

# 2020 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index – Mexico

**Overview** The 2020 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI) for Mexico reports on the state of the Mexican CSO sector. The report addresses seven key components or “dimensions” of the sustainability of the civil society sector: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, sectoral infrastructure, and public image. The Index 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 Mexican 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 2020. This is the third year the CSOSI reports on developments in Mexico, the only country in the Latin American region to be covered by the CSOSI.



**Results** In 2020, the challenges brought by COVID-19 aggravated an already difficult environment for CSOs that began in 2019, when the new López Obrador administration announced its intention to cut all federal funding to CSOs. With deteriorations in five dimensions, the overall sustainability of Mexican CSOs worsened slightly in 2020. Spurred by increasingly cumbersome government oversight, restrictions, and administrative burdens, the legal environment for CSOs witnessed the most significant decline. The virtual disappearance of federal funding for CSOs, combined with the economic decline and disruption of service provision caused by the pandemic, caused the sector’s financial viability and service provision capabilities to weaken. These same factors drove a deterioration in the organizational capacity of CSOs, though it was offset somewhat by their resilience

and effective use of technology. Advocacy declined in 2020 as CSOs were hesitant to engage in campaigns in an environment that is largely hostile to collaboration with the sector. Those that did engage in advocacy efforts typically saw limited success. Public image remained unchanged, while CSOs continued to be subject to negative rhetoric from the government, they were better equipped to adapt to the environment and media coverage of the sector’s work improved slightly. The infrastructure supporting Mexican CSOs not only withstood these obstacles but saw a slight improvement in 2020 as networks, coalitions, and support services continued to grow.

**Resources** The 2020 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>.