

Terms of Reference (ToR) for EU SEE Consultancy

1.1 Consultancy to conduct a follow-up survey among EU SEE Network Members and analysis on the impact of funding cuts and shifts in global cooperation on civil society.

The [EU System for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society \(EU SEE\)](#) is a global initiative funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium of civil society organizations. The program aims to monitor, protect, and strengthen the Enabling Environment (EE) for civil society. Within the program, the enabling environment refers to the legal, political, institutional and societal conditions that shape the ability of civil society to organize, access resources, express themselves freely, and participate in public decision-making.

The initiative brings together civil society organizations across 86 countries and has two main components: a Monitoring and Early Warning Mechanism (MEWM) that documents changes and sheds light on critical trends in the enabling environment for civil society, and a Flexible Support Mechanism (FSM) that provides funding to civil society in need.

The MEWM is implemented by a consortium of international civil society organizations, coordinated by Hivos, and CIVICUS, Democracy Reporting International (DRI), European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), Forus and Transparency International. Led by Oxfam-Novib, the FSM is implemented by a consortium that includes CIVICUS, Protection International and Urgent Action Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Within the EU SEE program, MEWM collects and analyses information about changes in the enabling environment for civil society through its network of national civil society organisations (Network Members). These organizations provide ongoing monitoring and research from their respective countries. The FSM uses some of the data produced by the MEWM to design to provide grants for civil society organizations in need.

2. Background, Objectives, Deliverables and Timeline

In 2025, the EU SEE conducted a [survey](#) on the impact of the US Funding Freeze on its Network Members in response to the funding cuts at a time when the EU SEE was taking shape. The findings of the survey were integrated with similar results on the impact of the funding cuts on civil society developed by ICVA and Accountability Lab/Humena.

Since the 2025 survey, the international development cooperation landscape has continued to shift significantly. The impact on civil society is no longer limited to the initial US funding freeze, but now includes wider donor budget cuts, changes in donor priorities, reduced predictability of support, shifts away from flexible grant-based funding,

and broader political changes in the global cooperation system. These trends risk weakening civil society's ability to operate independently, access sustainable resources, engage in public decision-making, and respond to community needs.

So, one year on, the EU SEE is planning to conduct a follow-up survey that will assess the ways in which funding restrictions from donors and shifts in global cooperation are affecting civil society. This follow-up research will therefore assess not only the direct financial impact of funding cuts, but also the wider implications for the enabling environment for civil society, including operational autonomy, civic space, public trust, diplomatic support, legal and regulatory pressures, and the ability of CSOs to participate meaningfully in policy processes.

2.1 Objective

The survey will build on the findings of the EU SEE research on the US funding freeze by gathering updated evidence on how funding cuts, donor withdrawals, changing donor priorities and broader shifts in international cooperation have affected civil society's enabling environment since January 2025.

The research will focus in particular on access to accessible and sustainable resources, while also examining how funding changes affect civil society's ability to operate freely and safely, maintain staff and programs, serve communities, participate in public decision-making, engage with donors and public authorities, and withstand legal, political, reputational or digital threats.

The research should be guided by the following questions:

1. What types of funding cuts, freezes, cancellations, non-renewals or donor shifts have affected CSOs since January 2025?
2. Which types of donors and funding channels have been most affected – USAID/US Government, other bilateral donors, OECD-DAC donors, non-DAC donors, multilateral agencies, private foundations, INGOs/intermediaries, or other sources?
3. What has been the impact on CSO budgets, staffing, program continuity, service delivery, advocacy work and organizational survival?
4. How have funding cuts affected civil society's access to sustainable resources and operational autonomy?
5. Have funding cuts contributed to increased legal, administrative, political, reputational, security or digital risks for CSOs?
6. Have CSOs observed changes in diplomatic support, donor engagement, public narratives, or trust between civil society and donors?
7. How are CSOs adapting, and what forms of support are most urgently needed?

8. What recommendations should be made to donors, governments, multilateral actors, the EU SEE consortium and civil society networks?

2.2 Methodology

The consultant is expected to use a mixed-methods approach, including:

- A short desk review of relevant data and recent analysis on international funding cuts, ODA trends, civic space and the enabling environment for civil society.
- A survey of EU SEE Network Members and, where relevant, selected wider civil society partners.
- A limited number of key informant interviews or follow-up conversations to deepen the analysis and collect illustrative examples/case studies.
- Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, with attention to regional, thematic and organizational differences.
- Clear anonymization and confidentiality procedures, given the sensitivity of the topic.

Note: Given the sensitivity of the research topic, the consultant will be expected to apply strong ethical and confidentiality standards. Survey responses and interview input should be anonymized unless explicit consent is provided. The consultant should ensure that no organization, respondent or country example is identifiable in the final report where this could create security, reputational, or political risks. The inception report should include a short data protection and risk mitigation approach.

2.3 Deliverables

The deliverables should include;

- Inception report, including refined research questions, methodology, sampling strategy, data collection tools (survey tool, interview guide if relevant), data protection/confidentiality approach, analysis framework, examples of similar initiatives and detailed workplan with schedule.
- Clean survey dataset and summary of responses, with appropriate anonymization, summary of the survey findings and analysis and recommendations.
- First draft analytical report, including quantitative findings, qualitative analysis, emerging trends, regional/thematic observations, illustrative examples, and draft recommendations.
- Validation or feedback session with the EU SEE team/selected consortium members to review emerging findings.
- Final Analytical report, including an executive summary, key findings, analysis of enabling environment implications, case examples where possible, and

recommendations to key stakeholders including donors, civil society and policy makers etc.

- Optional but useful: a short advocacy brief or slide deck summarizing key findings for external engagement.

2.4 Timelines

- 6 July – Submission of inception report.
- 24 July - Submission of first draft of survey findings and analysis.
- 31 July – Submission of final analytical report.

3.Scope of the Survey

The survey will collect data and analyze data on the impact of the funding cuts, freezes, cancellations, non-renewals and shifts in donor priorities from:

- Bilateral donors (OECD-DAC countries i.e. Germany, France, UK, Japan, Netherlands, US and others and non-DAC donors).
- Multilateral agencies, including UN agencies, the World Bank, regional development banks.
- Private foundations, philanthropic actors and corporate funding mechanisms.
- International NGOs, pooled funds and intermediary organizations through which CSOs receive sub-grants or partnership funding
- Other relevant sources of international support.

EU SEE consortium partners will support the consultant with survey dissemination, access to relevant EU SEE materials, feedback on the research tools, and where possible translation/dissemination support through existing network channels.

4. Consultant's Profile

The consultant should meet the following requirements:

- 1- At least 5 years of experience conducting multi-stakeholder surveys, qualitative research, detailed analysis, data collection and evaluation of the enabling environment for civil society, human rights, democracy, gender, governance, international development.
- 2- A relevant post graduate qualification in international relations, sociology, social sciences, development studies or a related field.
- 3- Demonstrated understanding of international development cooperation, donor funding trends, ODA, and the role of civil society in development and governance.

- 4- Experience working with civil society organizations across diverse regional contexts, ideally including Global South partners and/or international civil society networks.
- 5- Strong quantitative and qualitative analysis skills, including ability to analyze survey data and identify cross-regional trends.
- 6- Excellent writing skills and ability to produce clear, strategic, advocacy-oriented analysis.
- 7- Experience handling sensitive data and ensuring confidentiality/anonymization.
- 8- Fluency in English required; French and/or Spanish strongly desirable.

4.1. Duration of assignment – 30 – 40 working days (to be discussed before contract is signed)

5. Expression of interest

Interested consultants are invited to submit an expression of interest that includes;

- A proposal outlining the approach or methodology and work plan.
- Updated CV of the consultant clearly demonstrates relevant experience and background.
- Financial offer

Submissions should be made to eusee-info@hivos.org before 12 June 2026.

Proposals will be assessed based on:

- Understanding of the assignment and strategic relevance of the proposed approach;
- Experience with civil society, enabling environment, civic space and/or development cooperation;
- Quality and feasibility of methodology;
- Experience with survey design and mixed-methods analysis;
- Quality of previous analytical/report writing experience;
- Value for money and feasibility within the proposed timeline.