

# 2019 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index – Asia

**Overview** The 2019 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI) for Asia reports on the strength and overall viability of the CSO sectors in Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and for the first time, Timor-Leste. It addresses both advances and setbacks in seven key components or “dimensions” of the sustainability of civil society sectors: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, sectoral infrastructure, and public image. The CSOSI is intended to be a useful source of information for local CSOs, governments, donors, academics, and others who want to better understand and monitor key aspects of sustainability in the CSO sector.

The CSOSI provides a comprehensive assessment of the capacity of civil society to serve as both a short-term partner in implementing development solutions and a long-term actor in ensuring that development outcomes are sustained. The CSOSI empowers local civil society actors to collectively assess not only the environments in which they operate, but also their own capacities to advocate, operate sustainably, and communicate with citizens. Allowing local civil society to self-identify their development challenges is the first step in promoting resiliency and long-term self-reliance.

The CSOSI is produced by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in partnership with FHI 360, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), and a local implementing partner in each participating country. A total of 74 countries across the globe were surveyed in various regional editions of the CSOSI in 2019.

**Results** The developments depicted in this edition of the CSOSI largely represent a continuation of trends affecting CSO sustainability in the region over the past few years (yet they do not include the many ways the sector would be affected by the pandemic in 2020). In 2019, the legal environment score deteriorated in Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand as civic space shrank, due in large part to more restrictive implementation of existing laws as well as increasing state harassment of CSOs working on rights-based issues. Bangladesh, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand also saw continued deterioration in their public image scores due to negative government attitudes towards the sector that tarnish its reputation. However, increasing collaboration, networking, coalition building, and intersectoral partnerships in Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand led to improvements in those countries’ sectoral infrastructure scores. According to the inaugural report for Timor-Leste, the government and CSOs consider each other partners in development, yet financial viability remains fragile as most CSOs remain dependent on international donors and government funding.

**Resources** The 2019 CSOSI regional reports can be found at FHI 360’s [resource page](https://www.csosi.org). Explore historical CSOSI data at <https://www.csosi.org>

