

The Civil Society Organization (CSO) Sustainability Index rates the sustainability of countries' civil society sectors, focusing on the strength of the sector as a whole rather than of individual organizations. The index began reporting on countries in Eastern Europe and Eurasia in 1997 and on countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2009. In 2011, the index covered 28 countries in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, 23 in Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan for a total of 53 countries.

To compile the index, representatives of at least eight CSOs meet as a panel to assess the sector's strength in seven dimensions: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, infrastructure, and public image (definitions of these dimensions are included at the end of this snapshot). The CSO Sustainability Index score is an average of these seven sub-scores. Scores range from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most sustainable and 7 being the least. USAID divides countries into three categories—"Sustainability Enhanced," "Sustainability Evolving," and "Sustainability Impeded," for countries with overall index scores of 1–3, 3.1–5, and 5.1–7, respectively.

## Highlights from the 2011 Data

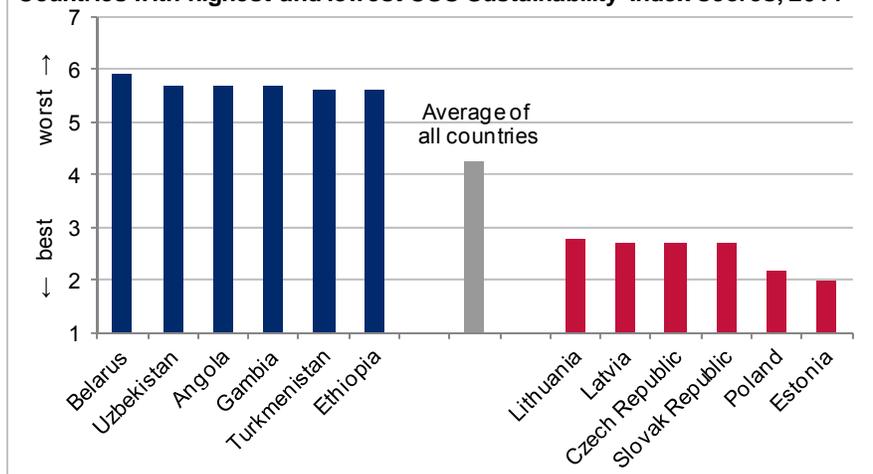
There have been few changes in the data since 2010. Because changes in civil society strength tend to be incremental, the scores for the index are very stable from year to year and the changes are typically small.

Despite the slight changes in 2011, we do see a great deal of difference between countries. Most countries fall into the "Sustainability Evolving" category for the overall index; however, 12 are considered "Sustainability Impeded" and 6 are "Sustainability Enhanced." The country with the most sustainable CSO sector, Estonia, has a score of 2.0; the least, Belarus, has a score of 5.9. The average for all countries is 4.3.

### Changes in the CSO Sustainability Index, 2010–11

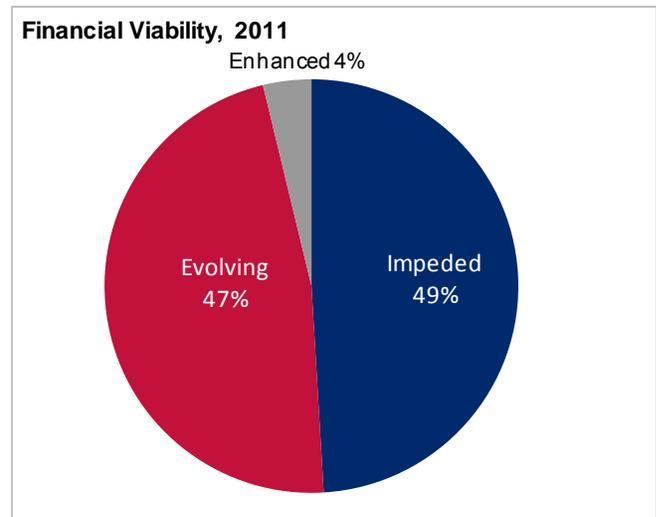
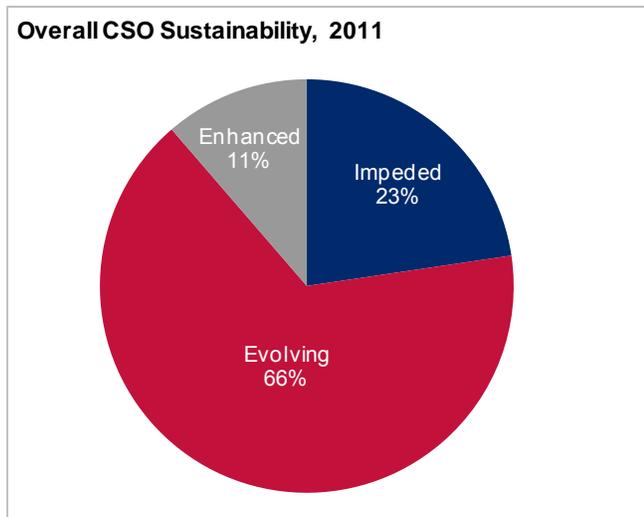
Country	Change
<i>Countries that have improved</i>	
Kenya	-0.1
Moldova	-0.1
Tajikistan	-0.1
Uganda	-0.1
<i>Countries that have worsened</i>	
Angola	+0.1
Bulgaria	+0.2
Croatia	+0.1
Ethiopia	+0.1
Kazakhstan	+0.1
Kosovo	+0.1
Lithuania	+0.1
Russia	+0.1
Senegal	+0.1

Countries with highest and lowest CSO Sustainability Index scores, 2011



## Sub-Category Scores

Financial viability is the weakest area for most (45 out of 53) countries. Although two-thirds of the countries' overall CSO sector scores are in the "Evolving" category, nearly half of the countries have "Impeded" financial viability. Only two countries' (Estonia's and Poland's) financial viability is categorized as "Enhanced" while many countries are donor-dependent and lack local sources of funding. Financial viability has worsened for 20 countries since 2009, perhaps due to the continuing recession, while 19 countries' financial viability stayed the same and 15 countries improved. Overall, countries have stronger performance on advocacy, service provision, and public image, areas which have seen more positive changes since 2009.

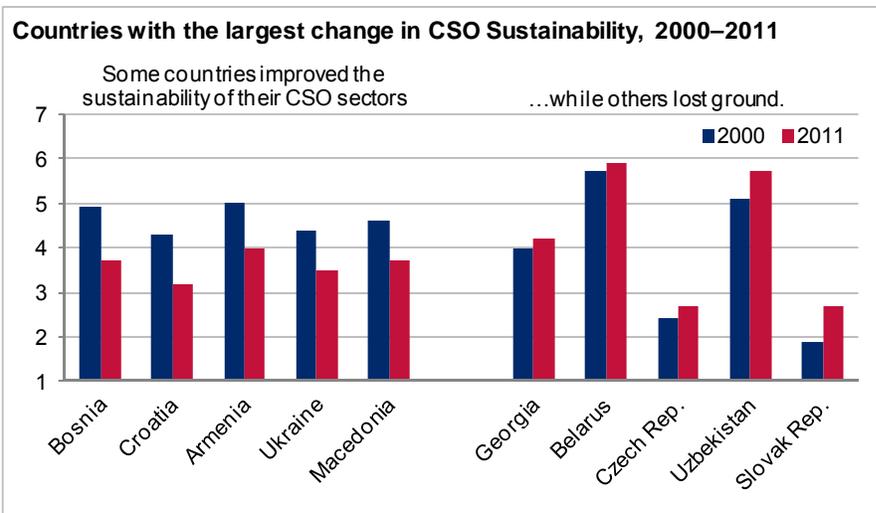


## Regional Trends

### Eastern Europe and Eurasia

The Northern Tier of Eastern Europe and Eurasia (such as Estonia and Poland) performs strongest on the overall index, while Central Asia has the highest score (worst) in the region. Eastern Europe and Eurasia has a wide spread between countries, with the only countries in the "Enhanced" category falling in this region (all in the Northern Tier) and three countries receiving an "Impeded" score.

Because the index has covered Eastern Europe and Eurasia for fifteen years, we see substantial changes over time, mostly for the better. Since 2000, when 28 countries participated and the current methodology was in use, the average overall change in score was -0.35, and 20 out of 27 countries improved their scores.



## Sub-Saharan Africa

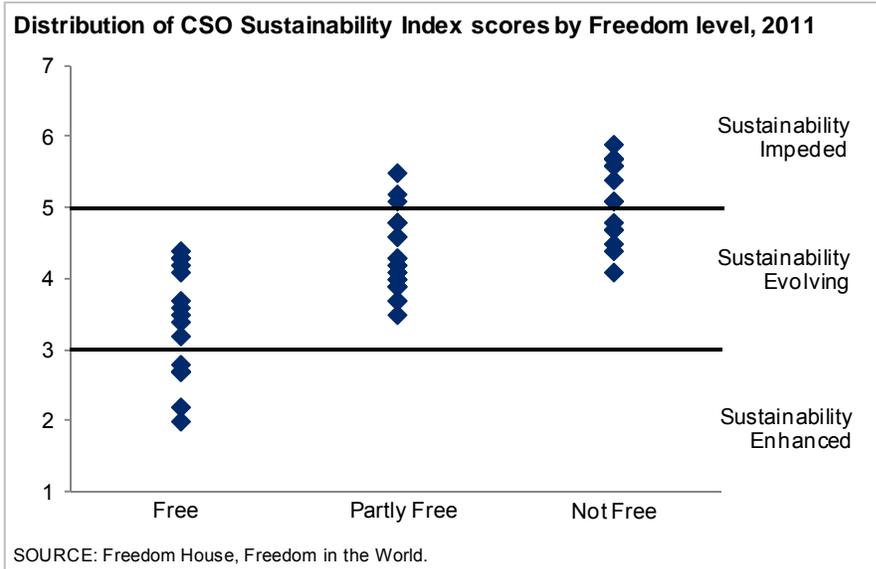
African countries have seen only small changes since 2009 when they first began doing the index. Kenya, Uganda, and Guinea have seen small improvements in CSO sector sustainability, while Congo (Kinshasa), Ethiopia, Senegal, and Angola have seen slight worsening. The best performer in the region is South Africa, with a score of 3.6. The worst is the Gambia with a score of 5.7. Many countries in the region struggle with their financial viability, with all but 6 of the 23 countries in the “Sustainability Impeded” category for that sub-score.

## South Asia

Afghanistan and Pakistan completed their first CSO Sustainability Index in 2011. Afghanistan scored a 5.1 on the overall index, placing it in the “Sustainability Impeded” category. Of its sub-scores, advocacy scored lowest (best) and financial viability highest. Pakistan scored 4.0, with infrastructure being its worst sub-score, and legal environment and service provision tied for its best.

## The CSO Sustainability Index and Other Factors

Performance on the CSO Sustainability Index is correlated with countries’ income and level of freedom. All of the best-performing countries are high- or middle-income European countries and have a high level of political freedom and civil liberties. The lower-performing countries are more geographically dispersed but have low levels of political freedom. Indeed, we see that all six of the best-performing countries are classified as Free by Freedom House, whereas all six of the worst-performing countries are classified as Not Free. Only free countries fell into the “Sustainability Enhanced” category on the CSO Sustainability Index, and no free countries were “Sustainability Impeded.” No high-income countries were “Sustainability Impeded” and no low or lower-middle income countries were Sustainability Enhanced.”



## Methodology of the Index

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### Forum Process

To complete the CSO Sustainability Index, a local implementer convenes a panel of at least eight representatives of CSO organizations. The panel represents the range of CSO activities in the country. Each panelist comes up with an initial score for each of the seven sub-indicators and shares them with the group. After a discussion, panelists may change their scores. The group then drops the highest and lowest scores and takes the average of the remaining scores to get the final score for each indicator. The indicator scores are averaged for the overall index and compared to the guidelines to ensure they make sense. The group submits the scores and a report to the Editorial Committee (EC) in Washington, DC. The EC checks that the scores are justified and comparable across countries. The EC has the final say on the score in the case of a disagreement.

The seven sub-indicators score the following factors:

- **Legal Environment** measures the extent to which the legal and regulatory environment supports the needs of CSOs.
- **Organizational Capacity** addresses the civil society sector's ability to engage in constituency building and strategic planning, internal management and staffing practices within CSOs, and the technical resources CSOs have available for their work.
- **Financial Viability** evaluates whether the civil society sector is financially viable and the economy is robust enough to support CSO self-financing efforts and generate donations from local sources.
- **Advocacy** looks at CSOs' record in influencing public policy.
- **Service Provision** examines the range of goods and services CSOs provide and how responsive these services are to community needs and priorities.
- **Infrastructure** measures whether there is a strong sectoral infrastructure that can provide CSOs with broad access to local CSO support services.
- **Public Image** looks at the extent and nature of the media's coverage of CSOs, the awareness and willingness of government officials to engage CSOs, and the public's knowledge and perception of CSOs.

USAID added the Service Provision and Infrastructure categories in 1999 and changed the methodology to make scoring more objective.

## Participating Countries

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### Eastern Europe and Eurasia

*Central Asia:* Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

*Eurasia:* Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

*Northern Tier:* Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia

*Southern Tier:* Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia

**Sub-Saharan Africa**

*East Africa:* Burundi, Congo (Kinshasa), Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda

*Southern Africa:* Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe

*West Africa:* Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone

**South Asia**

Afghanistan and Pakistan

**Additional Information**

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The entire USAID CSO Sustainability Index dataset is available from the Economic and Social Database (ESDB) at <http://esdb.eads.usaidallnet.gov/>. The ESDB website also offers related datasets such as Freedom House's Freedom in the World and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation's Index of African Governance.