|  |
| --- |
| http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/images/flag_yellow_low.jpg |
| **RWANDA****EU COUNTRY ROADMAP FOR** **ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY****2016 - 2020** |
| **Approved by: EU Heads of Missions with residence in Kigali, Rwanda** |
| **Date of approval/ update: 17/11/2016** |

Contents

[List of acronyms 3](#_Toc466462635)

[1. STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY 5](#_Toc466462636)

[1.1. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT 5](#_Toc466462637)

[1.1.1 Basic legal rights 5](#_Toc466462638)

[1.1.2 Organisational and financial sustainability 8](#_Toc466462639)

[1.1.3 Participation in public life 8](#_Toc466462640)

[1.1.4 Other Contextual Factors 10](#_Toc466462641)

[1.2. PARTICIPATION AND ROLES 10](#_Toc466462642)

[1.2.1 Participation in Public Policy Formulation 10](#_Toc466462643)

[1.2.2. Transparency and accountability 12](#_Toc466462644)

[1.2.3 Service delivery 12](#_Toc466462645)

[1.2.4 Inclusive and sustainable growth 13](#_Toc466462646)

[1.2.5. Conflict prevention, peace-building and state-building 13](#_Toc466462647)

[1.3. CAPACITY 14](#_Toc466462648)

[1.3.1 Legitimacy, Credibility and Internal Governance 14](#_Toc466462649)

[1.3.2 Programme and Project Management 14](#_Toc466462650)

[1.3.3 Research and Advocacy 14](#_Toc466462651)

[1.3.4 Organisation, coordination and collaboration 15](#_Toc466462652)

[2. CURRENT EU ENGAGEMENT 17](#_Toc466462653)

[2.1. STRUCTURED EU DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY 17](#_Toc466462654)

[2.2. POLICY DIALOGUE FOR AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT 17](#_Toc466462655)

[2.3. MAINSTREAMING CIVIL SOCIETY 18](#_Toc466462656)

[Mainstreaming across EU cooperation 18](#_Toc466462657)

[2.4.1 Member States and other key players 19](#_Toc466462658)

[2.4.2 Existing coordination mechanisms & Information Exchange 19](#_Toc466462659)

[2.4.3 Joint action 19](#_Toc466462660)

[2.4.4 Division of labour 20](#_Toc466462661)

[2.4. LESSONS LEARNT 20](#_Toc466462662)

[2.5.1 Lessons learnt 20](#_Toc466462663)

[2.5.2 Do no harm 21](#_Toc466462664)

[3. PRIORITIES & ACTIONS MATRIX 22](#_Toc466462665)

[4 . DASHBOARD 25](#_Toc466462666)

# List of acronyms

CBO : Community-Based Organisation

CS : Civil Society

CSO : Civil Society Organisation

DFID : Department for International Development

DDP : District Development Plan

DIP : Decentralisation Implementation Plan

EAC : East African Community

EDPRS : Economic Development and Poverty Reduction strategy

EIDHR : European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

EU : European Union

GoR : Government of Rwanda

JADF : Joint Action Development Forum

MIGEPROF : Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

MINECOFIN : Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

MP : Member of Parliament

MS : Member States

NAO : National Authorising Officer

NINGO : Network of International Non-Governmental Organisations

PFM : Public Finance Management

RCSP : Rwanda Civil Society Platform

RGB : Rwanda Governance Board

RMC : Rwanda Media Commission

SDGs : Sustainable Development Goals

SDP : Sector Development Plan

SWG : Sector Working Group

TWG : Technical Working Group

UNDP : United Nations Development Programme

UPR : Universal Periodic Review

USAID : United States Agency for International Development

**INTRODUCTION**

The EU roadmap for Engagement with civil society is a joint initiative between the European Union and its Member States. The purpose is to strengthen partnership with civil society around the world, to provide support to their endeavours but also to increase efficiency between the EU and the MS for more complementarity in their respective actions in favour of civil society. The country-specific Roadmaps are envisaged in the 2012 Communication from the European Commission on *"The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external relations"*.

In 2013, the European Union and its Member States conducted a joint mapping study of the CSOs operating in Rwanda with a special focus on those acting in governance dialogue, oversight and advocacy of civil liberties, including the media, in compliance with the 2012 EC communication on the role of civil society. Together with the concept note for the country programme ‘"Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA)", the mapping has been used as a baseline for the Roadmap on supporting CSOs in Rwanda.

The analysis of the state of the civil society and current activities of the EU in Rwanda has been carried out through a desk study, the distribution of a questionnaire to CSOs, several meetings at the level of the delegation, meetings with the government (the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) and the Ministry of Finance/National Authorising Officer (MINECOFIN/NAO), interviews with other relevant actors in the external environment, 3 workshops with civil society organisations (national and international) and 2 specific meetings with the Member States. The matrix and dashboard found in this roadmap were designed with the involvement of Member States.

Three key messages emerged from this analysis. These priorities will serve to guide the approach of the EU Delegation and Member States toward civil society. The first priority area will focus on promoting a conducive legal and institutional **environment** for CSOs in Rwanda. The second priority area intends to promote the meaningful, structured and sustained **participation** of CSOs in domestic policies and in EU and Member State programming cycles. The third priority will be to gear efforts toward increasing local CSOs’ **capacity** to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively. Guided by these priorities, the Matrix and Dashboard set out in the Roadmap intend to serve as measures of progress in the areas of capacity, environment and participation as well as an aid for programming and assistance in those fields.

The EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Rwanda was adopted by the EU Heads of Mission in 2016. Progress in implementing the Roadmap will be monitored and reported on an annual basis.

# 1. STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

## ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Rwanda gained independence from Belgium in 1962. After the 1994 genocide, during which approximately 800,000 people were killed, Rwanda emerged as a failed state. Since then, the government has made progress in stabilising the country and in achieving socio-political and economic development. However, challenges remain. The post-genocide period was characterised by an influx of CSOs, dominated mainly by international NGOs. There was, nevertheless, a parallel but slow emergence of local associations that contributed to alleviating social and economic conditions. Notably, there was an emergence of dynamic women’s groups and associations across a number of sectors. The ensuing transition from humanitarian relief to development work called for new roles and activities for CSOs. While some international NGOs continued to work in the country, often supporting local CSOs both financially and through technical assistance, many international NGOs left as the humanitarian situation improved, as well as some donors.

The Government of Rwanda’s long-term vision for development is set out in its Vision 2020 document. The Second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II) identifies national priorities in the medium-term that are translated into sector strategies and district development plans. These are both elaborated in annual action plans. While the GoR recognises that civil society has a crucial role to play in the implementation of the EDPRS II and key national policies, it sees that external assistance and interventions of CSOs should be aligned with this strategy. It does not always openly accept that CSOs may not agree with the government’s approach to tackling key development challenges or that there may even be differences of opinion within civil society itself about the best way forward. In the decentralisation strategy, CSOs are recognised as an important actor for local development; good governance, accountability and the struggle against corruption. Here, CSOs are viewed as playing a key role in the improvement of service delivery, gender equality and in policies related to innovation and access to information[[1]](#footnote-1). The government has acknowledged the importance of women in Rwandan society and strongly promotes equality and equity for both men and women through the Ministry for Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF). The National Gender Policy defines the process of mainstreaming gender needs in all public and private sector policies, programmes, projects and budgets of the government.

### *1.1.1 Basic legal rights*

An excessively consensus-based political system and the concerns of the government in maintaining unity have led to rigid and demanding legal frameworks and boundaries for CSOs. All freedoms are exercised under conditions determined by a law that limits freedom of association, assembly and expression. The CIVICUS enabling environment index of 2013 scores Rwanda 86/109 globally in terms of propensity of citizens to participate in civil society.[[2]](#footnote-2) This ranking is below Tanzania at 71 and Ghana at 48, but higher than Ethiopia at 102 and Burundi at 103/109.

**Freedom of Association**

Rwanda went through a lengthy consultation process which included both local and international CSOs, as well as local and international experts to pass new laws governing NGOs. The new national NGO law regulates the registration of NGOs and limits the power of government to deny registration. The legal framework contains provisions to strengthen NGO internal operations and legitimacy, and establishes rights and procedures for NGOs to participate in policy and legislative development (ICNL 2013d). The law does not recognise loosely-structured or non-registered CSOs, and restricts the space for civil society to engage in political activities and to work on sensitive, human-rights related or governance topics.

The legal framework for CSOs in Rwanda is multi-faceted, as different laws regulate NGOs (national and international) and other types of citizens’ collective actions and organisations. The 2012 laws governing the freedom of association for NGOs aim to simplify the registration process by reducing the bureaucratic burden compared to the previous laws. Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) is in charge of registering, monitoring and evaluating national NGOs and religious organisations, whereas the Directorate General for Immigration and Emigration is the referent authority for international NGOs. Registration is a pre-requisite for operation. Although the legislation is an improvement from previous laws, it has maintained burdensome conditions for registration. It requires considerable financial and human resources, which present difficulties for many organisations. The registration of an NGO can be temporarily suspend by the competent authority, and the judicial authority has the power to dissolve NGOs. The legal situation has improved somewhat but is still far from satisfactory.

Rwandan NGOs are required to hold a general assembly in order to appoint their legal representatives and office-bearers. Among other requirements, the minutes of these meetings, including signatures of all those who attended the general assembly should be submitted to the regulatory authority (RGB). To organise a general assembly, an NGO must book a "suitable" location and receive permission from the municipality and police. Both local and international NGOs are required to provide letters of collaboration with authorities in the districts in which they operate. The financial cost, time and energy it takes to obtain letters from all districts in which the organisations wish to operate constitutes a serious drain on the resources of organisations. The Directorate of Immigration requires that international NGOs provide evidence of funding for the period which they seek registration, up to 5 years. Most funding sources are unable to commit to providing support for multiple years. Many international NGOs are forced to seek annual registration as they can only provide proof of financial resources for a year at a time. Rwandan NGOs need to have secured funding when they seek registration. Funding, can only be secured once registration has been granted. In his September 2014 report, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Maina Kiai, called for the registration procedure for NGOs and INGOs to be simplified[[3]](#footnote-3).

Decentralisation regulations and particularly ministerial orders concerning the functioning of the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) require that CSOs participate in the JADF, contribute to the implementation of the District and Sector Development Plans (DDP-SDP) and sign a “Performance Contract,” (Imihigo) if relevant to reach the targets set in the DDP-SDP. Compliance with these rules can be a condition for issuing the necessary Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) required for maintaining the registration of INGOs (approximately 100 are present, from which more than 50 are member of the Network of INGO). According to RGB, 1,945 national CSOs were registered from 2012 to December 2015, up from the 350 that were registered over the entire period from 1962-2012[[4]](#footnote-4). As for international NGOs, DG Immigration reports that 160 were registered in 2015-16, with 19 further "not yet" registered or with registration under process.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The legislation regarding cooperatives is regulated by the Rwanda Cooperative Agency, which registers groups as well as providing support. The legal provisions concerning credit under the control of the Ministry of Finance (MINECOFIN) regulate micro-finance institutions and involve “saving groups” at grassroots level. In some cases, these groups are transformed into cooperatives. In many cases, these groups carry out non-credit related activities *and* functions. The education service regulations provide for the existence of semi-formalised youth and student “clubs”. As for health services, regulations provide for the existence of semi-formalised “users’ committees”. When these groups assume a more independent status, they are requested to register as an NGO or as a cooperative.

**Freedom of Assembly**

The Constitution (Art.36) guarantees freedom of peaceful assembly. Law No. 33.91 provides for prior notification for demonstrations on public roads and public assemblies. It also requires prior authorisation for assemblies in open air, on public roads or in a public space in the interests of public safety, tranquillity and health. In practice, only peaceful assemblies which authorities favour are allowed to take place; such as commemoration marches organised by ‘*Ibuka’* (the lobby group addressing justice for survivors of the 1994 genocide), which are facilitated by the authorities. Spontaneous assemblies are not recognised in law and peaceful protests voicing dissent and criticising government policies are not permitted.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**Freedom of Expression**

The ability of Rwandans to express themselves freely is increasing, particularly on social media platforms, where citizens have become more vocal in discussing and debating political topics. Freedom of expression, by and large, is handled with caution (self-censorship). The media landscape is dominated by state-owned media. The Rwandan media do not play a strong role in scrutiny, and investigative journalism is almost non-existent. Certain subjects/themes are perceived as taboo and difficult to address. Attempts made to establish Rwandan initiatives attempting to create more space for free expression, such as activities undertaken by the Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix (IRDP). However, such have encountered difficulties.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The Media Law went into force in 2012, defining rules for journalism and publishing activities of commercial and community media. The law provides for a wide autonomy of journalists and publishers. However, the framework allows for limits to dissemination of information for national security and public order interest. This clause in the law is ambiguous, open to wide interpretation and could be used to severely limit freedom of expression when deemed suitable by the government. Genocide denial and reintroduction of an ethnic dimension into politics are forbidden. Media reforms in recent years have led to an increase in media channels and the establishment of the Rwanda Media Commission (RMC), the media self- regulatory body, established by all registered Rwandan journalists. The RMC has a triple mandate: promoting, nurturing and protecting ethical journalistic practices; defending media freedom; and speaking on behalf of the media fraternity as a whole, especially as far as promotion and protection of ethical principles as well as freedom are concerned. Although the law provided a framework to set up the RMC, it still lacks a legal status. Article 276 of the Penal Code criminalises defamation of journalists. The Rwanda Media Barometer (RMB) has been established with the central goal of setting up a comprehensive framework of media development to be used for regular monitoring and assessment of the state of media in Rwanda. The RMB is not independent – it is carried out by the RGB, which rates Rwandan media freedom highly, in comparison to more negative ratings from Freedom House and Reporters without Borders.

Civil society has yet to make better use of the media, especially in Kinyarwanda, as a channel to influence public policy and to encourage debate. This is not helped by the fact that authorities and much of the citizenry view civil society with a degree of suspicion. The media portray civil society in a limited way, except during the civil society week. The fact that journalists expect to receive compensation payments for transportation and other costs can impact on the (non-) coverage of an issue and is an additional financial burden for NGOs to cater for (apart from the fact that it can undermine reporting neutrality). Media organisations tend to be of the opinion that CSOs are not able to provide them “stories” suitable for publication.

### *1.1.2 Organisational and financial sustainability*

There are legal barriers against foreign funding for CSOs. As far as domestic funding is concerned, NGOs are permitted to engage in income-generating activities provided that any profits earned are used in activities related to their primary objectives.  The government is required to include funding for NGOs in the national budget, as implementing partners of government policies, in addition to normal Ministry-level support and contracts. NGOs are permitted to compete for government funds and in some cases encouraged to do so.  While NGOs are exempt from tax on most categories of income, the tax law does not provide incentives for donations to NGOs**[[8]](#footnote-8)**.

The volunteerism policy is aimed at providing guidance on the management, rights, responsibilities and roles for both volunteers and volunteering organisations. The percentage of people undertaking voluntary work on a regular basis in Rwanda is low[[9]](#footnote-9). Sector volunteerism policies exist alongside support from international volunteering organisations. Institutional mechanisms dealing with volunteer management and coordination issues are unclear (identification, recruitment, deployment, social contracting, monitoring and evaluation of volunteers and volunteer work). Volunteer work is not addressed in national planning and development agendas. The institutional capacity to support, recognise, protect and network volunteers is limited. The SWOT analysis Matrix of the Volunteerism Situation in Rwanda mentions conflict with provisions in the local labour and tax laws as a threat.[[10]](#footnote-10)

### *1.1.3 Participation in public life*

Authorities set up the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), a multi-actor platform of public authorities, civil society and private sector at the district level (Akarere) or at the lower administrative level (sector or Umurenge). The JADF mechanism is a system of forums at district and sector level linked to the Ministry of Local Government and specific line Ministries at national level. The JADF at the level of the districts have responded to a need for increased dialogue and exchange on local development processes. These forums are, in one way or the other, operational in all 30 districts[[11]](#footnote-11). The JADF is considered to be a key platform for assisting in the implementation of effective decentralisation, consistent with the principles and objectives of GoR. It is intended to reinforce and improve service delivery as well as helping to better coordinate the interventions of various development actors. The JADF also deals with issues such as gender equity, social inclusion of marginalised groups and environmental sustainability.

The JADFprovides an opportunity for consultation and experience-sharing among development partners operating in the district. It facilitates planning and resource management within the district, i.e. knowing who is doing what, where and when. Despite many JADFs being chaired by a non-government member, it functions mainly as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the implementation of the district's Imihigo. Partly thanks to a strong lobby from the INGO network, the membership fee for the NGOs and INGOs are not obliged by law but rather, voluntary. Each JAFD at the district level, adopts rules of procedure requesting NGOs to contribute annually. NGOs who do not pay come under strong pressure. Donors are requested to contribute through bilateral projects. Participation can be burdensome when CSOs already have human resource capacity constraints. The sustainability of the forum will require broad and active participation from CSOs and private businesses and will heavily depend on their empowerment and engagement.[[12]](#footnote-12) Many CSOs approve of the JADF system, seeing it as a useful way to align their activities to district development priorities. Others consider that the forums threaten their autonomy, hindering them from pursuing their priorities.

In the justice sector, the government involves civil society in the elaboration of sectorial policies through the sector and technical working groups. Local CSOs, for instance, played an instrumental role in the design of training modules for *Abunzi*[[13]](#footnote-13) mediators. Several INGO and Rwandan NGOs recommendations were taken into account in the definition of the *Abunzi* laws. The advocacy of Legal Aid Forum[[14]](#footnote-14) has contributed to the approval of the National Legal Aid Policy, as well as to the adoption of the law governing the Bar Association that allows CSOs providing legal aid to hire salaried in-house lawyers who represent their clients in courts.

Since 2012, GoR has increased the amount of budgetary information publically available. Prior to 2015, budget proposals and supporting data were prepared by the executive, but the draft finance law was not made available to the public, meaning that citizens could not effectively participate in budget debates. The 2015 Open Budget Initiative (OBI) survey indicates that the pre-budget statement and the executive’s budget proposal are made available prior to the approval of the annual budget law, and that improvements have been made in terms of publication of ‘Citizens Budgets’, in-year reports, and audit reports. The 2015 OBI survey concludes, nonetheless, that opportunities for the public to engage in the budget process remain weak, with only a limited range of mechanisms available for capturing public perspectives on budgetary matters.

**Access to Information**

In March 2013, Rwanda became the 11th country in Africa and the 94th country globally to adopt a comprehensive Access to Information law. The law restricts access to material "of public interest" and falls short of the standards laid down in the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Model FOI Law. At the same time, it contains clear provisions for proactive disclosure and is seen as a signal of the government's intention to entrench transparency and enhance public participation in governance. Relevant information from the government is available on the website of RGB and the websites of ministries. *Sobanukirwa*, an access to information website, was launched to facilitate access to information about public authorities and some private bodies.[[15]](#footnote-15) Civil society has access to information on matters of public interest, information about Rwandan civil society about support programmes to civil society from various sources. These include the network of international non-governmental organisations (NINGO), donors and clusters, organised meetings (community levels and other organs), internet, radio and newspapers. No portal exists for civil society to discuss public participation or its own role. Information sharing at the sector level is less apparent. There is a strong will on the part of the government to put Rwanda at the forefront of ICT to support economic growth. This approach could benefit civil society due to the potential for greater access to information and communication. More sophisticated government ICT skills, at the same time, could also lead to other ways of controlling information (e.g. closing down social networks, communication).

###

### *1.1.4 Other Contextual Factors*

In terms of regional influences, elections and other regional issues in the countries of the Great Lakes region could influence the security situation in Rwanda and affect the operational space for CSOs. In terms of the educational context, although it is still an ongoing process, improvements in quality and levels of education may lead to enhanced levels of critical thinking of the population.

**CONCLUSIONS - ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

1. Government should be held to account regarding its international human rights obligations and the implementation of its own legislation through high-level political dialogue, public diplomacy and high-level events.
2. Follow the legal and political environment for CSO (how to operate, what kind of role etc.).
3. Protect the operational space of CSOs against the potential impact of regional dynamics of the Great Lakes Region

## PARTICIPATION AND ROLES

### 1.2.1 Participation in Public Policy Formulation

Both the EDPRS II of 2013, and the response strategy of the Development Partners[[16]](#footnote-16), highlight the importance of including civil society in monitoring and tracking government actions and strengthening their oversight role. Despite the large number of CSOs working on conflict-prevention, human rights and governance-related issues, the internal management deficiencies of CSOs and the burden posed by administrative and regulatory procedures hamper their ability to participate effectively in governance dialogue as well as policy processes. New legislation and decentralisation reforms alongside a set of specific programmes and instruments were launched with the aim of increasing the participation of citizens and civil society organisations in development policies.[[17]](#footnote-17) Despite these initiatives, there is a need to provide enhanced support to local civil society to enable it to act as an observer and partner in dialogue with the national institutions. Engagement of civil society with the government as an equal partner in its own right is still limited. GoR does not see roles for CSOs beyond responding to government input, project implementing partners, service delivery bodies or observers.[[18]](#footnote-18) This explains the modest role of CSOs in influencing national – and to lesser extent regional - policies.

In recent years, CSOs applied several strategies to influence public policy and/or public resource allocation. Under the organisation of the weak and increasingly less representative Rwanda Civil Society Platform, a civil society public policy dialogue is organised each year to discuss issues of concern in various areas with public, private and civil society actors. In the last two years, the dialogues discussed issues in relation to education and agriculture. The Civil Society Public dialogue is a platform for CSOs to engage and hold to account the government and the private sector. The discussions over the amendment that was sought to the legal framework of the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) led to the production of a new set of Prime Ministerial instructions establishing the JADF and determining its responsibilities, organisation and functioning. Individual CSOs have been invited to different policy platforms, where development priorities and important national agendas are discussed. In such cases, CSOs tend not to attend with a concerted and common stand on issues. Informal consultations are more frequent with INGOs, as they are considered as knowledge providers. CSOs participate in the Development Partners Retreat (DPR), an annual senior-level two-day event aimed at bringing together stakeholders in Rwanda’s development to review and discuss progress in implementing the EDPRS II and key sector policies of Rwanda. CSOs tend to play an observer role rather than a partner role during the retreat.

Other strategies being applied by CSOs to influence policy are the use of community score cards, public debates, discussion with local authorities about the use of public funds, interface meetings between service providers and citizens, radio dialogues, civic education as well as policy and budget analysis on social sectors and specific areas of concern. Since evidence is required to influence policy change, CSOs conduct research, including baseline surveys, and disseminate findings to promote certain rights or to draw attention to issues affecting vulnerable people and citizens in general as part of their advocacy strategy. They also attempt to reach out to decision-makers and legislators for advocacy purposes. In a very limited number of cases, CSOs assume a role of “critical witnesses.” Yet, many CSOs struggle to engage or influence public policies and their implementation. This applies to all public policies, including the National Strategy for Climate Change and Low Carbon Development, the Migration Policy and Trade Policy. However, policy-related institutions utilise the Sector-Wide Approach and work closely with development partners, civil society, academia and the private sector[[19]](#footnote-19).

In some cases, targeted efforts are carried out, aimed at or with the support of external actors. CSOs in Rwanda raise awareness of governance issues in the public sphere through an array of channels. These include radio or television talk shows; distributing booklets, leaflets, posters and pull-ups; sensitisation events such as socio-sports competitions and community meetings; bilateral meetings with government officials; or by reaching out to MPs in an informal manner*.* At grassroots level, decisions related to management of local resources can be carried out by fostering a shared perception of problems and by identifying possible solutions. This requires dialogue among CBOs (e.g. cooperatives), the cell and sector authorities as well as other relevant stakeholders (e.g. private sector). Cases of engagement of cooperatives in managing land disputes and disputes on the use of other resources (water basins) were reported during focus groups with CBOs during the mapping exercise.

### 1.2.2. Transparency and accountability

The role of civil society in budget transparency and access to information for citizens is of interest for all sectors. Through EDPRS II, GoR is increasingly recognising the role of civil society in promoting accountability, with "accountable governance" as one of its four thematic areas. GoR has established a number of initiatives to facilitate dialogue between state and citizens at national and local levels. These include the annual national dialogue meeting (*Umushyikirano*), district local assemblies (*inteko y’abaturage*), the *Imihigo* processes (system of public sector performance contracts), and the JADF at the district level. In practice however, there is scope for these initiatives to be more effective and for new spaces for state-society interaction to be created[[20]](#footnote-20). Smaller CSOs at district level do not have the capacity or trust of local government to engage in domestic transparency and accountability[[21]](#footnote-21). GoR is committed to empower civil society to work transparently for the public interest, with active participation in national development as stipulated in the seven-year Government Programme of 2010-17. In reality, citizen participation is often controlled by the authorities. A 5-year joint UN-GoR Programme “Strengthening civil society organisations for responsive and accountable governance in Rwanda," aims at supporting new and innovative projects to strengthen national CSOs in the domain of responsive and accountable governance in Rwanda. The Programme is active at three different levels: providing concrete support through grants and capacity building efforts; focusing on enhancing the role of CSOs in local governance with a focus on JADF and it conducting research on the state of play of civil society. 26 Rwandan CSOs received grants totalling US$ 980,000 in 2014 and a further 24 CSOs received grants of US$ 770,000 as part of the second phase of the programme in the fiscal year 2015- 2016. The instrument supports CSOs active in human rights and gender equality, civic education, social protection, budgeting and development planning, cultural promotion, media and umbrella representation. A policy dialogue event took place in December 2015 and two more policy dialogues are planned before the end of 2016. Efforts are also undertaken to better streamline the current registration procedure for national CSOs. The programme financed the production of the 2015 Civil Society Development Barometer.

### 1.2.3 Service delivery

The majority of Rwandan CSOs, particularly NGOs, as well as international NGOs are heavily focused on service provision and support for vulnerable groups aligned with national development plans and priorities. A large proportion focus on health, education, social protection and agriculture**[[22]](#footnote-22)**. Rwanda is economically highly reliant on agriculture. Food insecurity, malnutrition as well as population pressure on land are constant challenges. CSOs and other NGOs such as cooperatives are considered well-positioned to contribute to household food security; to strengthening the opportunities for women to benefit proportionately from agricultural development; and to improving the monitoring of the national land policy and justice related to land disputes. Land disputes are a major source of community conflicts and represent a burden on the formal judicial system[[23]](#footnote-23). The fight against chronic malnutrition and food security requires locally-rooted action in terms of community-based and multi-disciplinary interventions. Coming up with innovative ideas and best practices that can be replicated by government is still limited. CSO interventions in service delivery and its improvement are embedded in multi-actor partnerships through the JADF.

### 1.2.4 Inclusive and sustainable growth

CSOs contribute, often through combined projects, to poverty reduction and economic growth by supporting marginalised communities with commercial/income-generating activities. They stimulate food security initiatives of farmers, establish cooperatives in order to strengthen entrepreneurship, and provide livestock and technical and vocational training for youth. Women's groups provide credit for women’s associations engaged in economic activities. The EU, together with the Austrian Development Agency, Care Austria recently launched the “Youth Employability in the informal sector” project. The project builds on and contributes to the EDPRS II pillar on productivity and youth employment. It also builds on the two priorities under this theme of critical skills and attitudes for services, industrial sectors and entrepreneurship, access to finance and business development. CSO-business partnerships are virtually non-existent.

### 1.2.5. Conflict prevention, peace-building and state-building

The Rwanda Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order Sector Strategy is a key component of the EDPRS Governance Flagship Programme, and promotes accountable governance, a culture of peace and enhanced poverty reduction[[24]](#footnote-24). CSOs are very much welcome in the justice sector. A number of CSOs work on conflict resolution, reconciliation, violence prevention, psychosocial rehabilitation, human rights, rule of law, legal development and governance. These activities tend to be either through specific programmes on peace and security (e.g. combatting illicit small arms and light weapons), anti-violence projects, including domestic violence, or projects on equal rights, inclusivity and anti- corruption. Such efforts are remnants from the country’s post-conflict status that have remained crucial and seem to be gaining importance in the context of the recent influx of Burundian refugees. Such CSOs reinforce local capacity for conflict mediation (working with *Abunzi* mediators), as well as carrying out skills development on conflict resolution, critical thinking and peacebuilding. They further organise debates, studies and research. Some CSOs try to hold the government accountable to commitments made on peace, environmental protection and development initiatives as a long-term strategy for fostering peace and state-building. Other CSOs carry out awareness raising and sensitisation activities on topics of peace, human rights, welfare and equitable justice. In order to promote reconciliation, several local NGOs initiated saving groups and income-generating activities involving both *genocidaires* and victims of genocide. CSOs in this sector are viewed by the government mostly as implementing partners of government policies rather than independent watchdogs. Local authorities are involved in the projects through trainings and community awareness. Women's groups have been particularly active in supporting the *Gacaca[[25]](#footnote-25)* justice initiatives; lobbying for assistance and justice for widows, orphans, and other vulnerable groups in Rwandan society. The reach of Church structures and their involvement in peacebuilding activities is substantial. Despite these interventions, it remains difficult for CSOs to tackle sensitive and controversial issues which may further challenge the government, generate conflicts or be seen as undermining peace in the long term[[26]](#footnote-26).

**CONCLUSIONS PARTICIPATION AND ROLES**

1. There is a need to provide enhanced support to the emergence of an effective and efficient local civil society able to act as an observer and partner in dialogue with the national institutions, extending beyond its role of ‘responding to government input', project implementing partner, service delivery body or observer.
2. Building trust between the government and CSOs is essential. Supporting mutual accountability and providing recognition and visibility to crucial role of CSOs **is of great importance for the engagement of CSOs in all existing structures and in the area of domestic transparency and accountability**.
3. The division of rolesbetween international and local CSOs should be clarified and the perception of the local CSOs’ skills and capacities strengthened (beyond service providers or sub-contractors of NGO tasks) in order to avoid the de-facto exclusion of local CSOs.Equal partnershipbetween international and local CSOs should be promoted to avoid competition.
4. Strengthen the position of CSOs within existing structures like the Joint Action Development Forum

## CAPACITY

### 1.3.1 Legitimacy, Credibility and Internal Governance

Legitimacy stems from the perceptions of stakeholders in the larger environment in which CSOs are embedded and is related to CSOs' relevance, professionalism and the quality of internal governance. Their reputation is closely linked to their capacity to collect and highlight views of those they claim to represent and to answer to particular performance expectations of specific stakeholders. Recognition of CSOs in Rwanda is uncertain - most partners consider them as “beneficiaries” or “implementing agencies”. In most cases, linkages between NGOs and constituencies are weak (and in some cases institutional processes linked to national registration policies risk weakening these linkages further). At the local level, legitimacy is higher, considering the vast majority of Rwandan CSOs are member-based grassroots associations, focused on issues of livelihood. Yet, they have low capacity to engage on public policy issues in a more strategic way. Likewise, it has been difficult for urban-based advocacy CSOs to make connections with grassroots CSOs[[27]](#footnote-27).

CSOs are increasingly expected to represent citizens’ interests and to raise awareness of government issues in the public sphere in order to safeguard their social legitimacy and good reputation. They are thus tasked with to defining their mandate and developing practices to collect and highlight the views of those they claim to represent. In practice, this is mostly done by carrying out studies and surveys, or through media. A lack of specialisation of CSOs also influences the way in which they are perceived by peers and partners.

### 1.3.2 Programme and Project Management

The internal management deficiencies of CSOs are mostly related to financial sustainability, leadership issues, lack of knowledge on policy and economic analysis as well as to wider matters such as legitimacy and accountability.

### 1.3.3 Research and Advocacy

Although statistics, evidence-based advocacy and research are a prerequisite to engaging and influencing public opinion and policy, the capacity of Rwandan civil society to conduct research is in general very low. The data collected may be of good quality but the analytical work and compilation of research documents can be weak. CSO knowledge of policy and economic analysis, budget, planning, budget execution and transparency needs improvement in all sectors. The quality of research depends largely on the subject and the availability of funds. It is not clear how many CSOs partner with universities, research centres or individual academics. Few academics voluntarily engage with CSOs. In many ways, higher education institutions struggle to form a clear and coherent understanding of their role and responsibilities in shaping Rwandan society.

Advocacy is carried out by several CSOs but not alwaysin avisible way. There is a grey area between political and societal issues, and advocacy may be carried out in a discrete manner. Participatory advocacy is a relevant theme within agriculture notably. Effectiveness here requires access to information and active participation of farmers’ associations in policy dialogues among farmers themselves, with GoR, as well as with local administration and private operators (of inputs and commercialisation) on subjects like access to land (land ownership), use of land, and challenges of influencing policy planning and policy implementation. A number of organisations have conducted advocacy on gender-sensitive budgeting, accountable budgeting and Auditor General’s reports. CSOs monitor individual and collective cases of human rights violations. The manner in which GoR reacts to advocacy efforts depends on the sensitivity of the topic and the way that issues are addressed. If raised privately, it is often taken seriously, and if it is raised in public, the advocacy efforts can be viewed as an attempt to tarnish the image of Rwanda.

### 1.3.4 Organisation, coordination and collaboration

Rwanda has a relatively high number of umbrella organisations, mostly at national level. Umbrellas at district level are in some cases set up as “antennas” of the national umbrellas. The local civil society is organised in thematic networks. At national level **the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP),** composed of 14 umbrella sector organisations and some individual organisations acts a framework for dialogue, reflection and exchange of information and advocates on behalf of civil society and citizens. The capacity of the RCSP to play any of these roles is widely questioned. Almost all umbrella organisations consulted in the implementation of the mapping declared that RCSP is unable to represent them. They observed that RCSP cannot raise the voice of civil society on sensitive issues. Declarations periodically issued by the platform normally refer to issues on which a consensus also exists in government and that are normally more focused on “defending” Rwandan interests at international level, rather than that of Rwandan civil society vis-à-vis other actors. In some cases, differences among platform members reportedly do not allow the platform to find a common perspective on emerging issues. This leads to a situation where the platform itself does not intervene in a public debate. In addition, roles and relationships within RCSP (members, district levels, and management) are not clearly established.

The **Network of International NGOs (NINGO)** is an umbrella forum that brings together over 50 international humanitarian and development NGOs in Rwanda in cooperation with local partners and government authorities. NINGO aims to promote and defend the specific role and space of NGOs as members of civil society through collective advocacy, sharing best practices and achieving synergy. Inside the network there are increasing gaps between the INGOs considered as service-providers and the INGOs representing the voice of an independent civil society. The RCSP and the NINGO do not connect, nor do they share principles on values and roles. Indeed, it seems that coordination with and between INGOs including international foundations (Gates, MasterCard etc.) is even harder than with national NGOs.

Few informal networks or coalitions exist. In rare cases, coalitions are created as temporary structures linked to the implementation of campaigns. Often, being part of a network is a way to receive funds, to join forces and in some other cases a way to increase the visibility or to be perceived as legitimate by donors and public authorities. Despite their participation in umbrella organisations, most NGOs tend to work alone. In some cases, competition between NGOs and their “umbrellas” leads to conflict. Even if the platform and umbrella organisations exist, it is difficult to perceive a “civil society voice” in Rwanda. Opinions depend on who is at the table. NGOs, religious and international organisations are not always familiar with working in multiple-actor settings. Information and experience sharing is not common practice. Communication, especially with organisations from other sectors, requires interpersonal skills. In other words, there is still a lot of learning ahead for representatives of public, private and civil society sectors to enable them to engage in effective dialogue[[28]](#footnote-28). Out of few cases in which organisations have very specific constituencies and are maintaining the main function of advocating for specific interests, umbrella CSOs see their constituencies and member organisations as “beneficiaries” to be supported through the channelling of funds or the implementation of training activities. Seldom do member organisations actually play an active role in guiding the umbrella or in defining their agendas. This means that, in some cases, the member organisations drop out or maintain their membership as a mere formality. An unclear function and mandate from the members, alongside a lack of autonomy and dependency from donors and public authorities tends to undermine the institutional dynamics and the capacity of umbrella organisations to fulfil their missions. Coordination, representation, cohesion and synergy within civil society and the relationship between national, local and international CSOs in Rwanda are the subject of debate. Different understandings of role of civil society, competition over resources, lack of trust, leadership and common ground are sources of conflict among CSOs. These issues must be addressed in order to assure that they do not get in the way of effective representation, partnerships or the force of civil society.

National and international CSOs have developed relationships with organisations and networks from the Great Lakes region, the East African region and at global level. These are based on shared interests to share information, exchange experiences and best practices, but also to build a critical mass of empowered civil society in the region.[[29]](#footnote-29) Participation depends often on the background of management (French or English). As far as regional collaboration is concerned, it is important to keep the perception in mind that CSOs from different countries have to learn from each other. More and more French-speaking CSOs make an effort to become bilingual as East Africa offers more opportunities to network, and because it is easier to attend meetings in Nairobi, Kampala, Dar-es-Salaam or South Africa than in West Africa.

The relationship between CSOs in rural areas and the international community, as well as between civil society and the private sector are less developed. CSOs must re-position themselves in order to make the most of potential partnerships with the private sector, for example, regarding the provision of tools in agriculture.

**CONCLUSIONS CAPACITIES**

1. Internal management deficiencies of CSOs need to be addressed (legitimacy, accountability, programme management, financial sustainability, leadership issues, lack of knowledge on policy and economic analysis etc.), as does the disconnect between urban-based NGOs and organisations in the periphery at grassroots level.
2. Many CSOs are unfamiliar with working in multiple-actor settings. Coordination, representation, cohesion, synergy within civil society and relationships between national, local and international CSOs in Rwanda are subject of debate. Even if the platform and umbrella organisations exist, it is difficult to perceive a common perspective on emerging issues. It is important to encourage a “civil society voice” in Rwanda, which reflects the diversity of interests of civil society actors.
3. The relationship between CSOs in rural areas, especially grassroots organisations, and the international community, as well as between civil society and the private sector are less developed. Relationships with universities are not clear. CSOs must re-position themselves, not simply individually, in order to make the most of potential partnerships. Using opportunities to support those partnerships and to strengthen relevant links between groups of CSOs, private sector, universities and regional connections will not only broaden their knowledge but also their perspective on their own role.

# CURRENT EU ENGAGEMENT

* 1. **STRUCTURED EU DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY**

While the lion’s share of EU funding goes directly to the Rwandan government, the EU attaches a high importance to the broad participation of all stakeholders in the development of a country and encourages all parts of society to take part. Civil society, including economic and social partners such as trade unions, employers' organisations and the private sector, NGOs and other non-state actors play a vital role as promoters of democracy, social justice and human rights. Although not all sectors traditionally work with civil society, the EU keeps a regular bilateral dialogue with Rwandan civil society organisations and regularly organises thematic events to promote dialogue amongst all stakeholders on specific issues. Where applicable, information is provided in advance. Follow-up is ensured in accordance with the relevant portfolio, depending on the interest, willingness and capacity of civil society actors in a given area. There is a tendency to invite CSOs from within the support circle. The EU receives invitations from CSOs for special events. There are no annual meetings with CSOs to discuss the biggest challenges of implementation.

## POLICY DIALOGUE FOR AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The 11th EDF programme for the period 2014-2020 contains measures in favour of civil society. The EU, and its MS, are the principal supporters of civil society in Rwanda working in areas related to governance, protection of human rights as well as monitoring the justice sector. Part of the support is also addressed through the provision of innovative services in remote areas and in favour of vulnerable groups (Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), historically marginalised people, and survivors of gender-based violence etc.). Both the policy and the political dialogues benefit from the information resulting from those interventions.[[30]](#footnote-30)

The EU Delegation in Rwanda launched a CSO mapping exercise in 2013 as an instrument for defining a strategic vision of the issues, opportunities and possibilities for strengthening the engagement of CSOs into development and governance processes in Rwanda. The mapping followed the experience of CSO mapping in the framework of EU activities in other ACP countries, and the recognition of civil society as an important partner in development policies shared by both the EU communication on “The Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development”[[31]](#footnote-31) and the Rwanda adopted EDPRS II[[32]](#footnote-32). Moreover, it constitutes a tool for facilitating the identification of the 11th EDF Support programme to civil society in Rwanda and for identifying possible spaces of participation for CSOs in the 11th EDF activities. This exercise was motivated by the need to guide the EU and MS to better engage with international and local organisations at national level in sectors where their capacity still needs to be strengthened. The mapping exercise has been the first of its kind in Rwanda[[33]](#footnote-33). It follows up on other studies carried out by local organisations and donors[[34]](#footnote-34) as well as EU initiatives for supporting the civil society. These latter initiatives have been carried out both in the framework of the 9th, the 10th EDF and in the context of the thematic programmes NSA-LA Non-State Actors and Local Authorities Programme (NSA-LA) currently called Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities Programme (CSO-LA) and European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The mapping capitalised on such experiences. The EU and MS engage in political dialogue with the government in relation to freedom of association and the registration processes for CSOs and for greater representation and participation of CSOs in public decision-making and accountability processes. These topics are formally discussed under the auspices of EU-Government political dialogue (Article 8 of Cotonou agreement), but also in other formulations. The EU will use the civil society road map as a tool to guide political dialogue.

Article 8 Dialogue is an opportunity to raise issues of interest for CSOs. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) related to the Human Rights is an opportunity for CSOs to provide reports on the level of implementation of the recommendations accepted by the Government in the previous review. The EU Delegation is currently supporting the NGO 'Ligue des droits de la personne dans la région des grands lacs' (LDGL) in such a way.

## MAINSTREAMING CIVIL SOCIETY

### *Mainstreaming across EU cooperation*

The EU Delegation to Rwanda supports civil society through such programmes as EIDHR and CSO-LA. The EIDHR is focused on strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in supporting the peaceful conciliation of group interests and in consolidating political participation as well as representation. The CSO-LA is designed to support development actions to be implemented by CSOs or Local Authorities (LA) in close cooperation with the local communities and the most vulnerable population groups. This programme aims to promote an inclusive and empowered society.

The EU seeks complementarity between the geographical and thematic instruments. Given its mainstream financing comes through budget support, and the provisions of the agenda for change, the EU engages with the state authorities in the governance dialogue. In the implementing framework of bilateral cooperation for the 11th EDF programme, three focal sectors align with EDPRS II: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security, Sustainable Energy, Accountable Governance and special measures for CSOs. There are opportunities to encourage civil society participation in various sector and technical working groups (agriculture, decentralisation, energy, justice). These groups are co-presided by the government and the development partners.

Priority area 1 of the EU's 2014-2020 Regional Indicative Programme for Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) is peace and security in the Great Lakes region. This includes an important role for civil society actors in implementing international commitments on security and regional stability. The thematic approach is reserved for those areas of intervention that are deemed to be sensitive and where government consent is not required.

The EU Delegation has close contacts with a number of CSOs (mostly NGOs and some cooperatives), in particular those engaged most in Sector Working Group meetings where the EU participates. These include agriculture, water and sanitation, social protection, environment and land tenure, in which those CSOs often provide feedback on proposed policies under discussion. However, these feedback mechanisms are not well organised and require reinforcing. Dialogue with the private sector needs improvement, though some efforts have been made e.g. support to the Federation of Private Operators active in the water and sanitation sector (AFEPEAR project). In this case, competition exists between the roles of the private sector and those of the water utility. This situation does not favour constructive dialogue. As for the land sub-sector, since it targets all Rwandans, civil society have been more vocal. The EU Delegation has supported this process (Abunzi, Voicing citizens, etc.), and will continue to indirectly support the Abunzi system from 2017.

Concerning budget support to energy, civil society is represented mainly by two components. Firstly, private sector, represented primarily but not exclusively by the Energy Private Developer’s association, part of the Chamber of Industry under the umbrella of the Private Sector Federation (PSF). Secondly, Local NGOs-CBOs mainly dealing with biomass-related projects (distribution of improved cooking stoves) or basic rural electrification (like distribution of solar lamps). There is a level of dialogue, and to some extent, the issues raised by Private Sector have been taken in account in the formulation process (for example the creation of a Fund in Energy for Private Investors is one of the targets to be achieved). NGOs and CBOs have not contributed significantly to the formulation process nor to the dialogue, but can be very important for reporting on their energy-related activities since there are no reliable mechanisms in place for data-gathering or generation of statistics. Such information is extremely important to the government.

The EU Delegation intends to support new 'accountable governance' activities, both democratic and economic, as a focal sector in line with the EDPRS II. The EU intends to strengthen the oversight role of the institutions which are called to perform this role such as the Parliament, the Ombudsman, the Abunzi (mediators), CSOs and the media. Pitching this support towards the right stakeholders in an effort to encourage genuine civic engagement and community participation is a central challenge in the Rwandan context.

### *2.4.1 Member States and other key players*

|  |
| --- |
| **SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY** |
| **Areas Supported** | **Member States** |
| Agriculture, food security and environment  | Belgium, The Netherlands, Sweden, EU, One UN |
| Education | Belgium, UK, Germany |
| Gender | UK, The Netherlands , Sweden, EU , One UN |
| Governance, Democracy, Decentralisation | Belgium, UK, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, EU  |
| Health | Belgium, The Netherlands, EU  |
| Infrastructure | Belgium, EU |
| Justice and Human Rights | Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, EU, RCN (?) |
| Land Issues | The Netherlands, EU  |
| Media/ICT  | Belgium, The Netherlands, Sweden, EU  |
| Peace and Reconciliation | UK, Germany, The Netherlands ,Sweden, EU  |
| Private sector Development | Belgium, UK, Sweden, The Netherlands , Germany EU |
| Vulnerable populations | UK, Germany, Sweden, EU |

### *2.4.2 Existing coordination mechanisms & Information Exchange*

Topics related to civil society are discussed at the level of Heads of Cooperation and Heads of Political Sections of the Embassies, and if it requires involvement of the Heads of Mission, they are also discussed in these meetings. Issues include the interference of government authorities in CSOs’ affairs political pressure on CSOs, registration issues and coordination of civil society activities through EU Delegation and MS programmes. The new UK multi-donor civil society support programme (UK-Sweden-Switzerland-USA and EU as observer) provides an opportunity to exchange views and issues on CSOs and challenges they face with the government. There are two Technical Working Groups (TWGs) that deal with topics of specific interest to civil society. Firstly, a TWG on Voice and Accountability exist under the Sector Working Group Decentralisation/Good Governance. However, participation of civil society is not very active in this forum and INGO participation is non-existent. This makes coordination difficult. A TWG on Rule of Law also exists under the Justice SWG Justice. Having two similar TWGs also leads to the fact that some key players from DP side are not present at certain discussions.

### *2.4.3 Joint action*

In recent years, the Rwandan government has been a front-runner in holding donors accountable for their aid. Rwanda's aid policy and the country-led division of labour exercise are two notable examples. As part of the EDPRS II elaboration process, the government has requested development partners to organise themselves into three groups, each of which should prepare a "joint response" to the EDPRS II as far as aid programming is concerned. These three groups are (1) the UN family, (2) the multilateral development banks (the World Bank, African Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund), and (3) the bilateral development partners.

In 2013, bilateral development partners[[35]](#footnote-35) carried out ajoint analysis and response to the EPRDS. With this exercise, development partners wished to create and sustain positive momentum for supporting Rwanda to achieve the MDGs and its Vision 2020 target of middle-income country status by 2020. This strategy is an operational tool and aims to make overall aid delivery to Rwanda more effective, coherent and sustainable. The strategy is based on a joint assessment of the situation in the country including a sound analysis of the EDPRS II. The goal of the joint response strategy is to increase the impact and delivery of aid for better results, by reducing fragmentation, as well as increasing transparency, predictability and accountability. The joint response also reaffirms the development partners' commitment to support ownership and partnership as agreed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. UK/DFID led the process of designing a coordinated donor approach to civil society strengthening in Rwanda. Four development partners are part of the Ikiraro cy'terambere multi donor civil society support programme (UK-Sweden-Switzerland-USA) that started in June 2015. Since 2010, Sweden together with UK (DFID) have jointly supported civil society through a programme called PPIMA (Public Policy Information Monitoring and Advocacy Project) implemented by NPA (Norwegian People´s Aid). A third phase of the programme started in April 2016 for an additional three years. The Member States have regular consultations with CSOs to help review their strategic and operational engagement in Rwanda. While the civil society road map has been part of regular discussions among Member States, there is scope for increased involvement of CSOs with development partners. This could also link to the annual revisions of the road map.

### *2.4.4 Division of labour*

Through the participation of several EU MS, and possibly the future participation of the EU Delegation in the DFID-led multi-donor civil society support programme, a rationalisation of the support is envisaged, to eliminate overlapping of activities. The UN funds a RGB-led civil society fund. Participation in this fund is not an option for the partners in the DFID-led multi donor fund since RGB is the registration body for CSOs, which leads to potential conflict of interest, as well as threats to the autonomy of CSOs to act independently. It is important that both funds as well as other funds/programmes coordinate their activities through exchange of information and participation in either advisory committee. Given that the UN fund is partly funded by the same donors that directly finance certain CSOs, there are certainly some areas of inconsistency.

## LESSONS LEARNT

### *2.5.1 Lessons learnt*

There is a general agreement from CSOs that, despite a call for simplified EU procedures, the system of EU ‘Calls for Proposals’ remains a considerable problem for local NGOs to follow and comply with. The requirements are seen as too high, especially for local organisations, and the complex management procedures do not enable EU Delegation staff to perform a more qualitative follow-up. The system of calls for proposals is seen as too time-consuming and does not enhance grant funding to the best performing organisations as it is merely based on the quality of the proposals rather than on the knowledge of the organisations and the context that they operate in, especially when it comes to external assessors. More flexible systems that can provide direct support or performance-based grants or core support should be explored.

MS have generally good relationships with the CSOs that they are working with. International NGOs are becoming more professional. Some local NGOs have difficulties correctly reporting their outputs. There is a general problem of fund traceability, which becomes even more complicated when it comes to International NGOs. The risk is that some NGOs may accumulate funding while others are left aside. There is a need for more cooperation between donors. MS States note a lack of autonomy from many local CSOs.

At sector level within the EU Delegation, CSOs are to be encouraged to provide more frank feedback from CSOs to raise issues on implementation. Involvement of CSOs in the mid-term and final evaluation of EDPRS II could be an opportunity for dialogue and feedback. As there is a limit on what CSOs say in public fora about their government, the evaluation processes should be independent, otherwise there is no space for improvement and criticism. In addition, it considerable time and effort to consult CSOs. The dynamic of ‘being in a hurry’ is not positive for the process. The speed that the government wants undermines the quality of dialogue with different actors and learning from the past. At sector level, the role of CSOs tends to be passive. They focus on the question ‘what can you do for us?’ and not on what is working well. The dialogue, in terms of value for money is not taking place. The available EU funding instruments and mechanisms cannot meet the ambition of the communication. There is untapped potential for public and private education institutes to contribute evidence-based research for accountability, transparency and advocacy purposes. Collaborations between academia, private sector, NGOs, and indeed development partners would yield mutual benefit and must be better explored.

### *2.5.2 Do no harm*

There is still room to improve coordination at the level of the donors. This may need increased efforts to tap into cultural meanings shaping the Rwandan context. Support is given to the usual suspect organisations linked to various factors such as the size of grants, capacity of lobbying the donors etc. Not enough attention is paid to aspects related to the enabling environment. The contextual validity of interventions geared towards strengthening CSOs is limited by approaches that favour the use of English and French over Kinyarwanda. In particular, culturally informed civil society action may not be understood or represented appropriately by decision makers.

Possible tensions exist between having an “organised”, strong civil society speaking with one voice (with which donors and GoR can more easily engage) and the strength of a multifaceted, diverse, plural civil society in terms of sectorial expertise, size, language etc. A distinction must be made between advocating for the strong role of civil society as such (“on its own behalf”) and the plurality of stances of CSOs on certain issues. Whereas attempts at better coordination of CSOs etc. make a lot of sense, they might also lead to increased control over CSOs’ activities. The fact that many CSOs depend almost entirely on support through donors might impact on their (perceived) independence. Taken to the extreme, they might even be seen as foreign agents following a foreign agenda which in turn would weaken their ability for advocacy. Current modes of support to CSOs by way of calls for proposals make it very difficult for CSOs to follow their own set strategies and not to fall into a donor driven approach while they are still struggling to come up with the means to finance staff and overheads. Core funding for the CSOs with better management capacities could be one option to alleviate this problem.

#

# PRIORITIES & ACTIONS MATRIX

*Programmes and activities related contributing to each indicator in separate document*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priorities** | **Indicators** | **Sub-indicators** | **Means of Verification** |
| **P1.** **Environment*****Promote a conducive legal and institutional environment for CSOs in Rwanda*** | 1.1- Level of trust and openness of discussions among CSOs, also between CSOs/private sector | * Number of civil society partners reporting that spaces exist for dialogue among CSOs
* Level of cooperation between CSOs on selected human rights topics
* Citizens' perception of extent to which CSOs engage with private sector (RCSB)
* Citizens’ perceptions on cooperation/synergy between CSOs (Rwanda Civil Society Barometer RCSB)
 | * Collated information from MS-funded projects
* Qualitative input from MS
* Rwanda Civil Society Barometer
* Rwanda Civil Society Barometer
 |
| 1.2. – Level of difficulty, in theory and in practice, of the CSOs registration process | * Simplification and clarity of processes and conditions for registration
* Number of cases of NGOs refused registration who should otherwise have qualified
* CSO staff demonstrate understanding of and ability to meet administrative registration requirements
* Indicator on legal environment (RCSB)
 | * Qualitative input from MS
* Quantitative input from MS
* Qualitative input from MS
* Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer
 |
| 1.3 - Satisfaction of CSOs with platforms for feedback and dialogue put in place by government | * Number of civil society partners reporting that they have had one or more constructive engagements with government over the past six months
* CSO perception of existence of CSO avenues to engage w/government (RCSB)
 | * Collated information from MS- funded projects
* Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer
 |
| **P2.** **Participation*****Promote the meaningful, structured and sustained participation of CSOs in domestic policies and in EU and Member State programming cycle*** | 2.1- Improved collective donor mechanisms for consultation with civil society | * View from Member States on the consultation processes and mechanisms with civil society
 | * Qualitative input from MS
 |
| 2.2 - Improved dialogue between CSOs and government  | * Number of JADF meetings attended by programme staff of CSOs
* Number of participatory mechanisms for accountability and monitoring the activities of local authorities that CSOs meaningfully engage in
* Citizens' perceptions on extent to which CSOs engage state (RCSB)
 | * Collated information from MS-funded projects
* Collated information from MS-funded projects
* Rwandan Civil Society Development Barometer
 |
| 2.3 - Number of parliamentary debates by CSOs & Number of civil society/parliament dialogues instigated | * Number of meetings carried out within MS- funded projects
 | * Collated information from MS-funded projects
 |
| 2.4 - Number of research papers that receive response from government and/or are shared in public forum with government & Number of national government policies and laws directly influenced by CSO input | * Number of CSO research and policy recommendations which are integrated into policy and law revisions/developments
* Number of requests to CSOs from Ministries or public agencies for research on a concrete topic
* CSO perceptions of CSO effectiveness in influencing public policy (RCSB)
 | * Collated information from MS-funded projects
* Collated funded from MS-funded projects
* Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer
 |
| 2.5 - Number of Imihigos (performance contracts) at district level which received CSO input | * Qualitative input from Member States
 | * Collated information from MS-funded projects
 |
| 2.6 - Level of media coverage of CSO activity | * Number of media organisations facilitating or participating in CSO-Government dialogues or public debate events in projects funded by Member States
* Number of a) radio programmes b) TV programmes, and c) press articles based on evidence from CSO activities and research funded by Member States
 | * Collated information from MS-funded projects
* Collated information from MS-funded projects
 |
| **P3.** **Capacity*****Increase local CSOs capacity to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively*** | 3.1 - Number of research papers submitted to government by civil society | * Number of research papers a) produced by CSOs, and b) used to develop evidence for advocacy campaigns and/or dialogue with government or local authorities
 | * Collated information from MS-funded projects
 |
| 3.2 Number of local CSOs that qualify for direct donor funding | * Number of CSOs having international stakeholders (financial & technical support) (RCSB)
 | * Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer
 |
| 3.3 Level of legitimacy and representativeness of CSOs (in terms of representation of citizen views, use of social accountability mechanisms to consult, gather and aggregate citizen feedback and internal governance and accountability processes) | * Number of adult citizens (above 15 years) engaged in the social accountability project activities (disaggregated by gender, disability and historically marginalised).
* Diversity of civil society participants (disaggregated by sex, residence, education) (RCSB)
* CSO perception of democratic practices within CSOs (RCSB)
* Citizen & CSO perceptions of extent to which CSOs are responsive to membership needs (RCSB)
 | * Collated information from MS-funded projects
* Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer
* Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer
* Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer
 |

# DASHBOARD

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Country: RWANDA** |
|  | **Process**  |
|  | **Area** | **Indicator** | **Achievement** |
|  | Involvement of Member States in Roadmap elaboration | Member States present in the country are actively involved in the elaboration of the Roadmap  | * The Member States were informed about the Roadmap during HoC meeting on 24/03/15
* They received all relevant information about the roadmap and participated in a meeting on the 27/04/15 to discuss the state of civil society strategic priorities
* They gave comments and input to DRAFT Roadmap on a number of occasions 2015-16
* MS also contributed to the formulation of the priorities and activities matrix
* The validation of the Roadmap by the ambassadors took place on ……
 |
|  | Consultation with local CSOs and international NGOs | The Roadmap has been prepared on the basis of consultations with a broad range of local CSOs respecting principles of access to information, sufficient advance notice, and clear provisions for feedback and follow-up.  | * Civil Society organisations received an invitation for a workshop and information about the Roadmap.
* The EUD organised three workshops with national and international NGO in Rwanda (21,22,23 April 2015)
* In addition, a questionnaire has been designed to gather input from Rwandan civil society around a few key areas that influence the effectiveness of civil society and to collect their views and proposals regarding support in order to reinforce the EU/CSOs partnership over the next years in Rwanda.
 |
|  | Joint actions | Member States present in the country are actively involved in the implementation of the Roadmap priorities | * MS will report on their activities and projects pertaining to the priorities on a yearly basis and are encouraged to use the roadmap to guide approaches and programmes
 |
|  | **Outcome**  |
| **Priority** | **Indicators** | **Sub indicators** | **Achievement**  |
| **Priority 1 – Environment** | 1.1- Level of trust and openness of discussions among CSOs, also between CSOs/private sector | * Number of CSOs reporting thay spaces exist for dialogue among CSOs
* Level of cooperation between CSOs on selected human rights topics has improved.
* Citizens' perception of extent to which CSOs engage private sector (RCSB)
* Perceptions on cooperation/synergy between CSOs (RCSB)
 |  |
| 1.2 – Level of difficulty, in theory and in practice, of the CSOs registration process | * Simplification and clarity of processes and conditions for registration
* Number of cases of NGOs refused registration who should have otherwise qualified
* CSO staff demonstrate understanding of and ability to meet administrative registration requirements
* Indicator on the legal environment (RCSB)
 |  |
| 1.3 - Satisfaction of CSOs with platforms for feedback and dialogue put in place by government | * Number of civil society partners reporting that they have had one or more constructive engagements with government over the past six months
* CSO perception of existence of CSO avenues to engage w/government (RCSB)
 |  |
| **Priority 2 - Participation** | 2.1- Improved collective donor mechanisms for consultation with civil society  | * Qualitative input and feedback from Member States
 |  |
| 2.2 - Improved dialogue between CSOs and government | * Number of JADF meetings attended by programme staff
* Number of participatory mechanisms for accountability and monitoring of local administrative action that CSOs meaningfully engage in
* Citizens' perceptions on extent to which CSOs engage state (RCSB)
 |  |
| 2.3 - Number of parliamentary debates and dialogues instigated by CSOs | * Number of meetings carried out within MS-funded projects
 |  |
| 2.4 - Number of research papers that receive response from government and/or are shared in public forum with government and - Number of national government policies and laws directly influenced by CSO input | * Number of CSO research and policy recommendations which are integrated into and policy and law revisions/developments
* Number of requests to CSOs from ministries or public agencies for research on a concrete topic
* CSO perceptions of CSO effectiveness in influencing public policy (RCSB)
 |  |
| 2.5 - Number of Imihigos at district level which received CSO input | * Qualitative input from CSOs
 |  |
| 2.6 - Level of media coverage of CSO activity | * Number of media organisations facilitating or participating in CSO-Government dialogues or public debate events funded by MS
* Number of a) radio programmes b) TV programmes, and c) press articles based on evidence from CSO activities and research
 |  |
| **Priority 3 - Capacity** | 3.1 - Number of research papers submitted to government by civil society | * Number of research papers a) produced by CSOs, and b) used to develop evidence for advocacy campaigns and/or dialogue with government or local authorities
 |  |
| 3.2 Number of local CSOs that qualify for direct donor funding | * Number of CSOs having international stakeholders (financial and technical support) (RCSB)
 |  |
| 3.3 Level of legitimacy and representativeness of CSOs (in terms of representation of citizen views, use of social accountability mechanisms to consult, gather and aggregate citizen feedback and internal governance and accountability processes | * Number of adult citizens (above 15 years) engaged in the social accountability project activities (disaggregated by gender, disability and historically marginalised).
* Diversity of civil society participants (disaggregated by sex, residence, education) (RCSB)
* CSO perception of democratic practices within CSOs (RCSB)
* Citizen & CSO perceptions of extent to which CSOs are responsive to membership needs (RCSB)
 |  |

1. The decentralisation strategy is being coordinated by the Ministry of Local government. The other actors which form the key institutions for the decentralisation sector include the various levels of GoR administration and its coordinating bodies, development partners, including CSOs, RALGA, donors and the private sector. The institutional overview distinguishes several levels oversight and decision making bodies : The Umudugudu Committee is the level where the population collectively define and resolve their social and economic problems. The Development Advisory Committee is at cell level. The Sector council coordinates all activities of the cells, and the District Council ensures development as articulated in the Districts plans. The Provincial Administration coordinates District Development Plans and assures resources. The Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities promotes good governance of districts and towns. The Central government including technical Ministries is the central overseer of the plan implementation at district level..  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://civicus.org/eei/downloads/Civicus\_EEI%20REPORT%202013\_WEB\_FINAL.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The UN Special Rapporteur recommended

	* The registration procedure for national and international NGOs should be much simpler and faster, in the same way asr private companies;
	* To abolish the requirement of renewal of registration certificates for international NGOs;
	* To allow unregistered organisations to operate;
	* To abolish the 20 per cent limit on overhead costs in programmes of international NGOs that are not in the interests of its beneficiaries;
	* To alleviate the reporting requirements on international NGOs;” Report to the Human Rights Council, A/HRC/26/29/Add.2, 16 September 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.rgb.rw/fileadmin/Key\_documents/LIST\_OF\_REGISTERED\_RBOs\_and\_NGOs\_in\_2015-Updated.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.migration.gov.rw/index.php?id=229 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. United Nations Special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, January 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. An IRDP programme to establish debate spaces was terminated when its Director was replaced, and certain Development Partners consequently withdrew funding.  [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ICNL - The International Center for Not for profit Law – NGO Law Monitor Rwanda updated 11 February 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. CIVICUS Civil Society Index Analytical Country Report for Rwanda, March 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Republic of Rwanda - National Itorero Commission- volunteerism policy paper - Kigali, July 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Education, health, agriculture and infrastructure have established direct presence at provincial and district levels – Governance and decentralisation sector, strategic plan 2013/2014 – 2017/2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Final Evaluation Report of Joint Action Development Forum Strengthening Project (Period: November2009-March2013) Commissioned by The Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy – CIPS Consultants [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Abunzi are government-trained local mediators [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The Legal Aid Forum is a membership based network encompassing 37 organisations that provide legal aid services to the indigent Rwandan population or vulnerable groups, or that provide support to legal aid service providers in Rwanda. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <https://sobanukirwa.rw> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The joint programming initiative of 7 EU (6 EU MS plus EU Delegation) and 4 non-EU bilateral partners (Switzerland, USA, Japan and Republic of Korea). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Final report CSOs Mapping, December 2013

	* The Policy Dialogue Programme (PDP) aims to strengthen and enhance civic participation, transparency, vertical and horizontal accountability and research-based evidence in public policy processes, serves as a strategic forum for networking with international governance indexes in order to objectively assess Rwanda’s governance. Policy dialogues have been conducted on the following topics: The Mo Ibrahim Foundation Index and reports on Rwanda; the Media Law and the Media Development Policy, the Anti-Corruption Policy, and legislative reform.
	* The Joint Governance Assessment (JGA): an assessment undertaken jointly by the Government of Rwanda and the Development Partners; based on clear and understandable objectives and key principles: joint ownership among partners; consultation and openness; orientation towards the identification of priorities of actions; credibility; linkage with specific and historical context of Rwanda; evidence basis; provision of a basis for dialogue among stakeholders. At national level, two spaces to be further developed are constituted by the Joint Governance Assessment (managed by RGB) - in which CSOs had in the past a limited engagement - and the monitoring of the engagements following the UPR 2011. It is unlikely to be repeated, and will reportedly be partly transformed into an informal Governance dialog between GoR and HoCs interested in governance issues.
	* The establishment and strengthening of a set of means to improve involvement of NSA in development processes and to stimulate participation and accountability at local level, including: Umuganda (mandatory community service); Ubudehe (involvement of communities to play an active role in solving problems at cell level, supported by the work of Ubudehe facilitators, who visits cells and support people in discussing the characteristics of poverty and their role in poverty reduction); Imihigo (Performance-contracts, in which development partners engage on specific objectives, the contract that should reflect local priorities is signed with the President of Rwanda); Abunzi (community mediators that resolve disputes at community level). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See for example: Agricultural and Food Security Policies and Small Scale Farmers in the East African Community 4. Rwanda, October 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Some networks supplement the government efforts in the implementation of energy policy and strategy, for e.g. the Rwanda renewable energy Alliance (RREA) which has been established in accordance with the Law N°04/2012 of 17/02/2012 and brings together members involved in Renewable Energy (RE), Energy Efficient (EE), and Environment and Climate Change (CC) sectors, including cooperatives, women and youth organisations and the Rwanda #YACA (Youth Alliance for Climate Actions) that address Climate change  [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Multi-Donor Civil Society Support Programme 2015-2020, DFID RWANDA BUSINESS CASE July 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. questionnaires: [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. (RCSP 2011) - Legal Frameworks and Political Space for Non-Governmental Organisations: An Overview of Six Countries: Phase II June 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Concept Note for country programme ‘"Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA)" [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. JRLOS Strategy 2013/14 to 2017/18 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. A post-genocide system of community justice [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Source: questionnaires: [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. NGO Law Monitor: Rwanda – The International center for Not-For-Profit Law- Last updated 11 February 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Final Evaluation Report of Joint Action Development Forum Strengthening Project (Period: November2009-March2013) Commissioned by The Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy – CIPS Consultants [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Examples: The East African Civil Society Organisations Forum (EACSOF), The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), the Global Network of Women Peace Builders (GNWP), GNWS, Houiru commission/Groots Africa, SUN Movement, Global Children’s movement [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. European Union – republic of Rwanda National Indicative Programme for the period 2014-2020  [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. EC Communication on “The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with civil society in external relations”, COM (2012) 492. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, May 2013 (<http://www.edprs.rw/content/edprs-2>‎) [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The implementation of the mapping exercise started on October 20, 2013 and completed in December 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Such as, for example, the CIVICUS report on Rwanda, the CCOAIB studies on CSOs roles in decentralisation, the USAID, UNDP and DFID diagnostic studies. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Consisting of the EU (European Delegation and the EU Member States - Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden United Kingdom - as well as the European Investment Bank), Japan, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, and the United States  [↑](#footnote-ref-35)