

2021 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index – Asia

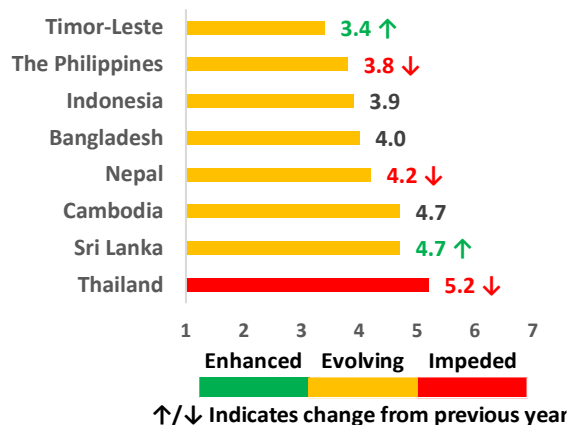
Overview The 2021 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI) for Asia reports on the strength and overall viability of the CSO sectors in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Timor-Leste. It addresses both advances and setbacks in seven key components 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 73 countries across the globe were surveyed in various regional editions of the CSOSI in 2021.



2021 OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY



Results Across the globe, civic space has been increasingly under fire in recent years, a longer-term trend dramatically emphasized by the restrictions on freedoms of assembly and speech that have accompanied COVID-19 precautions. In 2021, the *CSO Sustainability Index* again documented this trend in Asia, which is most evident in the deterioration of the legal environment governing CSOs. Declines in that dimension were reported in six of the eight countries covered in this edition of the Index: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

At the same time, the global economic uncertainty brought on by the pandemic, together with resulting lockdowns on businesses and travel, continued to have a direct impact on the financial viability of CSOs in the region. This financial deterioration was evident in four of the eight countries

covered in this edition of the Index—Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand—while Bangladesh, Nepal, and Timor-Leste maintained the status quo following 2020 declines.

Despite these continued—and, in several cases, increased—challenges, CSOs across the region remained critical players in responding to the emergency needs of their communities. Even during lockdown restrictions, CSOs were able to adapt both their services and how they operated and reached constituents. CSOs limited by travel restrictions turned to online platforms for meetings, interviews, and webinars with their constituents. Where online services remained a challenge, some CSOs and foundations strengthened collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs).

Resources The 2021 CSOSI regional reports can be found on FHI 360’s [resource page](https://www.csosi.org). Explore historical CSOSI data at <https://www.csosi.org>.