



World Alliance for Citizen Participation

CIVICUS' 2013

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT INDEX





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About CIVICUS

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ACRONYMS

CIVICUS: CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

CPDE: CSO Platform for Development Effectiveness, the CSO coalition formed to follow up on the Busan Partnership for Development

CSI: CIVICUS Civil Society Index, a civil society self-assessment project

CSW: CIVICUS Civil Society Watch, a project to monitor the space for civil society

CSO: Civil society organisation

DAC: Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which brings together most government development donors

EC: European Commission – the executive body of the European Union

EEI: CIVICUS Civil Society Enabling Environment Index, a new tool to quantitatively measure conditions for civil society in different countries

GPEDC: Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

ICNL: International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, an international civil society organisation

NGO: Non-governmental organisation, a type of civil society organisation

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, an intergovernmental organisation of 34 countries, in which most development donor governments are represented

UN: United Nations

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INTRODUCTION TO THE EEI

For 20 years, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation has been at the forefront of efforts to understand the state of civil society and draw attention to threats faced by civil society around the world.

On the former, CIVICUS has built tools such as the Civil Society Index (CSI), a participatory research process conducted in over 70 countries. On the latter, CIVICUS has issued countless alerts about legal, regulatory and policy measures in many countries that restrict civil society's ability to exist and operate freely and its ability to participate in governance processes.

It has also highlighted other threats such as physical attacks, harassment, imprisonment

and assassinations of civil society activists, as well as crackdowns on protests and demonstrations. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of an "enabling environment" for civil society in order for any democracy to flourish.

In general, the international development community considers an enabling environment for civil society to be the political and policy context within which civil society organisations (CSOs) operate, with particular interest paid to areas that can be controlled by the State and that relate to governance.

THE CIVICUS DEFINITION OF “ENABLING ENVIRONMENT”

In the State of Civil Society Report published in April 2013, the environment for civil society was broadly defined as “the conditions within which civil society works.”¹

CIVICUS has long used a working definition of civil society as being “the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests.”

It follows from this working definition of civil society that the environment for civil society is made up of the forces that shape and influence the size, extent and functioning of that arena.



The State of Civil Society report highlights that key aspects of the enabling environment should include the following²



A. CSOs’ legitimacy, transparency and accountability: Civil society groups should make efforts to be transparent and accountable to their stakeholders, to derive their legitimacy from endorsement by their stakeholders³;



B. Building connections, coalitions and solidarity: There should be multiple connections and collaborations between different civil society groups and individuals, and collaborative platforms and coalitions at different levels;



C. The legal and regulatory environment: CSO laws should be clear and well-defined. The registration process should be quick, easy and inexpensive. The state’s laws, regulations and policies on civil society should make it easy for civil society groups to form, operate free from interference, express their views, communicate, convene, cooperate and seek resources;



D. Political environment: Governments and politicians should recognise civil society as a legitimate social and political actor and provide systematic opportunities for state and civil society institutions to work together;



E. Public attitudes and perception: There should be tolerance of people and groups who have different viewpoints and identities; and it should be easy for all people to participate in civil society;



F. Corruption: There should be no tolerance of corruption amongst state officials, political actors, people in business and civil society personnel;



G. Communications and technology: There should be reliable, cheap and widespread access to communications platforms and technologies;



H. Resources: Civil society groups should be able to access resources from a range of sustainable sources, including domestically, and to define their own activities, rather than have these defined by funding opportunities.

This list indicates that the enabling environment for civil society could be broader than what the current discourse suggests.

¹2013 State of Civil Society report: Creating an enabling environment for civil society, CIVICUS, 29 April 2013, pg 10. The full text is available at <http://socs.civicus.org>.

²Ibid, pg 19.

³CIVICUS also acknowledges that while civil society organisations are primarily accountable to their stakeholders, they are also accountable to the government, other civil society groups and the public at large.

Year	Milestone
1980-90s	Aga Khan Foundation and others initiated discussions about the enabling environment for civil society.
February 2003 & March 2005	Key stakeholders agreed to encourage civil society participation in the coordination of aid strategies at the First High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Rome (2003) and Paris (2005) respectively.
June 2008	Formation of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment, a global CSO platform to improve the impact of CSO development work and advocate for more favourable government policies and practices for CSOs.
September 2008	At the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, Ghana, CSOs for the first time were recognised as independent development actors in their own right. Countries, territories and international organisations agreed in the Accra Agenda for Action to work with CSOs to provide an enabling environment that maximises their contributions to development.
October 2008	BetterAid, a platform to improve the capacity of civil society to engage in aid effectiveness policy, and Open Forum started to act as the twin civil society fora to engage with the post-Accra international process on aid and development effectiveness.
March 2011	The Multi-stakeholder Task Team on Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment published key messages for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and outlined the following fundamental rights guaranteed in regional and international instruments for protection: freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to operate free from unwarranted State interference, the right to communicate and cooperate, the right to seek and secure funding, and the State's duty to protect.
June 2011	Open Forum adopted the Siem Reap CSO Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness. It defines an "enabling environment" as the political and policy context created by governments, official donors and other development actors that affect the ways CSOs may carry out their work. It defines "enabling standards" as a set of inter-related good practices by donors and governments – in the legal, regulatory, fiscal, informational, political and cultural areas – that support the capacity of CSO development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained and effective manner.
December 2011	At the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea, it was agreed in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation that countries, territories and international organisations would implement fully their respective commitments to enable CSOs to exercise their roles as independent development actors, with a particular focus on an enabling environment, consistent with agreed international rights, that maximises the contributions of CSOs to development.
June 2012	The Working Party on Aid Effectiveness agreed on a set of indicators, targets and processes for the monitoring of the Busan commitments. The enabling environment is one of 10 global indicators. This indicator will monitor whether civil society operates within an environment that maximises its engagement in and contribution to development.
September 2012	The European Commission issued its communication on relations with CSOs in 2012, which affirmed the need to promote the CSO enabling environment. In the communication, the CSO enabling environment referred to a functioning democratic legal and judicial system, which gave CSOs the de jure and de facto right to associate and secure funding, coupled with freedom of expression, access to information and participation in public life.
December 2012	CSOs launched the CSO Platform for Development Effectiveness (CPDE). The CPDE is the successor civil society platform to the Open Forum/Better Aid processes.

It is within this context that CIVICUS started to develop a new tool for assessing the enabling environment for civil society, called the Enabling Environment Index (EEI) in 2012.

CIVICUS worked on building the EEI with the Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation, Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria under the leadership and supervision of Professor Lorenzo Fioramonti. This research partnership was formed to ensure that the EEI passed the test of academic rigour and methodological legitimacy.

The EEI defines the enabling environment as “a set of conditions that impact on the capacity of citizens (whether individually or in an organised fashion) to participate and engage in the civil society arena in a sustained and voluntary manner.”⁴

There are at least two notable features of this definition. One is the adoption of the capability approach, which “emphasises the underlying conditions that make individuals ‘capable’ of fulfilling their own goals.”⁵ This approach considers the quality of the “demand” side of the environment (i.e. the readiness of CSOs and citizens) to be as important as the “supply” side (i.e. governance and policy measures that directly affect civil society). As such, this approach recognises the role of socio-economic and socio-cultural factors as key components of the enabling environment for civil society.

The choice of the capability approach to underpin the EEI has been consciously made. This approach points to the importance of “readiness” by CSOs and individual citizens. Recognising that this is formed by socio-economic and socio-cultural factors, these issues need to be incorporated into the long-term policy debate. Strengthening the communications infrastructure and addressing economic and gender inequality are vital parts of building a healthy civil society. Tolerant, participative societies and cultures of volunteering and giving are key to a vibrant civil society. Without trust in CSOs, the legitimacy, impact and strength of civil society is severely undermined. We hope that future discussions on the enabling environment will embrace an expansive view of the issue and include socio-economic and socio-cultural factors as well.

The other notable feature is the conscious inclusion of individual citizens, as well as CSOs (or organised forms of civil society), as the actors in the civil society arena. This is consistent with the general CIVICUS approach, which affirms that all actions from outside the government and business spheres that promote democracy, good governance, human rights, social justice, equality and sustainable development are part of civil society, whether they are generated by organisations, movements, ad-hoc groups or citizens.

Many aspects of the EEI (notably its reliance on secondary statistical data) are departures from the CIVICUS tradition of participatory action-research that is generated and owned by civil society actors at the country level. However, we believe that it is nevertheless useful to look at what a tool like this can tell us about the environment in which civil society operates. We consider this a useful complement to the other tools we use to understand civil society, and not a substitute for them. We also wanted to build a tool that would generate debate and dialogue about the enabling environment for civil society.

As part of this process, we assembled a multi-stakeholder Advisory Group, whose thoroughness and insight proved indispensable for the refinement of the product. We also published a draft version of the EEI in April 2013, alongside our State of Civil Society Report, and opened up a public consultation in the following months. During this period we coordinated several events that fed into the consultation process, during which we received invaluable feedback from our network of members, partners, friends and critics. The EEI described in this paper has been shaped by all of these exchanges.

Date	Location	Organising Partner	Key Points
25 May	Bellagio, Italy	CIVICUS	Real-time, crowd-sourced information in future should accompany index; Development of index must be academic process
3 June	Lagos, Nigeria	Nigeria National Network of NGOs	Importance of gender rights, corruption and education to local context; Need for citizen-generated data, yet understanding of constraints relating to primary data gathering clear
6 June	Kampala, Uganda	Uganda National NGO Forum	Need for ranking; Explanation of index should be less academic; Vital role of national platforms in disseminating index
6 June	Johannesburg, South Africa	University of Pretoria	Need to measure capacity of people for struggle; Some of the data sources are not timely
20 June	Brussels, Belgium	European Commission and Swedish International Development Agency	Need for better measurement of civil society funding and infrastructure; Index not advocacy focused enough
20 June	Quito, Ecuador	Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental	Local concern about freedom of expression and division amongst civil society actors
26 June	Nairobi, Kenya	Africa CSO Platform for Principled Partnership	Objectives, purpose and rationale need to be explicit; Importance of socio-economic dimension and socio-cultural dimension cannot be underestimated; Index should measure broader trends not transient events

2

THE EEI UNPACKED

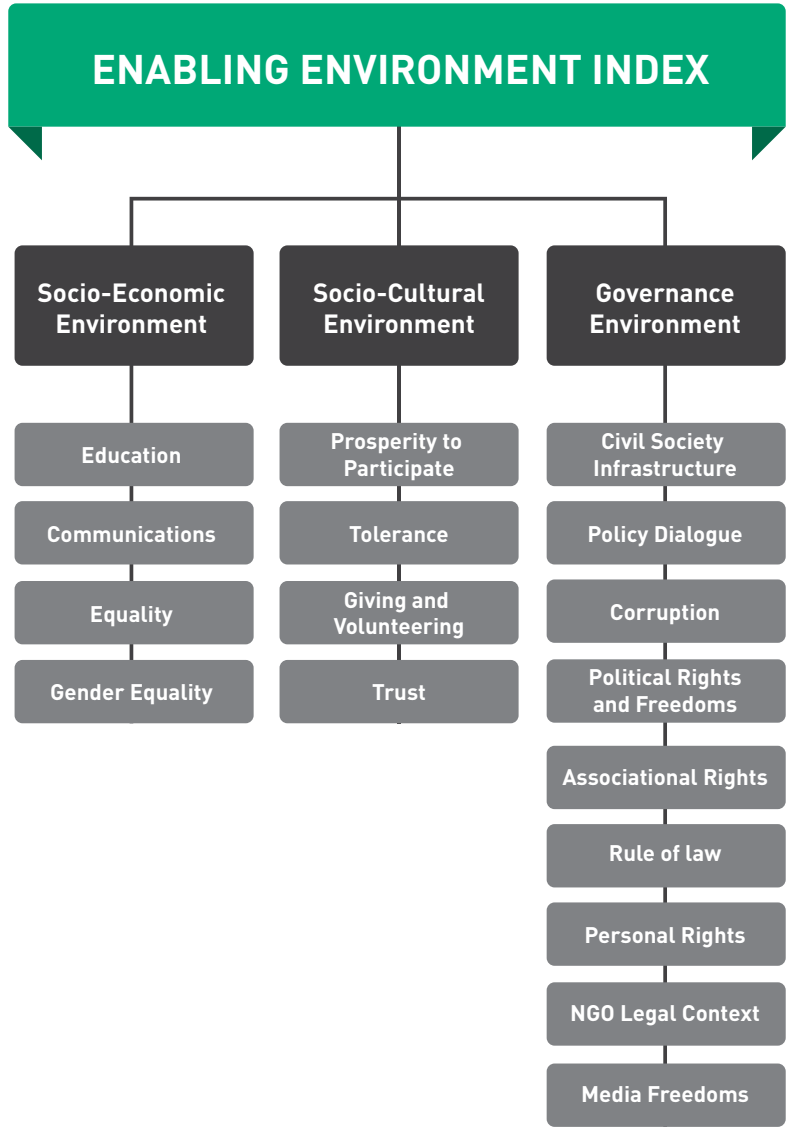
The EEI is a global composite index developed using secondary data that seeks to understand the propensity of citizens to participate in civil society.

Readers who are interested in the methodology can refer to the Methodological Note as well as the Dimensions and Sources Table, both of which can be found and downloaded from the CIVICUS website.

The composite index is made up of 53 indicators. The indicators that are part of the EEI have different units and scales. In order to be incorporated into the EEI, they are re-weighted on a scale of 0-1. These 53 indicators are clustered into 17 sub-dimensions, which are then averaged and sorted into 3 dimensions.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT INDEX

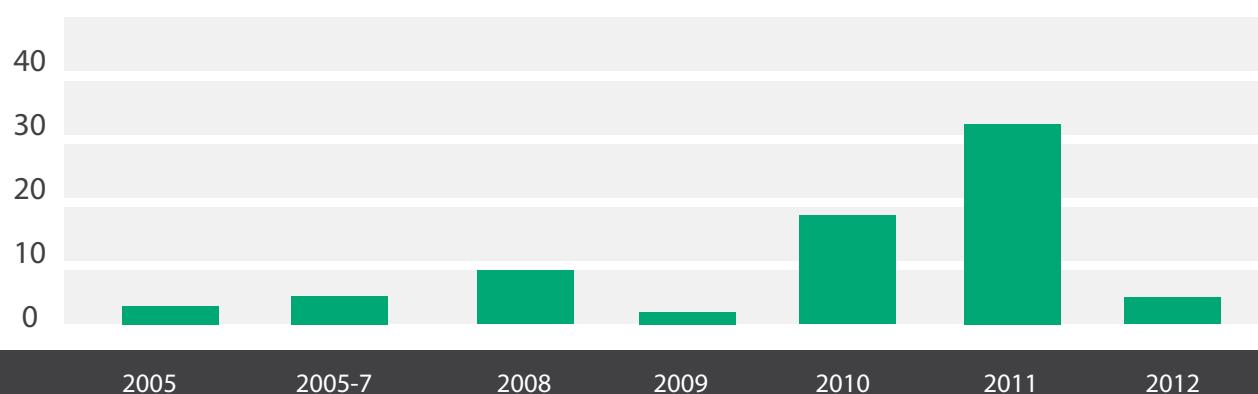
- 3 DIMENSIONS
- 17 SUB-DIMENSIONS
- 53 INDICATORS



The Enabling Environment Index is made up of 71 data sources, which cover the period 2005 to 2012. Over 70% of the sources are from the years 2010 and 2011.

Data points from earlier years have been included where the dimensions tend to evolve slowly over time. All of the data points from the period 2005 to 2009 are used in the socio-cultural dimension. However, the socio-cultural dimension does include data sources from 2009, 2010 and 2011 also. All the data in the socio-economic and governance dimensions are from 2010 onwards.

Number of data points in the EE Index by year



Coverage

The EEI covers 109 countries. The number of countries included in the EEI is determined by data availability, and only countries that have scores in at least 14 out of 17 sub-dimensions have been included.

Table: Enabling Environment Index coverage⁶

Region	Number of UN member states in the EEI	Number of UN member states in the region	Percentage of UN member states in the region covered by the Enabling Environment Index
Africa	29	54	53.7
Asia-Pacific ⁷	18	58	33.3
Europe	41	47	87.2
The Americas	20	35	57.1

⁶Even though Kosovo is not a member state of the United Nations, it is included in the EEI.

⁷The limited country coverage inhibits more detailed regional comparison. The decision to compare countries in Asia and Oceania is due to the fact that only two countries in Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) had the requisite number of data sources to be included in the index. All the other countries in Oceania had data for 9 or less sub-dimensions. The two countries from Oceania both rank extremely highly on the Enabling Environment Index and are not representative of a general trend in Oceania or the Asia-Pacific region.

As a result of extensive existing research on various components of the enabling environment in the region, the EEI has the highest level of coverage of countries in Europe.

A severe deficiency of the EEI is that it only measures 2 out of 38 Small-Island Developing States.⁸ This is particularly problematic with regard to countries in the Asia-Pacific region and the Americas, more specifically countries in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

In the Pacific, there is hardly any information available on economic inequality, education and gender equality and there is absolutely no data available for all the components of the socio-cultural dimension. In both the Caribbean and the Pacific, there is little data on civil society infrastructure, policy dialogue and the NGO legal framework. In the case of the Caribbean, the only two Small-Island Developing States that are included in the index are the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago. If data were available for the other 14 Small-Island Developing States, then the EEI would cover 97.1% of the countries in the Americas.

There is a huge discrepancy between the percentage of countries assessed in Europe and the percentage of countries in other regions that are in the EEI. This suggests that there is a need to focus further data gathering efforts on civic space in these regions.

Small-island states not included in the Enabling Environment Index by region

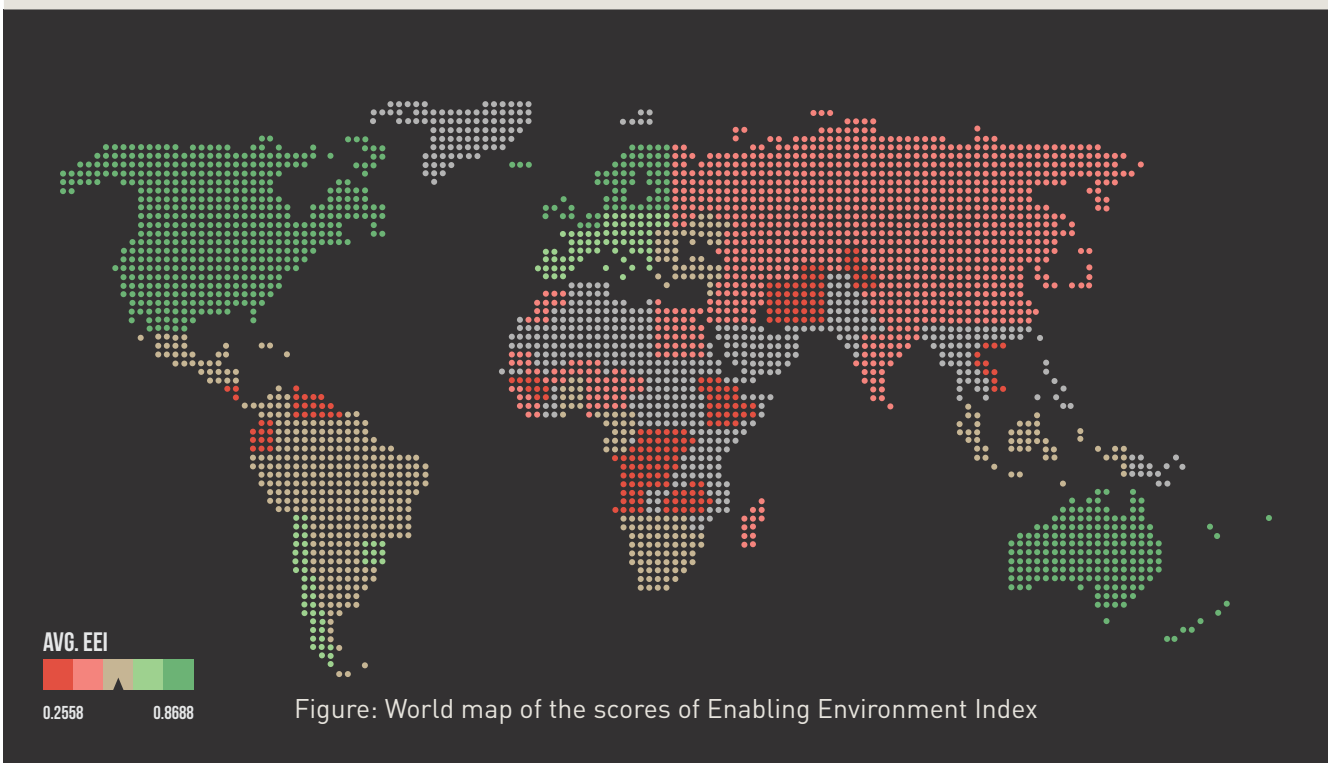


Figure: World map of the scores of Enabling Environment Index

⁸The number of small-island developing states listed does not include small-island territories or dependencies

3

THE EEI RESULTS

Top five countries on the EEI

EEI RESULTS

Owing to its good implementation of human rights protections and low levels of inequality and corruption, New Zealand ranks highest on the EEI with a score of 0.87.

New Zealand is the only country that is consistently in the top 5 countries in all three dimensions. It is closely followed by Canada (0.85) in second place. Canada, a country with a good education system, excellent communication infrastructure and robust human rights protections, is in the top 10 countries in the socio-economic, socio-cultural and governance dimensions. Australia (0.84) ranks third, followed by Denmark (0.81). Rounding out the top five is another Nordic country, Norway (0.80).

Top 5 countries

Ranking	Country	Score
1	New Zealand	0.87
2	Canada	0.85
3	Australia	0.84
4	Denmark	0.81
5	Norway	0.80

Worst five countries on the EEI

Due its political instability and poor civil society infrastructure, the Democratic Republic of Congo (0.26) is the lowest ranked country on the EEI.

Ruled by an authoritarian regime with a poor human rights record, Uzbekistan (0.29) is considered to have the second worst enabling environment for civil society of countries included in the index. Burundi, which is emerging from a protracted civil war, is still wrangling with establishing the rule of law. According to the index, Burundi (0.31) has the third worst enabling environment and is closely followed by Iran (0.31). A lack of gender equality and the repression of civil liberties are the primary factors which restrict the space for and the potential of Iranian civil society. Governed by a President that openly threatens civil society⁹, the Gambia (0.32) has the fifth worst enabling environment for civil society ranked on the index

Top 5 countries

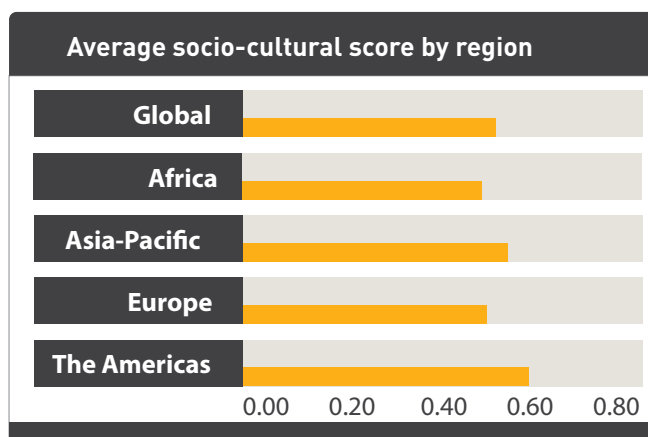
Ranking	Country	Score
105	The Gambia	0.32
106	Burundi	0.31
107	Iran	0.31
108	Uzbekistan	0.29
109	Democratic Republic of Congo	0.26

⁹The Gambia's bloodcurdling threat, The Guardian, 1 October 2009 <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/oct/01/gambia-jammeh-human-rights>.

The global average for the socio-cultural dimension is 0.52. The Americas ranks highest on the socio-cultural dimension with a regional average of 0.59.

Five of the countries that are ranked in the top ten in the socio-cultural dimension are from the Americas (Canada, United States of America, Colombia, Guatemala and Trinidad and Tobago). A high propensity to participate, a high degree of tolerance of different ethnic and religious groups and high public trust in non-profit organisations are key attributes of these national contexts. Only 5 of the 20 countries covered by the EEl in the region were below the average. Due to limited trust in people and infrequent giving and volunteering, Ecuador (0.44) has the lowest socio-cultural score in the Americas.

Indicators of the socio-cultural dimension	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Propensity to Participate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tolerance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trust (including trust and public image of NGOs)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Giving and Volunteering



Top 10 countries in the socio-cultural dimension		
1	New Zealand	0.83
2	Australia	0.80
3	Canada	0.78
4	USA	0.78
5	Colombia	0.72
6	China	0.71
7	Guatemala	0.67
8	Trinidad and Tobago	0.66
9	Burkina Faso	0.64
10	South Korea	0.64

10 worst countries in the socio-cultural dimension		
1	Jordan	0.40
2	Guinea	0.40
3	Serbia	0.40
4	Kazakhstan	0.37
5	Gabon	0.33
6	Gambia	0.33
7	Angola	0.33
8	Uzbekistan	0.30
9	Burundi	0.29
10	Democratic Republic of Congo	0.28

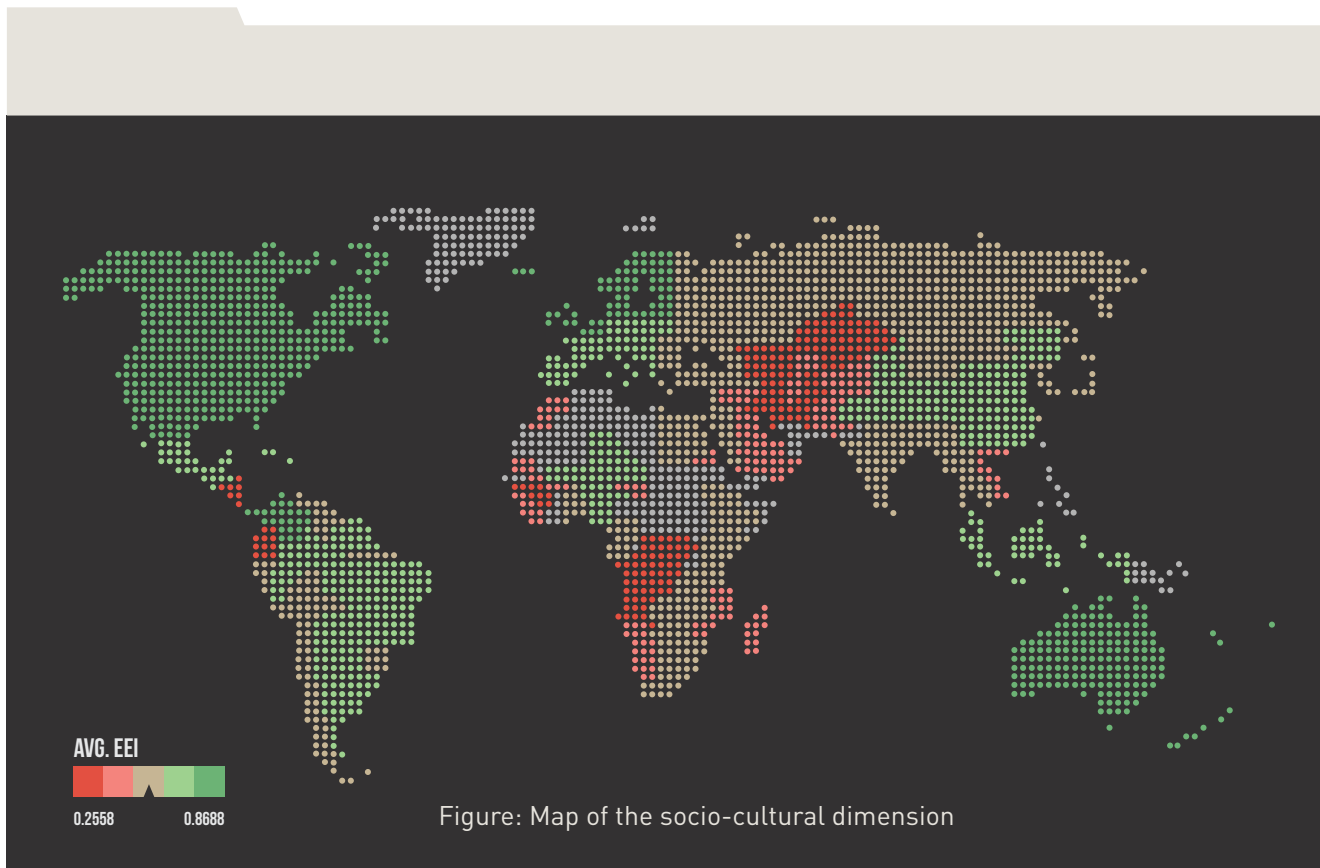
Low score for socio-cultural dimension in Balkans and former Soviet-bloc		
85	Georgia	0.46
87	Montenegro	0.45
89	Albania	0.44
91	Kosovo	0.43
94	Macedonia	0.41
95	Tajikistan	0.40
96	Croatia	0.40
97	Kyrgyzstan	0.40
98	Bosnia & Herzegovina	0.40
100	Serbia	0.40
103	Kazakhstan	0.37
107	Uzbekistan	0.30

The Asia-Pacific region has the widest range of scores. Four countries in the Asia-Pacific region were in the top 10 countries (New Zealand, Australia, China and South Korea). In fact, New Zealand and Australia are the two highest ranked countries with scores of 0.83 and 0.80 respectively. As is the case of highly ranked countries in the Americas, there are high levels of public participation and public trust in New Zealand and Australia.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the post-Soviet States are amongst the worst performing countries in the region. This is not particularly surprising given the fact that the socio-cultural dimension measures social cohesion and trust (including trust in non-profits), which is low in post-communist countries and may not have been helped by the post-communist influx of non-indigenous forms of civil society.¹⁰

The European country with the highest score in this dimension is Denmark (0.56), which is ranked 27th out of 109 countries. Low levels of giving and volunteering as well as a lack of interest in public participation are the reasons why 63.4% of the countries in Europe are below the global average. In Europe, there is a narrow range of scores in the socio-cultural dimension, with the lowest score being that of Serbia (0.40). The countries in the Balkan Peninsula, which the EEI indicates is categorised by low levels of trust in people in general, do not score highly in the cultural dimension.

Burkina Faso, ranked 9th out of 109 countries globally, is the nation with the best socio-cultural environment for civil society on the African continent. This is linked to a high degree of tolerance of different ethnic and religious groups in the West African nation. Much like Europe, 63.3% of the countries in Africa ranked by the EEI are below the global average. However, 6 African countries are in the bottom 10 countries in this dimension (Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Gabon, Gambia, Angola and Guinea) due to a very poor public perception of civil society.



¹⁰Bridging the gaps: Citizens, organisations and dissociation, Civil Society Index summary report: 2008-2011, CIVICUS, August 2011. The full text is available at <http://civicus.org/downloads/CSIReportSummary.pdf>

The global average for the socio-economic dimension is 0.54. It is clear that there is a strong correlation between socio-economic development and the enabling environment for civil society.

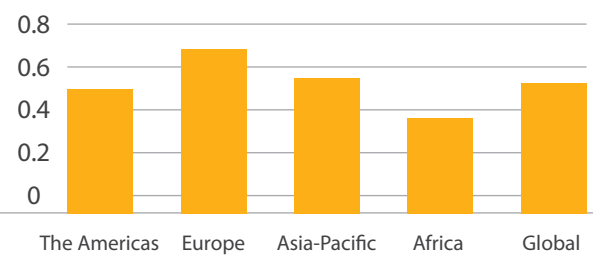
However, CIVICUS does not believe that a country’s level of socio-economic development is the sole determinant of its enabling environment. With generally high education levels and good communications infrastructure, the continent that scores highest in the socio-economic dimension is Europe, with a regional average of 0.67. Norway (0.83) is the country that scores highest globally in the socio-economic dimension. Six other countries in Europe appear in the top 10 (Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Iceland, Finland and Denmark). Over 90% of the European countries in the index have a higher score than the global average.

The only sub-average countries in Europe are Macedonia, Montenegro, Georgia and Kosovo whose low results can be attributed to a failure to tackle gender inequality. The lowest ranking European country is Kosovo (0.51). However, in the global socio-economic ranking Kosovo is only sixty-fifth.

Indicators of the socio-economic dimension

- Education
- Communications (with a focus on internet users and access)
- Equality (with a focus on economic inequality)
- Gender equality

Average socio-economic score by region



Top 10 countries in the socio-economic dimension

1	Norway	0.83
2	Sweden	0.82
3	Netherlands	0.82
4	Germany	0.79
5	New Zealand	0.78
6	Iceland	0.78
7	Finland	0.78
8	Australia	0.78
9	Canada	0.77
10	Denmark	0.77

10 worst socio-economic environments for civil society

100	Tanzania	0.31
101	Mozambique	0.31
102	Benin	0.31
103	Malawi	0.29
104	Burkina Faso	0.29
105	Nigeria	0.29
106	Liberia	0.28
107	Mali	0.28
108	Democratic Republic of Congo	0.24
109	Sierra Leone	0.23

The average for the Asia-Pacific region is 0.54. As is the case with the socio-cultural and governance sub-dimensions, New Zealand scores highest in the region. In Asia, the average is brought up by a few high scoring countries as only 39% of the countries scored higher than the global average. Interestingly, economic giant India (0.32) is the country which is considered to have the worst socio-economic conditions for civil society in the region. Particularly high rates of economic inequality and lack of access to communications infrastructure resulted in India ranking 99th out of 109 countries.

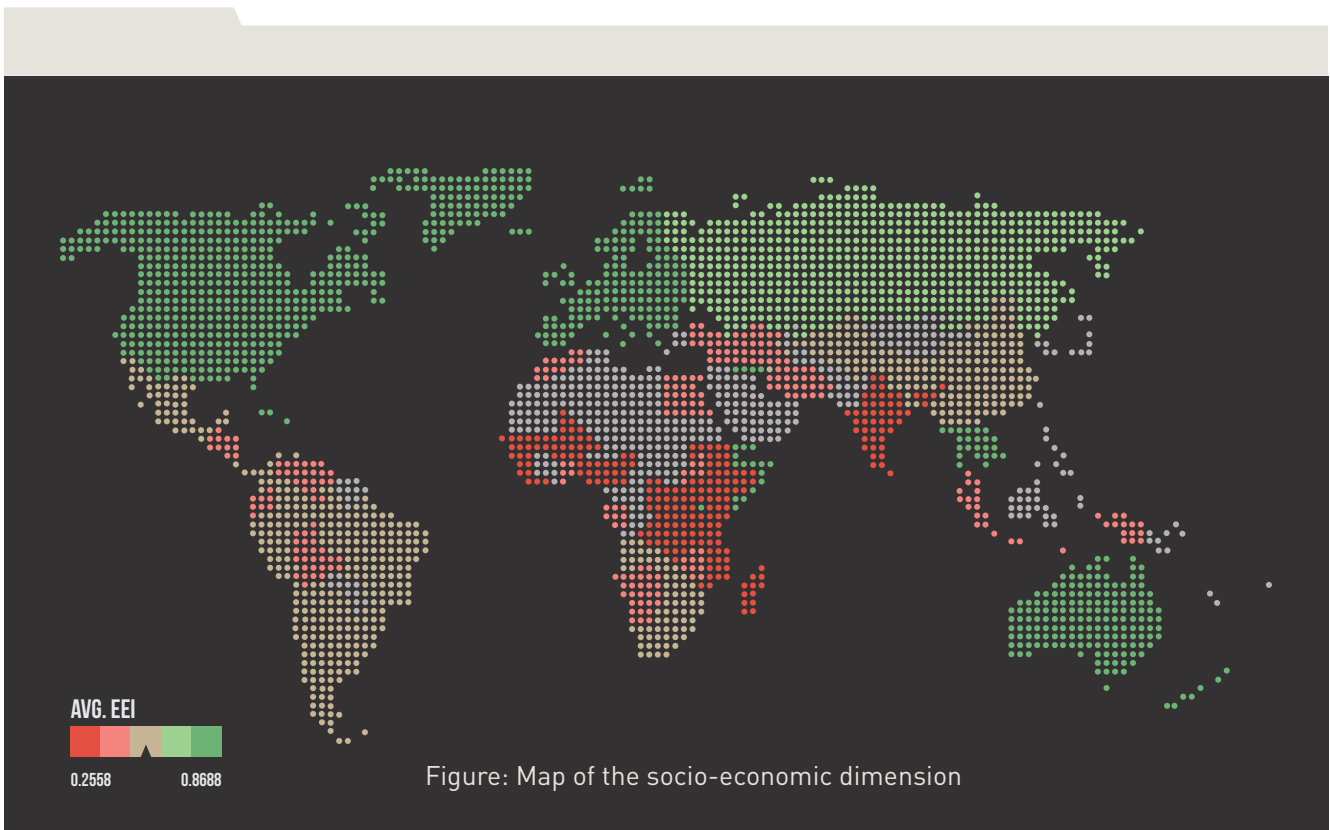
The socio-economic dimension: continued

In the Americas, the highest ranked country is Canada (0.77). The regional average is 0.51, which is slightly below the global average. In stark contrast to the high scores in the socio-cultural dimension, only 6 of the 20 countries measured in the region are above the global average of 0.54 (Canada, United States of America, Trinidad and Tobago, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay).

This is mainly due to the fact that residents of these countries can easily access basic services. The country with the lowest score in the region is Guatemala (0.43). Low rates of secondary school completion and internet access negatively impact the potential for vibrant civic action and well connected civil society organisations.

Africa does not fare well in the socio-economic dimension of the enabling environment. The average for the region is 0.35, well below the global average of 0.54. The best country in the region is Botswana (0.53), which has a good education system and ranks 53rd out of 109 countries. All the countries in the bottom 10 are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As is the case of the Indian example cited above, it is clear that there needs to be investment in enhancing the communications infrastructure and addressing the pertinent issues of economic and gender inequality in the region.



It is very apparent that governance is the most important component of an enabling environment for civil society.

Given its critical role in shaping the enabling environment for civil society, the governance dimension makes up half of the EEI score, while the socio-economic dimension and the socio-cultural dimension amount to one quarter of the score each.¹¹ The global governance average is 0.58.

Europe is the region that has the highest score on the governance dimension, with an average of 0.73. Denmark is considered to have the most conducive enabling environment for civil society, with a near perfect score of 0.96. All other Nordic countries score particularly high on the governance dimension with Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden all scoring above 0.91. Only 19% of countries in Europe were ranked below the global average of 0.58. All the European countries below the global average are post-communist States, in which old authoritarian structures and conservative political forces still wield significant influence.

Belarus (0.23) and Russia (0.34) are the two worst governance contexts in Europe for civil society. Belarus ranks 106th out of 109 countries globally.

Indicators of the governance dimension

Civil society infrastructure

- Organisational capacity
- Civil society financial viability
- Effectiveness of service provision organisations

Policy Dialogue

- Civil society advocacy ability
- Budget transparency
- Networking
- Civil society participation in policy

Corruption

Political Rights and Freedoms

- Political stability
- Political participation
- Political culture
- Political rights
- Human rights
- Political terror

Associational rights

Rule of law

- Legal Framework
- Electoral pluralism
- Confidence in honesty of electoral process
- Independence of the judiciary

Personal rights

- The rights not to be tortured, summarily executed, disappeared, or imprisoned for political beliefs
- Trade union rights
- Workers rights

NGO Legal Framework

Media freedoms

- Free speech
- Press freedom
- Freedom on the Net

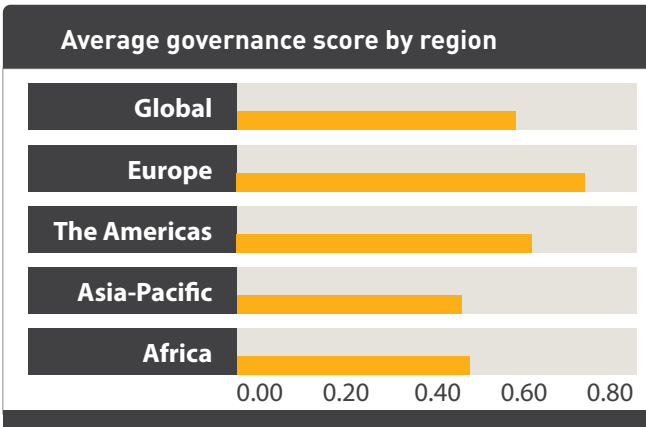
Top 10 governance environments for civil society

1	Denmark	0.96
2	Iceland	0.94
3	Switzerland	0.94
4	New Zealand	0.93
5	Canada	0.93
6	Sweden	0.92
7	Finland	0.92
8	Norway	0.91
9	Luxembourg	0.91
10	Austria	0.91

10 worst governance environments for civil society

100	Tajikistan	0.30
101	Gambia	0.30
102	Zimbabwe	0.26
103	Democratic Republic of Congo	0.25
104	Ethiopia	0.25
105	Vietnam	0.25
106	Belarus	0.23
107	China	0.20
108	Uzbekistan	0.19
109	Iran	0.17

¹¹If the governance dimension, the socio-cultural dimension and the socio-economic dimension were simply averaged, the scores of 91 of the 109 countries in the index would only vary by +/-0.05 or less.



The regional governance average for Africa is 0.44, which is well below the global average of 0.58. The three best governed countries on the continent are in the Southern Africa region. Botswana, South Africa and Namibia rank 39th, 40th and 41st out of 109 countries respectively. Botswana scores particularly high on guaranteeing freedom of association (0.94) and South Africa has the most conducive environment for policy dialogue between civil society and the State (0.80). It is hoped that these in-country best practices can be further studied and disseminated across the continent.

The West African nations of Ghana and Benin round off the top five best governed countries in the region, both countries scoring higher than 0.60. Only 20% of countries in Africa surpass the global average of 0.58. Gambia (0.30), Zimbabwe (0.26), Democratic Republic of Congo (0.25) and Ethiopia (0.25) have the least favourable governance environments for civil society.

These four countries are in the bottom ten countries globally because of particularly poor legal frameworks for civil society and severely strained relationships between civil society and the State.

The Asia-Pacific region has the lowest regional average for governance, which at 0.43 is only slightly lower than the African average. As a result of minimal corruption and strong freedom of association, assembly and expression guarantees, New Zealand (0.93) and Australia (0.90) have the best governance environments. South Korea (0.72) and India (0.54) have the third and fourth best governance environments in the region.

This sharp plummet in scores indicates that there is a huge disparity in governance environments in the region. If New Zealand and Australia were not included in the region, the average score for the Asia-Pacific region would be 0.38. Developing economy powerhouses India (0.54), Indonesia (0.52), Turkey (0.47) and Malaysia (0.44), are above the region's governance average, but they are well below the global average of 0.58. The Asia-Pacific region has the most countries in the bottom ten (Tajikistan, Vietnam, Iran, Uzbekistan and China). Poor civil society-State relations, inadequate legal protections of civil and political rights and frequent violations of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly are the principal reasons that these countries have very low scores in the governance dimension.

It is apparent that human rights protections in the region need strengthening.

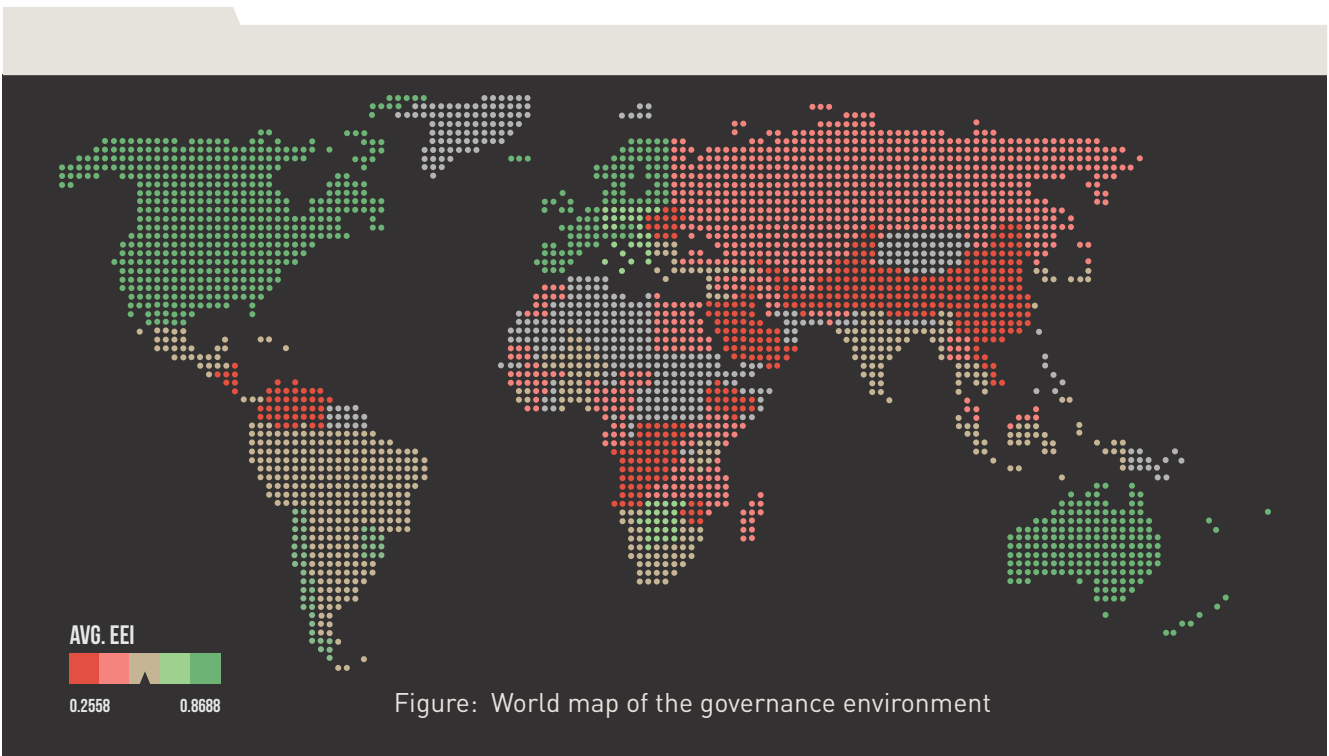
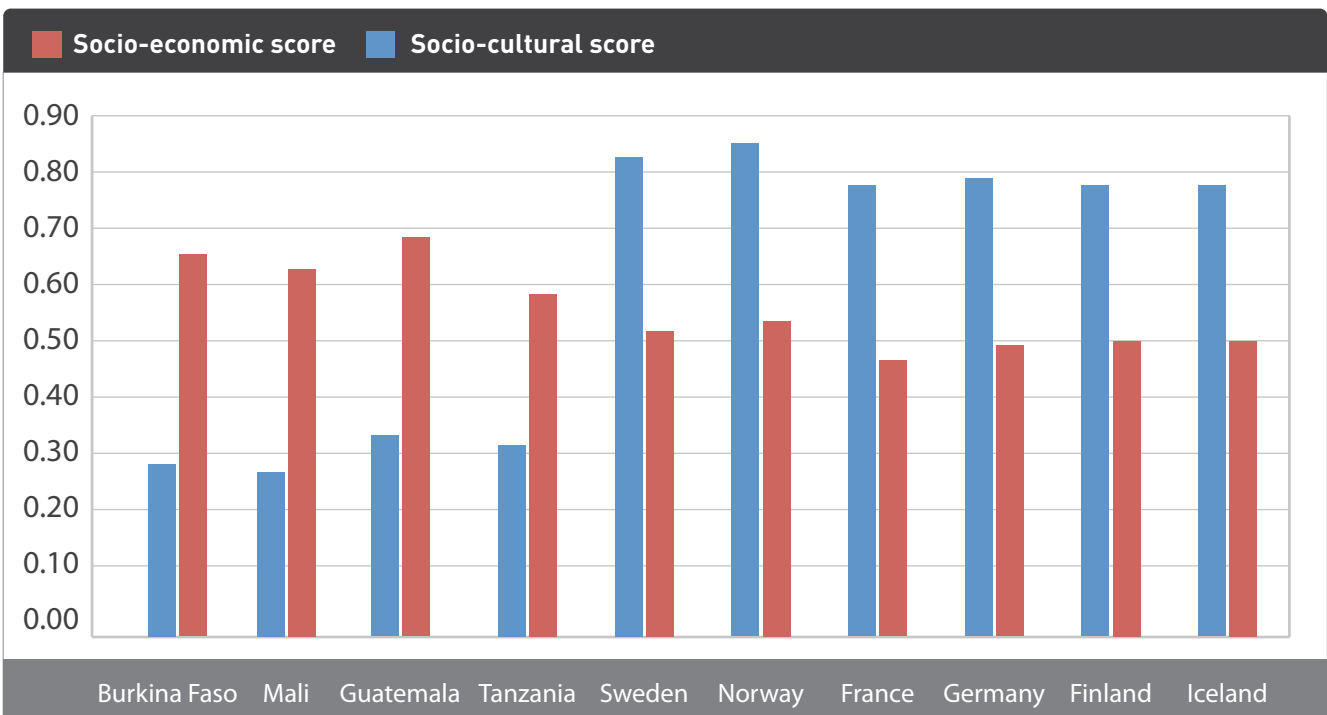


Figure: World map of the governance environment

One interesting aspect of the EEI scores is the imbalances between different dimensions of the index.

For example, the gap between the socio-economic and socio-cultural scores reveals two types of imbalances. On the one hand, some countries, such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Guatemala and Tanzania have relatively high scores on the socio-cultural dimension but low socio-economic scores.

This could suggest that, despite low socio-economic outcomes in these counties, the socio-cultural context for civil society is relatively strong. The reverse seems to be true in several European countries (Sweden, Norway, France and Germany) where, despite very good socio-economic conditions, more needs to be done to build trust in non-profits and a culture of giving and volunteering in order to strengthen civic engagement and CSO impact.

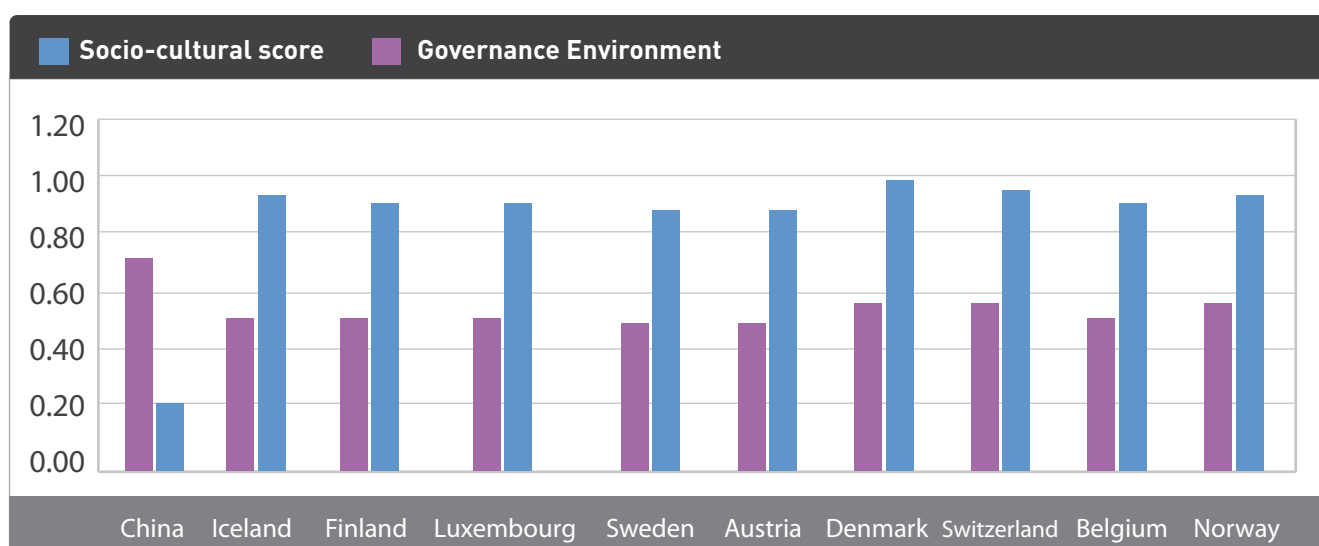


Countries	Gap between the economic score and the cultural score	Socio-economic score	Socio-cultural score
Burkina Faso	0.36	0.29	0.64
Mali	0.34	0.28	0.62
Guatemala	0.32	0.35	0.67
Sweden	0.31	0.82	0.51
Norway	0.30	0.83	0.53
France	0.30	0.76	0.47
Germany	0.29	0.79	0.49
Tanzania	0.28	0.31	0.59
Finland	0.28	0.78	0.50
Iceland	0.28	0.78	0.50

If we look at the gaps between socio-cultural and governance scores, the biggest imbalances are generally seen in European countries which have extremely high governance scores coupled with comparatively low scores on the socio-cultural dimension.

As indicated above, this suggests that this is an area which needs to be addressed in order to enhance the impact of European civil society organisations locally. However, the big outlier in this case is China, which has a very high score on the socio-cultural dimension and the third worst governance environment for civil society. Good governance conditions are critical to the health and state of the environment for civil society.

Although China clearly has great potential for civic action and for organised civil society, political and legislative reforms are essential for civil society to flourish.

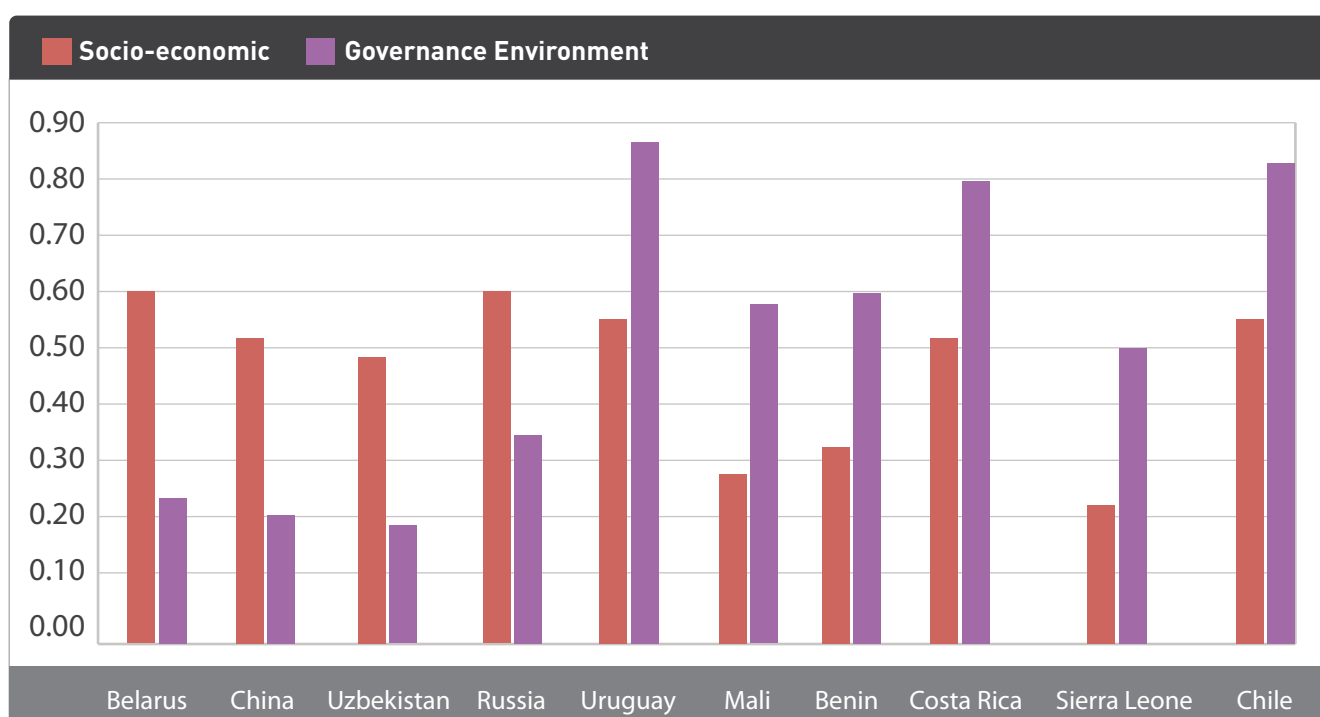


Countries	Gap between the economic score and the governance score	Socio-cultural score	Governance score
China	0.51	0.71	0.20
Iceland	0.44	0.50	0.94
Finland	0.42	0.50	0.92
Luxembourg	0.42	0.50	0.91
Sweden	0.41	0.51	0.92
Austria	0.41	0.50	0.91
Denmark	0.40	0.56	0.96
Switzerland	0.40	0.54	0.94
Belgium	0.39	0.49	0.88
Norway	0.38	0.53	0.91

Turning to the gap between socio-economic and governance scores, several Latin American countries have high governance scores, but low scores on the socio-economic dimension. Although Uruguay, Costa Rica and Chile do not have low scores on the socio-economic dimension per se, there is a clear discrepancy between their average socio-economic scores and their high governance scores.

The EEI indicates that these countries, as well as Benin, Mali and Sierra Leone, should focus on closing the gender and economic gap in educational achievement and access to communications infrastructure in order to strengthen citizen participation as a whole. Although Belarus, China, Russia and to some extent Uzbekistan have fairly good socio-economic conditions for civil society, they have poor governance contexts, which are marked by acrimonious State-civil society relations.

Local and international civil society must continue to pressure these governments to enact reforms to strengthen the governance environment and protect the space for civil society.



Countries	Gap between the economic score and the governance score	Socio-economic score	Governance environment score
Belarus	0.37	0.60	0.23
Uruguay	0.33	0.55	0.88
China	0.32	0.52	0.20
Mali	0.31	0.28	0.58
Uzbekistan	0.31	0.49	0.19
Benin	0.29	0.31	0.60
Costa Rica	0.29	0.52	0.81
Sierra Leone	0.28	0.23	0.51
Russia	0.27	0.61	0.34
Chile	0.27	0.56	0.83

Enabling Environment Index ranking

EEI RESULTS

Ranking	Country	Score
1	New Zealand	0.87
2	Canada	0.85
3	Australia	0.84
4	Denmark	0.81
5	Norway	0.80
6	Netherlands	0.79
7	Switzerland	0.79
8	Iceland	0.79
9	Sweden	0.79
10	United States of America	0.79
11	Finland	0.78
12	Ireland	0.76
13	Luxembourg	0.76
14	Austria	0.76
15	United Kingdom	0.75
16	Belgium	0.75
17	Estonia	0.73
18	Uruguay	0.73
19	France	0.72
20	Cyprus	0.71
21	Chile	0.71
22	Spain	0.70
23	South Korea	0.70
24	Malta	0.70
25	Germany	0.70
26	Slovenia	0.69
27	Hungary	0.69
28	Czech Republic	0.69
29	Poland	0.68
30	Portugal	0.68

Ranking	Country	Score
31	Costa Rica	0.66
32	Latvia	0.65
33	Lithuania	0.65
34	Slovakia	0.65
35	Trinidad and Tobago	0.64
36	Italy	0.63
37	Argentina	0.61
38	Bulgaria	0.61
39	Croatia	0.60
40	South Africa	0.59
41	Romania	0.59
42	Brazil	0.59
43	Botswana	0.58
44	Panama	0.57
45	Peru	0.57
46	Ukraine	0.56
47	El Salvador	0.56
48	Ghana	0.56
49	Montenegro	0.55
50	Macedonia	0.55
51	Mexico	0.55
52	Albania	0.55
53	Guatemala	0.54
54	Serbia	0.54
55	Namibia	0.53
56	Colombia	0.52
57	Bolivia	0.52
58	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.52
59	Indonesia	0.52
60	Kosovo	0.52

* All scores have been rounded off.

Enabling Environment Index ranking: continued

EEI RESULTS

Ranking	Country	Score	Ranking	Country	Score
61	Moldova	0.52	92	Sierra Leone	0.41
62	Mali	0.51	93	Belarus	0.41
63	Dominican Republic	0.51	94	Egypt	0.40
64	Burkina Faso	0.50	95	Gabon	0.40
65	Thailand	0.50	96	Iraq	0.40
66	Georgia	0.50	97	Madagascar	0.39
67	India	0.50	98	Nigeria	0.38
68	Malaysia	0.50	99	Tajikistan	0.38
69	Benin	0.49	100	Vietnam	0.37
70	Ecuador	0.48	101	Angola	0.37
71	Tanzania	0.47	102	Ethiopia	0.36
72	Turkey	0.47	103	Zimbabwe	0.35
73	Armenia	0.47	104	Guinea	0.35
74	Malawi	0.46	105	The Gambia	0.32
75	Russia	0.45	106	Burundi	0.31
77	Honduras	0.45	107	Iran	0.31
78	Nicaragua	0.44	108	Uzbekistan	0.29
79	Kazakhstan	0.43	109	Democratic Republic of Congo	0.26
80	Kyrgyzstan	0.43			
81	Venezuela	0.43			
82	Senegal	0.43			
83	Azerbaijan	0.43			
84	Kenya	0.43			
85	Mozambique	0.43			
86	Rwanda	0.42			
87	Uganda	0.42			
88	Liberia	0.41			
89	China	0.41			
90	Morocco	0.41			
91	Jordan	0.41			

* All scores have been rounded off.

Afghanistan
Algeria
American Samoa
Andorra
Anguilla
Antigua and Barbuda
Aruba
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belize
Bermuda
Bhutan
British Virgin Islands
Brunei
Burma
Cambodia
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Cayman Islands
Central African Republic
Chad
Channel Islands
Comoros
Congo, Republic of the
Cook Islands
Cote d'Ivoire
Cuba
Curacao

Djibouti
Dominica
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Faeroe Islands
Fiji
French Guiana
Greece
Greenland
Grenada
Guam
Guinea-Bissau
Guyana
Haiti
Holy See
Hong Kong
Isle of Man
Israel
Jamaica
Japan
Kiribati
Kuwait
Laos
Lebanon
Lesotho
Libya
Liechtenstein
Macau
Maldives
Marshall Islands

■	Martinique
■	Mauritania
■	Mauritius
■	Micronesia
■	Monaco
■	Mongolia
■	Nauru
■	Nepal
■	Netherland Antilles
■	New Caledonia
■	Niger
■	Niue
■	North Korea
■	Oman
■	Pakistan
■	Palau
■	Palestinian Territories
■	Papua New Guinea
■	Paraguay
■	Philippines
■	Puerto Rico
■	Qatar
■	Reunion
■	Saint Kitts and Nevis
■	Saint Lucia
■	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
■	Samoa
■	San Marino
■	Sao Tome and Principe
■	Saudi Arabia

■	Seychelles
■	Singapore
■	Sint Maarten
■	Solomon Islands
■	Somalia
■	South Sudan
■	Sri Lanka
■	St. Martin
■	Sudan
■	Suriname
■	Swaziland
■	Syria
■	Taiwan
■	Timor-Leste
■	Togo
■	Tonga
■	Tunisia
■	Turkmenistan
■	Turks and Caicos Islands
■	Tuvalu
■	United States Virgin Islands
■	United Arab Emirates
■	Vanuatu
■	West bank

4

THE DISCUSSION

The creation of the EEI has been an important step in at least two longer journeys. For those interested in development effectiveness, it is an attempt to map some of the elements of an enabling environment for civil society; and for CIVICUS, it is a further contribution to understanding the state of civil society in countries around the world.

We believe the EEI is an important contribution in itself, but it is also important to recognise its limitations and identify opportunities to make further progress.

One of the most pertinent questions that emerged in the consultation process was that of the political utility of the EEI, with some of our constituents questioning whether the index would be useful to improve the conditions of the environment in which civil society operates. These days, there is a plethora of indices, which makes it necessary to consider how an index can be communicated widely and be visible in order to possess any political clout.

From this point of view, credibility and relevance to policy-makers are among the key factors of success.¹²

¹² Duncan Green, in his blog post, "Why do some (better) alternatives to GDP get picked up, while others sink without trace?" (<http://www.oxfamblogs.org/tp2p/?p=13574>) mentions five key success factors of indices, which are 1) relevance to policymakers; 2) salience for a broad audience (simplicity, understandability, good communication); 3) credibility and legitimacy (where neutrality is a key); 4) stakeholder participation and 5) preference of single figure index over complex dashboards.

The Discussion

With regard to the question of credibility, an index needs to have a solid theoretical foundation in order to withstand the rigorous review of the research community. More than anything, it needs to be seen as a neutral tool (i.e., communicating facts rather than selective observation or mere opinions). CIVICUS has strived to achieve this with the EEI.

The EEI comes at a time of heightened attention on the issue of the enabling environment in policy-making circles and its mention in the post-Busan global monitoring framework of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) in particular.

We hope that policy-makers will find our contribution useful but we acknowledge that a tool like this will not answer all of the critical questions being asked about the enabling environment for civil society.

One of the reasons for the limited utility of the current EEI is the lack of data, particularly regarding the legal environment for civil society. The absence of relevant indicators limits the explanatory power of the EEI. In the EEI, only two sub-dimensions directly measure the legal and regulatory framework for civil society, which are the “civil society infrastructure” sub-dimension and the “NGO legal context” sub-dimension, both of which have limited country coverage. For CIVICUS, this represents a serious shortcoming but it is at the same time a significant opportunity for the international community.

One lesson we have learned in the course of developing the EEI is the need for gathering in-depth primary data at country level.

There is a significant shortage of research and reporting on civil society and its environment that, on the one hand, is detailed enough to monitor country-specific events and changes in a systematic manner and that, on the other hand, is comprehensive enough to highlight emerging global trends.

Initiatives such as the Civil Society Index¹³ have been very important in collating comparative information on the state of civil society. However, the data gathered is now out of date, does not have full coverage and is not always comparable across countries. More recently, CIVICUS has been in partnership with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) to conduct country-level assessments of the enabling environment for civil society in close to 20 countries, and the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) civil society coalition has also been mapping various CSO efforts on data collection on the enabling environment for civil society. Yet, these efforts will also not in themselves deliver the sort of comparative evidence base that policy-makers and indeed civil society itself would like to see.

Here, we believe that a concerted effort by CSOs, donors¹⁴, partner governments and others is needed to develop a common and comparable knowledge base on civil society. As discussed above, such a knowledge base should be as broad as the EEI in its coverage of factors but, importantly, it should involve the collection of fresh data.

There are international political opportunities that can be used to generate such data. For example, within the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) process itself, each country government has been tasked with collecting country-specific data on certain indicators within the scope of the Busan commitments. Although the enabling environment for civil society has not been included for this country-level task, there is room to use this process to bring issues to the political level in order to mobilise necessary resources for further data collection.

There is also a growing awareness and effort to build a knowledge base on democratic governance, in line with the motivation to develop new indicators in the post-MDG era. Accordingly, a careful decision must be made whether to single out the enabling environment for civil society as a unit of measurement on the one hand or to create a conscious alignment with other indices on democratic governance.

The Discussion

CIVICUS will be working with partners over the coming years to build such a comparative knowledge base, drawing on a variety of methods that have been used in this area. We would welcome ideas and suggestions on how we might go about assembling this more comprehensive database.

Finally, our consultation process has also revealed that the discussion of the “enabling environment for civil society” is still largely occurring amongst a select few civil society organisations and donors. Hardly any of the civil society practitioners in our consultations in Johannesburg, Kampala, Lagos, Nairobi and Quito had previously heard of the concept of the enabling environment. This suggests a need to promote better connections between the immediate concerns of civil society about the operating conditions or civic space in their own countries, and the international policy discourse on the enabling environment.

For CIVICUS, our over-arching aim is to ensure that the real challenges faced by our colleagues in civil society across the world are addressed. The recent interest in the enabling environment provides a useful opportunity to engage international policymakers in the concerns of civil society, and we hope the EEL goes some way in highlighting the countries and areas in which civic space is under threat.



END.

¹³The Civil Society Index is a participatory needs assessment and action-planning tool for civil society that has been implemented by CIVICUS over the past ten years in more than 75 countries. Further information about CIVICUS' Civil Society Index is available at <http://civicus.org/what-we-do-126/csi>.

¹⁴At the time of writing the European Union and several of its donor governments are developing roadmaps for working with civil society. This represents a significant opportunity for further engagement on the issue of the enabling environment.

About Civicus

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance of civil society organisations and activists working to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizens' freedom of association are challenged.

CIVICUS has a vision of a global community of active, engaged citizens committed to the creation of a more just and equitable world. This is based on the belief that the health of societies exists in direct proportion to the degree of balance between the state, the private sector and civil society, and that governance is improved when there are multiple means for people to have a say in decision-making. CIVICUS seeks to amplify the voices and opinions of people and their organisations, share knowledge about and promote the value and contribution of citizen participation and civil society, and help give expression to the enormous creative energy of a diverse civil society.

CIVICUS, with its numerous partners, works by bringing together and connecting different civil society actors and other stakeholders in civil society; researching into and publishing on the health, state and challenges of civil society; and developing policy positions and advocating for the greater inclusion of and a more enabling environment for civil society. CIVICUS was founded in 1993 and is headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa.

We warmly welcome new members and partners. To join us or find out more please visit www.civicus.org

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