



EU SEE

SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Tanzania

Country Focus Report

2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. An Introduction to the Enabling Environment

B. Assessment of the Enabling Environment

1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms
2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework
3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources
4. Open and Responsive State
5. Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society
6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment

C. Recommendations

D. Research Process

A) An Introduction to the Enabling Environment

What we understand by an Enabling Environment is the combination of laws, rules and social attitudes that support and promote the work of civil society. Within such an environment, civil society can engage in political and public life without fear of reprisals, openly express its views, and actively participate in shaping its context. This includes a supportive legal and regulatory framework for civil society, ensuring access to information and resources that are sustainable and flexible to pursue their goals unhindered, in safe physical and digital spaces. In an enabling environment, the state demonstrates openness and responsiveness in governance, promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. Positive values, norms, attitudes, and practices towards civil society from state and non-state actors further underscore the supportive environment.

To capture the state of the Enabling Environment, we use the following six principles:

SIX ENABLING PRINCIPLES

- 1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms**
- 2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework**
- 3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources**
- 4. Open and Responsive State**
- 5. Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society**
- 6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment**

In this Country Focus Report, each enabling principle is assessed with a quantitative score and complemented by an analysis and recommendations written by our Network Members. Rather than offering a singular index to rank countries, the report aims to measure the enabling environment for civil society across the six principles, discerning dimensions of strength and those requiring attention.

The findings presented in this report are grounded in the insights and diverse perspectives of civil society actors who came together in a dedicated panel with representatives from civil society to discuss and evaluate the state of the Enabling Environment. Their collective input enriches the report with a grounded, participatory assessment. This primary input is further supported by secondary sources of information, which provide additional context and strengthen the analysis.

Brief Overview of the Country Context

In 2025, Tanzania's enabling environment for civil society continued to narrow across multiple dimensions, with fundamental freedoms increasingly constrained by arbitrary arrests, politically motivated prosecutions, and electoral violence that created a climate of fear and inhibited open participation in public life. Civil society actors, including activists and opposition figures, faced assaults and intimidation, while several opposition candidates were barred from standing in elections, undermining the right to freely associate, assemble, and engage in political processes. The legal and regulatory framework remained restrictive, with authorities applying laws in ways that enabled censorship, criminalisation of dissent, and punitive action against organisations and individuals accused of spreading "false information" or challenging state narratives.

Access to sustainable and flexible resources was also weakened as civic actors operated in an environment marked by surveillance, heightened scrutiny, and disruptions to both physical and digital spaces, limiting their ability to mobilise safely and pursue long-term goals. State openness and responsiveness similarly declined, with officials issuing warnings against perceived external interference, denying access to observers, and fostering an atmosphere in which engagement with government processes grew increasingly perilous. Public discourse about civil society became more hostile, fuelled by negative rhetoric from political figures depicting activists as threats to peace, which further eroded social trust and diminished societal support for independent civic action.

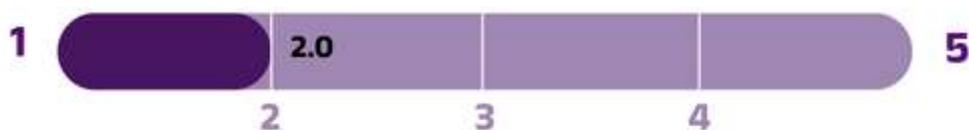
Moreover, the digital sphere—an essential space for organising, information-sharing, and public dialogue—came under severe restriction through internet service disruptions, platform bans, rising data costs, and the criminalisation of VPN use, all of which curtailed access to secure online environments and impeded civil society's ability to operate safely and effectively.

B) Assessment of the Enabling Environment

PRINCIPLE SCORE

1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms

Score:¹



Tanzania's Constitution guarantees freedoms of association, assembly, and expression. Citizens can form and join associations, political parties, unions, NGOs, and informal groups, both offline and online, to pursue shared interests. Organisations must register with authorities, submit constitutions and leadership structures, and receive official recognition to operate legally. Citizens also join cooperatives, professional associations, and advocacy groups to address social, economic, and workplace concerns. Religious freedom is generally respected, though occasional tensions arise, particularly in Zanzibar, where political disputes sometimes intersect with Islamic identity.

Despite legal protections, these rights are often constrained in practice. Police regularly deny permits for opposition rallies, arrest political leaders before meetings, and restrict online association through internet shutdowns and social media blocks. Laws such as the Cybercrimes Act and Media Services Act are used to prosecute social media users, journalists, and bloggers, resulting in self-censorship. High-profile incidents, including the arrests of comedian Idris Sultan and journalists, and restrictions on JamiiForums, illustrate persistent challenges to civic freedoms in Tanzania.

1.1 | Freedom of Association

[Article 20](#) of the Constitution of Tanzania guarantees the right to form or join associations or organisations established for the purpose of preserving or promoting one's beliefs and

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

interests. Also, Tanzania's legal framework permits the formation of associations, both formal and informal, allowing citizens to collaborate, advocate, or pursue shared interests.

Individuals and groups can legally establish associations, clubs, unions, NGOs, and political parties. NGOs and political parties must register with the relevant government authority, submitting constitutions, objectives, leadership structures, and sometimes proof of funding or membership. Once approved, an association is legally recognised, can operate, open bank accounts, and engage in collective activities. Ordinary clubs, professional associations, and informal groups can also form with minimal formalities, provided they comply with national laws.

Citizens also form informal groups around shared social or economic interests, such as farmers' cooperatives, savings groups, or local advocacy committees. For example, the Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Society ([AMCOS](#)) allows members to improve production collectively, negotiate fair prices, and advocate for agricultural support. Workers form unions such as the [Tanzania Teachers' Union](#) (TTU) or the Medical Association of Tanzania ([MAT](#)) to negotiate salaries, working conditions, or professional standards through collective meetings, strikes, and conferences.

Religious freedom is generally respected, and interfaith relations are largely peaceful, though sectarian tensions occasionally arise. Muslims are a minority nationwide, but nearly all Zanzibaris practice Islam. Political tensions between mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar sometimes [intersect](#) with religious issues. In some cases, religious groups face operational challenges—for instance, in July 2025, Bishop Josephat Gwajima's Glory of Christ Church was [closed](#), and the East African Lutheran Church (KKAM) in Ubungo Kibo was [demolished](#), reportedly for being on a road reserve.

Tanzanians also exercise their right to associate online. Citizens can join or create communities on platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, X (formerly Twitter), and [JamiiForums](#) to discuss social, political, or professional issues. Online spaces facilitate organising campaigns, raising awareness, or planning events like voter education drives, environmental initiatives, or civic rights advocacy. NGOs and advocacy organisations also use digital platforms to coordinate activities, share information, and engage members remotely. For example, JamiiForums allows citizens to report issues, debate policies, and mobilise support for social causes. However, online association can be disrupted by government restrictions. [Nationwide internet shutdowns](#), and [blocks](#) on platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and X, limit citizens' ability to organise and communicate freely in digital spaces.

1.2 | Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

In Tanzania, the Constitution guarantees the right to peaceful assembly. [Article 20\(1\)](#) states: *“Every person is entitled, subject to the laws of the land, to freedom of peaceful assembly, association, and public expression of opinion.”* Despite this, authorities maintain that demonstrations are unlawful without prior police authorisation. This position is grounded in [Section 43\(1\)](#) of the Police Force and Auxiliary Services Act, which requires organisers to give written notice at least 48 hours before any public gathering or procession. Section 43(3) further empowers police to issue a stop order if they *“reasonably believe”* the event may threaten public peace, safety, or order. Under [Section 45](#), any gathering of three or more people that defies a dispersal order is automatically deemed an unlawful assembly. This was used in 2025 to restrict freedom of Assembly in Tanzania.

Although President Samia Suluhu Hassan [lifted the 2016 blanket ban](#) on opposition rallies imposed by former President John Magufuli, freedom of assembly has continued to deteriorate sharply in the wake of escalating electoral violence and repressive electoral conditions. President Samia's [popularity declined](#) in the years leading up to the 2025 polls amid growing frustration over allegations of abductions, [extrajudicial killings](#), police brutality, arrests of opposition leaders, and broader suppression of democratic freedoms—issues the government did not publicly address.

In August 2024, [police banned](#) CHADEMA's planned International Youth Day rally in Mbeya, accusing organisers of intending to incite violence. A month later, in September 2024, CHADEMA chairman Freeman Mbowe and his deputy for mainland Tanzania, Tundu Lissu, [were arrested](#) ahead of a protest over alleged killings and abductions of government critics. Police justified the ban by citing "inflammatory" statements from party leaders and insisted they were acting to maintain public order. Following Tanzania's [General Election](#) held on 29 October 2025, protests—mobilised for months on social media, particularly TikTok, erupted nationwide. Police used tear gas and live ammunition to disperse demonstrators. [Numerous deaths](#) were reported, with some accounts suggesting thousands may have [been killed](#), although the exact number remains unknown. Authorities also imposed a nationwide internet shutdown.

1.3 | Freedom of Expression

In Tanzania, the Constitution guarantees freedom of expression. [Article 18](#) affirms that every person has the right to hold opinions, express ideas, and seek, receive, and share information through any medium without interference. Citizens also have the right to access information relevant to their lives and society, both nationally and internationally.

In practice, however, this right is frequently curtailed through restrictive laws and their enforcement. The 2015 [Cybercrimes Act](#) and the 2020 Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations have been used to prosecute social media users for insulting the president. Vague prohibitions on communication that "causes annoyance" or "leads to public disorder" empower authorities to suppress speech at their discretion. The [2020 regulations](#) further criminalise "spreading rumours" or insulting the nation online. A notable case occurred in May 2020 when comedian Idris Sultan [was arrested](#) for a video mocking former President John Magufuli. Authorities claimed the post violated the Cybercrimes Act by "bullying" the president. Sultan had also been [previously detained](#) for social media posts, including face-swap images, with authorities citing the law's prohibition on impersonation.

The government has also targeted journalists, bloggers, and ordinary citizens. In June 2024, journalist Dinna Maningo, owner of Dima Online, was detained for allegedly [exposing confidential investigation](#) documents related to sexual assault by the former Simiyu Regional Commissioner.

The 2016 [Media Services Act](#) grants the government broad authority over media content and licensing, including severe penalties for publishing defamatory, seditious, or illegal content. Section 59 empowers the Minister to ban any publication or restrict content deemed to threaten national security or public safety. Sustained legal and regulatory pressure has led to widespread self-censorship.

After assuming office in 2021, President Samia Suluhu Hassan [lifted](#) some bans on online media outlets and restored the licences of newspapers previously prohibited under the late

President Magufuli, allowing for increased government criticism. Nonetheless, self-censorship persists, and journalists continue to face harassment. For example, five journalists were detained covering a banned CHADEMA youth conference in Mbeya in August 2024, and others [were arrested](#) during protests against forced disappearances in Dar es Salaam in September 2024. Musicians and artists criticising the government have also faced arrests and censorship.

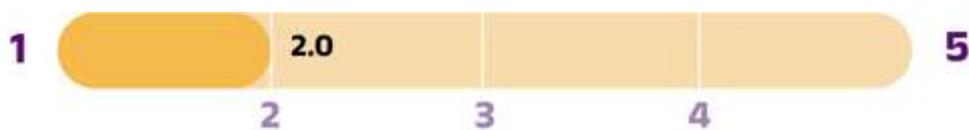
Media outlets themselves have been targeted. In October 2024, The Citizen and its Swahili-language sister paper, Mwananchi, had their online publishing [licences suspended](#) for 30 days after posting an animation criticising President Samia. On 6 September 2025, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) [suspended JamiiForums'](#) online content licence for 90 days and blocked access, citing violations of the Online Content Regulations after publishing statements about [political](#) and [business](#) figures.

TCRA monitors and removes online content and maintains a register of bloggers, forums, and online media. Ahead of the 2024 Local Government Elections, TCRA repeatedly ordered media outlets—including JamiiForums, MillardAyo, and JamboTV—to remove content without explanation. In May 2025, statements by Kawe MP Pastor Josephat Gwajima were also [removed](#) despite being made at a press conference, with TCRA citing verification concerns.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework

Score:



In Tanzania, NGO and CSO registration is governed by the Non-Governmental Organisations Act, 2002, overseen by the NGO Coordination Board, whose leadership is politically appointed, raising concerns over government influence. Registration requires multiple documents, founding members, local endorsements, physical offices, and fees ranging from TZS 80,000 to USD 350, with international NGOs paying more. While established organisations often navigate the process smoothly, smaller, rural, and advocacy-focused CSOs face challenges including delays, travel costs, and complex paperwork. Compliance obligations are extensive, including annual financial reporting, renewals, and sector-specific approvals, often overlapping with other laws. Foreign funding and politically sensitive activities are highly scrutinised, and state interference including harassment, confiscation of property, registration freezes, and arrests creates operational insecurity. Legal frameworks prioritise state control over civil society, with limited transparency, unpredictable enforcement, and restricted tax benefits. These factors, combined with regulatory fragmentation and election-period pressures, result in a constrained civic space and limited autonomy for Tanzanian CSOs.

2.1 | Registration

NGO and CSO registration in Tanzania is governed by the [Non-Governmental Organisations Act](#), 2002 (as amended), which gives the NGO Coordination Board the mandate to approve, refuse, or cancel registrations. The Board consists of the Registrar and Chairperson, both appointed by the President, and additional members appointed by the Minister of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups, raising concerns about political influence, especially over NGOs or CSOs whose work may be viewed as critical of the government.

The law outlines clear procedures and fees. Local NGOs and CSOs registering at district, regional, or national level must have at least five Tanzanian founding members, a constitution, minutes of the founders' meeting, a recommendation letter from local authorities, and a physical office address. [Registration fees](#) are about TZS 80,000 at district level; TZS 100,000

at regional; and TZS 115,000 at national level. International NGOs pay higher fees (USD 350). A [national assessment](#) of the CSO operating environment (2018–2022) found that many child-rights and youth-focused CSOs view the registration process, particularly the fees, as burdensome. The report also notes that some groups see the combined costs as discouraging factors that deter them from completing formal registration.

In practice, however, registration is more difficult. While well-established organisations often navigate the system smoothly, smaller, rural, or advocacy-focused CSOs [face obstacles](#) such as obtaining local recommendation letters, travel costs, and complex paperwork. In addition, the NGO Act does not specify a clear, fixed timeframe for the length the registration process should take. Studies show that even with modest fees, national-level registrations can take [three months](#) or more, particularly when documents require revisions or the Registrar’s office has a backlog. A certificate of registration is valid for ten years and NGOs or CSOs must apply for renewal of their registration certificate six months before the expiry date.

Compliance requirements also create ongoing burdens: NGOs must file annual activity and audited financial reports and pay renewal fees. Delays, discretionary enforcement, and occasional nationwide registration freezes further undermine predictability. For instance, during a 2024 verification exercise, the government [temporarily suspended](#) all new NGO registrations. Although authorities have stated that [properly submitted](#) applications can be processed within “no more than two weeks,” implementation is inconsistent. One source also notes a past statement by the Registrar expressing a preference for “fewer NGOs that align with the Government’s interests,” reflecting broader concerns about selective application of the law.

Although Tanzanian law provides mechanisms to review and appeal NGO registration refusals, the fairness and independence of these processes are often questioned, since both the NGO Coordination Board and the Minister are Presidential appointees. Applicants may first request a review by the Board. If dissatisfied with the outcome or if they opt out of the Board review they [can appeal](#) to the responsible Minister, who is required to make a decision within two months. Aggrieved parties can further pursue a [judicial review](#) in the High Court. However, there is no public record tracking appeal outcomes, processing times, or success rates, leaving transparency limited and decisions subject to discretion.

The legal framework governing CSOs is also fragmented. Some organisations fall under both the NGO Act and the Societies Act, while faith-based organisations running community projects are often required to register as NGOs, creating double-registration and multiple compliance obligations. For instance, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) obtained a certificate of compliance under the NGO Act but also had to [register separately](#) under the Legal Aid Act, 2007, and its 2018 regulations to provide legal aid. Each registration requires distinct documentation, clearance letters, and sometimes fees, increasing workload, costs, and compliance complexity. Smaller CSOs seeking to offer legal aid may find these additional requirements prohibitive, forcing them to choose between NGO work and legal services.

Marginalised groups face further barriers, particularly during politically sensitive periods. One deaf woman reported being denied registration for an independent NGO for Deaf women and was directed to operate under CHAVITA, the national association representing both men and women. Ahead of general elections, sources indicate that the Registrar and Board have been reluctant to register new CSOs, often without providing legally grounded or reasonable explanations.

2.2 | Operational Environment

CSOs registered under the NGO Act are required to comply with a broad range of laws and regulations beyond the Act itself, including access-to-information statutes, labour laws, tax obligations, and sector-specific requirements. CSOs must maintain a registered headquarters or office in Tanzania, keep accurate records and financial accounts, conduct activities aligned with their stated objectives, and ensure governance and public accountability through mechanisms such as board meetings and proper documentation.

The regulatory environment for CSOs is fragmented, with overlapping mandates from multiple authorities, resulting in increased compliance burdens and higher operational costs. Sector-specific requirements further complicate operations. For example, during election periods, organisations must engage with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to obtain voter-education or observer accreditation under [Section 10](#) of the Independent National Electoral Commission Act. Similarly, [Section 6\(1\)](#) of the Political Parties Act requires any individual or organisation, domestic or foreign, to notify the Registrar at least 30 days prior to conducting civic education or capacity-building training for a political party. CSOs providing legal aid must also obtain certification from the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, creating multiple, overlapping registration obligations. These overlapping requirements illustrate a regulatory architecture that is neither harmonised nor streamlined, contributing to operational uncertainty.

Scholarship underscores the fluidity of civic space in Tanzania, shaped by negotiation processes and the governing regime, whether democratic or authoritarian ([Kessy, 2025](#)). For instance, Furaha ya Wanawake Wajasiriamali kwa Viziwi Tanzania (Tanzania Joy Women Entrepreneurship for the Deaf) (FUWAVITA) has reported challenges in securing donor funding due to unpredictability in the enabling environment, with donors expressing concern over the stability and reliability of the civil society ecosystem. Supporting this, a [2022 survey](#) by the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) found that many local CSOs, particularly smaller organisations, faced financial challenges as donor support became increasingly unpredictable.

Compliance obligations are extensive. Under the Non-Governmental Organisations [Regulations](#), 2018, CSOs must submit quarterly and annual reports, including detailed financial disclosures for grants exceeding TZS 20 million. In comparison, business entities face no analogous reporting requirements for grants or donor funds. These obligations divert significant organisational resources from programmatic activities to administrative compliance. Although the law does not always set precise fines for each violation, non-compliance can result in administrative actions such as warnings, suspension of activities, or, in more severe cases, revocation of registration. Repeated or serious infractions may also prompt investigations or legal proceedings by the Board.

Foreign funding is subject to additional scrutiny. CSOs must notify the NGO Coordination Board of foreign grants, and approval is required, particularly for advocacy or politically sensitive activities, to ensure alignment with national interests. Domestic funding is subject to standard accounting and reporting requirements but generally attracts less regulatory scrutiny. [Finance Act](#) and Bank of Tanzania regulations mandate that foreign funds be routed through legal banking channels, with receipts and transfers properly documented for auditing. Funding for sensitive activities may trigger government investigation or restrictions if deemed a threat to public order or national security.

Instances of state interference have been documented, including disruptions to Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) paralegals in Kisarawe, obstruction of Twaweza's CSO Week

outreach in Monduli, and police raids on [election observers](#) that led to arrests. On 12 November 2025, staff members from the LHRC working at White Sands Hotel in Dar es Salaam were [harassed and intimidated](#). Their laptops, IDs, and mobile phones were confiscated, and they were ordered to report to the Zonal Crimes Office the next day. Such actions contribute to a climate of operational insecurity and constrain CSO autonomy.

Obtaining charitable status is particularly restrictive. Under Section 64(8) of the [Income Tax Act](#), only organisations exclusively established for narrowly defined purposes such as relief of poverty, education advancement, public health, or provision of public infrastructure qualify, limiting the ability of many CSOs to secure tax benefits despite broader developmental activities. Neither the [Tax Administration Act](#) nor the Income Tax Act provides clear timelines for approval, and the conditions imposed are often deemed impractical. Moreover, Section 34 of the [NGO Act](#) empowers the Minister to issue guidelines for monitoring and evaluating NGO documents and files. While intended as oversight, these powers can enable excessive state intervention, constrain organisational independence and limit sector effectiveness.

2.3 | Protection from Interference

Existing legal frameworks in Tanzania prioritise state control over civil society rather than safeguarding civic space. Under the Non-Governmental Organisations Act, 2002 (as amended), the Registrar of NGOs has authority to monitor and evaluate NGO activities and investigate matters in cooperation with law enforcement. Section 34 allows members of the public to inspect NGO records at the Registrar's office. As [documented](#) by the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) in its *Compendium of Laws Governing Civil Society Organizations in Tanzania*, the regulatory environment imposes multiple reporting obligations, particularly on grants, which function as financial oversight mechanisms that may compromise organisational autonomy.

The Act does not set clear timelines or frequency for inspections or investigations, and no statutory limits exist. Additional laws, including the [Criminal Procedure Act](#) (Section 42[1][b]) and the [National Security Act](#) (Section 14[1]), grant police broad powers to enter premises, seize property, and arrest individuals on suspicion of offences, often without proportionality safeguards, clear timelines, or guaranteed judicial oversight. Consequently, CSOs can be subjected to investigations related to alleged fraud, mismanagement, or technical breaches without notice or recourse, limiting operational independence.

There are several documented cases that illustrate these risks. In November 2025, [LHRC staff](#) were harassed and had laptops, IDs, and phones confiscated by security officials and were ordered to report to a crimes office. [In 2017](#), the Community Health Education Services & Advocacy (CHESA)'s offices were raided, and it was later deregistered, along with other NGOs, under accusations of violating laws or "ethics and culture." Similarly, two Actions for Democracy and Local Governance (ADLG) staff were arrested in 2017 during a workshop on mining-area governance and charged under penal-code provisions. Such actions generate fear, undermine operations, and restrict civic space.

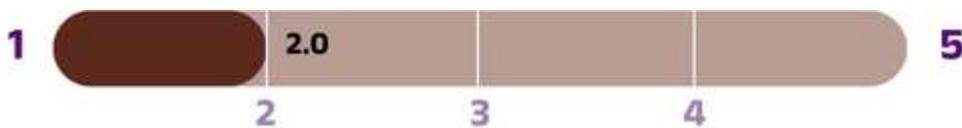
In Zanzibar, civil society operates under the [Societies Act](#) No. 6 of 1995, which requires registration and regulatory oversight. According to a 2025 Human [Rights Watch report](#), many voters faced difficulties obtaining identity cards, limiting political participation. Civil society actors describe a climate of fear and digital repression, particularly around elections, with online restrictions, harassment of activists, and regulatory uncertainty contributing to shrinking civic space.

Legal and administrative instruments have been [used to constrain](#) CSO operations through threats of deregistration, intensified oversight, and scrutiny of funding. Independent activities, public-interest litigation, or criticism of authorities have at times triggered opaque interference, including arbitrary arrests, harassment, and intimidation. Public statements and regulatory measures targeting NGOs—such as warnings of money-laundering risks or heightened oversight during electoral periods—further demonstrate a restrictive operating environment for civil society.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources

Score:



Civil society organisations in Tanzania face significant financial and operational constraints due to restrictive funding structures and regulatory barriers. Most funding is project-based, offering little support for core costs and limiting long-term planning. Domestic fundraising is hindered by laws requiring District Commissioner approval and the absence of tax incentives for donations. Tax exemptions for CSOs are slow and inconsistent, while essential items such as medical assistive devices remain taxable. Access to funding is uneven, favouring urban, established NGOs with stronger networks and grant-writing capacity, while rural and youth-led groups remain marginalised. Heavy reliance on foreign donors increases vulnerability to funding freezes, such as USAID’s 2024–2025 suspension, which forced many CSOs to halt activities and lay off staff. Banking restrictions, including account freezes, have further disrupted operations. Advocacy-focused CSOs face heightened political sensitivities, limiting participation in governance work. Overall, restrictive laws, financial dependency, and capacity gaps undermine CSO sustainability and impact.

3.1 | Accessibility

Funding arrangements for CSOs in Tanzania remain predominantly project-based, offering limited support for core or operational costs. This structure undermines institutional stability and constrains long-term planning. Domestic resource mobilisation is further limited by restrictive legal provisions. For example, Section 177 of the [Penal Code](#) (CAP 16, R.E. 2022) requires prior approval from the District Commissioner before any fundraising can occur—an impractical requirement for organisations operating nationally.

Although CSOs may apply for tax exemptions, these are not automatic. The application process is often lengthy; one organisation reported waiting three years before its exemption was approved. While some international donors benefit from diplomatic privileges such as duty-free importation [under](#) the Diplomatic and Consular Immunities and Privileges Act (Cap. 356), CSOs themselves do not. Essential items, including assistive medical devices such as

hearing aids, remain taxable, creating financial barriers for organisations serving persons with disabilities.

Access to funding opportunities is also uneven. Calls for proposals are typically shared online, but many grassroots and community-based organisations lack reliable internet access, sufficient grant-writing skills, or visibility within donor networks. Funding opportunities often circulate within established networks, disproportionately benefiting larger, more connected NGOs. [According](#) to the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) (2022), available funding “tends to go to a few big NGOs with such capacity,” leaving smaller organisations at a disadvantage. This was reiterated by the panel members. A [2025 media report](#) similarly highlights how youth-led CSOs face “funding gaps” and “skills deficits” that impede their sustainability.

Geographic disparities further shape access to resources. THRDC’s 2022 report notes that CSOs in urban centres such as Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Dodoma have better access to donors, networking opportunities, and information platforms. In contrast, rural and community-based CSOs are described as “isolated from funding ecosystems,” with limited access to digital tools, training, and donor engagement spaces.

Tanzania does not provide special tax deductions or incentives for individuals, companies, or institutions donating to CSOs. The only tax advantages relevant to development actors arise from diplomatic and consular immunities—treaty-based privileges that do not translate into domestic incentives for philanthropic giving.

Local fundraising culture remains underdeveloped, contributing to heavy reliance on foreign donors. Smaller organisations, particularly community-based groups, are especially vulnerable due to limited capacity in proposal writing, financial management, and reporting. Donors therefore tend to favour larger, well-established CSOs, a pattern that is particularly evident in Zanzibar. Child-rights and youth-focused CSOs are among those most dependent on external philanthropic foundations and international agencies. The government does not provide funding to support CSO engagement in advocacy or public-interest awareness, further constraining the financial environment.

3.2 | Effectiveness

Most financial grants available to civil society organisations in Tanzania are highly restrictive, tied to specific, pre-approved project activities, which limits organisational flexibility to reallocate funds for emerging needs or broader institutional priorities. This constraint reduces strategic adaptability and long-term planning. However, documented evidence indicates that donors have occasionally adjusted or suspended funding for Tanzanian CSOs in response to security, governance, or human-rights concerns. Broader donor guidance further shows that partners are expected to adapt funding modalities under volatile conditions, including through remote management, reprogramming, crisis modifiers, or additional security budgets.

For instance, in 2024–2025, USAID implemented a [funding freeze](#) affecting several Tanzanian CSOs, prompting suspension of awards, halted disbursements, and forced project re-planning. Similarly, the [World Bank suspended](#) disbursements for the REGROW tourism project following allegations of human-rights abuses, requiring implementing partners and government actors to adjust project modalities. [CSO reports document](#) that such suspensions and adjustments often compel organisations to pause activities, reduce staff, shift to remote delivery, or scale down monitoring operations. [Donor guidance](#) and sector analyses show that crisis or contingency funding lines are explicitly designed to enable rapid reprogramming in response to security or operational changes, demonstrating that donors build mechanisms to adjust funding terms as needed.

CSOs in Tanzania tend to perform more effectively in service delivery and community development initiatives than in advocacy, governance, or accountability work. This disparity is largely shaped by political sensitivities, restrictive regulatory oversight, and fear of reprisals, which inhibit meaningful participation in policy dialogue or oversight processes. Financial constraints are particularly pronounced during electoral periods, and even when funding is secured, state authorities may [impose limitations](#) or deny authorisation for certain activities, illustrating patterns of interference that undermine programme implementation.

The donor–CSO relationship in Tanzania occasionally allows for shared decision-making or negotiation regarding funding and project activities. While documented instances are limited, a [2023–2024 review](#) of the CSO enabling environment recommended strengthening donor–CSO interaction, including regular donor roundtables and more inclusive processes for resource distribution. Nonetheless, no robust or publicly visible system guarantees shared governance, and most funding relationships remain donor-driven. Smaller or grassroots CSOs typically have very limited influence over funding terms or project design.

Human resource capacity further constrains CSO effectiveness. Many organisations operate with staff lacking adequate training or comprehensive thematic expertise, reducing programme impact. Moreover, the 2019 NGO Act and associated [regulations](#) introduced complex registration, compliance, and reporting requirements, which increase administrative costs and divert resources from substantive work. Under the Non-Governmental Organisations Regulations (2018), CSOs must submit quarterly and annual reports, including detailed financial disclosures for grants exceeding TZS 20 million, but the regulations do not specify precise deadlines. Non-compliance may lead to suspension or cancellation of registration, yet enforcement is inconsistent, creating unpredictability and potential disputes.

Finally, the broader legal and policy framework restricts CSOs' capacity to engage on sensitive topics such as governance, human rights, and LGBTIQ+ issues. These limitations impair organisational effectiveness, constrain civic participation, and weaken the sector's overall contribution to democratic governance.

3.3 | Sustainability

The existing legal and regulatory framework in Tanzania continues to constrain the operational capacity and growth of civil society organisations. Funding structures exacerbate these limitations, as the majority of donor resources are project-specific rather than pooled or flexible “basket” funds. This restricts organisations' ability to reallocate resources according to emerging priorities or broader institutional objectives. Most funding originates from foreign philanthropic foundations and international donor agencies, increasing reliance on external sources and limiting financial autonomy.

Delays or interruptions in funding cycles have had significant operational impacts on CSOs. Regulatory requirements, such as the submission of contracts for donor-funded grants for approval, often introduce prolonged delays. [Reports](#) indicate that some grant-funded projects remained unapproved for over three months, jeopardising employment opportunities and project timelines. Media coverage confirms these disruptions: during a USAID funding suspension, more than 60 NGOs in agriculture, youth, and women's empowerment experienced [operational setbacks](#). Surveys found that over 40% of affected CSOs had to suspend or terminate staff, [reduce budgets](#) by up to 90%, and in several cases, close offices, halt projects, or suspend community services. These delays undermine long-term planning, reduce service delivery reliability, and weaken community trust in CSOs.

CSOs also exhibit limited engagement in income-generating activities, partly due to perceptions that such initiatives constitute profit-making ventures, exposing organisations to

regulatory scrutiny and public criticism. Weak internal financial accountability mechanisms are common, with some organisations operating in a quasi-personal manner, further compromising transparency and institutional robustness.

To mitigate these constraints, CSOs increasingly leverage non-financial resources alongside donor funding, although these typically complement rather than replace external grants. [Volunteerism](#) is a critical strategy, particularly for grassroots and community-based CSOs, enabling them to extend reach into rural or remote areas while fostering community ownership and trust. For instance, [Umoja Tanzania](#) engages both local and international volunteers to support educational and social-work activities, demonstrating reliance on volunteer time in lieu of paid staff.

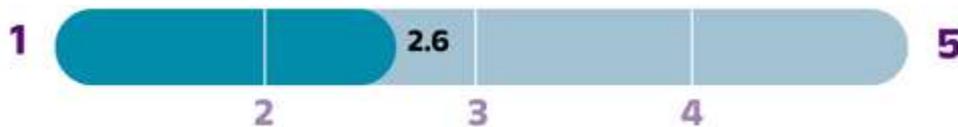
Political sensitivities around governance and accountability programming further limit operational flexibility. International donors are often cautious in supporting advocacy-oriented or independent organisations, narrowing the diversity and reliability of funding streams. Additionally, donor-driven programmes can sometimes be misaligned with local community priorities, reducing public trust and limiting the perceived legitimacy of CSO interventions.

Furthermore, no comprehensive, nationwide data exists on the proportion of CSO funding in Tanzania allocated to core versus project-specific costs, or on domestic versus foreign funding across all NGOs. Existing surveys cover only selected CSOs and may not represent the entire sector. A 2022–2023 survey by the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition [notes that](#) “most NGOs continue to have high dependency upon donor funding without other fundraising alternatives.”

PRINCIPLE SCORE

4. Open and Responsive State

Score:



Tanzania's Access to Information Act, 2016 guarantees citizens' right to request information, requiring public bodies to acknowledge requests within seven days and respond within 21–51 days. The law includes accessibility provisions for persons with disabilities, though compliance is weak and requests are rarely fulfilled in practice. A 2020 review found that most inquiries went unanswered, no annual reports were submitted to Parliament, and bureaucratic secrecy limited meaningful access. Fees and broad exemptions create further barriers.

CSOs are often invited to contribute during early stages of policy development, but participation is inconsistent, affected by political sensitivity, short submission deadlines, and lack of formal mechanisms for feedback. Although examples exist of CSO involvement in legal reforms, their influence on final outcomes is unclear due to limited transparency, weak follow-up, and the absence of systems to track how recommendations are used. Marginalised groups face additional obstacles, and many consultations remain symbolic rather than substantive.

4.1 | Transparency

Tanzania's legal framework formally recognises citizens' right to access information, as established under Section 5 of the [Access to Information Act, 2016](#). Public authorities are required to provide information proactively or upon request, respond within seven days to acknowledge receipt, and deliver the requested information within 21 days. In complex cases involving large volumes of information, authorities may extend the deadline by up to 30 additional days, provided the requester is notified in writing. Section 19 allows applicants to contest refusals, fees, or delays before the head of the institution within 30 days.

The Act applies only to Mainland Tanzania and to public bodies or private entities that use public funds or hold information of significant public interest, explicitly excluding Zanzibar. Stakeholders in Zanzibar have [repeatedly called](#) for stronger access-to-information provisions,

and as of 2024, the Zanzibar Media Committee (ZAMECO) has been [reviewing](#) relevant laws to enhance transparency and media freedom.

The law requires information to be accessible to all citizens, including marginalised groups and persons with disabilities. Section 10(4) allows requests to be submitted orally for those unable to write, and mandates information to be provided in formats accommodating sensory disabilities, such as Braille, large print, audio, or electronic formats. This is reinforced by the [Persons with Disabilities Act, 2010](#), which obliges public bodies to provide information in accessible forms, including sign language where needed.

There is no publicly available evidence that anyone in Tanzania has received government-held information in a language other than Kiswahili or English, the country's official languages. A [2023–2024 assessment](#) of ICT and information access for persons with disabilities found that, despite legal provisions for accessible formats, compliance is uncommon. The study highlights the experience of a visually impaired journalist, whose requests for accessible information were “rarely adhered to” in practice.

Despite these provisions, practical access remains limited. State institutions are often slow to release information through official channels, restricting CSOs' ability to engage effectively or hold authorities accountable. A [2020 review](#) of the Access to Information Act, 2016 (ATI) found that fewer than one in ten requests were partially successful, with about 81% of requests unanswered beyond the 21-day legal deadline. This had not changed in 2025. No government body had submitted annual reports to Parliament on information requests, undermining transparency and compliance monitoring. [Obstacles](#) include institutional reluctance, limited resources, and a bureaucratic culture that favours secrecy.

The Act allows public authorities to charge fees to cover production costs, which can create financial barriers for low-income citizens. Exemptions to access are broad and vaguely defined, with unauthorised disclosure punishable by three to five years in prison. While penalties exist for overt acts such as concealing or destroying information, unjustified denial without other wrongful acts carries no clearly defined punishment. In practice, inconsistent enforcement, limited public reporting, and bureaucratic hurdles continue to constrain meaningful access to information, especially for marginalised populations.

4.2 | Participation

In Tanzania, CSOs are often consulted at the early stages of drafting policies and regulations, but the practice is inconsistent and heavily dependent on political context, donor expectations, and the nature of the policy being developed. Government institutions usually seek out CSOs to access technical expertise, enhance legitimacy, demonstrate openness, limit political criticism, fulfil legal or procedural expectations for participation, or tap into CSO networks for public awareness and implementation support.

There are several examples demonstrating early-stage CSO involvement. In 2023, the Law Reform Commission held dialogues where CSOs, including the Tanganyika Law Society, were invited to offer [opinions on legal](#) and institutional reforms. Between 2019 and 2022, during the drafting of the Personal Data Protection Act, CSOs such as JamiiForums [submitted model](#) laws and technical proposals that shaped the initial discussions. In August 2022, media stakeholders were formally invited to contribute to [proposed amendments](#) to the Media Services Act. In January 2024, the Parliamentary Committee on Administration, Constitution,

and Law invited a range of stakeholders to [provide input](#) on governance and election-related bills.

Despite this, public records show limited transparency about whether CSO input is incorporated into final policies. Government documents rarely indicate which recommendations came from CSOs, making it difficult to verify their actual influence. Some CSOs maintain formal [MoUs](#) with government bodies that allow them to support policy work within their thematic areas. For example, in June 2025 the government cited stakeholder, including CSO, contributions when announcing [amendments](#) to the Merchandise Marks Act, 1963, which aims to strengthen the regulation of counterfeit goods. Twaweza East Africa's [2024 Annual Report](#) also notes the involvement of several CSOs including Twaweza, TCD, NaCoNGO, CSL, LHRC, IFES, and CoRI in providing analysis and recommendations on the [Media Services Act](#), the Tanzania Information & Broadcasting Policy, and participating in multi-stakeholder forums on electoral-law reforms.

There is no standardised legal or institutional mechanism for CSOs to submit recommendations, either online or in person. Most submissions happen through [workshops](#), roundtables, symposiums, and similar events. The timeframe for submitting feedback in Tanzania can be very short, depending on the issue's urgency. For example, on 11 August 2024, Parliament called for input on eight draft bills, with hearings from August 14–16 and submission deadlines on [August 15–16](#). Some saw this as discouraging participation, though in other cases the [government allows](#) up to two weeks for submissions. Other organisations, such as [JamiiAfrica](#), create other methodologies and collect public input through online platforms like [JamiiVoices](#) or the [Stories of Change](#) initiative and send these submissions to government focal points by email (Online). Although authorities sometimes respond, there is limited evidence to show that these inputs lead to concrete action.

When it comes to marginalised groups' participation, reports indicate additional barriers. According to the UNPRPD "Situational Analysis on Persons with Disabilities in Tanzania" (November 2022), persons with disabilities remain [under-represented](#) in consultations, face accessibility obstacles, and often perceive their participation as tokenistic. Gender assessments similarly highlight [persistent gaps](#) in women's participation in decision-making processes, driven by structural and cultural constraints that limit meaningful engagement. This limits their meaningful participation in policy processes and sometimes shows that their engagement is more symbolic rather than influential, underscoring the need for more inclusive and accountable consultation mechanisms.

Despite these engagements, CSO participation is often reactive rather than initiated by government institutions. Government officials may attend consultation forums in a formalistic or perfunctory manner, offering limited feedback and giving little indication that CSO inputs will shape outcomes. At the same time, some CSOs do not engage proactively or consistently during consultations, which further reduces the likelihood that their recommendations will be taken seriously. As a result, although CSO-government engagement occurs, its impact on final policy outcomes remains limited.

4.3 | Accountability

In Tanzania, CSOs' contributions to government-led consultations are frequently overlooked or given minimal weight. While CSOs are formally invited to participate in policy discussions or development planning, their input rarely translates into substantive action. Efforts by CSOs to hold government institutions accountable are often constrained by a mix of legal,

institutional, and political barriers. In some cases, restrictive measures including intensified compliance requirements, tax audits, or, in extreme instances, harassment and enforced disappearances of activists have been reported.

The current legal and institutional framework does not obligate the government to provide feedback on CSO submissions. Stakeholder engagement is often procedural, aimed at demonstrating participatory processes rather than incorporating perspectives meaningfully. No public reporting exists on which CSOs were consulted, what issues were discussed, or which recommendations were submitted, unless CSO publish it, limiting transparency and impeding monitoring of these engagements. As a result, many CSO recommendations, especially those involving policy reform or governance issues, are ignored, with only minor technical or administrative suggestions occasionally acknowledged.

Evidence suggests that CSO input is sidelined for [multiple reasons](#). Proposals critical of government policies or touching politically sensitive topics are frequently ignored. CSOs engaged in advocacy or politically sensitive campaigns may be perceived as partisan, reducing authorities' willingness to act on their input. Others are seen as misaligned with national priorities, while watchdog organisations are often treated as external critics rather than partners in policy-making. Government officials may also fear that CSO contributions could fuel dissent, particularly on governance, elections, or human-rights issues, resulting in selective consideration of only politically safe recommendations.

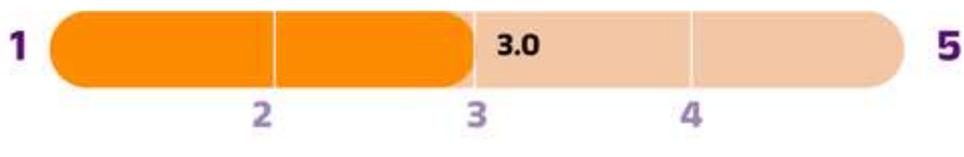
Tanzania lacks a national mechanism to track or audit government follow-up on CSO input. While some organisations or coalitions implement their [own monitoring](#), these systems are limited. Governments rarely provide explicit rejections of CSO recommendations, making it difficult to link submissions to outcomes or quantify how often input is disregarded. Even when recommendations are submitted, follow-up processes within ministries, commissions, or local government offices remain weak and unclear, further constraining the influence of civil society on national decision-making and accountability.

The absence of transparent feedback, annotated drafts, or audit trails means that most CSO inputs amount to “consultation without guarantee,” making it difficult to assess their influence on final decisions. For example, the final [Tanzania Development Vision 2050](#) document, released in 2025, does not indicate which sections reflected CSO or public input. Although the government and CSOs held public consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues, there is no clear way to link specific CSO recommendations to final policies. Media reports and press releases often note that CSOs were “consulted” or “involved,” but they rarely provide follow-up or outcome reports showing whether and how input shaped laws, policies, or budgets. Additionally, Tanzania lacks any formal, standardised legal or institutional process for CSOs to contest government decisions or demand explanations when their contributions are ignored.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

5. Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society

Score:



Civil society organisations in Tanzania face persistent mistrust, often portrayed as foreign-influenced due to unclear definitions of “national values.” This undermines their credibility despite their role in advancing rights, governance, and civic participation. Advocacy-focused CSOs remain few, and their input in policy processes is often symbolic, though recent engagements such as contributions to Vision 2050, SDG reviews, tax-policy submissions, and the National AI Strategy show pockets of influence. Media restrictions, financial pressures, and government sensitivity to criticism further limit civic space, reinforcing self-censorship and weakening public trust. Online platforms help CSOs mobilise communities but also expose them to misinformation and regulatory risks. Public opinion remains mixed: many citizens see CSOs as addressing community needs, yet others view them as partisan or donor-driven. While Tanzania has strong equality laws, gaps in implementation leave women, youth, and persons with disabilities facing entrenched barriers to full participation in political and civic life.

5.1 | Public Discourse and Constructive Dialogue on Civil Society

Civil society organisations in Tanzania are often portrayed as agents of foreign agendas or cultural influences, a characterisation that is formally [prohibited](#) under national regulations. This framing has generated debates regarding the definition of “Tanzanian norms and traditions,” a concept complicated by the country’s diverse ethnic and cultural groups. The absence of clear statutory or codified guidance on this matter has led to reliance on unwritten or informal interpretations of national values. Despite these constraints, CSOs have played a critical role in promoting discourse on human rights, freedoms, democratic governance, and constitutionalism. Nevertheless, government narratives frequently label certain NGOs as instruments of foreign interests, including efforts to influence political transitions or advocate for LGBTIQ+ rights. Such [labelling](#) undermines public confidence in these organisations and constrains their ability to engage effectively in advocacy or rights-based initiatives.

Advocacy-oriented CSOs in Tanzania remain few compared to the many service-delivery NGOs, which [limits the range](#) of civil-society voices feeding into political debates. Some CSOs are perceived as being misaligned with national interests, and when they engage in sensitive advocacy, segments of the public view them as partisan. This perception weakens trust, reduces community mobilisation, limits the reach of public-awareness campaigns, and makes it harder for CSOs to push for reforms without facing suspicion or resistance. However, CSOs continue to participate in political and policy processes such as development planning, legislative reviews, and governance or accountability initiatives but their influence is not as strong or widespread as expected.

Many CSO actors feel their involvement in consultations is often symbolic, with little incorporation of their recommendations. Impact tends to be greater when CSOs work through coalitions that pool expertise and legitimacy, especially on sectoral issues like resource governance, SDGs, and fiscal policy. Broader political reforms remain constrained by regulatory and political pressures. There are recent examples of meaningful engagement. In 2025, CSOs met in Arusha to [contribute](#) to Vision 2050, and their input was officially acknowledged. Through the Tanzania Solidarity for Development Platform (TSDP), CSOs submitted [shadow reports](#) for the 2019 and 2023 SDG reviews. Policy Forum submitted [tax-reform](#) position papers to the Parliamentary Budget Committee in 2023. And in May 2025, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa tasked JamiiAfrica with [convening](#) stakeholders to inform the National AI Strategy.

There is no comprehensive data on how often CSOs are invited to participate in public dialogues or policy reforms in Tanzania, but evidence shows it does happen occasionally. For instance, over 900 civil-society and private-sector participants contributed to the drafting of Tanzania Vision 2050, with the committee [acknowledging their input](#). In 2023, TLS and other CSOs [were invited](#) by the Law Reform Commission to present recommendations to improve civic and political space. JamiiAfrica (formerly JamiiForums) also played a [key role](#) in developing Tanzania's first Data Protection Act, helping draft a model law with ICNL support that informed the 2022 PDPA and the 2023 establishment of the Personal Data Protection Commission. However, CSOs report that their contributions are rarely fully incorporated. Often, only a few suggestions are considered, or recommendations [are ignored](#). Reviews of CSO engagement in accountability and public finance note that, while NGOs contribute via technical working groups, budget tracking, and policy briefs, their input is frequently treated as non-binding rather than seriously influencing policy.

Media coverage in Tanzania continues to face serious pressure, according to several media-freedom monitors, human-rights organisations and industry reviews. Although independent journalists and media houses still operate, the overarching environment remains restrictive. Structural and systemic constraints from self-censorship and unequal coverage to political pressure continue to skew media narratives, limiting the possibility of balanced, in-depth reporting. According to a [2024 report](#) by Freedom House, the 2016 [Media Services Act](#) allows the government broad control over licensing and content, resulting in harsh penalties for material considered seditious or defamatory.

Ahead of the October 2025 election, Human Rights Watch [documented](#) harassment, arrests and abductions of activists — contributing to a climate that discourages critical reporting. A [2025 review](#) highlights a decline in public trust in traditional media, with many citizens describing outlets as “disconnected” or “self-serving.” As advertising revenues collapse, newsrooms face financial strain that weakens editorial independence and increases

vulnerability to external influence. This economic pressure, combined with regulatory risks and political sensitivities, often results in softened or selective coverage.

In 2025, after disputed elections and allegations of violence, the government [openly accused](#) both international and local media of biased reporting and “slander,” urging foreign outlets to adhere to what it called “balanced and ethical journalism.” The government’s response reflects its sensitivity to unfavourable coverage and reinforces the pressure on the press to align with official narratives. Domestically, authorities continued to insist that media outlets should be “patriotic” and focus on stories that project a [positive image](#) of the country, arguing that foreign media should also avoid publishing reports that could tarnish their own nations’ reputations.

Online platforms significantly influence public perceptions of CSOs by providing channels to reach people, mobilise support, raise awareness, and shape public discourse, particularly among youth and urban populations. However, because online spaces can be noisy, polarised, or subject to censorship, CSOs’ credibility and reputation are sometimes affected by misinformation, public distrust, or regulatory pressures. To effectively influence public opinion and policy, CSOs need to combine online outreach with offline engagement and prioritise transparent, credible communication. A recent [article](#) highlights that JamiiForums and other online community platforms have become key “virtual public spheres” where users discuss politics, rights, and social issues, including government criticism, civic activism, and CSO-led initiatives.

5.2 | Perception of Civil Society and Civic Engagement

According to the *Twaweza 2023 Annual Report*, a nationally representative panel of 2,000 Tanzanians indicated that approximately 44% believe civil society organisations “address citizens’ priorities and concerns to a large extent,” while 30% believe that CSOs “make a significant contribution to the development of their communities,” a decline from 44% in 2019. The report further highlights that CSOs are widely perceived as mobilising communities and addressing local problems, reinforcing their role as [agents](#) of social change. However, evidence from [regional studies](#) on civic space dynamics in East Africa suggests a contrasting narrative. In Tanzania, many CSOs have become less vocal over time due to government actions that limit operational space and curtail advocacy. This includes perceptions that external actors use some CSOs and NGOs to advance [agendas](#) inconsistent with national sovereignty, such as [promoting](#) LGBTIQ+ rights, or that they primarily provide financial benefits to community members rather than pursuing broader civic or social objectives.

The government [developed](#) a National Strategy for Civic Education (2011) to coordinate civic-education initiatives across schools, communities, and public institutions. However, a 2024 report by HakiElimu noted that, despite civics being part of the curriculum, there is [limited evidence](#) that teaching quality, content, and resources effectively empower youth for democratic participation. Civil-society organisations (CSOs) have stepped in to complement government efforts. For example, [HakiElimu](#) piloted an “Action Civics School Toolkit” in 20 secondary schools (2022–2023) to teach democratic values, leadership, and participation. The Foundation for Civil Society (FCS), through its “Uraia Wetu Project (2023–2025),” supports CSOs nationwide to [strengthen civic participation](#), while ActionAid Tanzania mobilises youth and women, provides civic and electoral education, and [builds capacity](#) for policy engagement. At the regional level, for example, in the Kilimanjaro region, NGOs have raised awareness about citizens’ rights and [encouraged](#) people to claim them, effectively serving as community-level civic educators. These efforts show that while government-led

civic education exists, CSOs play a crucial role in engaging citizens and promoting democratic practices.

According to the [Afrobarometer report](#) published in May 2025, Tanzanians generally believe they can influence the political process, particularly through voting and elections. The report shows that 88% of citizens view regular, open, and honest elections as the best way to choose leaders, and 86% feel “completely free” to vote for their preferred candidate, regardless of the outcome of the votes. However, actual willingness to speak out or challenge power is limited by fear or perceived risk: 75% of respondents believe whistleblowers face retaliation, highlighting concerns about personal safety despite support for political participation. When asked whom they would contact to raise concerns, 42% said local government officials, 33% cited central government, and many still prefer informal leaders, such as religious figures or community elders, over political offices.

On the other hand, community-led civic activity is present in Tanzania — particularly through youth volunteerism, local development projects, civic-education initiatives, and NGO-driven community programmes. However, participation remains uneven. Many citizens report little or no engagement with CSOs or volunteer efforts, largely due to geographic isolation, limited resources, and a political environment that can discourage open civic involvement. As a result, civil-society organisations and NGOs have become the backbone of these initiatives, [frequently depending](#) on local volunteers to run activities in communities where formal structures are weak or absent. But we must understand that there is no single comprehensive dataset tracking all volunteerism or civic-engagement participation nationwide; most evidence comes from case-studies or NGO-reporting, which may under-represent the true picture.

Public perception of CSOs is thus ambivalent; while recognised as vehicles for community development, some organisations are increasingly viewed as income-generating entities or as instruments serving partisan interests. Government classifications of CSOs into those aligned with the ruling party and those aligned with the opposition further complicate their operations, affecting the degree of cooperation and engagement that CSOs can secure from state institutions. These dynamics underscore the complex interplay between civic credibility, public trust, and political context in shaping the effectiveness of civil society in Tanzania.

5.3 | Civic Equality and Inclusion

In Tanzania, a comprehensive legal framework exists to promote and safeguard equal rights and opportunities for all individuals. The [Constitution of Tanzania \(1977\)](#) serves as the cornerstone of this framework, with Articles 12 and 13 enshrining the principles of equality and non-discrimination as fundamental rights. Article 12 stipulates that all human beings are born free and equal, each entitled to recognition and respect for their inherent dignity. Correspondingly, Article 13(1) affirms that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled, without any form of discrimination, to equal protection under the law. Furthermore, Article 13(4) explicitly prohibits discrimination by any person or authority acting under the law or in the execution of state functions.

Complementing these constitutional provisions are a range of national policies and legislative instruments that aim to enhance inclusion and equity. The National Gender and Women’s Development [Policy \(2023\)](#) seeks to advance gender equality across all dimensions of life - social, economic, political, and cultural - by guiding the formulation and implementation of gender-responsive policies, strategies, and programmes that safeguard the welfare of both women and men. In a similar vein, the [Persons with Disabilities Act \(2010\)](#), particularly Section

6, obliges the government to prohibit all forms of discrimination on the basis of disability and to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy full and equal protection and benefits before the law. Additionally, the National Guidelines on [Mainstreaming Gender](#) into the Environment provide a coherent, systematic approach for integrating gender perspectives into environmental governance, thereby reinforcing institutional accountability and inclusivity within ecological management frameworks.

However, the practical implementation of these laws and policies often remains inadequate. While women's political representation has improved through constitutional provisions such as the allocation of 30 percent special seats in Parliament, substantive decision-making power remains concentrated among men. For instance, within the current [cabinet of 30 ministers](#) (excluding deputy ministers), only six are women, including the President herself. This gender imbalance highlights persistent structural and sociopolitical barriers to equitable participation in governance. As of [July, 2024](#), 37.5 percent of ministers in mainland Tanzania are women, 37.4 percent of parliamentarians are women, 37.8 percent of judges are women, and 24 percent of Tanzanian embassies and missions are headed by women.

Regarding Local Government, as of now, no official report has been released on the November 2024 local government elections. This means there is no disaggregated data showing how many women, youth, or persons with disabilities (PWDs) contested for chairperson or mixed-member positions, who won, or what voter turnout looked like. For context, in the 2019 [local government elections](#), women held only 2.1% of elected village chair positions, 6.7% of hamlet chair positions, and 12.6% of street chair positions. With no gender-disaggregated data available for 2024, there is little evidence that major improvements have been made. However, each village council continues to have 25 members, including eight seats reserved for women to meet the one-third quota.

Similarly, laws and policies concerning persons with disabilities lack robust enforcement mechanisms and sufficient budgetary support to ensure accessibility and inclusion within civic institutions. A source reports that some organisations, such as Furaha ya Wanawake Viziwi Tanzania (FUWAVITA), have faced challenges participating in government-led initiatives to support the deaf community. FUWAVITA was reportedly excluded from such activities and instructed to channel its concerns through the umbrella organisation SHIVYAWATA, despite having distinct interests and priorities. Patriarchal social structures continue to impede the active participation of women and girls in public life. Women remain underrepresented in local governance structures and civic organisations, largely due to entrenched social norms and expectations regarding gender roles. Similarly, persons with disabilities and members of ethnic minority groups frequently encounter stigma and exclusion from key civic processes, including public consultations, electoral activities, and access to civic information—often exacerbated by the absence of accessible communication tools such as sign language interpretation or Braille materials.

A 2025 study using national health and demographic surveys found that disability is more frequently [reported](#) among older adults, women, and people in certain regions, indicating that disability is both widespread and socially diverse. Household and census data show that about 11.2% of Tanzania's population (aged 7 and above) lives with some form of disability. Civil-society organisations and international partners are [leading advocacy](#) and inclusion efforts, promoting awareness, accommodations, and the rights of people with disabilities (PWDs) to education and employment. Despite these efforts, research [indicates](#) that stigma and discrimination persist, particularly in workplaces and training institutions. However, growing

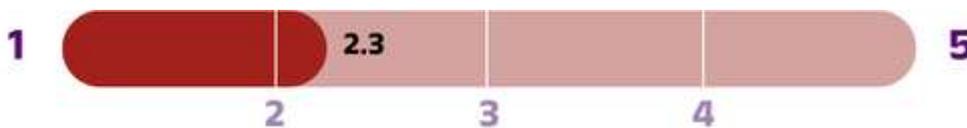
inclusion initiatives suggest gradual positive change, especially among civil-society actors, institutions, and younger generations.

Although Tanzania's legal framework formally guarantees equal rights for all, significant gaps remain between policy and practice. Weak enforcement, limited institutional capacity, and entrenched political dynamics continue to hinder the realization of these rights. As a result, marginalised groups—including women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) face a combination of institutional, cultural, and economic barriers that restrict their full and equitable participation in civic and political life. According to a May 2025 [report](#) by the Foundation for Civil Society, limited access to assistive devices, services, and inclusive infrastructure further constrains PWDs' mobility, education, and engagement. Poverty and resource scarcity manifested as inadequate infrastructure, lack of assistive tools, limited job opportunities, and insufficient inclusive services which intersect with disability to impede full participation in civic, economic, and social activities.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment

Score:



Tanzania has increasingly restricted digital freedoms since 2020, using nationwide and app-specific internet shutdowns during elections and periods of political tension. Platforms such as X, Telegram, and sometimes WhatsApp remain inaccessible without VPNs, and authorities rely on laws like the Cybercrimes Act and the Online Content Regulations to criminalise online dissent, monitor citizens, and pressure platforms to remove critical content. Reports indicate expanding surveillance, including an “Online Patrol” unit and data requests from telecoms, contributing to arrests of journalists, activists, and opposition figures. Although evidence of state-linked hacking is unverified, fears of monitoring force CSOs and citizens to self-censor. The Personal Data Protection Act (2022) created a privacy commission that has begun issuing rulings, but implementation remains uneven. Digital-security training for CSOs is growing, though smaller groups lack capacity. Despite improving network coverage, internet access remains limited and costly. Tanzania is developing AI policies and expanding digital-literacy initiatives, but rural connectivity and affordability gaps persist.

6.1. | Digital Rights and Freedoms

In Tanzania, internet shutdowns were virtually unheard of before the 2020 election period. However, as civic engagement, accountability, and political openness have declined, so too have digital rights and freedoms. Between 29 October and 3 November 2025, during the election period, Tanzania experienced its first nationwide [internet shutdown](#), leaving citizens unable to access websites or mobile applications. The government reportedly implemented this measure in [response](#) to widespread protests, presenting it as a means to maintain order. Before this, while complete shutdowns were rare, authorities frequently imposed app-specific restrictions that forced users to rely on VPNs to access them.

A similar pattern was observed during the October 2020 general election, when access to major social media platforms [was blocked](#), as observers described it as a “complete

communication shutdown.” In August 2024, access to X was again **restricted** for about 24 hours amid online campaigns exposing alleged kidnappings and state violence. This recurring use of digital restrictions during politically sensitive moments suggests a deliberate government strategy to control information flow and suppress public mobilisation. As of December 2025, several platforms, including Telegram, X, and occasionally WhatsApp, remain **inaccessible** in Tanzania without a VPN. These incidents of internet shutdowns and app-specific restrictions do not follow a predictable pattern. There is no set number of times they occur in a year or within a specific timeframe. Instead, they usually happen during periods of heightened public discussion or when the government seeks to control information flows—particularly around election periods.

The **Cybercrimes Act, 2015**, criminalises various online activities, including the publication of information considered false, deceptive, misleading, or inaccurate. It grants law enforcement broad powers to search and seize electronic devices and conduct surveillance without a court-issued warrant, relying instead on “reasonable grounds” as justification. Key terms within the law, such as “offences,” remain vaguely defined, leaving room for interpretation and potential abuse. The Act also includes a “sedition offence” provision, which carries severe penalties and is punishable by harsh criminal sanctions and limited legal recourse for defendants. Authorities have repeatedly invoked this law, particularly Section 16, which criminalises the publication of false information, to target independent journalists, bloggers, and citizens expressing dissent online.

The Electronic and Postal Communications (**Online Content**) Regulations, 2018, and subsequent amendments have further expanded the government’s control over digital spaces. These regulations empower authorities to fine, warn, or ban individuals and media outlets for publishing content deemed inappropriate or contrary to public interest. They give the government sweeping authority to regulate and restrict online content produced by bloggers, citizen journalists, forum administrators, and social media users, as well as content on websites, online television, and radio platforms. The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (**TCRA**) oversees enforcement of these regulations, including monitoring and removing online content. It also maintains a register of bloggers, online forums, and online radio and television stations. Notably, these rules apply not only to residents within Tanzania but also to Tanzanian citizens living abroad, extending the government’s digital oversight beyond national borders.

As of June 2025, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) **warned** that it could ban any social media platform that failed to follow national content-regulation laws. The regulator made it clear that platforms refusing to meet moderation demands would not be allowed to operate. In December 2025, Meta confirmed that it had **restricted access** to activist Maria Sarungi-Tsehai’s Instagram account inside Tanzania. Meta also removed the Instagram and WhatsApp accounts of US-based activist Mange Kimambi, though it said those actions were not the result of government pressure. Meta’s confirmation is significant because it is one of the few times the company has publicly acknowledged responding to a government request to limit access to an activist’s account. Meta also disclosed that during the election period, Tanzanian **authorities threatened** to ban Facebook and Instagram unless certain critical posts and activist accounts were taken down, many of which were documenting alleged human rights abuses.

Regarding online surveillance, unverified reports suggest that the police have a special unit, the Online Patrol, responsible for monitoring social media platforms and websites. It is also alleged that in various WhatsApp groups, impostors are planted to monitor discussions and

report any activities considered offences. Several individuals, CSO staff, and activists have reportedly [been arrested](#) as a result of such monitoring. The government has also been accused of privately [demanding the removal](#) of certain information from online media outlets and individuals' accounts. Although these demands are rarely made public, there have been a few instances where media outlets themselves disclosed such pressure to the public. According to the 2021/22 Vodafone Law [Enforcement Disclosure Report](#), in 2022, Tanzania's government made 13,836 data requests to local subscribers, up from 10,055 in 2021.

For example, on 9 January 2025, Dr. Willibrod Slaa, opposition leader and former General Secretary of CHADEMA, was arrested and denied bail for allegedly publishing false information about President Samia Suluhu Hassan's alleged efforts to interfere in CHADEMA's internal elections. Despite the offence being bailable, Dr. Slaa was denied bail and detained for 48 days. Also, a lecturer at Mkwawa University College of Education was arrested in September 2016 for allegedly insulting President Pombe Magufuli in a WhatsApp message. While confirming the lecturer's detention, police declined to reveal the contents of the message he was accused of sending. The opposition Member of Parliament for Arusha (CHADEMA), Godbless Lema, was arrested and reprimanded by the police for allegedly publishing online statements deemed incitement.

Many incidents are never reported because victims [fear retaliation](#), and it is often technically difficult to prove state-linked surveillance or spyware use. Forensic evidence is rare, which means published cases almost certainly underestimate the real scale of the problem. As a result, CSO staff and human rights defenders often [limit criticism](#) of government policies or avoid sharing sensitive information due to fear of monitoring, arrest, or other reprisals. This environment requires digital strategies that assume potential censorship or content removal. CSOs therefore need diversified communication channels and secure fallback options — including non-social media pathways, peer-to-peer or end-to-end encrypted tools, and backup platforms.

6.2 | Digital Security and Privacy

In the area of Digital Security and Privacy, there is no verified evidence that government agencies or other actors in Tanzania have conducted cyberattacks, deployed spyware or malware, or used other hacking tools to infiltrate the devices, networks, or online communication platforms of civil society actors. However, it is widely believed that such activities may occur. There are also unverified reports suggesting that authorities routinely monitor phone calls and text messages sent through non-encrypted communication channels. Some sources allege that mobile phones are occasionally used to track individuals' locations.

In September 2024, Tanzania's main opposition party urged telecom company Tigo to respond to allegations made by a former employee who [claimed](#) the firm had assisted the government in tracking the location of an opposition figure who was later targeted in a failed assassination attempt. The accusation stemmed from testimony in a British court by a former Millicom (Tigo's parent company) employee, who stated that Tigo had shared mobile phone data with the government, revealing the whereabouts of opposition lawmaker Tundu Lissu in the weeks leading up to the attack.

Another high-profile case involved Erick Kabendera, a Tanzanian investigative journalist, who filed a \$10 million lawsuit against Vodacom Tanzania, accusing the telecom company of [complicity](#) in his 2019 arrest, which he described as an abduction. Kabendera alleged that Vodacom had deliberately deactivated his phone line without notice and lured him to a service

centre under false pretences. Shortly after receiving a suspicious call from a Vodacom representative, he was arrested by police officers, who reportedly refused to identify themselves. These events are not often reported, but there are always rumours that the government is involved in this kind of activity.

Multiple local digital-rights organisations and international NGOs have [documented](#) recurring cases of monitoring, targeted surveillance, spyware-like activity, online censorship, and data breaches between 2019 and 2025. Civil-society [reports](#) highlight the operational consequences of these practices, including increased self-censorship, reduced public advocacy, fear of organising, and difficulties communicating safely with beneficiaries. These trends are also reflected in national civic-space assessments and human-rights reports. Digital disruptions such as internet shutdowns, platform restrictions, and network interference have further [affected](#) CSO work by interrupting campaigns, limiting information flow, and constraining mobilisation. Evidence of such disruptions is available from Access Now, OONI, and local monitoring initiatives. However, Tanzania lacks a dedicated public tracker that records all surveillance incidents or privacy breaches targeting CSOs, unlike global databases that track internet shutdowns. Many cases are never reported due to fear of reprisals, meaning existing reports likely underestimate the true frequency. In addition, attributing incidents is challenging, as technical verification of state-linked spyware, interception, or monitoring requires forensic analysis that is rarely made public.

In 2023, Tanzania enacted the [Personal Data Protection Act, 2022](#), which established a Commission for the Protection of Personal Data and Privacy. This Commission is tasked with receiving, investigating, and addressing complaints related to the misuse of personal data and violations of individuals' privacy. With the law and the Commission in place, there is now a formal mechanism to safeguard digital privacy. By November 2024, the Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC) had registered more [than 700 entities](#) that collect and process personal data. By March 2025, less than a year after its establishment, the Commission had received at [least 60 complaints](#), mostly related to cyberbullying, especially involving online loan applicants who are required to give or deny consent for lenders to access their data.

The PDPC has already issued several rulings. In August 2025, in the case *Nyangoma Mwesingwa v. Cecilia Maliganya* (PDPC/CMP/002/2025), the respondent was found liable for posting and commercialising a newborn's image without parental consent. PDPC declared the image "[sensitive personal data](#)" and ordered her to delete the photos within 14 days, pay the complainant TZS 20 million, and pay the Commission a TZS 5 million fine. In another case, decided on 10 July 2025, [PDPC ordered](#) MI CASA Company to pay lawyer Abdul Naumanga TZS 20 million for using his photos and videos on Instagram without permission, following Complaint No. 8 of 2024. Although he requested TZS 400 million, the Commission awarded TZS 20 million and ordered the content removed.

CSOs in Tanzania are increasingly adopting practical cybersecurity and encryption measures, largely supported by NGO-led training, digital-security guides, and sector-specific policies. Tanzanian and regional organisations produce security handbooks, conduct training, and provide toolkits that promote secure communication practices such as end-to-end encrypted messaging, secure email, VPN use, strong password management, encrypted backups, and device hardening. Examples include the Defenders Protection Initiative's digital-security handbook and JamiiAfrica's online and offline training. International groups like Access Now, through the Digital Security Helpline and CiviCERT, also offer incident-response support and guidance on encryption, secure backups, and safe communication, which many CSOs in Tanzania actively rely on. However, smaller grassroots organisations often face challenges —

including limited training, insufficient budgets, and a lack of technical personnel — which make it difficult for them to implement [strong encryption](#) and comprehensive cybersecurity practices across their operations.

6.3 | Digital Accessibility

Regarding access to digital services, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) [reported](#) in September 2025 that the country had 56.3 million internet users. These services are delivered through mobile lines, fixed fibre connections, and wireless networks. The reported number of users reflects all lines or connections that accessed the internet at least once in the three months before September, across all technologies, including FTTH, 2G (GPRS/EDGE), 3G, 4G, and 5G. However, [DataReportal](#) estimates show that 20.6 million people in Tanzania were using the internet at the end of 2025, representing a 29.1% internet penetration rate. The country also had 89 million mobile connections, with 90.6% classified as “broadband”—meaning they connected via 3G, 4G, or 5G networks.

During the quarter ending September 2025, TCRA [reported](#) that network availability in monitored areas reached 99.62%. Mobile network coverage stood at: 2G – 98.6%, 3G – 93.8%, 4G – 94.2%, and 5G – 28.9%. Population coverage for these networks was: 2G – 78.2%, 3G – 75.9%, 4G – 76.9%, and 5G – 8.6%. On the other hand, [DataReportal](#) suggests that 50.4 million people in Tanzania did not use the internet at the end of 2025, suggesting that 70.9 percent of the population remained “offline” at the end of the year. According to [Ookla](#), by the end of 2025 the median fixed broadband download speed in Tanzania was 19.54 Mbps.

In Tanzania, [more than 95%](#) of the population relies on data bundles. However, telecommunications companies have continued to raise bundle prices, with the increases in 2021 being especially steep and triggering strong [public backlash](#). These complaints prompted the government, through the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), to suspend the new prices and order operators to revert to the previous rates until further notice. According to TCRA’s September 2025 [report](#), the average cost of internet data is TZS 9.35 (USD 0.0038) per MB. This means that 5GB (equivalent to 5,120 MB) costs about TZS 47,872 (USD 19.69). The Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) recommends that the price of 5GB should not exceed 2% of a country’s average monthly income. In Tanzania, however, the cost is far above this benchmark. A 5GB bundle costing TZS 47,872 (USD 19.69) represents around 10% of the average [monthly income](#) of TZS 477,241 (USD 196.29) about five times higher than the recommended threshold. The situation is even more challenging for people with lower education levels, particularly those who never attended school or only completed primary education. On the other hand, the communication bundles offered by MNOs and ISPs are unaffordable for some CSOs, which are constrained by limited funds and hence fail to implement their activities effectively.

Tanzania is actively preparing for AI and other emerging technologies. In May 2025, during World Press Freedom Day, the then–Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa [assigned](#) JamiiAfrica to [convene](#) stakeholders and provide input on the National AI Strategy, designed to help citizens adapt to AI advancements. The strategy is still in draft, and will be finalised soon. Additionally, on that day the Prime Minister stated that the [National AI Policy](#) is on the way. Although it has not yet been finalised, stakeholders are eager to see it and its implementation, believing that it will create opportunities for innovation. Sectoral efforts are also under way. In January 2025, the Ministry of Education released the [National Guidelines](#) for Artificial Intelligence in Education to ensure the effective, ethical, secure, and responsible use of AI in the education

sector. Likewise, in February 2022, the Ministry of Health developed the [Policy Framework](#) for Artificial Intelligence in Tanzania's Health Sector, outlining key processes, technologies, principles, and recommendations for integrating AI into healthcare and improving health outcomes. These initiatives reflect the government's commitment to preparing both institutions and citizens for emerging technologies.

Digital literacy and ICT skills in Tanzania are steadily growing, as digital device usage is increasing, and supported by government initiatives. The National [Digital Education Strategy](#), launched in January 2025, aims to guide the adoption, deployment, and use of digital technology in the education sector to improve learning outcomes while promoting innovation and entrepreneurship through ICT in teaching and learning. Another key initiative is the Tanzania [Digital Skills Framework](#), which fosters a self-sustaining skills ecosystem. It examines the context and dynamics of digital skills demand, supply, development, and deployment within the digital economy - that continuously evolve to align with changing labour market conditions and work environments.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain, such as limited internet access in rural areas and the need for better integration of digital skills into school curricula to bridge the gap between basic technology use and advanced ICT applications. Ongoing [initiatives](#) include establishing science labs with ICT facilities, providing computers and laptops to primary schools, and planning for technology infrastructure in new secondary schools, all aimed at strengthening teaching, learning, and the use of digital technology (ICT).

C) Recommendations

This section presents targeted recommendations to the Government of Tanzania, Civil Society Organisations, and the Donor/International Community. The recommendations respond to persistent challenges related to the principles mentioned earlier.

1. | Recommendations to the Government of Tanzania

1.1. Strengthen Civic Space & Public Trust

- Clarify the meaning of “national values” in law and policy to reduce arbitrary accusations against CSOs.
- Institutionalise structured CSO participation in policymaking (agenda-setting, drafting, review).
- Avoid public narratives that portray CSOs as partisan or foreign-controlled.
- Support public forums for dialogue between government, CSOs, academia, and citizens.

1.2. Advance Civic Equality & Inclusion

- Enforce equality laws (Constitution, PWD Act, Gender Policy) with adequate budgets.
- Increase women’s leadership through transparent appointment criteria, mentorship, and training.
- Ensure disability-inclusive civic processes (sign-language services, accessible materials).
- Publish gender-, youth-, and disability-disaggregated data annually.
- Conduct community campaigns to reduce stigma, discrimination, and harmful norms.

1.3. Protect Digital Rights

- Limit the use of internet shutdowns through judicial oversight and transparency requirements.
- Review and amend restrictive laws (Cybercrimes Act, Online Content Regulations).
- Ensure transparency in government requests to social media platforms.
- Strengthen the independence and operational capacity of the Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC).
- Improve internet affordability and expand rural digital infrastructure.

1.4. Safeguard Digital Security & Accountability

- Adopt national rules governing surveillance, device searches, and data access by law enforcement.

- Require telecom companies to publish data-request transparency reports.
- Investigate allegations of unlawful tracking, intimidation, or harassment of digital activists.
- Support secure, resilient communication channels for public institutions and civic actors.

2. | Recommendations to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

2.1. Rebuild Public Trust

- Strengthen internal governance, financial transparency, and public reporting.
- Avoid urban-only focus by increasing outreach in rural and underserved communities.
- Address political-labelling risks by maintaining nonpartisan practices and clear accountability.
- Publicise community-impact stories to counter public perceptions of CSOs as donor-driven.

2.2. Expand Civic Engagement

- Scale up civic-education partnerships.
- Enhance safe channels for whistleblowing and citizen feedback, including anonymous reporting.
- Build coalitions for more effective advocacy (e.g., fiscal justice, gender, climate, disability).

2.3. Strengthen Inclusion

- Ensure meaningful participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in CSO governance.
- Partner with disability-led organisations to design accessible programmes and consultation processes.
- Prioritise data collection on civic participation among marginalised groups.

2.4. Improve Digital Resilience

- Invest in digital security training for staff and community partners.
- Adopt encrypted tools, secure data practices, and contingency plans for shutdowns.
- Document digital-rights violations safely and responsibly for advocacy and reporting.

3. | Recommendations to Donors & International Community

3.1. Sustain Support for an Enabling Environment & Policy Reform

- Continue providing dedicated funding for legal reforms and advocacy efforts that strengthen civic space, digital rights, and equality.
- Maintain technical assistance to government bodies working to modernise data protection and regulatory frameworks.
- Keep supporting multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms that promote constructive engagement and accountability.

3.2. Continue Strengthening CSO Capacity

- Sustain predictable, flexible, multi-year core funding—especially for organisations advancing human rights, democracy, and inclusion.
- Alongside other priorities, continue prioritising grants for rural, youth-led, women-led, and disability-led groups.
- Maintain support for coalition-building, research initiatives, and national-level consultations.

3.3. Continue Advancing Inclusion & Equity

- Along with existing focus areas, continue funding programmes that advance gender equality, disability rights, youth participation, and wider social inclusion.
- Continue supporting development of disaggregated data systems and research that address persistent evidence gaps.

3.4. Sustain Efforts to Protect Digital Rights

- Continue investing in digital-security training, tools, and emergency assistance for at-risk activists and CSOs.
 - Maintain diplomatic engagement opposing internet shutdowns and restrictive digital regulations.
 - Keep supporting independent investigations and reporting on surveillance, censorship, and online attacks.
-

D) Research Process

Each principle encompasses various dimensions which are assessed and aggregated to provide quantitative scores per principle. These scores reflect the degree to which the environment within the country enables or disables the work of civil society. Scores are on a five-category scale defined as: fully disabling (1), disabling (2), partially enabling (3), enabling (4), and fully enabling (5). To complement the scores, this report provides a narrative analysis of the enabling or disabling environment for civil society, identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as offering recommendations. The process of drafting the analysis is led by Network Members; the consortium provides quality control and editorial oversight before publication.

For Principle 1 - which evaluates respect for and protection of freedom of association and peaceful assembly - the score integrates data from the [CIVICUS Monitor](#). However, for Principles 2–6, the availability of yearly updated external quantitative indicators for the 86 countries part of the EUSEE programme are either limited or non-existent. To address this, Network Members convene a panel of representatives of civil society and experts once a year. This panel uses a set of guiding questions to assess the status of each principle and its dimensions within the country. The panel for this report took place in December 2025. The discussions are supported by secondary sources, such as [V-Dem](#), the [Bertelsmann Stiftung Governance Index](#), the [RTI Rating from the Centre for Law and Democracy](#), and other trusted resources. These sources provide benchmarks for measuring similar dimensions and are complemented by primary data collection and other secondary sources of information available for the country. Guided by these deliberations, the panel assigns scores for each dimension, which the Network Members submit to the Consortium, accompanied by detailed justifications that reflect the country's specific context. To determine a single score per principle, the scores assigned to each dimension are aggregated using a weighted average, reflecting the relative importance of each dimension within the principle. This approach balances diverse perspectives while maintaining a structured and objective evaluation framework.

This publication was funded/co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union

