rental space, internet access, and logistical support; the Center for Media Studies and Peace Building, which convenes dialogues and workshops for CSOs; and the Media Resource Center (MRC), which provides free training and services. The centers are largely dependent on foreign funding, although MRC also generates income by renting space for training and meetings and charging for internet access.

Several local institutions, including the local Rotary Club, offer grants to CSOs on a limited scale. Faith-based institutions give grants to some organizations as well. NCSCL has begun to provide small grants to small and new CSOs and CBOs with funding from the Embassy of Sweden, Mercy Corps, and USAID.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN LIBERIA



CSO networking is weak. Many organizations do not respond to emails and are not inclusive of other organizations in their activities. While CSOs understand the need to work together and share information, very few coalitions and networks exist. The main coalition is NCSCL, which unites more than 600 organizations. Although NCSCL began to provide grants in 2022, its communications with the larger community of CSOs remains weak.

CSO capacity building was active in 2022. DEN-L held a two-day training on institutional capacity and small-grants management for thirty CSOs. Five organizations working on sexual and gender-based violence took part in training under the EU- and United Nations Women Spotlight Initiative, which aims to eliminate violence against women, girls, and people facing intersecting forms of violence. The Women’s NGO Secretariat of Liberia and CENTAL held a series of capacity-building activities for CSOs and CBOs with support from Sida and other donors. YARD–Liberia conducted its annual computer literacy training and other training programs. Other training addressed organizational and financial management and project proposal writing.

The concept of intersectoral partnerships is not well understood in Liberia. The government and CSOs engage in limited partnerships to provide basic services in areas such as water, sanitation, education, and health care. However, CSO-government partnerships are gradually developing. For example, in 2022, the Ministry of Internal Affairs relaunched the National Situation Room, which was closed during the pandemic. Through the Liberia Early Warning and Response Network, the situation room monitors election-related tensions in all fifteen counties, assisted by NCSCL and community volunteers, including so-called youth agents of peace.

CSOs cooperate readily with media to obtain coverage of their issues and advocacy campaigns. Businesses do not interact significantly with CSOs other than on a few humanitarian projects.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.6

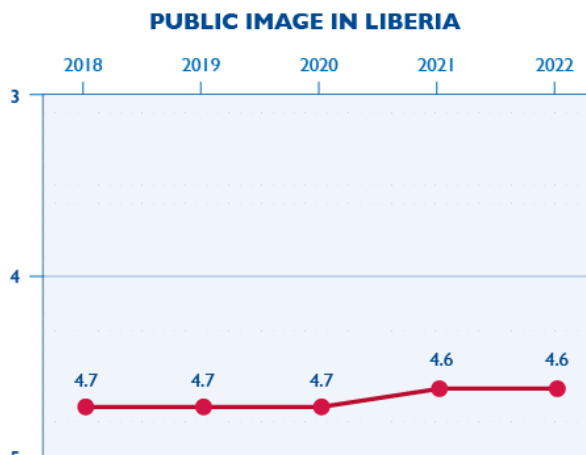
The public image of CSOs was unchanged in 2022.

Liberian CSOs receive considerable media coverage. With the exception of some government-owned outlets, most local media cover CSOs’ activities when requested. Government-controlled media sometimes stream CSOs’ activities. CSOs usually pay for media coverage if they initiate the request for coverage, but media also cover CSO-related stories free of charge.

Local communities see CSOs as reliable advocates in times of trouble and often turn to them for assistance or to speak on their behalf. For example, in 2022, March for Justice received a call for help from the family of a rape victim. March for Justice used its social media platform and other media outlets to force the police to find the perpetrator. Its action eventually led to the arrest and trial of the accused.

The government has a positive view of CSOs working in service delivery but distrusts advocacy organizations that question its decisions and policies. Policy makers often express doubt about CSOs’ policy positions or the feasibility of their recommendations. Business opinions of CSOs are fairly undeveloped.

Liberian CSOs are effective at promoting their image and activities. Many CSOs are engaged on social media, host websites, or conduct community events. Through constant engagement with media outlets, some organizations have developed productive relationships with journalists, which encourages positive coverage of their activities and amplification of their messaging. For example, in 2022, after private messages went unheeded, NCSCL used its Facebook page and cooperated with media outlets such as Smart News Liberia to call publicly on the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services to address its concerns about the 2022 census. NCSCL also used its public platform to press for the dismissal and prosecution of sanctioned government officials.

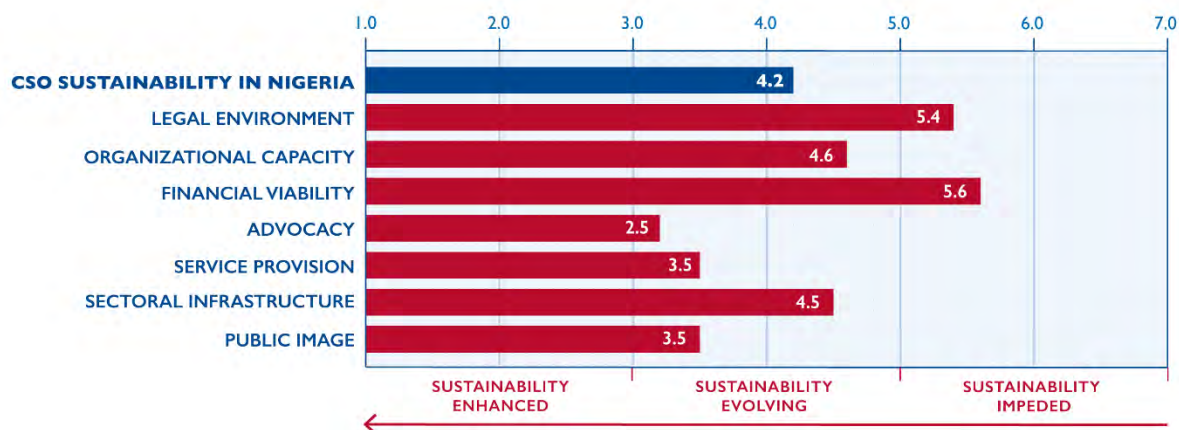


More established CSOs publish their annual reports online. Most other CSOs do not share their annual reports with the public. Some CSOs self-regulate by adopting internal codes of ethics and otherwise seeking to demonstrate transparency and adherence to international best practices. There has been ongoing talk in the sector about the need for a general code of conduct, but these discussions have yet to bear fruit.

NIGERIA

Capital: Abuja
Population: 230,842,743
GDP per capita (PPP): \$5,860.3
Human Development Index: Low (0.535)
Freedom in the World: Partly Free (43/100)

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.2



Nigeria had a busy political season in 2022 as preparations got underway for general elections in February and March 2023. In February, the legislature passed and the president assented to the Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which aims to increase the credibility of the electoral system by strengthening its legal framework. Major provisions include granting more authority to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and approving the adoption of electronic technologies for recording and counting votes. Civil society groups were deeply involved in ensuring passage of the bill, and many CSOs, along with a joint National Democratic Institute–International Republican Institute pre-election assessment mission, commended the new act. CSOs also engaged in voter education and registration and successfully pushed the INEC to extend the voter registration deadline from June 30 to July 31.

Elections for new governors of Ekiti and Osun states took place in July and August. Although relatively peaceful, the elections were marred by allegations of vote buying. Yiaga Africa ran parallel vote tabulations that confirmed the results announced by the INEC. The candidate from the ruling party was victorious in the Ekiti election and the opposition party won in Osun.

Nigeria continued to grapple with many security challenges in 2022, including banditry in the northwest and insurgency in the northeast. In the southeast, separatist elements continued to attack police stations and INEC facilities to demand the release of the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra, who has been detained on charges of terrorism and incitement since 2021. In the northeast, there were fewer reports than in the previous year of attacks by Boko Haram and the Islamic State’s West Africa Province. Many ex-fighters in the northeast left the bush to embrace peace in a development attributed in part to national and state governments’ deployment of non-kinetic approaches to combating insurgency, including amnesty for repentant fighters and a program to deradicalize and socially reintegrate ex-fighters. Local CSOs worked with the national and regional governments on transitional justice and the deradicalization program.

Nigeria’s economy continued to struggle in 2022. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the country’s real gross domestic product grew at a rate of between 2.25 and 3.54 percent. The unemployment rate was above 33 percent, and inflation was at 21 percent as of December 2022. The poor economic performance intensified the need for CSOs’ services in areas such as health, education, and humanitarian relief. It also spurred many young people to emigrate to Europe and elsewhere, which led to staffing shortages in many sectors, including civil society.

Overall CSO sustainability improved slightly in 2022. Advocacy was slightly stronger as CSOs pushed successfully for the passage of major legislation, including the Electoral Act, 2022 and the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022, which removed nonprofit organizations from the definition of designated non-financial

institutions subject to strict oversight. Service provision improved slightly as CSOs responded to floods that caused widespread distress and helped prepare for the 2023 general elections. The sectoral infrastructure was slightly stronger as CSOs accessed improved services from intermediary support organizations (ISOs) and engaged in more effective networking and coalition building. CSOs' public image was enhanced by a slight increase in media coverage from private and state-controlled media and growing public appreciation of their efforts. CSOs' legal environment, organizational capacity, and financial viability were unchanged.

The CSO sector in Nigeria is large and diverse. In 2022, the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), the main regulatory body for national-level CSOs, estimated the number of registered CSOs at slightly more than 600,000. There is no central database of CSOs registered at the state and local levels, which makes it difficult to determine the total number of CSOs in the country. Many community-based organizations (CBOs) and self-help associations operate without registration.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 5.4



The overall legal environment for CSOs in Nigeria was unchanged in 2022. While changes in two federal laws had positive outcomes for CSOs, state-level registration requirements continued to grow more stringent.

The Company and Allied Matters Act (CAMA), 2020 is the main law governing CSOs at the national level. Since it came into force in 2021, CSOs have criticized many of CAMA's provisions, including its authorization of the state to arbitrarily withdraw or revoke CSO registration certificates and conduct warrantless searches of CSOs' premises. CAMA allows the CAC to interfere in CSOs' internal affairs and, without adequate findings or due process, to order the involuntary merger or dissolution of CSOs holding "dormant" bank accounts. CSOs continued in 2022 to urge the government to expunge discriminatory sections of the law. Their efforts bore

fruit in April 2023, when, in response to a lawsuit filed by a human rights and constitutional lawyer in 2020, the court nullified certain provisions of the act, including section 839, which conferred on the CAC the power to unilaterally suspend an association's trustees.

Under CAMA, national-level CSOs must register with the CAC. Foreign CSOs register with both the CAC and the National Planning Commission, while state-level CSOs register with state agencies and local-level CSOs register with local authorities. Online registration is possible and usually straightforward. CSOs are seldom denied registration provided they meet the requirements. An exception in 2022 was the Traditional Religion Practitioners Association (TRPA), which was denied registration on the grounds that the group's forms of worship were not publicly available (generally interpreted to mean that they were secretive or cultlike). TRPA challenged the decision in court, but the outcome is not yet known. Certain federal ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, require CSOs to register with them regardless of CAC registration.

State-level registration requirements are becoming more stringent. In several states, including Adamawa, Borno, Jigawa, Kwara, and Lagos, CSOs must register with multiple state-level agencies to operate in certain sectors and communities. CSOs must register separately with each office except in Adamawa and Borno states, where registration is centralized and thus somewhat easier. Borno has set strict conditions for the registration of international CSOs based on suspicions that they had engaged in illegal activities in the past. In 2022, several states imposed burdensome reporting and accountability obligations on CSOs in connection with state-wide audits of their financial transactions conducted by the Federal Inland Revenue Service and state revenue services. For instance, in Adamawa State, CSOs' accounts were audited from 2019 to 2021 to ascertain their level of legal compliance. In Yobe and Borno states, CSOs continued to face operational restrictions, such as the need to obtain clearances from state authorities before carrying out any activities.

Two changes in key laws helped improve the legal environment for CSOs in 2022. First, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), an anti-corruption organization, challenged the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, Etc.) Act, 2015 in the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States. On March 25, 2022, the court ruled that the act inhibited individual and group rights and ordered the federal government to amend section 24 of the act so that it aligns with international human rights treaties that Nigeria has ratified. Section 24 criminalizes “offensive” messages sent via computer and had been used to harass many journalists in the country. Second, passage of the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 and the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 removed nonprofits from the definition of designated non-financial institutions, thereby easing government oversight and burdensome reporting requirements regarding CSOs’ financial transactions. CSOs are no longer required to register with and report to the Special Control Unit Against Money Laundering.

The ban on Twitter, which went into effect in June 2021 after the social media platform deleted tweets by President Muhammadu Buhari, was lifted in January 2022. The federal government said that it lifted the ban after Twitter agreed to register its operations in Nigeria and abide by new rules concerning taxes and prohibited contents. CSOs welcomed the move, as many advocacy organizations rely on Twitter for their work.

The proposed Donor Agencies Regulatory Commission (Establishment) Bill (HB 1568), which was introduced in the House of Representatives in 2021 and read for a second time in January 2023, lapsed with the end of the Ninth National Assembly in June 2023. The bill sought to compel donors to Nigeria to account for their funding and its expenditure by receiving agencies and bodies, including CSOs. In the face of strong CSO resistance, the bill was never passed and lapsed with the close of the Ninth National Assembly in 2023.

The Center for Journalism Innovation and Development recorded fifty-two verified attacks on journalists in 2022. On January 10, the office of the *Peoples Gazette* newspaper in Utako, Abuja, was raided by officers of the National Intelligence Agency, who interrogated the managing director and a reporter over the source of a leaked confidential memo. The National Broadcasting Commission suspended a Vision FM radio program for six months and fined the station NGN 5 million (approximately \$11,000) on charges of breaching the constitution in discussing the controversial extension in office of the National Intelligence Agency director general. On May 13, the Department of State Security arrested a journalist at EaglesForeSight, an online news platform, for recirculating an allegation originally published in *Peoples Gazette* that the governor of Ogun State had a criminal record in the United States.

Under the Finance Act, 2020, CSOs are exempted from paying income tax on activities that are not profit oriented. CSOs must pay value-added tax on goods and services unless they are used exclusively for donor-funded humanitarian projects. An amendment to the Finance Act 2020, that took effect on January 1, 2022, made public educational institutions liable for income tax.

CSOs may earn income from the provision of goods and services. They are not barred from competing for government contracts, although they are rarely successful when they do so. CSOs may engage in fundraising and accept funds from foreign donors.

Few local lawyers are trained in or familiar with CSO-related laws. High-quality legal advice is expensive and generally accessible only by large CSOs with ample funding.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.6

CSOs’ organizational capacity was unchanged in 2022.

CSOs continued to benefit from two major donor-funded capacity-building programs in 2022. USAID’s five-year Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) program is implemented by the Palladium Group in partnership with the Policy and Legislative Advocacy Center (PLAC), Center for Leadership, Strategy, and Development (Center LSD), and Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNNGO). The European Union (EU)’s Agents for Citizen-Driven Transformation (ACT) program is implemented by the British Council in partnership with NNNGO. Both programs continued to offer training and technical assistance in 2022 in areas such as project management, financial management, fundraising, and strategic planning. Local CSOs from across Nigeria benefited from these programs. In July 2022, SCALE organized a summit that brought together several CSOs and approximately 500 organizational development experts to chart a path for developing the capacity of Nigerian

CSOs. The summit resulted in the identification of concrete steps to improve the capacity of participating organizations and the establishment of a professional association, the OD Network, to build the capacity of experts in the field. The ACT program assessed the organizational capacity of more than 200 CSOs that had taken part in its activities and found improvements in their capacity. However, CSO experts are concerned that the programs' achievements may be difficult to sustain once ACT and SCALE end in 2023 and 2026, respectively.

Many national CSOs liaise with local leaders and CBOs to identify potential beneficiaries for their work.

Organizations often rely on participatory approaches to reach out to constituents and work with them effectively.

Such approaches sometimes require CSOs to adapt to specific circumstances. For example, in 2022, the Al-Amin Foundation in Borno State, which helps deradicalize and rehabilitate victims and ex-fighters of the insurgency in the northeast, and the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD), which contributes to a similar program for former Boko Haram fighters in the northeast, faced unusual challenges in involving beneficiaries in their work. Al-Amin was able to engage with targeted children and women only after a long period of engagement and interaction that allowed it to gain the women's trust. The fluency of the founder of Al-Amin in the local Kanuri language allowed the victims to relate their stories in their native language and feel that their experiences were understood. Only a few larger organizations maintain databases of their beneficiaries.

Many CSOs sought to improve their planning abilities in 2022 as strategic plans are normally a requirement of foreign donors. CSO practitioners attended various training sessions on strategic planning, and in March, NNNGO trained more than 100 persons on strategic planning for nonprofits. As donor funding continued to dwindle in 2022, CSOs often adjusted their strategic plans to focus on areas covered by available funding programs. Donor-funded CSOs often use metrics developed by the donors to measure the success of their work.

Only large CSOs in major cities maintained well-defined management structures and active boards in 2022. Board member engagement in the governance of CSOs, especially small and rural organizations, remained low. Many smaller CSOs list board members in their documentation only to fulfil registration requirements. Large CSOs normally have written policies to guide their operations and are generally transparent in their operations in accordance with their donors' requirements.

CSO staff and volunteer capacity, engagement, and retention did not change significantly in 2022. Most large, well-funded CSOs hire professional staff such as accountants and have documented personnel practices, including employee contracts, job descriptions, and human resource policies. Smaller organizations are often unable to hire or retain competent staff. Because of high unemployment among university graduates, some CSOs are able to recruit recent graduates as volunteers. Staff attrition remained a widespread challenge and was made worse by the mass emigration of Nigerians searching for employment in 2022.

CSOs' use of information technology continued to expand in 2022. Many organizations, especially large CSOs in urban areas, rely on social media and meeting platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams. Cybersecurity has yet to become a concern for CSOs in Nigeria, and the computer systems of many organizations are vulnerable to hacking as they are protected only by passwords.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN NIGERIA



FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.6

The financial viability of the CSO sector was stable in 2022.

Nigerian CSOs are heavily dependent on foreign support. The United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) remained the largest donors, with total US aid estimated at \$1.1 billion in 2022 and UK aid estimated at £130 million (approximately \$156 million) for 2022–23. Some bilateral funders reduced their support for Nigerian CSOs during the year. For example, USAID's State Accountability, Transparency, and Effectiveness (State2State) Activity

decreased its funding by \$20 million, though civil society support continued on a smaller scale. Another long-time donor, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa, reduced its funding after closing its office in Nigeria in 2021.



Shifts in donor priorities affected the funding outlook at many organizations. For example, as the Borno State government began to close camps for internally displaced persons operated by international CSOs, donors supporting the camps diverted their resources to other concerns, such as election- and democracy-related projects, climate change, and the environment. As a result of camp closures, members of the Borno State Network of Civil Society Organizations that provided services in the camps were hit with funding cuts. The end of the COVID-19 pandemic did not have a noticeable effect on levels of donor funding for CSOs in 2022.

Local sources of funding continued to be constrained in 2022. After devastating floods in some areas of the country,

CSOs mobilized monetary and non-monetary support from communities and local foundations to help flood victims. For example, the Civil Society Forum and other CSOs in Jigawa State worked with the Jigawa State government to raise more than NGN 2 billion (approximately \$4.8 million) for flooded communities. Otherwise, CSOs obtain limited funding from local sources. The federal and state governments sometimes hire CSOs to train or sensitize government staff and community members, but such income is generally marginal. The Elumelu Foundation, which focuses on empowerment, entrepreneurship, and poverty eradication, the Dangote Foundation, which works on health, education, and empowerment, and the Akin Fadeyi Foundation, which is involved in anti-corruption, women’s rights, education, and environmental sustainability, offered CSOs some support in 2022.

As in previous years, few CSOs and CBOs explored opportunities for funding from businesses and individual philanthropists as they usually implement projects directly rather than through intermediaries such as CSOs. Few organizations seek to market their services and products or to operate social enterprises as the income from such activities is low in comparison to funding from foreign donors.

Although other sources of funding are scarce, CSOs explored new resource opportunities in 2022, thanks in part to the SCALE and ACT programs, which have improved the sector’s ability to raise funds. CBOs obtained funds from religious institutions, influential leaders, and community groups, often by using social media platforms such as Telegram, Facebook, and Twitter. For instance, an organization in Kwara State raised NGN 25 million (approximately \$32,400) to drill boreholes using crowdfunding. Faith-based organizations and professional associations, such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities, Nigeria Labor Congress, and Nigeria Union of Journalists, funded their activities with members’ monthly dues. Some organizations generated funding by producing books, operating business centers, building and leasing event centers, or offering transportation services. The Women Environmental Program (WEP), for instance, has four meeting places that it rents out for events. Income from individual donations was modest in 2022, although communities gave generously to help people affected by the floods and a cholera outbreak.

CSOs’ financial management capabilities continued to be mixed in 2022. Large organizations maintained generally sound systems while smaller organization sought to improve their skills with support from donor-funded programs. Only large CSOs implementing donor-funded projects are able to hire professional financial services for tasks such as audits and the publication of financial statements.

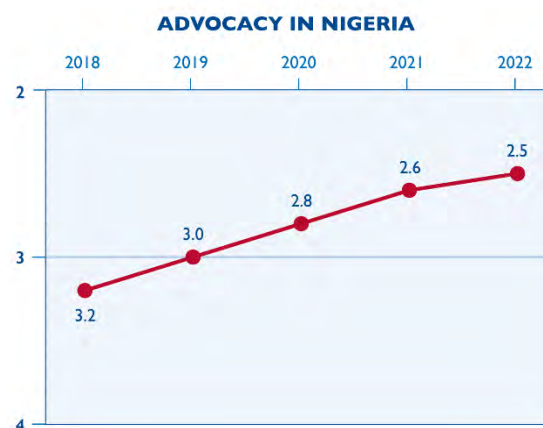
ADVOCACY: 2.5

CSO advocacy improved slightly in 2022 as the sector worked effectively with the government at the federal and state levels to enact several pieces of important legislation.

At the national level, Yiaga Africa led twenty-five organizations in urging the president to assent to the Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which improved the legal framework for the conduct of general elections. Some of CSOs’ recommendations were included in the bill. PLAC, Center for Democracy and Development (CDD), and

other organizations used websites and social media to raise public awareness about the act and other election-related matters. Yiaga Africa, the Jigawa State Civil Society Forum, and several other CSOs mobilized voter registration drives.

Several mechanisms allowed CSOs to interact with the government on a regular basis in 2022. For instance, CSOs and governments at all levels collaborated through the Open Government Partnership and Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI). NEITI adopted a framework to guide CSOs and communities hosting oil companies in effectively engaging in natural resource governance. CSOs continued to attend public hearings on budgetary and legislative issues. PLAC and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) took part in a public hearing on an act to establish the National Electoral Offences Commission in August, and CSOs attended hearings on amending the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 and six bills to strengthen Nigeria's paramilitary agencies.



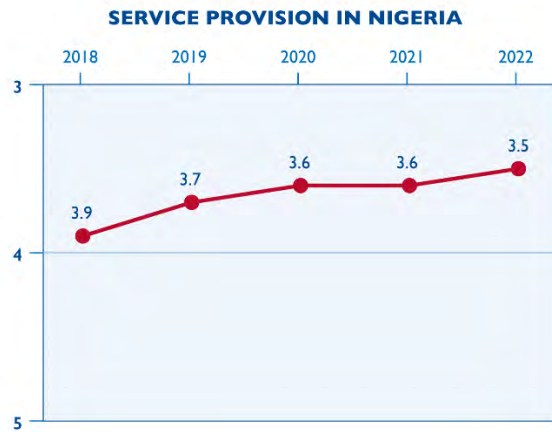
Much of CSOs' advocacy work took place at the state level in 2022. WEP, Global Peace Initiative, Jigawa Civil Society Forum, Partner West Africa, and other organizations urged Kebbi and several other states to pass the Child Rights Act, bringing the number of states that have adopted the act to thirty-four out of thirty-six. In Bauchi State, Partners West Africa–Nigeria (PWAN) and other CSOs working with USAID's SCALE program helped ensure the enactment in December of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law, 2022. This new legislation is expected to facilitate the speedy trial of cases of gender-based violence, which previously took about four years to complete. In Jigawa State, the Civil Society Forum coordinated significant public input into the 2023 budget by working with communities to conduct needs assessments and submit the results to the governor and relevant ministries. Jigawa CSOs also contributed to the passage of a bill requiring couples who intend to marry to determine whether they are both carriers of sickle cell anemia.

In Borno, CDD and the Al-Amin Foundation led a civil society group focused on convincing the government to incorporate communities into its deradicalization and rehabilitation program. In Abuja, the Community Emergency Response Initiative (CERI) successfully pushed the local authority to construct public toilets in designated areas. In Kano, CSOs effectively fought the government's plan to borrow NGN 8 billion (approximately \$19.3 million) for a railway project that they considered unnecessary. In Plateau, CSO advocacy resulted in the government's establishment of a committee to identify ways to finally implement the state's Gender Commission Act, which had been adopted in 2018. CSO advocacy also led to the speedier release of funds for budget implementation in Kaduna, Plateau, and Nasarawa states. Some states have special advisers to the governor on CSO matters, which facilitate interactions between the CSO sector and state governments.

In legislative activity, WEP led a number of organizations in successfully pushing for approval of a national policy to reduce plastic pollution in Nigeria. However, CSO advocacy on the national Audit Bill, which is meant to enhance the professionalism of the Office of the Accountant General, did not yet yield fruit as the president failed to assent to the bill in 2022. Despite the efforts of organizations such as SERAP and the Center for Social Action, the federal government continued to use loans as its main source of public financing in 2022, causing the national debt to rise. In November, the National Assembly and CSOs agreed that CSOs should have a liaison office at the National Assembly to improve communications between the two sides.

CSOs successfully pushed for the amendment of certain sections of CAMA 2020 that they considered restrictive, including section 839, which conferred unilateral powers on the CAC to suspend the trustees of an association. In 2023, section 839 and several other provisions were nullified by the court on the grounds that they violated sections of the constitution guaranteeing fundamental human rights. CSO advocacy led to the exclusion of nonprofit organizations from the definition of designated non-financial institutions in the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 and the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022. Effective advocacy by CSOs also slowed down progress of the Donor Agencies Regulatory Commission (Establishment) Bill, which sought to compel donors to Nigeria to account for their funding and its expenditure by receiving agencies and bodies. The bill eventually lapsed in 2023.

SERVICE PROVISION: 3.5



CSO service provision improved slightly in 2022 as civil society continued to fill the gap created by the state's gradual withdrawal from social service provision. Both federal and state governments are gradually transferring social service provision to the private sector, which is raising prices and making basic services such as electricity, health, and education difficult for many people to afford. Some CSOs seek to offer these services at no cost or to settle the bills of people who cannot afford the services. In 2022, CSOs played an especially important role in helping people affected by flooding and providing voter education.

CSOs provide services in many sectors, including health care, the environment, education, security, water and hygiene, and humanitarian relief. In Abuja, CERI educated adolescent girls about personal hygiene and provided

sanitary pads, while in Benue and Katsina states, WEP provided twenty sets of computers and solar panels to each of six schools. In the southeast, CBOs constructed roads after gathering contributions from local community members. Breakthrough ACTION Nigeria collaborated with the Nigerian government and US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief on developing social and behavioral change interventions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 among people living with HIV. Breakthrough ACTION also trained government malaria control officers in Bauchi State and worked with Momentum Country and Global Leadership in Nigeria to champion a community approach to marital issues in Ebonyi State.

Nigerian CSOs provide a wide range of goods and services designed to meet community needs. In Borno State, Al-Amin Foundation sponsored community phone-in programs on issues affecting the victims of the insurgency and created the She-Be-Peace network to bring together women of different faiths to promote peaceful coexistence. In Imo, Enugu, and Ebonyi states, the Parent-Child Intervention Center operated a capacity-building program to train counselors to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively. Organizations in Abuja and Oyo provided free legal services to victims of political harassment and trained teachers to use computers. WEP helped empower women economically by providing training and start-up capital for micro-businesses. WEP also trained farmers in Katsina to produce organic fertilizer from neem leaves and to fabricate simple farm tools. Typically, only CSOs implementing donor-funded projects have sufficient funding to collect data to determine the impact of their projects in the communities served.

Many CSOs in Nigeria provide services to communities beyond their own members, including other organizations and social institutions such as schools, orphanages, and correctional centers. For example, with funding from the Ford Foundation, PLAC began to produce an annual report, "The State of CSOs in Nigeria," which targets a broad audience with information about the CSO sector. Many CSOs provide their goods and services without discriminating on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, or religion. Local and international CSOs provided services equally to all people affected by flooding in 2022.

Since the goods and services that CSOs provide are largely donor funded, most organizations do not seek to recover costs.

CSOs' expanding role in service provision is prompting governments, especially at the state level, to recognize and express appreciation for their activities. The Lagos State government held a summit meeting with CSOs in 2022 to discuss ways that the two sectors could partner to develop the local economy. The Enugu State government usually invites CSOs to its events as a sign of appreciation. In Kwara State, several CSOs were honored with awards during the 2022 annual state award ceremony. In Borno State, the government recognized the contribution of local CSOs to its deradicalization program.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 4.5

The infrastructure supporting the CSO sector improved slightly in 2022 as CSOs were able to access improved services from ISOs and engage more effectively in networking and coalition building.

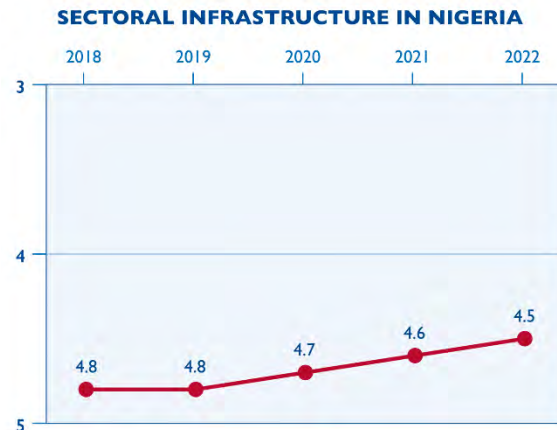
ISOs and resource centers offered a generous array of training to the CSO sector in 2022. CDD organized leadership and management training, especially for CSOs operating in urban areas. NNNGO trained CSO practitioners on strategic planning; PLAC, with support from USAID's SCALE program, trained CSOs on legislative engagement; and the development Research and Projects Center (dRPC) trained women CSOs on communications and advocacy techniques in Niger, Taraba, and Kebbi states. The services provided by resource centers and ISOs generally meet CSOs' needs, although small rural CSOs continue to find their cost unaffordable. Resource centers and ISOs earn some revenue to cover their operating costs, although the amount is minimal compared to foreign support.

Both online and in-person training for CSOs increased in 2022. In addition to training offered by resource centers and ISOs, the ACT and SCALE programs offered workshops on topics such as fundraising, advocacy, and financial management. Local CSOs such as WEP, Center LSD, and Yiaga Africa provided training related to election observation, strategic planning, and leadership. Social Action ran its Social Action Camp to train activists. WEP organized a monthly mentoring program on development issues for young CSO practitioners. As it was a pre-election year, many CSOs participated in training to build their capacity in election observation and community mobilization. Training is typically needs driven, trainers are usually local, and training materials are offered in English. There is no university or management institute in Nigeria that targets the CSO sector, although such a facility would be of great value to ensuring the sector's sustainability.

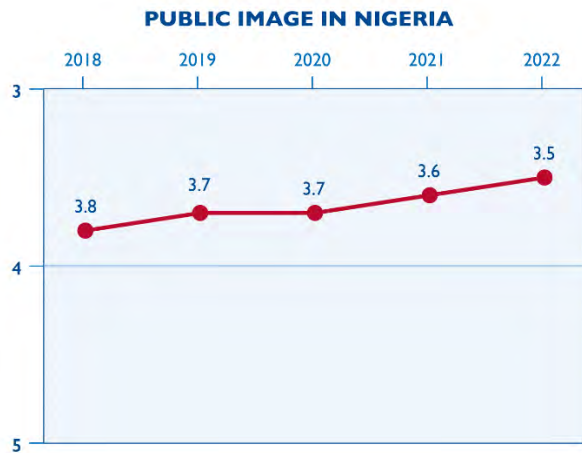
Local foundations such as Dangote Foundation, Tony Elumelu Foundation, and Fadeyi Foundation continued to provide grants to address locally identified needs in 2022. Most individual philanthropists prefer to work directly with communities rather than go through CSOs.

CSO networks and coalitions expanded in 2022, especially among large urban CSOs. Open Alliance, the Situation Room, and several state-level coalitions facilitated information sharing in the sector. The Action Group on Free Civic Space, a loose coalition concerned with security issues and led by Spaces for Change, collaborated on efforts to remove CSOs from the list of designated non-financial institutions. In June 2022, CSOs from several West African countries, including Nigeria, formed the Advocacy Coalition of West Africa to fight corruption in the sub-region by promoting whistleblowing. CSO members from Nigeria include CDD, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (CISLAC), and Human and Environmental Development Agenda. Other coalitions working in various thematic areas included the Coalition of Societies for the Rights of Older Persons in Nigeria, Conflict Resolution Trainers Network, Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development, Citizen Observant Hub, and Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All.

Collaboration between CSOs and governments at all levels was especially strong in 2022. For example, WEP partnered with the Katsina and Benue state governments to provide computers and train teachers on their use, while CDD worked with the federal government on the deradicalization program in the northeast. Collaborations between the media and CSOs in 2022 focused on pre-election activities. Yiaga Africa ran a voter education program on Channels TV, while CDD partnered with Channels TV to encourage peaceful co-existence and discourage disinformation. The Wole Soyinka Foundation, PLAC, CISLAC, and several other CSOs partnered with various media organizations to sensitize the public to election-related and other matters. Partnerships between CSOs and business organizations in 2022 included cooperation between the Mother of Models International, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency, and Access Bank to train women above forty years old on business skills and the acquisition of loans.



PUBLIC IMAGE: 3.5



The public image of the CSO sector in Nigeria improved slightly in 2022 as CSOs' pre-election activities and other services attracted positive media coverage and enhanced public perceptions of civil society.

CSOs' involvement in voter education and sensitization and other election-related activities received positive media coverage in 2022. A workshop on political integrity and political party accountability reporting for journalists organized by CISLAC was covered by many media outlets, including *ThisDay* newspaper. Many CSO practitioners appeared on Nigeria Television Authority, African Independent Television, Television Continental, and other outlets to analyze political issues in the country ahead of the 2023 elections. PLAC interns were featured on Nigeria Info 95.1 discussing their internship

program and youth participation in decision making. The ACT program facilitated media coverage of CSOs discussing ways to influence government policies in Kano State. Media coverage of CSOs' activities is typically treated as a public service, although a few government-controlled media demand fees to cover CSOs' work.

Public perceptions of CSOs improved in 2022. CSOs were regarded as playing an important role in community development, and their ability to help flood victims by mobilizing monetary and non-monetary support was especially appreciated. In general, the public perceives CSOs as instruments of social development and responds positively to their activities.

Governments at both state and national levels are increasingly comfortable with CSOs' contributions. For example, at the Lagos State Development Partners Initiative: NGO Summit 2022, the Lagos government stated that it views CSOs as critical stakeholders in its development agenda. While the Borno State government criticizes international CSOs for not doing enough to support its efforts to counteract the insurgency, it recognizes local CSOs as essential players in its deradicalization and rehabilitation program. Governments at all levels often turn to CSOs, particularly those that are seen as non-adversarial, for credible information and expertise. The relationship between CSOs and the private sector was similarly cordial in 2022, as evidenced by their cooperation to train women in business skills.

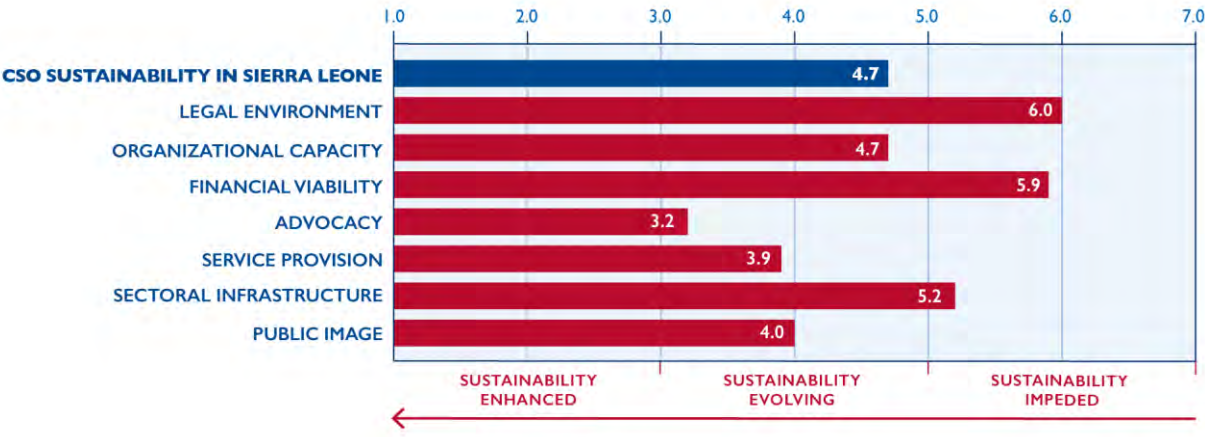
CSOs across the country continued to use traditional and social media platforms skillfully to publicize their activities in 2022. WEP, ActionAid Nigeria, Global Peace Initiative, and Breakthrough ACTION Nigeria have effective media engagement strategies and incorporate journalists into their project implementation. Breakthrough ACTION Nigeria, for instance, used several media partnerships to reach the public with critical information about maternal, newborn, and child health in 2022. In addition to traditional media, CSOs often use social media platforms to publicize their activities.

Leading CSOs continued to publish annual reports to demonstrate accountability and transparency in 2022. Self-regulation was again a focus as the SCALE and ACT programs organized a conference that brought together CSOs, NNNGO, and government regulators, including the CAC, to discuss a self-regulatory framework for the Nigerian CSO sector. CSOs welcomed the meeting as a way to ward off new legislation that could stifle their operations, and they pledged to work with the CAC and other government agencies to come up with a template for self-regulation. Following the conference, the National Technical Committee on Civil Society Self-Regulation developed the harmonized Nonprofit Code of Conduct to improve the accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of all CSOs in Nigeria. There is as yet little evidence that the code has been widely accepted and implemented across the sector. Many civil society experts feel that CSOs and development partners need to be more strongly committed to the adoption of a comprehensive self-regulatory framework in addition to urging legal compliance. They argue that any such framework must address compliance with codes of conduct and ways to bridge the gap between large and small and rural and urban organizations.

SIERRA LEONE

Capital: Freetown
Population: 8,692,606
GDP per capita (PPP): \$1,600
Human Development Index: Low (0.477)
Freedom in the World: Partly Free (65/100)

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.7



When the Sierra Leonean president Julius Maada Bio announced on March 14, 2022, that general elections would take place in June 2023, many people expressed hope that the elections would be free and fair. The parliament’s passage of the Public Elections Act in July 2022 and the Political Parties Regulations Commission Act in November 2022 were seen as progressive reforms fulfilling recommendations from national and international observers to give election management bodies the necessary authorities to fulfill their roles. But preparations for the 2023 elections were not without controversy. In 2021, when Statistics Sierra Leone, the national coordinator of official statistics, took a mid-term population and housing census to use in delimiting boundaries and allocating parliamentary and local council seats in the elections, the main opposition party had questioned the credibility of the census-taking process and urged its supporters not to participate. After the release of the census results in June 2022, some political commentators and civil society groups doubted the accuracy of data showing, for example, that Kenema District in Eastern Province had a larger population than the capital city of Freetown.

Another controversy concerned voter registration, which took place from August to December 2022. Data were alleged to be garbled or missing and underaged citizens were allegedly added to the rolls. The Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone was accused of trying to fix the system in favor of the ruling party. In a contested move in October, the commission announced that the existing first-past-the-post system for local council and parliamentary seats would be replaced by proportional representation. Disagreements over the change aroused public concern and even led to a fistfight in the parliament. Throughout the pre-election period, CSOs played a vital role in registering voters and ensuring passage of the Public Elections Act of 2022.

Several demonstrations raised public tensions in 2022. Protesters decrying the high cost of living during the summer accused the police of using excessive force and restricting freedoms of expression and assembly. In July, the police arrested scores of participants in a women’s “Black Monday” protest in Freetown, and in August, several protests turned violent, resulting in the deaths of twenty-five civilians and six police officers as well as the vandalism of public property. The government refused to hand over the bodies of dead protesters to family members, some of whom claimed that the bodies were unceremoniously buried in unmarked graves. Many CSOs condemned the violence and encouraged the government to promote national unity by conducting a thorough investigation and engaging in dialogue with the public. An investigatory committee set up by the government blamed the opposition party for the violence.

In this highly polarized atmosphere, the state auditor general remained under investigation on charges of professional misconduct after the 2020 Annual Audit Report alleged financial misappropriations, including in the Office of the President. In 2022, the acting auditor general did not conduct audits of the offices of the president

and the vice president, claiming that they did not meet the required minimum number of recorded financial transactions to trigger an audit.

Sierra Leone's gross domestic product grew by 3 percent in 2022, down from 4.1 percent in 2021, according to World Bank estimates. Statistics Sierra Leone reported inflation at 40 percent at the end of the year, driven by the steep depreciation of the leone, the national currency. Sierra Leone continued to spend about 20 percent of total revenue on external debt servicing in 2022. Several CSOs intensified calls to cancel the country's debt, which they tied to the effect of climate change on low-income economies in Africa.

The overall sustainability of the CSO sector was unchanged in 2022. The legal environment deteriorated slightly in 2022 as organizations were increasingly harassed. Advocacy improved slightly as CSOs' policy initiatives and lobbying efforts resulted in significant legal advances for women. All other dimensions of sustainability were unchanged.

Available data on the number of registered CSOs remained inconsistent and fragmented in 2022, in part because of the number of entities authorized to register CSOs. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED), the oversight body for CSOs, reported that 300 national and 93 international organizations registered or renewed their registrations in 2022. The Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO), a government-affiliated umbrella organization, listed 386 registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a distinct legal form. The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) does not disaggregate data about not-for-profit companies (NPCs) in its nationwide registry of companies. The Ministry of Social Welfare, line ministries, and local councils register CSOs but do not release data. An unknown number of unregistered organizations also operate in the country.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 6.0



CSOs' legal environment deteriorated slightly in 2022 as organizations faced increasing harassed.

CSOs are governed by the Development Cooperation Framework (DCF), which was adopted in 2020. Many CSOs view the DCF as having problematic provisions that hinder their operations. These include the need for organizations to have four paid employees at the time of registration, align their projects with government priorities, and work in no more than two sectors. After delaying a review of the DCF in 2021, the government finally undertook consultations with CSOs about the framework in 2022, which were still underway at the end of the year.

CSOs may register with the CAC as NPCs limited by guarantee; with MoPED as NGOs, defined as

independent, not-for-profit, non-partisan, charitable organizations working on behalf of communities; or with a number of other government agencies. Most CSOs register as NPCs as the requirements are fairly simple. Organizations seeking to register as NGOs, which establishes eligibility for tax waivers, face a more complicated registration process. Although registration with SLANGO is supposedly voluntary, MoPED often demands it as a condition for issuing registration certificates to NGOs and does not publish the names of NGOs that have not registered with SLANGO in the National Gazette. These practices are tantamount to denying NGO status and undermine organizations' relationships with potential donors. Both NPCs and NGOs must register and re-register annually with all government agencies with which they will work and with local councils in all geographic areas in which they will operate. Unregistered organizations operate freely, but without legal status they may not interact formally with other entities.

In practice, the registration process is problematic for nearly all CSOs because of a lack of uniformity in the laws governing registration and ineffective communications between the numerous registering entities. Organizations complain that neither the government nor SLANGO has clearly defined registration processes and that the need

to register with multiple national and local offices is time consuming and expensive. For example, for a project in 2022, ActionAid Sierra Leone was required to register with every district council in the communities in which it would work despite having already registered with SLANGO, MoPED, the CAC, and the relevant line ministries. The cost of the multiple registrations came to about \$2,000. MoPED and SLANGO have recently made some effort to ease the registration process. They now grant initial registration licenses for a two-year period, and MoPED has granted some renewals for two years (as provided in the DCF). However, NGOs continue to have doubts about SLANGO's commitment to promoting their interests rather than those of the government.

Several CSOs received notices from the Audit Service Sierra Leone that they would be audited in 2022. The audits were justified on the grounds that the organizations received money for and on behalf of the public and thus their incomes were equivalent to public funds. The notices baffled most recipients, as the choice of organizations to audit seemed arbitrary and the request to hand over their financial accounts was without legal basis. Although they complied, the audited organizations never received the final audit reports despite numerous requests. CSOs viewed the audits as an illegal attempt to tighten regulation of the sector.

More than ten NGOs received summons to appear before the parliamentary committee overseeing the National Commission for Social Action in 2022. The committee indicated that it needed to scrutinize the NGOs' activities because they receive money on behalf of Sierra Leone. The organizations saw the summons as overstepping the committee's mandate and a ploy to consume their time and resources by demanding, for example, the submission of seventeen printed copies of requested documentation and requiring the representatives of the CSOs, all of which complied with the summons, to wait five hours for a ten-minute meeting. International CSOs such as ActionAid Sierra Leone and International Christian Aid also received summons and wrote a joint letter of complaint to the vice president. Later, the speaker of the parliament cautioned the parliamentary committee not to summon NGOs and to refer any query about NGOs to MoPED.

Other harassment in 2022 included the forceable removal from office of the executive directors of the Sierra Leone Commercial Motor Bike Riders Union and the Market Women Association by the Ministry of Transport and Aviation. The stated reason was that their mandates had expired, but they had recently demanded better working conditions for their members and protested rises in the price of fuel and other basic commodities. Interim executive directors were appointed, allegedly by officials in the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Trade and Industry, in violation of procedures defined in the organizations' bylaws. In addition, the executive director of the Campaign for Good Governance, the head of the Institute for Legal Research and Advocacy for Justice (ILRAJ), and other CSO leaders were attacked on social media after criticizing government actions. The head of the Native Consortium and Research Center (NCRC) was detained by police after discussing economic issues such as the hike in fuel prices. The government accused CSOs of cyber bullying, stalking the president, and breaching national security on online platforms under expanded powers granted by the draconian Cyber Security and Crimes Act 2021.

NGOs may be granted duty waivers for goods and services imported to realize their objectives. The waivers are awarded on a discretionary basis and do not go to organizations that are critical of the government. CSOs are otherwise not exempted from taxes.

CSOs may accept foreign funding, earn income from their activities, fundraise locally, and generate funds through business activities provided they use the income for development purposes. CSOs may bid on government contracts. In 2022, the National Civil Registration Authority contracted with the Institute of Governance Reform and Society for Democratic Initiative to provide research and policy papers on social enterprises, a concept that is starting to gain hold in Sierra Leone.

CSOs continued in 2022 to have access to pro bono legal services from organizations such as ILRAJ and the Center for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL). These services are generally available only in Freetown. Civil society activists who are lawyers often provide pro bono services to CSOs and community-based organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.7

CSOs' organizational capacity was unchanged in 2022.

CSOs' engagement with their constituencies improved during the year. Even when faced with funding shortfalls, most organizations sought to maintain regular contact with the communities with which they work so that they

could step in to help when needed. For example, the Village and Savings Association Initiative, funded by ActionAid Sierra Leone, and the Cash Box Initiative of the Market Women Association, extended their strong grassroots relationships by helping beneficiaries cope with financial challenges during the post-pandemic period. CSOs continued to involve constituents in funded activities. For instance, GOAL Sierra Leone's beneficiaries operated and managed water wells that the organization is constructing in their communities. Many organizations conduct beneficiary assessment surveys to encourage constituents' identification with and ownership of activities after a project ends.

Most registered CSOs have clearly defined missions as they are a requirement for registration. Established CSOs usually have strategic plans, which, if they are followed, help them measure their results and identify successes and areas for improvement. Smaller CSOs rarely engage in planning. In 2022, in a European Union (EU)-funded project, ActionAid Sierra Leone helped about fifteen organizations acquire planning skills and develop simple, achievable strategic plans.

Many registered CSOs operate openly and transparently to demonstrate functioning systems of accountability and ensure their credibility with donors. For instance, Campaign for Good Governance (CGG) and Rainbow Initiative provide project reports and audits to their funding partners, which helps build the basis for onward support. Service-level agreements with government entities similarly outline clear reporting requirements to ensure transparency. They typically include a community awareness component that allows the government to track project implementation and confirm that expected services have been delivered.

Registered and established organizations usually have well-defined internal management systems spelling out expectations in areas such as leadership, administration, financial and human resources, and programming. Less established organizations, including informal professional associations such as the Commercial Motor Bike Riders Union, often lack established procedures and clearly defined responsibilities. Nevertheless, even smaller organizations seek to manage themselves efficiently to resist control by government agencies and other external actors. Although boards are a requirement for registration, their engagement is not enforced, especially in smaller organizations.

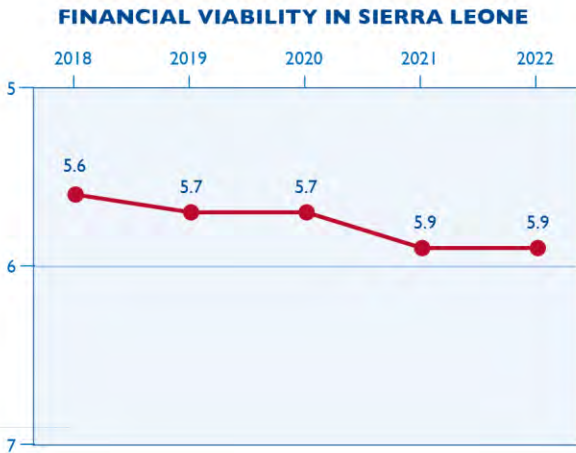
Maintaining staff was an acute concern in 2022. High inflation forced many CSO employees to leave for better paying jobs, often with international organizations, severely undermining the capacity of the organizations that they left. Organizations such as Human Rights Defenders Network–Sierra Leone (HRDN–SL) and NCRC turned to interns and volunteers, but some of these, after gaining experience, also left for international CSOs offering higher pay. Some larger organizations, such as the Sierra Leone Labor Congress, Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU), and Budget Advocacy Network (BAN), were able to maintain professional staff in key positions. However, such arrangements are becoming increasingly uncommon, and many organizations now recruit only when they need staff to perform specific short-term duties, which makes it difficult to recruit professionally qualified staff and adversely impacts the quality of an organization's work. There were reports in 2022 that a major international donor, when unable to obtain financial reports from its local partners in a timely manner, provided its own staff to help the organizations complete project activities and develop the required reports.

Because of the leone's steep depreciation, many CSOs did not have sufficient funds to purchase equipment and cover basic operating costs in 2022. Property owners often quote rental prices geared to the leone-US dollar exchange rate, which has made their facilities unaffordable for many organizations. CSOs' overall access to technology did not improve in 2022. Most organizations continued to access the internet through employees' mobile phones and remained unable to afford the cost of hosting and maintaining websites. Larger CSOs' use of social media, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, continued to increase. Smaller groups communicated with their members mostly through community meetings.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN SIERRA LEONE



FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.9



CSOs' financial viability was unchanged in 2022, despite the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had diverted the resources of many donors.

Most CSOs rely on international support. The EU, Irish Aid, USAID, and German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) are among the few donors known to have supported CSO projects in 2022. Funding from international CSOs, such as Christian Aid, Trócaire, and Catholic Relief Services, helped keep several major CSOs from closing their doors. However, after funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic discontinued, many organizations, including the Center for Human Rights and Development International (CHRDI), Inter Religious Council Sierra Leone, and West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), were forced to shut down or abandon their mandates to venture into areas more

likely to lead to funding. As donors such as the EU shifted their support to infrastructure projects in 2022, funding was particularly scarce for advocacy CSOs.

The government funds CSOs through service-level contracts. These contracts usually go to organizations that are loyal to the governing party. Many CSOs complain that the government's calls for proposals are not publicized and funding is not awarded in a fair and competitive process.

Another concern among local CSOs is that international organizations serve as implementing partners for government programs. For example, Welthunger Hilfe, Catholic Relief Services, Plan International, Save the Children, and the United Nations Population Fund worked as implementing partners in the health, education, and social service sectors in 2022. Local CSOs view this arrangement as forcing them to compete unfairly against international organizations for funding. There is little follow-on benefit to this arrangement, as the international CSOs tend to implement projects directly without sub-contracting to local CSOs and often poach their staff. In response to complaints, the government said in 2021 that it would review arrangements allowing international organizations to serve as implementing partners, but this did not happen in 2022.

In a related concern, the localization of international CSOs came to the fore in 2022 as donor funding decreased and some organizations working in Sierra Leone considered closing down their programs. While local CSOs view international organizations operating in Sierra Leone as depriving them of funding and other resources, the closure of their programs poses the separate problem of lost employment and decreased capacity in the sector. Talking Drum Studio Sierra Leone, a peacebuilding and conflict-transformation program of Search for Common Ground, localized in 2022 and, building on a well-established presence, was seen as a strong example of productive localization. However, there was no evidence that other international organizations intended to provide for the continuation of their programs after they withdraw.

Other sources of local support continued to be modest in 2022. Corporate funding for CSOs is rare as companies usually prefer to implement corporate social responsibility programs themselves so as to maximize tax deductions. In-kind volunteer support is difficult to obtain as, in a practice introduced by international CSOs, beneficiary communities usually expect remuneration for any volunteer assistance that they offer. For example, Restless Development had to provide transportation and food in exchange for community leaders' participation in a meeting to discuss a health-care project that would benefit their families. GOAL SL brought laborers from Kenema City to a remote area in Kenema District to help construct a water well because of a lack of local community support.

Many membership-based organizations did not raise funds from their members in 2022 because of the country's declining economic condition. For example, Sierra Leone Market Women Association did not collect membership dues, which lowered self-generated revenue and made it difficult for the organization to support members in physical or medical distress.

CSOs rarely earn revenue by selling products and services, as people assume that they have already received funding for their activities. Among the few organizations able to generate revenue in 2022, 50/50 Group and SLTU rented out their facilities and Propel Organization sold wares made from reusable waste. The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society sells souvenirs to fund the provision of humanitarian aid, while the Gigibonta Foundation operates restaurants that generate funding to sustain an orphanage. Although not widespread, the idea of social enterprises resonates with many CSOs and is slowly taking hold. The Kambia District Agricultural Development Organization operates a village savings and loan scheme as a social enterprise, with the profits helping its members assume larger loans to upgrade their businesses.

CSOs may publicly fundraise, and the Sick Pikin Foundation and Thinking Pink Foundation regularly do so. Except for Sick Pikin, Street Child, and the Breast Cancer Foundation, no organization is known to have used crowdsourcing in 2022, mainly because of a lack of know-how.

Established CSOs, such as Rainbow Initiative and Focus 1000, generally operate transparently to maintain their credibility with partners and donors and fulfill government re-registration and reporting requirements. Their financial management practices include the submission of regular financial and audit reports prepared by skilled staff in cooperation with professional service providers. Smaller organizations tend to have limited or insufficiently qualified staff to perform other than rudimentary financial management.

ADVOCACY: 3.2

CSO advocacy showed slight improvement in 2022 with passage of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Act, Customary Lands Right Act, and National Land Commission Act.

Strong CSO advocacy to protect and promote women’s rights has been underway for many years. In 2022, the parliament finally passed the GEWE Act, which extends maternity leave, institutes gender-responsive and gender-sensitive budgeting, and mandates that women occupy at least 30 percent of cabinet, parliamentary, and high-level appointed positions. Broad-based coalitions, including CCG, 50/50 Group, Women’s Forum Sierra Leone, Manor River Union, and Women Peace Network, worked alongside informal groups such as the He-for-She and Yellow Ribbon campaigns to ensure the law’s approval.

CSOs regard passage of GEWE as one of civil society’s most important victories in recent years. CSOs also contributed to passage of the Customary Lands Right Act and National Land Commission Act, which provide women with equal rights to land ownership, prohibit customary practices that restrict women’s access to land, and require regional and local governance structures established under the act to consist of at least 30 percent women. A four-way working group on the draft law brought together CSOs, the government, paramount chiefs, and the private sector in an exemplary illustration of the way that sectors can work together to advance civil rights. CSOs involved in the working group included Land for Life, Network Movement for Justice and Development, Green Scenery, Namati, Women’s Network for Environmental Sustainability, and Sierra Leone Land Alliance.

CSOs and community-based organizations continued to cooperate with the government through policy initiatives and lobbying in 2022. Many organizations took part in national and local budgeting processes, which allowed them to raise concerns and inform the public about aspects of some agencies’ budgets. Organizations such as Defence for Children International and HRDN–SL contributed to the work of the Committee on Trafficking, which arranged the safe repatriation of more than 100 Sierra Leoneans trafficked to work in Lebanon and Kuwait. BAN and other CSOs implemented a public campaign calling for Sierra Leone’s public debt to be cancelled by international partners such as the IMF and World Bank. They took the campaign to an international level by partnering with CSOs from other African countries to lobby the G20 summit of leaders in October. The campaign was unsuccessful, but the government expressed gratitude for CSOs’ effort to help alleviate the country’s dire economic situation.

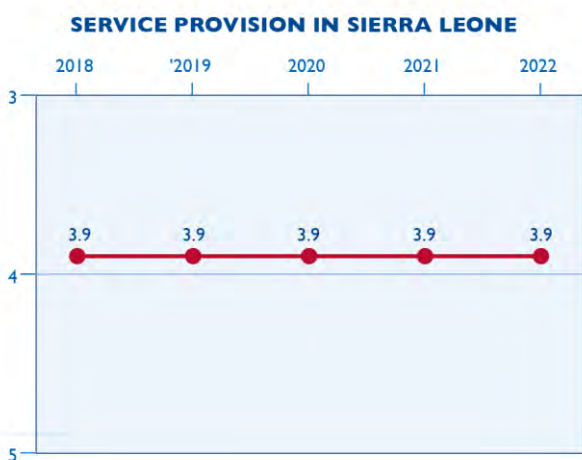


Two international mechanisms allowed CSOs to hold the government to account in 2022. The National Coalition on Mining and Extractives and the Network Movement for Justice and Development cooperated with the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources through the Sierra Leone Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which promotes the accountable management of oil, gas, and mineral resources. In 2022, the initiative sought to improve public outreach to increase understanding of its work. CSOs and the government also cooperated through the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which fosters transparency and citizen engagement in governance. CSOs taking part in OGP meetings included the National Council for Civic Education, CGG, and Women’s Forum Sierra Leone. OGP interventions led to the creation of a CSO desk in the parliament in 2022. While still new, the desk began to facilitate interactions between CSOs and the parliament by sharing information about legislation.

Discussions between CSOs and the parliament also led to the establishment in 2022 of the Parliament and Civil Society Network, which intends to work on policy and legal reforms and citizen engagement. CGG, Native Consortium, WANEP, and Westminster Foundation for Democracy participated in the network and conducted training on parliamentary proceedings for CSOs in November 2022. In other work with the parliament, National Election Watch (NEW) and other organizations took part in the reform of the Public Elections Act and the Political Parties Regulation Commission Act in 2022. Among CSOs’ recommendations were that political parties be required to nominate women candidates and election petitions be quickly concluded.

CSOs have relentlessly pushed for review of the DCF since the law was enacted in 2018, including by documenting the sector’s concerns in the *2021 CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa*. MoPED finally agreed to undertake a review of the DCF in 2022. During the discussions, CSOs such as Yes Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law and HRDN–SL pushed to obtain guidance on the ways that organizations can seamlessly register or renew their licenses. The consultations, which were more extensive than when DCF was first promulgated in 2018, were still underway at the end of the year.

SERVICE PROVISION: 3.9



CSOs’ service provision was largely unchanged in 2022.

A handful of CSOs continue to provide a wide range of goods and services in traditional areas, such as health care, education, agriculture, and sanitation and hygiene. CSOs also offer services related to human rights, gender, telecommunications, and the extractive industries. For example, Namati represents peasants and communities on land rights issues, and AdvocAid helps girls and women who are caught up in Sierra Leone’s challenging judicial system access justice and obtain representation in court. Other organizations providing services in these fields include CGG, 50/50 Group, National Coalition on Extractives (NACE), Legal Link, and NCRC. Some services were limited in 2022 because of a lack of funding. For example, WANEP, which works on peacebuilding, early warning, and conflict prevention,

was not able to undertake major activities in 2022 because it did not have sufficient funding.

Some CSOs determine beneficiaries’ needs, particularly for social services, through assessments conducted with the beneficiaries themselves. For example, WASH-NET conducted a needs assessment of schools to assess whether their priorities were to obtain toilets, water facilities, or dust bins in 2022.

Some organizations reach audiences beyond their immediate members. For example, SLTU and the Commercial Motor Bike Riders Union are membership organizations but provide education and transportation services to individuals beyond their members. BAN, CARL, CGG, CHRDI, and Institute for Governance Reform (IGR) publish reports on social and rights issues that go to broad public audiences. Services are generally offered to everyone in a non-discriminatory way.

CSOs do not normally recover the cost of services. Many organizations believe that providing care at no cost to beneficiaries is a crucial aspect of their work.

The government recognized CSOs' activities on several important occasions in 2022. For example, the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs acknowledged Rainbow Initiative's work to establish a one-stop center for victims of rape, and the Ministry of Health applauded the efforts of Focus 1000 to reduce child mortality. The speaker of parliament and the minister of gender and children's affairs publicly acknowledged CSOs' contributions to the passage of the GEWE Act, while the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone acknowledged CSOs' support in the passage of the Public Elections Act. The Ministry of Finance expressed gratitude to BAN for its campaign calling for the cancellation of Sierra Leone's international debt.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 5.2

The infrastructure supporting CSOs was unchanged in 2022.

With the ongoing closure of resource centers in Sierra Leone, no local organizations offered library services or technical assistance to CSOs in 2022. The popularity of resource centers has declined since information became easily accessible through the internet. CSOs also rely on their networks and partners for information about their areas of specialization. A few organizations, such as CARL, CHRDI, and 50/50 Group, offer research collections in their offices on specific topics.

No Sierra Leonean organizations offer grant funding to CSOs. Modest project support was available from some international CSOs, such as Trócaire, GIZ, and Amnesty International, which are estimated to have provided \$100,000 to CSOs in 2022.

CSO networks and coalitions grew in 2022, mostly around thematic topics. For example, NEW coordinated organizations working on the elections and provided training for its members on basic computer skills and election observation reporting. The working group on the GEWE Bill trained members on lobbying and strategies for targeting community-level leaders to build support for the bill. Other networks in areas such as water and sanitation and education shared information and best practices with members so that they could work toward their common goals.

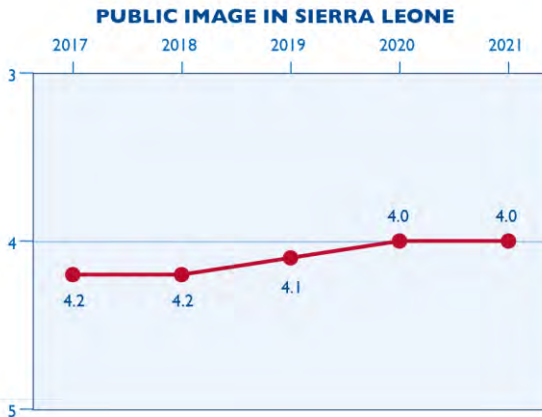
Training opportunities were very limited in 2022. They included capacity building for the National Association of Farmers offered by Solidaridad under the RECLAIM Sustainability! program, sessions on overcoming barriers affecting women offered by CARL and SEND SL, and workshops to engage communities to support the GEWE Act offered by CGG with funding from Trócaire. Materials in local languages are largely unavailable except as audio and video messaging.

CSOs pursued many productive partnerships with other sectors in 2022. IGR worked with the Ministry of Finance on the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey; Rainbow Initiative provided training to the Sierra Leone Police on investigating gender-based violence; and Legal Access for Women Yearning for Equality and Rights (LAWYERS) cooperated with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs on the prevention of rape and gender-based violence. Sick Pikin Project partnered with the National Revenue Authority and Vista Bank on a marathon to raise funds for children needing critical surgery. Epic Radio worked with CHRDI to air a discussion about the state of human rights in the country after the August protests, and AYW Media engaged with HRDN-SL, Amnesty International, and other human rights organizations on a similar effort.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN SIERRA LEONE



PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.0



CSOs public image was stable in 2022.

CSOs enjoyed positive coverage, particularly in private and social media. For example, Epic Radio frequently invited organizations such as CARL and IGR to discuss their activities and comment on current events. Online platforms run by journalists frequently covered civil society interventions. These stories were shared widely on WhatsApp, sometimes leading to online attacks on organizations that were critical of government actions.

The public is generally supportive of CSOs. It identifies easily with organizations that are close to local communities and make visible, relevant contributions. At the same time, the public is aware and disapproves of organizations that were once credible but have become government

mouthpieces. Some CSOs providing educational and health services alongside government ministries have met with allegations of collusion or conflict of interest. In the polarized political environment, advocacy organizations are either appreciated or disparaged depending on individual biases regarding their work.

CSOs providing services get along easily with the government because their work is seen as non-political and adding value to government activities. The private sector similarly appreciates the services that CSOs provide. Advocacy organizations have more mixed reputations with both sectors depending on their positions. Both government and business users rely on the resources and information that CSOs provide, particularly technical assistance in hard-to-reach communities. In 2022, the government recognized the need to improve its relationship with the CSO sector, and the vice president hosted a dialogue between the two sides in an attempt to restructure their relationship. No tangible results came out of the discussion, although some CSOs were seen as more sympathetic to or at least less critical of the government after taking part in the meeting.

CSOs usually engage in public relations and maintain good relationships with journalists. Some organizations factor journalists into their activities and budgets to ensure positive, accurate coverage. For instance, Fambul Tok International and SEND Foundation included journalists in teams implementing activities in the field in 2022. Organizations must sometimes reimburse journalists for covering their work. CSOs' access to television and radio is gradually waning as programming costs rise. Organizations are turning instead to WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter to express their views, tell their stories, and publicize their work. CGG, CHIRDI, NEW, and IGR regularly post on social media about their activities and positions on national issues.

Although no umbrella body oversees CSO self-regulation in Sierra Leone, many organizations abide by codes of conduct promoted by their networks and membership organizations. NEW, NACE, and BAN have codes that members subscribe to and observe, with punishment for noncompliance ranging up to expulsion for particularly grave breaches. Larger organizations such as ActionAid Sierra Leone, CGG, CARL, Legal Link, LAWYERS, and SEND Foundation publish their reports and other materials on public platforms and social media, particularly Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. Smaller organizations do not generally have the capacity to prepare or publish materials for public consumption.

ANNEX A: CSO SUSTAINABILITY INDEX METHODOLOGY

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CSOSI IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

I. INTRODUCTION

USAID's Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (the Index or CSOSI) reports annually on the strength and overall viability of CSO sectors in Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, and Mexico. The CSO Sustainability Index is a tool developed by USAID to assess the strength and overall viability of CSO sectors in countries around the world. By analyzing seven dimensions that are critical to sectoral sustainability, the Index highlights both strengths and constraints in CSO development. The Index allows for comparisons both across countries and over time. Initially developed in 1997 for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, the CSOSI is a valued tool and methodology used by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, donors, academics, and others to better understand the sustainability of the civil society sector. USAID is continually striving to ensure the cross-national comparability of the Index scores and to improve the reliability and validity of measurements, adequate standardization of units and definitions, local ownership of the Index, transparency of the process of Index compilation, and representative composition of panels delivering the scores.

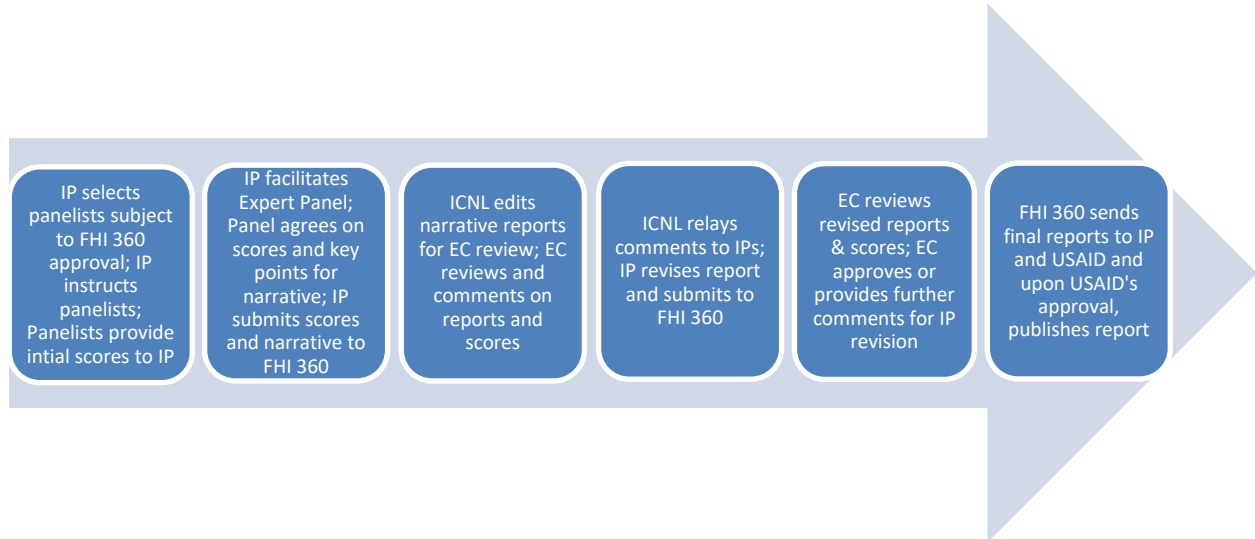
Beginning with the 2017 Index and for the following five years, FHI 360 and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) are managing the coordination and editing of the CSOSI. A senior staff member from both FHI 360 and ICNL will serve on the Editorial Committee as will one or more senior USAID/Washington officials. FHI 360 will provide small grants to local CSOs to implement the CSOSI methodology in the country, while ICNL will be primarily responsible for editing the reports. Local Implementing Partners (IPs) play an essential role in developing the CSO SI and need a combination of research, convening, and advocacy skills for carrying out a high-quality CSOSI.

Local Implementing Partners should please remember:

- Panels must include a diverse range of civil society representatives.
- Panelists should formulate initial scores for dimensions and justifications individually and in advance of the Panel Meeting.
- Discuss each indicator and dimension at the Panel Meeting and provide justification for the proposed score for each dimension.
- Compare the score for each dimension with last year's score to ensure that the direction of change reflects developments during the year being assessed.
- Note changes to any indicators and dimensions in the country report to justify proposed score changes.
- The Editorial Committee will request additional information if the scores are not supported by the report. If adequate information is not provided, the EC has the right to adjust the scores accordingly.

II. METHODOLOGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTER

The following steps should be followed by the IP to assemble the Expert Panel that will meet in person to discuss the status of civil society over the reporting year, determine scores, and prepare a country report for the 2022 Civil Society Organization (CSO) Sustainability Index.



I. Select Panel Experts. Carefully select a group of at least 8-10 civil society representatives to serve as panel experts. Panel members must include representatives of a diverse range of CSOs and other stakeholders, such as:

- CSO support centers, resource centers, or intermediary support organizations (ISOs);
- CSOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), and faith-based organizations (FBOs) involved in a range of service delivery and/or advocacy activities;
- CSOs involved in local and national level government oversight/ watchdog/ advocacy activities;
- Academia with expertise related to civil society and CSO sustainability;
- CSO partners from government, business, or media;
- Think tanks working in the area of civil society development;
- Member associations such as cooperatives, lawyers' associations, and natural resources users' groups;
- Representatives of diverse geographic areas and population groups, e.g., minorities;
- International donors who support civil society and CSOs; and
- Other local partners.

It is important that the Panel members be able to assess a wide spectrum of CSO activities in various sectors ranging from democracy, human rights, and governance reforms to the delivery of basic services to constituencies. CSOs represented on the panel must include both those whose work is heavily focused on advocacy and social service delivery. To the extent possible, panels should include representatives of both rural and urban parts of the country, as well as women's groups, minority populations, and other marginalized groups, as well as sub-sectors such as women's rights, community-based development, civic education, microfinance, environment, human rights, and youth. The Panel should to the extent possible include an equal representation of men and women. If two or more representatives of the same CSO participate in the Panel, they can only cast one vote. It is recommended that at least 70 percent of the Expert Panel be nationals of the country that is being rated.

In countries experiencing civil war, individuals should be brought from areas controlled by each of the regimes if possible. If not, individuals from the other regime's territory should at least be contacted, to incorporate their local perspective.

In some instances, it may be appropriate to select a larger group in order to better reflect the diversity and breadth of the civil society sector in the country. For countries where regional differences are significant,

implementers should incorporate, to the greatest extent possible, differing regional perspectives. If financial constraints do not allow for in-person regional representation, alternative, low-cost options, including emailing scores/ comments, and teleconferencing/Skype, may be used.

If there is a USAID Mission in the country, a USAID representative must be invited to attend the panel. USAID representatives that attend are welcome to provide some words of introduction to open the event, as it is funded by USAID, and they are welcome to observe and participate in the discussion. However, they will not have the ability to cast their vote in terms of scores.

Please submit to FHI 360 for approval the list of the Panel members whom you plan to invite at least two weeks before the meeting is scheduled to occur using the form provided in Annex A. It is the responsibility of the IP to ensure that the panel composition, and the resulting score and narrative, are sufficiently representative of a cross-section of civil society and include the perspectives of various types of stakeholders from different sectors and different areas of the country.

2. Prepare the Panel meeting. Ensure that panel members understand the objectives of the Panel, including developing a consensus-based rating for each of the seven dimensions of civil society sustainability covered by the Index and articulating a justification or explanation for each rating consistent with the methodology described below. We encourage you to hold a brief orientation session for the panelists prior to the panel discussion. This is particularly important for new panelists but is also useful to update all panelists on methodology and process changes. Some partners choose to hold a formal training session with panel members, reviewing the methodology document and instructions. Other partners provide a more general discussion about the objectives of the exercise and process to the panelists.

Definition of CSO:

Civil society organizations are defined “broadly as any organizations, whether formal or informal, that are not part of the apparatus of government, that do not distribute profits to their directors or operators, that are self-governing, and in which participation is a matter of free choice. Both member-serving and public-serving organizations are included. Embraced within this definition, therefore, are private, not-for-profit health providers, schools, advocacy groups, social service agencies, anti-poverty groups, development agencies, professional associations, community-based organizations, unions, religious bodies, recreation organizations, cultural institutions, and many more.”

- Toward an Enabling Legal Environment for Civil Society, Statement of the 16th Annual Johns Hopkins International Fellows in Philanthropy Conference, Nairobi, Kenya. The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law, Volume 8, Issue 1, November 2005.

The overall goal of the Index is to track and compare progress in the sector over time, increasing the ability of local entities to undertake self-assessment and analysis. To ensure a common understanding of what is being assessed, the convener shall provide a definition of civil society to the panel members. The CSOSI uses the enclosed definition to ensure the report addresses a broad swath of civil society.

In order to allow adequate time to prepare for the panel, distribute the instructions, rating description documents, and a copy of the previous year’s country chapter to the members of the Expert Panel a minimum of three days before convening the Panel so that they may develop their initial scores for each dimension before meeting with the other panel members. It is critical to emphasize the importance of developing their scores and justifications before attending the panel. It is also important to remind panel members that the scores should reflect developments during the 2022 calendar year (January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022).

We also recommend you encourage panelists to think of concrete examples that illustrate trends since this information will be crucial to justifying their proposed scores. In countries with closing civic space, the IP should take initiative to ensure that expert panel members do not self-censor themselves, including by taking whatever measures possible to build trust. The confidentiality of all members must be ensured and participants must be protected against retaliation; to this end, the IP can choose to enforce Chatham House Rules.

Lastly, it is highly recommended to compile and send to panelists data and information sources to guide them as they score. Recommendations for information sources are listed below under #4.

We are very interested in using the preparation of this year’s Index to track lessons learned for use in improving the monitoring process in upcoming years. We would appreciate implementers recording and submitting any observations they might have that will increase the usefulness of this important tool. In addition, we will solicit feedback through regional debriefs and will continue to maintain an online forum where IPs can share best practices, ask questions, and submit their comments or suggestions. These methods will be supplemented by brief satisfaction surveys that will be used to help evaluate the success of methodological and process innovations.

3. Convene a meeting of the CSO Expert Panel.

3.a. We do not require panelists to score individual indicators but only overall dimensions. For each dimension, allow each panel member to share his or her initial score and justification with the rest of the group. (Note: If two or more representatives of the same CSO participate in the Panel, only one vote can be cast on their behalf.) Although scoring will not take place at the indicator level, please be sure that panel members discuss each indicator within each dimension of the CSOSI and provide evidence-based, country-relevant examples of recent or historical conditions, policies, and events within each of the dimension narratives. Please take notes on the discussion of each indicator and dimension, detailing the justification for all dimension scores, in the template provided. These notes must be submitted to FHI 360 with the first draft of the narratives (they do not have to be translated into English if not originally written in English).

At the end of the discussion of each dimension, allow panel members to adjust their scores if desired. Then, for each dimension, eliminate the highest score and the lowest score (if there are two or more of the highest or lowest scores, only eliminate one of them) and average the remaining scores together to come up with a single score for each dimension. Calculate the average or arithmetic mean¹ of these scores for a preliminary score for the dimension. Please keep all scores on record, making sure that personal attribution cannot be made to individual panel members. Use a table similar to the one provided below to track panel members’ scores without personal attribution.

Panel Member	Legal Environm	Organizational Capacity	Financial Viability	Advocacy	Service Provision	Sectoral Infrastructure	Public In
1							
2							
3							

3. b. Once a score is determined for a dimension, please have panel members compare the proposed score with last year’s score to ensure that the direction and magnitude of the change reflect developments during the year. For example, if an improved score is proposed, this should be based on concrete positive developments during the year that are noted in the report. On the other hand, if the situation worsened during the year, this should be reflected in a worse score (i.e., a higher number on the 1-7 scale).

Please note that for countries where a democratic revolution took place in the previous year, the panelists should be conscious to avoid scoring based on post-revolution euphoria. The score-change framework should be closely followed to avoid panelists scoring based on anticipated changes, rather than the actual level of change thus far.

A change of 0.1 should generally be used to reflect modest changes in a dimension. Larger differences may be warranted if there are more significant changes in the sector. The evidence to support the scoring change must always be discussed by the panel and documented in the dimension narrative. **See CSOSI Codebook – Instructions for Expert Panel Members** for more details about this scoring scale.

In addition, for each dimension score, review the relevant description of that dimension in “CSOSI Codebook – Tiers and Scores: A Closer Look.” Discuss with the group whether the score for a country matches that rating description. For example, a score of 2.3 in organizational capacity would mean that the civil society sector is in the

¹ Arithmetic mean is the sum of all scores divided by the total number of scores.

“Sustainability Enhanced” phase. Please read the “Sustainability Enhanced” section for Organizational Capacity in “Ratings: A Closer Look” to ensure that this accurately describes the civil society environment.

If the panel does not feel that the proposed score is accurate after these two reviews, please note this when submitting proposed scores in your narrative report, and the Editorial Committee will discuss whether one or more scores need to be reset with a new baseline. Ultimately, each score should reflect a consensus among group members.

3. c. Discuss each of the seven dimensions of the Index and score them in a similar manner. Once all seven dimensions have been scored, average the final dimension scores together to get the overall CSO sustainability score. Please submit the table with the scores from the individual panelists together with the narrative report. Panelists should be designated numerically.

3. d. Please remind the group at this stage that reports will be reviewed by an Editorial Committee (EC). The Editorial Committee will ensure that all scores are adequately supported and may ask for additional evidence to support a score. If adequate information is not provided, the EC may adjust the scores.

4. Prepare a draft country report. The report should focus on developments over the calendar year 2022 (January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022).

The draft report should begin with an overview statement and a brief discussion of the current state of sustainability of the civil society sector with regard to each dimension. In the overview statement, please include an estimated number of registered and active CSOs, as well as a description of the primary fields and geographic areas in which CSOs operate. Also include a brief overview of any key political, economic, or social developments in the country that impacted the CSO sector during the year. If this information is not provided, the editor will request it in subsequent rounds, which will require additional work from you.

The report should then include sections on each dimension. Each of these sections should begin with a summary of the reasons for any score changes during the year. For example, if a better score is proposed, the basis for this improvement should be clearly stated upfront. These sections should include a discussion of both accomplishments and strengths in that dimension, as well as obstacles to sustainability and weaknesses that impact the operations of a broad range of CSOs. Each indicator within each dimension should be addressed in the report.

The report should be written based on the Panel members’ discussion and input, as well as a review of other sources of information about the CSO sector including but not limited to analytical studies of the sector, statistical data, public opinion polls, and other relevant third-party data. Some international sources of information and data that should be considered include the following:

- CIVICUS State of Civil Society Report - <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-center/reports-publications/socs-reports>
- CIVICUS Monitor - <https://monitor.civicus.org/>
- World Giving Index - <https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/publications>
- Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) - <https://www.v-dem.net/>
- Media Sustainability Index - <https://www.irex.org/projects/media-sustainability-index-msi>
- Nations in Transit - <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/nations-transit#.VdugbqSFOhI>
- Freedom in the World - <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>
- Freedom of the Press - <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-press>
- ITUC Global Rights Index - <https://www.globalrightsindex.org/en/2021>
- ITUC Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights - <https://survey.ituc-csi.org/?lang=en>
- U.S. Department of State Human Rights Report - <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrprt/>
- ICNL Civic Freedom Monitor - <https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor>
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - <https://carnegieendowment.org/regions>
- Afro-Barometer - <http://www.afrobarometer.org/>

Please limit the draft reports to a maximum of **ten pages in English**. Please keep in mind that we rely on implementers to ensure that reports are an appropriate length and are well written.

While the individual country reports for the 2022 CSO Sustainability Index must be brief, implementers may write longer reports for their own use to more fully describe the substance of the panel meetings. Longer reports may include additional country context information or examples and could be used for a variety of purposes, including advocacy initiatives, research, informing project designs, etc.

Please include a list of the experts who served on the panel using the form provided. This will be for our reference only and will not be made public. Also, **please remember to provide the individual panelists' ratings for each dimension** (with the names replaced by numbers).

Submit the draft country reports with rankings via email to FHI 360 by the date indicated in your grant's Project Description.

5. Initial edits of the country report. Within a few weeks of receiving your draft report, FHI 360 and its partner, ICNL, will send you a revised version of your report that has been edited for grammar, style, and content. As necessary, the editors will request additional information to ensure that the report is complete and/or to clarify statements in the report. Please request any clarification needed from the editor as soon as possible, then submit your revised report by the deadline indicated.

6. Editorial Committee review. In Washington, an Editorial Committee (EC) will review the scores and revised draft country reports. The EC consists of representatives from USAID, FHI 360, ICNL, and at least one regional expert well-versed in the issues and dynamics affecting civil society in the region. A USAID representative chairs the EC. If the EC determines that the panel's scores are not adequately supported by the country report, particularly in comparison to the previous year's scores and the scores and reports of other countries in the region, the **EC may request that the scores be adjusted, thereby ensuring comparability over time and among countries, or request that additional information be provided to support the panel's scores.** Further description of the EC is included in the following section, "The Role of the Editorial Committee."

7. Additional report revision. After the EC meets, the editor will send a revised report that indicates the EC's recommended scores, and where further supporting evidence or clarification is required. Within the draft, boxes will be added where you will note whether you accept the revised scores or where you can provide further evidence to support the original proposed score.

The report should be revised and returned to the editor within the allotted timeframe. The project editor will continue to be in contact with you to discuss any outstanding questions and clarifications regarding the scoring and the report's content. Your organization will be responsible for responding to all outstanding comments from the EC, as communicated by the project editor until the report is approved and accepted by USAID.

8. Dissemination and promotion of the final reports. After the reports are approved by USAID and final formatting is conducted, the country reports will be grouped into regional reports. Each Implementing Partner will be responsible for promoting both the final, published country report and the regional report. Your organization will conduct activities to promote the Index's use and visibility. This may include organizing a local public event, panel discussion, or workshop and making the report available electronically by web posting or creating a social network page for the country report and through the other methods described in your Use and Visibility Plan. Documentation that you have conducted these activities as described in that Plan must be submitted to FHI 360 before it will authorize the final payment.

III. THE ROLE OF THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

As an important step in the CSO Sustainability Index process, all country reports are reviewed and discussed by an Editorial Committee composed of regional and sector experts in Washington, DC, and an expert based in the region. This committee is chaired by a USAID Democracy Specialist and includes rotating members from USAID (past members have included experts from regional bureaus, the USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance’s Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DCHA/DRG), the USAID Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and the Environment’s Local Solutions Office, and USAID Democracy, Human Rights and Governance foreign service officers). The committee also includes civil society experts from FHI 360 and ICNL.

The Editorial Committee has three main roles. It reviews all reports and scores to ensure that narratives are adequate and compelling from the standpoint of supporting the proposed score and to determine if the proposed change in score is supported by the narrative. A compelling narrative demonstrates that a score results from the evidence of systematic and widespread cases and is not based on one or two individual cases. For example, a country environment characterized by a growing number of CSOs with strong financial management systems that raise funds locally from diverse sources is a compelling justification for an elevated financial viability score. A country in which one or two large CSOs now have the ability to raise funds from diverse sources is not. The Editorial Committee also checks that scores for each dimension meet the criteria described in “Ratings: A Closer Look,” to ensure that scores and narratives accurately reflect the actual stage of CSO sector development. Finally, the Editorial Committee considers a country’s score in relation to the proposed scores in other countries, providing a regional perspective that ensures comparability of scores across all countries.

CSOs are encouraged to remind their panels from the outset that the Editorial Committee may ask for further clarification of scores and may modify scores, where appropriate. **While implementing partners will have the chance to dispute these modifications by providing more evidence for the scores the panel proposed, the USAID Chair of the EC will ultimately have the final say on all scores.** However, by asking panels to compare their scores with last year’s scores and “Ratings: A Closer Look” (which is essentially what the Editorial Committee does), it is hoped that there will be few differences between proposed scores and final scores. Ensuring that the narrative section for each dimension includes adequate explanations for all scores will also limit the need for the Editorial Committee to ask for further clarification.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CSOSI EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

USAID's Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (the Index or CSOSI) is a tool developed by USAID to assess overall viability of civil society organizations (CSOs) in a particular country. By analyzing seven dimensions that are critical to sectoral sustainability on an annual basis, the Index highlights both strengths and constraints in CSO development.

The Index allows for comparisons both across countries and over time. Initially developed in 1997 for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, the CSOSI is a valued tool and methodology used by CSOs, governments, donors, academics, and others to better understand the opportunities, challenges, and sustainability of the civil society sector in a particular country or region. In 2022, the CSOSI was implemented in 15 countries.

For the period of 2017-2023, FHI 360 and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) are managing the coordination and editing of the CSOSI. To develop the Index each year, FHI 360 provides small grants and technical support to local CSOs who serve as Implementing Partners (IPs) responsible for leading the in-country process to prepare the annual country report, using the CSOSI methodology. ICNL oversees the editing of the country reports once they are drafted by IPs. A senior staff member from both FHI 360 and ICNL serves on an Editorial Committee that reviews all reports, as do one or more senior USAID/Washington officials.

The Expert Panel (EP) members for whom this Codebook is designed participate in in-country panel discussions on the seven dimensions of sustainability covered by the Index. The IP convenes these panel discussions annually to assess the situation of civil society in their countries and determine scores based on an objective analysis of the factual evidence.

The CSOSI management team is continually striving to ensure the cross-country and cross-year comparability of the Index's scores, as well as to improve the reliability and validity of measurements, standardization of definitions, local ownership of the Index, and transparency of the Index's methodology and processes.

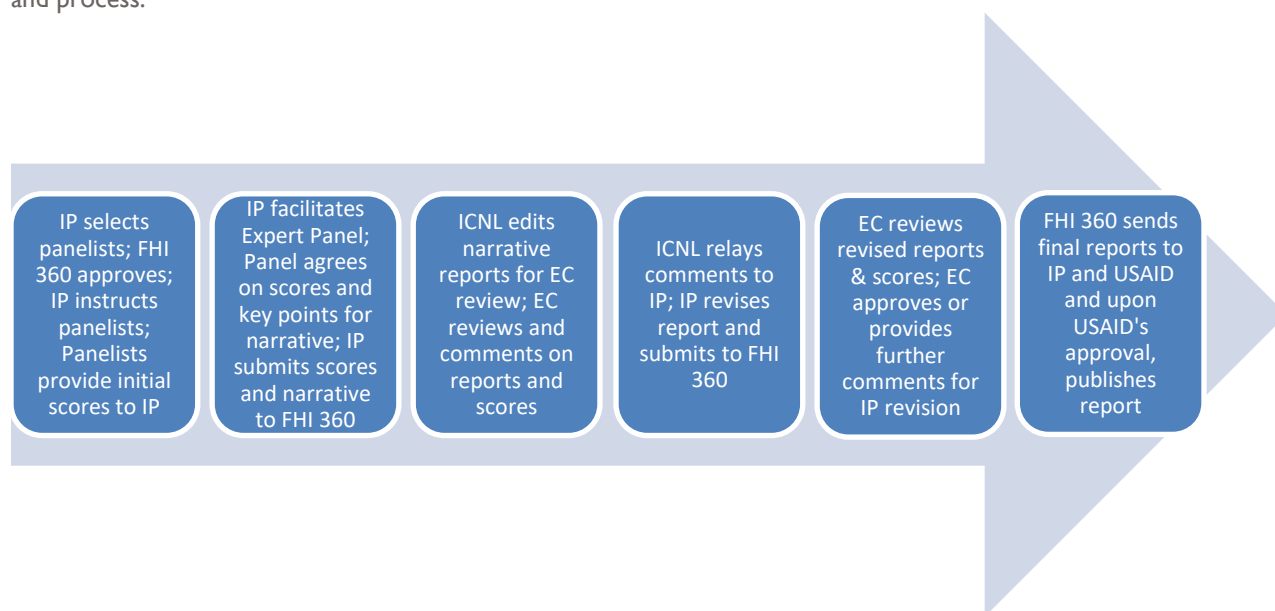
Therefore, FHI 360 has created this Codebook to inform and guide expert panel members through the scoring process. The Codebook provides definitions of the key concepts used to assess the overall strength and sustainability of the civil society sector in a given country, explains the scoring process, and standardizes the scale to be used when proposing score changes.

This document is the first part of the Codebook, providing an overview of the concepts and processes that guide the expert panel members' role in the CSOSI's methodology. The second part of the Codebook provides descriptions, or vignettes, of each score for each dimension, to standardize expert panel members' understanding of the scoring scale and to assist them in ensuring that scores are accurate.

CSOSI METHODOLOGY

The CSOSI measures the sustainability of each country's CSO sector based on the CSOSI's seven dimensions: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, sectoral infrastructure, and public image. Its seven-point scoring scale used not only by CSOSI, but also variety of well-known reviews such as Freedom House in its publications "Nations in Transit" and "Freedom in the World."

The IP in each country leads the process of organizing and convening a diverse and representative panel of CSO experts. EPs discuss the level of change during the year being assessed in each of the seven dimensions and determine proposed scores for each dimension. The IP then drafts narratives that document the rationale for each score. The scores are organized into three basic "tiers" representing the level of viability of the civil society sector: Sustainability Impeded; Sustainability Evolving; and Sustainability Enhanced. All scores and narratives are then reviewed by a Washington, D.C.-based Editorial Committee (EC) for consistency, completeness, and methodological adherence, assisted by regional civil society experts. The graph below summarizes the approach and process.



Definition of Concepts

The overall goal of the Index is to track progress or regression in the CSO sector over time, increasing the ability of local entities to undertake self-assessment and analysis. To ensure a common understanding of what is being assessed, panel members need a shared understanding of the key concepts underlying their assessment.

Civil Society Organization

Civil society organizations are defined:

*"...As any organizations, whether formal or informal, that are not part of the apparatus of government, that do not distribute profits to their directors or operators, that are self-governing, and in which participation is a matter of free choice. Both member-serving and public-serving organizations are included. Embraced within this definition, therefore, are private, not-for-profit health providers, schools, advocacy groups, social service agencies, anti-poverty groups, development agencies, professional associations, community-based organizations, unions, religious bodies, recreation organizations, cultural institutions, and many more."*²

This definition of CSO includes informal, unregistered groups and movements, but to be included in the CSOSI, the movement must possess the structure and continuity to be distinguished from a single gathering of individuals

² Toward an Enabling Legal Environment for Civil Society, Statement of the 16th Annual Johns Hopkins International Fellows in Philanthropy Conference, Nairobi, Kenya. The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law, Volume 8, Issue 1, November 2005.

and from personal or family relationships. In many countries political parties and private companies establish and support CSOs, but these entities are usually either public, for-profit, or not self-governing.

Civil Society Sector

The CSOSI defines the CSO sector to include all of the following: non-governmental organizations (focused on advocacy, oversight, or service provision), social movements, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations, trade and labor unions, women’s groups, youth groups, resource centers and intermediary support organizations, research institutes and think tanks, professional associations, cooperatives, and natural resource users’ groups, recreational organizations, cultural institutions, social enterprises, and informal movements, networks, and campaigns.

Throughout the report, please address differences between these different types of CSOs and note where trends and developments have affected specific types of CSOs.

Seven Dimensions of Sustainability

The CSOSI measures sustainability across seven dimensions by analyzing a series of indicators related to each dimension. (see **Scoring: Dimensions and Indicators, provided as Annex A, for the full list of questions to guide your analysis of each indicator**):

1- LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: The legal and regulatory environment governing the CSO sector and its implementation.

<i>Registration – Legal procedures to formalize the existence of a CSO</i>
<i>Operation – The enforcement of the laws and its effects on CSOs</i>
<i>State Harassment – Abuses committed against CSOs and their members by state institutions and groups acting on behalf of the state</i>
<i>Taxation – Tax policies that affect CSOs</i>
<i>Access to Resources – Legal opportunities for CSOs to mobilize financial resources</i>
<i>Local Legal Capacity – Availability and quality of legal expertise for CSOs</i>

2- ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: The internal capacity of the CSO sector to pursue its goals

<i>Constituency Building – Relationships with individuals or groups affected by or interested in issues on which CSOs work</i>
<i>Strategic Planning – Organizational goals and priorities for a set timeframe</i>
<i>Internal Management – Structures and processes to guide the work of CSOs</i>
<i>CSO Staffing – Quality and management of human resources</i>
<i>Technical Advancement – Access to and use of technology</i>

3- FINANCIAL VIABILITY: The CSO sector’s access to various sources of financial support

<i>Diversification – Access to multiple sources of funding</i>
<i>Local Support - Domestic sources of funding and resources</i>
<i>Foreign Support – Foreign sources of funding and resources</i>
<i>Fundraising – CSOs’ capacity to raise funds</i>
<i>Earned Income – Revenue generated from the sale of products and services</i>
<i>Financial Management Systems – Processes, procedures and tools to manage financial resources and operations.</i>

4- ADVOCACY: The CSO sector’s ability to influence public opinion and public policy

<i>Cooperation with Local and Central Government – Access to government decision-making processes</i>
<i>Policy Advocacy Initiatives – Initiatives to shape the public agenda, public opinion, or legislation</i>
<i>Lobbying Efforts – Engagement with lawmakers to directly influence the legislative process</i>
<i>Advocacy for CSO Law Reform – Initiatives to promote a more favorable legal and regulatory framework for the CSO sector</i>

5- SERVICE PROVISION: The CSO sector’s ability to provide goods and services

<i>Range of Goods and Services – Variety of goods and services offered</i>
<i>Responsiveness to the Community – Extent to which goods and services address local needs</i>
<i>Clientele and beneficiaries – People, organizations and communities who utilize or benefit from CSOs’ services and goods</i>
<i>Cost Recovery – Capacity to generate revenue through service provision</i>
<i>Government Recognition and Support – Government appreciation for CSO service provision</i>

6- SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: Support services available to the CSO sector

<i>Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs) and CSO Resource Centers – Organizations and programs that provide CSOs with training and other support services</i>
<i>Local Grant-Making Organizations – Local institutions, organizations, or programs providing financial resources to CSOs</i>
<i>CSO Networks and Coalitions – Cooperation within the CSO sector</i>
<i>Training – Training opportunities available to CSOs</i>
<i>Intersectoral Partnerships – Collaboration between CSOs and other sectors</i>

7- PUBLIC IMAGE: Society’s perception of the CSO sector

<i>Media Coverage – Presence of CSOs and their activities in the media (print, television, radio, and online)</i>
<i>Public Perception of CSOs – Reputation among the larger population</i>
<i>Government/Business Perception of CSOs – Reputation with the government and business sector</i>
<i>Public Relations – Efforts to promote organizational image and activities</i>
<i>Self-Regulation – Actions taken to increase accountability and transparency</i>

How to Score

The CSO Sustainability Index uses a seven-point scale from 1 to 7. **Lower numbers indicate more robust levels of CSO sustainability.** These characteristics and levels are drawn from empirical observations of the sector's development in the country, rather than a causal theory of development. Given the complex nature of civil society sectors, many contradictory developments may be taking place simultaneously. The levels of sustainability are organized into three broad clusters:

Sustainability Enhanced (1 to 3) - the highest level of sustainability, corresponds to a score between 1.0 and 3.0;

*Sustainability Evolving*³ (3.1 to 5) - corresponds to a score between 3.1 and 5.0;

Sustainability Impeded (5.1 to 7) – the lowest level of sustainability, corresponds to a score between 5.1 and 7.0.

Sustainability Enhanced	Sustainability Evolving	Sustainability Impeded
1.0 – 3.0	3.1 –5.0	5.1 –7.0

Scoring Process⁴

The primary role of the EP is to provide an assessment of the CSO environment based on the seven dimensions mentioned above. During the panel discussion, panel members are tasked with analyzing each dimension and any recent developments, identifying and discussing initial scores for each dimension, including their evidence for these scores, and determining their final proposed scores for each dimension. The overall score for the country will be an average of these seven scores.

³ The ‘Sustainability Evolving’ categorization does not assume a direct or forward trajectory. Dimension and Overall Sustainability scores that fall within this category may represent both improvements and regressions.

⁴ NOTE: For countries in which the CSOSI is being implemented for the first time, the below scoring process does not apply. Instead, please refer to the document Scoring Process for Setting Country Baselines. For countries discussing baseline score recalibration, please use the Recalibration Guidance Sheet.

Each expert panel member is asked to follow the steps below:

Step 1: Please start by reviewing last year’s report and other sources of information about sectoral developments from the last year of which you are aware related to each dimension and its indicators. Then, based on the evidence, rate each dimension on the scale from 1 to 7, with a score of 1 indicating a very advanced civil society sector with a high level of sustainability, and a score of 7 indicating a fragile, unsustainable sector with a low level of development. Fractional scores to one decimal place are encouraged. See “Scoring based on Level of Change” on page 6 below for guidance on how to determine proposed scores.

When rating each dimension, please remember to consider each indicator carefully and make note of any specific, country-relevant examples of recent or historical conditions, policies, or events that you used as a basis for determining this score.

Step 2: Review your proposed score for each dimension to ensure that it makes sense in comparison to last year’s score and narrative. Please carefully consider the importance of any developments and weigh more heavily those changes that have had an impact at the sector level, especially in cases when there have been both positive and negative changes. In determining the level of change, including the incremental change over the past year, look at the evidence of change, the various factors over the year being assessed that led to those changes (events, policies, laws, etc.), the durability of the change and the extent to which the change impacts the sector as a whole.

Step 3: Once you have scores for each dimension, average these seven scores together to arrive at an overall CSO sustainability score and provide all these scores to the IP before you attend the expert panel discussion.

Step 4: Attend the EP discussion. Listen to other experts describe the justification for their scores. After discussing each indicator in a dimension, you will have the opportunity to revise your proposed score. Should the panel achieve consensus regarding the scores, the consensus scores will be the panel’s final proposed scores. If consensus is not reached among the panelists, the IP will average the panelists’ scores, removing one instance of the highest and lowest scores each, to arrive at the final scores that will be proposed to the EC.

It is very important that the discussion includes specific examples and information that can be used to justify the Expert Panelist’s scores. Therefore, please come prepared to share specific evidence to support trends you have noted during the year. If adequate supporting information is not provided, the EC has the right to adjust the scores accordingly, to ensure objectivity and methodological consistency in scoring.

Important Note: In countries with disputed territories or areas (e.g., self-declared states, breakaway states, partially recognized states, declared people’s republics, proto-states, or territories annexed by another country’s government), panelists should score based only on the area under the national government’s control. However, these territories’ contexts should be discussed, to be referenced briefly in the introduction of the country report.

In countries experiencing civil war (political and armed movements that administer parts of the country, regions governed by alternative ruling bodies), panelists should balance the situation in each of the territories when determining all scores and discuss trends and developments under each regime.

In countries where a great deal of regional autonomy is recognized (e.g., Iraqi Kurdistan), expert panelists should take those areas into account when scoring and compiling examples, and IPs should ensure the situation in these areas are well-integrated into the scoring decisions and narrative report.

For countries with closing civic space, sufficient data and information sources should be discussed to both acknowledge the changes in civic space and consider its impacts on dimensions. The panelists should respond to published sources and present their evidence to ensure the balance between positive and negative developments affecting civil society in their country. To avoid self-censorship and ensure the confidentiality of and non-retaliation against any expert panel member, the IP could choose to enforce the Chatham House Rule. When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

In countries where a democratic revolution took place in the previous year, the panelists should still closely follow the score-change framework when determining the new dimension-level scores to justify the changes, avoiding exaggerated score increases that may be due to a post-revolution feeling of euphoria. The proposed scores should always measure the actual changes thus far and not anticipated impacts in the near future.

Scoring Based on Level of Change

The level of change in a dimension from one year to the next is determined by assessing the impact of multiple factors including new policies and laws, changes in implementation of existing policies and laws, various organization-level achievements and setbacks, changes in funding levels and patterns, as well as contextual political, economic, and social developments. While individual examples may seem impactful on their own, ultimately a sector’s long-term sustainability only changes gradually over time as the implications of these positive or negative developments begin to be felt and their long-term effects take hold. Therefore, dimension-level score changes each year should not in normal circumstances exceed a 0.5-point change from the previous year.⁵

When determining what weight to give different trends and developments in how they affect the scores, consider the relative scope of the changes and the duration of their impacts. Those trends and developments that will have larger and longer-term impacts on the sector as a whole should be weighted more heavily compared to those that affect only limited parts of the sector and are more likely to change from year to year. For example, a demonstrated increased capability to mobilize domestic resources (e.g. through corporate philanthropy or crowdfunding) broadly witnessed throughout the sector, or a new mechanism for long-term funding of CSOs (e.g. through a basket fund or a tax designation mechanism) would signal a longer-term change in a sector’s financial viability than a one-year increase in donor funding to CSOs such as during a year of national elections or following an emergency.

In determining how the level of change in the dimension of sustainability should translate into a change in score, the following scale can be used to assist expert panel members’ decision-making:

⁵ Note: This scale has been adjusted for the 2018 CSOSI to more accurately reflect the scale at which trends and developments should impact a score given the definitions of the scoring scale above.

What was the overall impact of the change(s) on the dimension?

Deterioration	<p>Cataclysmic deterioration: Trends and developments have had a completely transformative negative effect on at least one or two indicators in the dimension and significantly affected other dimensions as well.</p> <p>Example: Legal Environment – A law has banned all international CSOs and their affiliates from the country, as part of the government’s systematic crackdown on civil society organizations.</p>	0.5 or greater
	<p>Extreme deterioration: Trends and developments have had very important negative effects on at least one or two indicators in the dimension.</p> <p>Example: Organizational Capacity – Economic depression and instability have led donor basket funds to close abruptly, leaving many major CSOs without funding for their activities. Outreach efforts to constituencies have been halted due to funding shortages and many major CSOs have lost their well-qualified staff members.</p>	0.4
	<p>Significant deterioration: Trends and developments have had important negative effects on at least one or two indicators in the dimension.</p> <p>Example: Public Image – The government conducts a relentless media campaign to discredit the image of CSOs by calling them agents of foreign actors seeking to destabilize the country. At the same, the government intimidates media outlets and threatens them with retaliation should they partner with or cover CSO activities without prior approval by the government.</p>	0.3
	<p>Moderate deterioration: Trends and developments have had a somewhat negative impact in at least one or two indicators in the dimension.</p> <p>Example: Legal Environment – In an effort to increase public revenue, the government has decided to increase fees by 100% for some types of government services, including CSO registration renewal fees, which were already very high according to many CSOs. As a result, some CSOs, particularly community-based organizations (CBOs), had to delay or suspend their activities.</p>	0.2
	<p>Slight deterioration: Trends or developments have had a slightly negative impact on at least one or two indicators in the dimension.</p> <p>Example: Legal Environment – The government has decided that CSOs should submit their financial statement and annual activity report to the registration agency every year. This may have a long-term positive effect but in the short term, it has increased bureaucratic hurdles and the possibility of harassment by overzealous government officials.</p>	0.1
	No Change	<p>The country has not encountered any significant trends or developments in the dimension or developments have been both positive and negative in equal measure.</p>
	<p>Slight improvement: Trends or developments have had a slightly positive impact on at least one or two indicators in the dimension.</p> <p>Example: Legal Environment – To facilitate CSO registration, particularly for those in rural areas, the government has decided its registration agency will allow the agency to take applications locally and process registration directly at the district level. Now, CSOs in rural areas are not required to travel to the capital to apply. However, this measure is accompanied with a small increase in the registration fee.</p>	0.1

Improvement	<p>Moderate improvement: Trends and developments have had a somewhat positive impact in at least one or two indicators in the dimension.</p> <p>Example: Service Provision – To improve the effectiveness of public service delivery, the central government has decided that at least 10% of local government contracts for basic service delivery will be set aside for CSOs. The law is lacking in specificity, particularly around the application process, but it reinforces CSOs’ image as credible partners.</p>	0.2
	<p>Significant improvement: Trends and developments have had important positive effects on at least one or two indicators in the dimension.</p> <p>Example: Public Image – There has been a net increase of CSO partnerships with businesses. CSOs have also agreed to and published a general code of conduct for the sector, reinforcing a positive trend of greater transparency and accountability.</p>	0.3
	<p>Extreme improvement: Trends and developments have had very important positive effects on several indicators in the dimension.</p> <p>Example: Organizational Capacity – The government and international donors have launched a five-year multi-million-dollar basket fund to support CSO-led activities and to strengthen CSO capacity, with a special focus on skills training for CSO staff members, particularly those from CBOs.</p>	0.4
	<p>Transformative improvement: Trends and developments have had a completely transformative positive effect on at least one or two indicators in the dimension and will potentially affect other dimensions as well.</p> <p>Example: Legal Environment – A nonviolent revolution that toppled an authoritarian regime and installed a more democratic regime has produced sudden political and legal changes that will protect basic freedoms and human rights.</p>	0.5 or greater

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC QUESTIONNAIRE

BACKGROUND

To enhance its methodology, the Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI) has incorporated several activities into its annual process. These activities respond directly to the methodological issues identified through the feedback and consultation process conducted with project stakeholders in 2018 and 2019.

One of these activities to enhance the methodology's implementation is to disseminate an electronic questionnaire or e-questionnaire to a larger group of individuals. The questionnaire allows a larger, more diverse group of individuals to contribute their perspectives and insights on the CSOSI dimensions, strengthening the representativeness and inclusiveness of the process and data, enhancing Expert Panel (EP) deliberations, and providing Implementing Partners (IPs) more evidence to improve report quality. Dissemination of the questionnaire also helps to improve the visibility of the IP and Index and foster engagement with stakeholders who are the most likely to subsequently use the Index when completed.

Instructions

- **Identify approximately 50 participants to whom to send the questionnaire** – The IP selects individuals who will expand the scope and diversity of inputs into the process. The selected individuals should include representatives of or specialists in specific sub-sectors of civil society organizations (CSOs), such as labor unions, capacity-building organizations, organizations representing marginalized and vulnerable groups, informal movements, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, intermediary support organizations, resource centers, and research institutes. Emphasis should be placed on selecting individuals who are in other localities of the country and those located in rural areas. The objective is for the IP to select a group of people who would add new perspectives on various aspects of the sector on which the in-person panelists might not have deep expertise, as well as individuals who have broad knowledge but would be unable or available to attend the in-person panel discussion. FHI 360 and the local USAID Mission may request additions to the list of questionnaire recipients from their own network of contacts.
- **Design your e-questionnaire** – Look at the mandatory and optional questions shared by FHI 360 to design an e-questionnaire that best responds to the needs of the civil society sector in your country. You can translate the e-questionnaire into the principal local language(s) of the country. The country-specific questionnaire should be brief and should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete.
- **Disseminate the electronic questionnaire to your selected additional participants** – The IPs can disseminate the electronic questionnaire on the online platforms of their choice or consult with FHI 360 on setting up the e-questionnaire on SurveyMonkey, to be distributed to the IP's selected additional participants. The IP can use snowball sampling to disseminate the questionnaire to both increase the number of responses as well as to diversify them. To reach larger audiences, the IP can work with local CSO umbrella organizations to tap into their mailing lists, social media pages, and other sector-specific online platforms to share the questionnaire link. The IP should ask the additional participants to complete the questionnaire within a period of two weeks or less.
- **Compile analysis of the questionnaire's results** – After the e-questionnaire deadline that the IP identified has expired, the IP compiles the quantitative and qualitative data received. In cases when FHI 360 supported the IPs to set up the e-questionnaire on SurveyMonkey's CSOSI account, FHI 360 collects the electronic questionnaire results and submits them to the IP.
- **Incorporate the findings into the panel discussion** – Statistics and examples that are raised through the questionnaire responses should be presented to the in-person panel to serve as an additional data source for the scoring process and the discussion around the relevant indicators. When responses are not conclusive or do not align with the experts' opinions, the IP should still present them at the panel discussion for the panelists' consideration.
- **Write the conclusions reached into the narrative report** – While panels should analyze the questionnaire results and use them to inform their discussions, the e-questionnaire responses do not directly translate into scoring decisions. The data received from the electronic questionnaire should be incorporated into the narrative report in the same way that the expert panelists' insights are incorporated

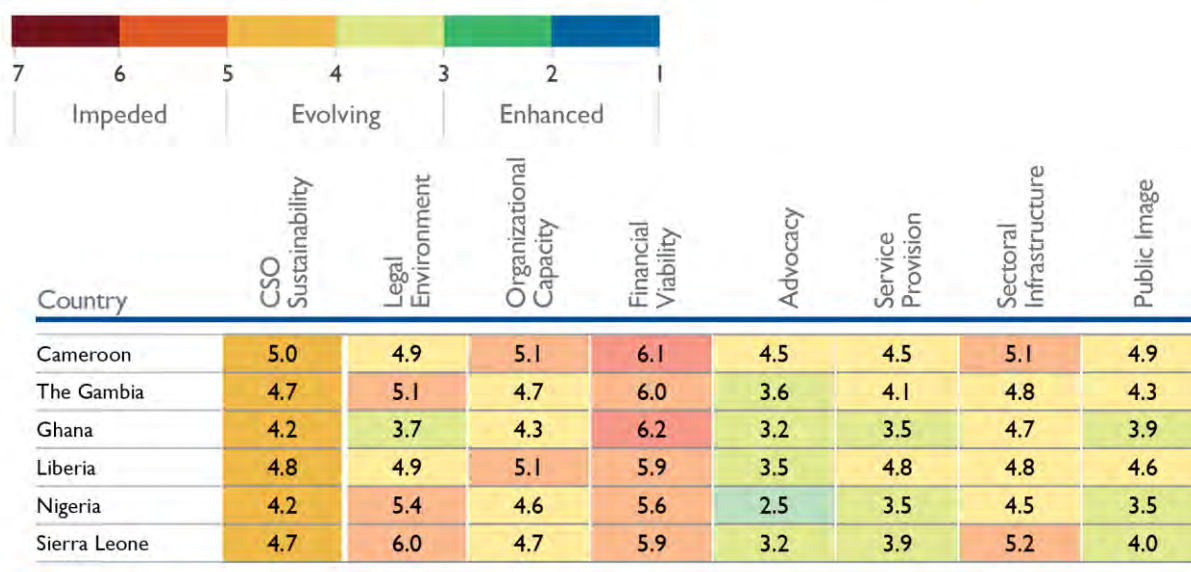
-- justifying scores, sharing without attribution to a particular individual, or reference to the questionnaire. Instead, the inputs should simply be mentioned where relevant as evidence of what has changed positively or negatively in ways that affected the sustainability of the CSO sector in the relevant year. Anecdotal evidence, specific examples, and references to events through open-ended questions may provide IPs necessary data to strengthen their narrative reports.

Tips

- When selecting additional participants, please keep the following points in mind:
 - Sending the e-questionnaire to people with whom you already have a working relationship may increase the response rate, so consider sharing it with organizations and individuals in other areas of the country with whom you have worked;
 - Sharing the e-questionnaire with donor agencies operating in your country and allowing them to propose individuals to receive the e-questionnaire can be a useful way of reaching new experts and perspectives outside of your own organization's network;
 - Sharing the e-questionnaire with civil society networks and allowing them to forward it to their member organizations' leaders, or other experts with whom they work, is a useful way of maximizing circulation outside of your network;
 - When sending out the e-questionnaire, it may be useful to commit to sending participants a copy of last year's final country and regional reports, so they feel a sense of participation in the larger process of developing the CSOSI;
 - When preparing your distribution list, consider whether the situation in the country is such that individuals may try to manipulate the e-questionnaire results. If that is a possibility, consider steps to target distribution, and establish specific time frames or other measures to address the concern.
- When disseminating an e-questionnaire, inform your audience about the survey deadline, and send a reminder a few days before the last day.
- As a best practice, the IP can compile a written overview of the conclusions and evidence of the additional participants and send it to the EP members before the panel discussion, so they can review it. If a written overview is sent out before the panel discussion, the IP can ask the expert panelists at the discussion which findings stood out most to them, to spur discussion.
- When e-questionnaire findings are not conclusive, the IP should ask the expert panelists to analyze the results to better understand the data.
- Pay special attention to geography – if your country has breakaway regions, is experiencing a civil war, or has regions' that may be unrepresented or marginalized, make extra efforts to reach people in all the relevant areas.
- Convincing the participants that their inputs are confidential is key to obtaining a high participation rate and meaningful findings. Especially in countries where self-censorship might be an issue, be very clear that only your organization and FHI 360 will see their inputs, and no comments made will be personally attributed under any circumstances.
- The IPs can use any online platform of their choice to disseminate the electronic questionnaire. In the past, FHI 360 used SurveyMonkey while some other IPs reported using Google Forms.
- The IPs should take relevant measures to ensure data privacy.

ANNEX B: STATISTICAL DATA

2022 SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (WEST AFRICA) SCORES

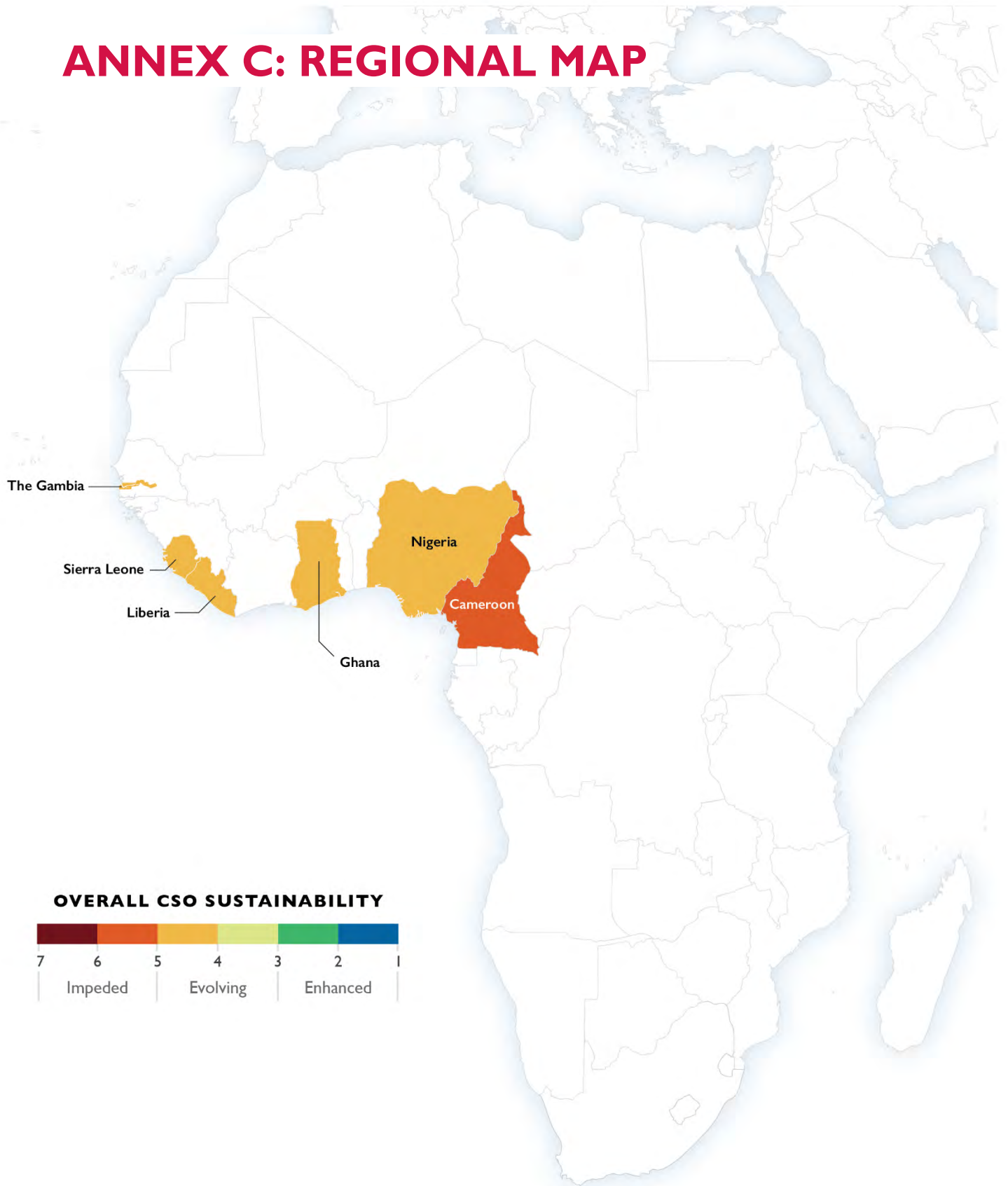


SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (WEST AFRICA) HISTORICAL SCORES

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cameroon	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.0
The Gambia	N/A	N/A	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.2	5.1	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.7
Ghana	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2
Liberia	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.8
Nigeria	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.2
Sierra Leone	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7

To further explore CSOSI's historical data and past reports, please visit - www.csosi.org.

ANNEX C: REGIONAL MAP



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