

Strengthening engagement with Civil Society: the EU Civil Society Roadmaps 2025–2027

#GLOBALGATEWAY #TEAMEUROPE



What are Civil Society Roadmaps

Established through the [2012 EC Communication](#) “The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe’s engagement with Civil Society in external relations”, the *Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)*, also referred to as *Civil Society Roadmaps* are **compact, Country-level EU strategy documents that structure how EU Delegations and Team Europe support and engage with civil society** in partner countries over a 2–4 year period.

Civil Society Roadmaps (CSRMs) are built on the Communication’s strategic priorities for EU support to civil society, notably:

1. To enhance efforts to promote a conducive environment for CSOs in partner countries to operate freely and effectively.
2. To promote a meaningful and structured participation of CSOs in domestic policies of partner countries, in the EU programming cycle and in international processes.
3. To increase local CSOs’ capacity to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively.

As strategic documents, CSRMs:

- Map and analyse the civil society landscape and civic space, building on lessons learned;
- Define a medium-term strategic approach and results framework for EU and Team Europe engagement with, and support to, CSOs;
- Link this engagement to concrete resources (NDICI geographic and thematic programmes, EFSD+ blending, Member States and Development Financial Institutions’ support);
- Guide the organisation of regular, predictable structured dialogues with CSOs (rather than ad hoc consultations);
- Align EU, Member States and other like-minded partners around a common approach to civil society.



The EU and the Member States should develop country roadmaps for engagement with CSOs, to improve the impact, predictability and visibility of EU actions, ensuring consistency and synergy throughout the various sectors covered by EU external relations.

EC Communication 2012

The 4th Generation of Civil Society Roadmaps

The **latest (4th) generation of Civil Society Roadmaps covers the period 2025–2027¹** and explicitly integrates the **Global Gateway Strategy**, making CSRMs a central tool for ensuring meaningful civil society participation in and accountability of Global Gateway (GG) investments. This generation of CSRMs **aims to strengthen and systematise** EU Delegation’s engagement with civil society so that it is more strategic, results-oriented and effective. Where relevant, CSRMs

should also reflect **additional country priorities**, notably those linked to fragility, conflict prevention, or other context-specific challenges.

A clearer structure: four strategic pillars

The new CSRMs are structured around four strategic pillars, which represent key areas of engagement with civil society, to be tailored to each priority sector and project, and adapted to each country context—and, where feasible, coordinated with Team Europe:



Knowledge & Understanding of Civil Society

Civil Society Roadmaps are grounded in comprehensive sector mappings and political economy analyses, which assess the perspectives of specialised and affected CSOs—especially in the priority Global Gateway sectors. They also promote analytical work and knowledge generation to strengthen understanding of civil society engagement, expertise, concerns and expectations, potential roles and the enabling conditions for their meaningful participation.



Consultations & Dialogue

CSRMs integrate actions to introduce the Global Gateway Strategy to local CSOs and promote spaces for engagement at policy and project levels, building on existing participatory mechanisms (local/national/regional). Where feasible, Roadmaps also integrate dialogues through Team Europe and promote multi-stakeholder dialogues.



Enabling Conditions for Meaningful Engagement

CSRMs incorporate actions to promote an enabling environment for civil society, including preventing and addressing barriers to participation. They promote, for instance, access to information, technical assistance, and mechanisms to articulate, protect, and promote CSOs and civic space. They also support capacity strengthening, institutional development, and spaces for dialogue and accountability.



Partnerships for Impact & Accountability

CSRMs promote EU partnerships with civil society to strengthen their role in maximising positive social and economic impacts, reducing inequalities, promoting environmental sustainability, and fostering transparency and accountability—with an emphasis on key GG sectors and projects.



What is new in the 4th Generation of CSRMs?

Civil society role in the Global Gateway Strategy

Civil society is a fundamental driver of Global Gateway success, and the GG Strategy explicitly identifies the active participation of civil society as a cornerstone of effective projects. As GG investments—particularly in infrastructure—can significantly reshape local economies ecosystems and social structures, Civil Society Organisations contribute to ensure that affected communities’ needs and rights are heard and addressed.

CSOs act as key intermediaries between communities and decision-makers, supporting participation, providing technical input, strengthening project design delivery, and promoting transparency and accountability. They also help mitigate risks, uphold social and environmental safeguards, and advance inclusive, sustainable outcomes—amplifying lived experience and supporting community-driven solutions, especially for vulnerable groups.

It is important that through the mapping phase, all the relevant and specialised civil society actors are identified and engaged. Further to EU Delegations’ usual civil society partners, it is important to broaden the scope of civil society actors to be engaged and consulted. The list includes but is not limited to CSOs (and their networks and platforms) specialised in the main GG sectors (energy and climate, education, health, transport and digital connectivity), trade unions, private sector associations (such as chambers of commerce), think tanks and research institutes, foundations, etc.



Youth perspective systematically included

Engagement of existing Youth Sounding Boards (YSBs) in partner countries will contribute to ensure a youth perspective in both drafting and implementing of CSRMs, in line with YSBs’ mandate to make EU external action more youth relevant.



Stronger coordination: whole-of-delegation & Team Europe alignment

A whole-of-delegation approach and Team Europe alignment—including collaboration with EU Member States, key partners and European Development Finance Institutions—are essential.



Resource-linked Roadmaps

Each CSRM is resource-linked, tied to dedicated and sustained resources, including the NDICI geographic and thematic programmes, EFSD+ blending facilities and other resources provided by Member States, European Financial Institutions or other key partners. The calls for proposals funded by the CSO Thematic Programme shall be likewise aligned with the CSRMs priorities.



Period 2028 - 2034 and beyond

Once information on the 2028 - 2034 Multiannual Financial Framework and relevant external financing instrument becomes available, the CSRM framework may be adapted and further guidance communicated, as necessary.

What this means for civil society organisations

A more structured and strategic approach to how the EU engages with civil society at country level

Greater alignment of EU and Team Europe engagement with civil society across sectors and initiatives



Clearer frameworks for dialogue and consultation, including in relation to Global Gateway priorities

Increased attention to the conditions for meaningful participation, including access to information and civic space

Recognition of the role of civil society in contributing knowledge, informing policies and supporting accountability