



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

# Civic Space

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# Overview

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- Civic Space
- Policy instruments
- CSF + CSF-Flex





## 3 Civic Freedoms

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- Freedom of Association
- Freedom of Expression
- Freedom of peaceful Assembly

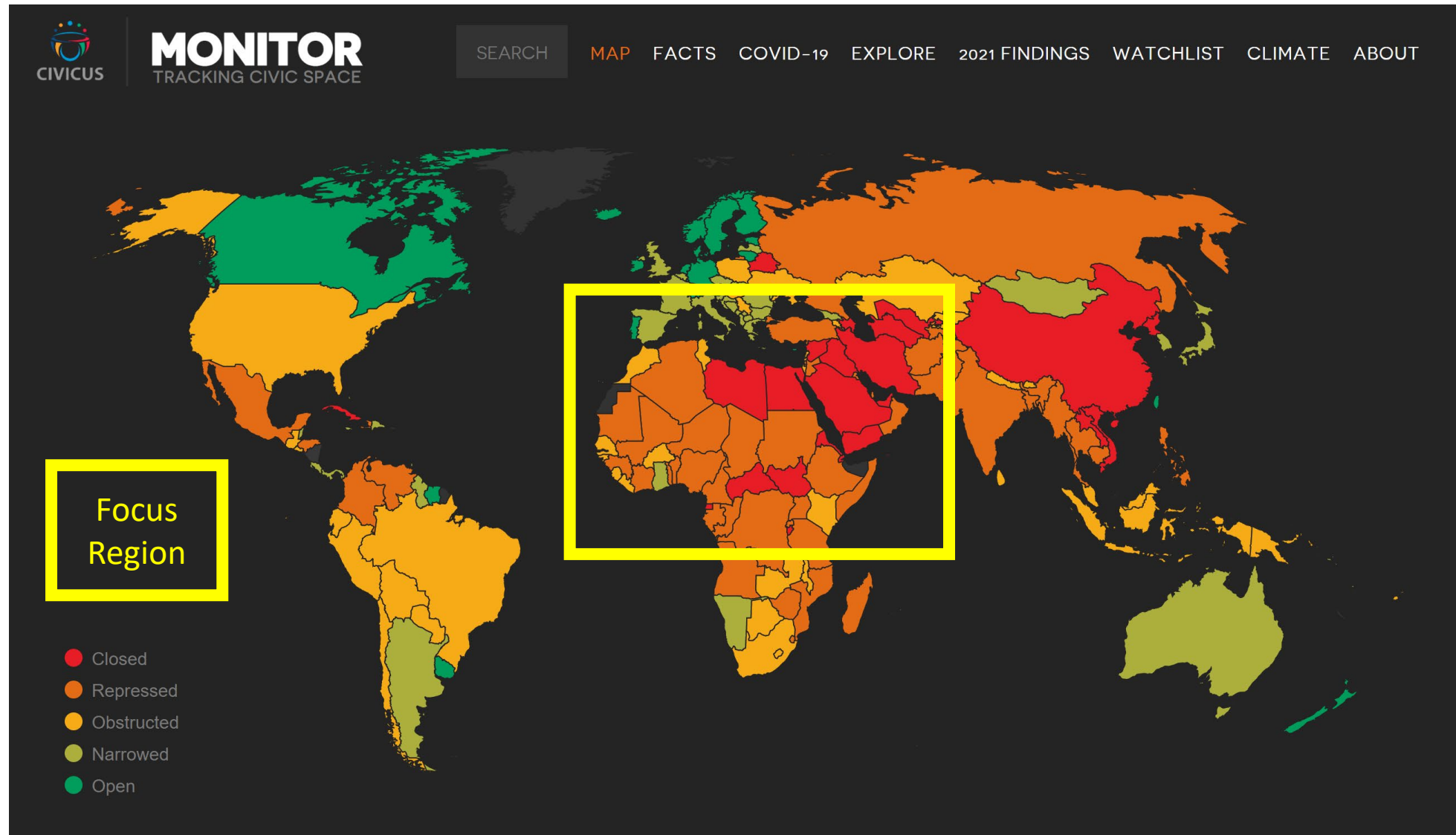




# Current Situation



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# Civic Space & Civil Society

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A strong civil society is essential for a good functioning democracy and an inclusive society where civic space is safeguarded.

Civic space and civil society is under pressure in many countries, with restrictive NGO laws etc.

The Netherlands supports civil society organisations in reducing inequality, combating corruption, amplifying the voice of rights holders and calling upon duty bearers to fulfil human rights of their constituencies.

Specific attention goes to the realization of women's rights and gender.

The [Youth@Hearts principles](#) are put into practice in policy preparation and implementation.

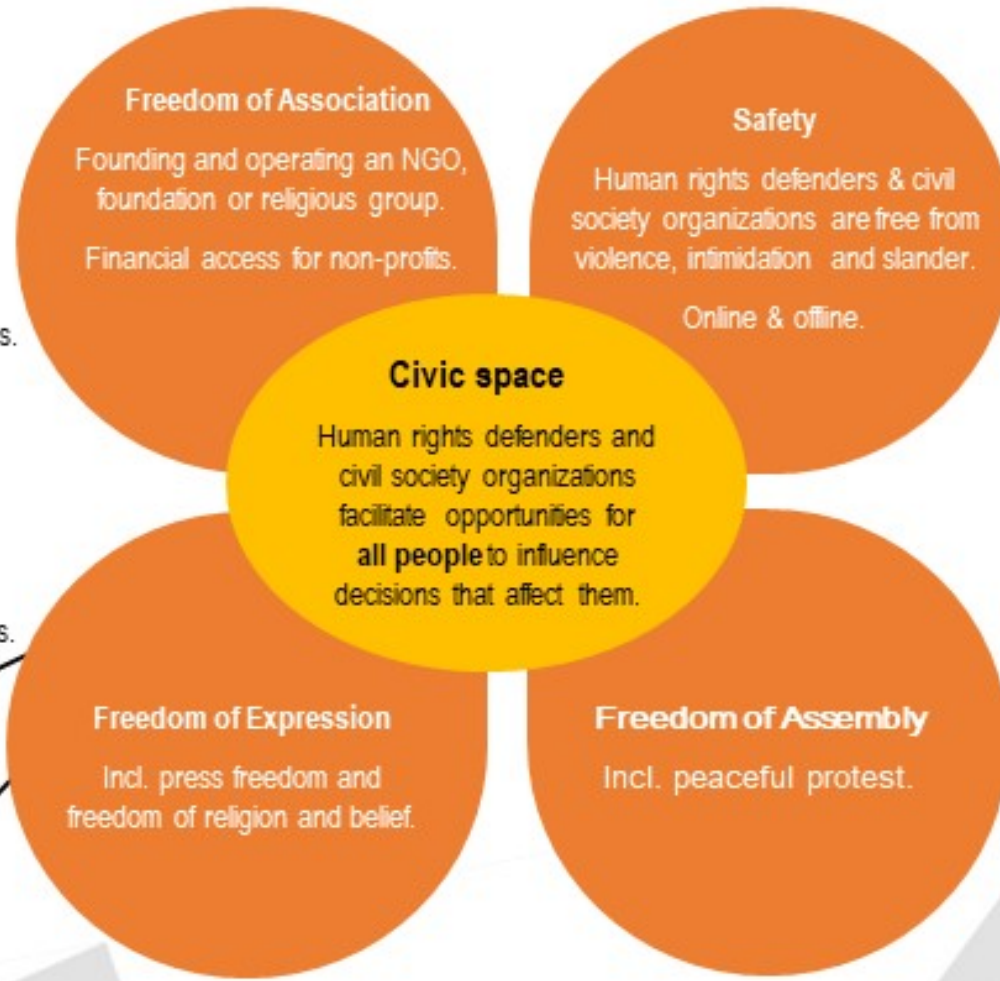


### Enabling responses to civil society

- Strengthening the independent role of civil society to represent diverse societal groups.
- Promoting constructive dialogues among different (opposing) stakeholders.
- Strengthening civil society to address grievances to prevent extremism and violence.
- Implementing risk-based security measures.
- Promote use of open data

### Concerns around Civil Society

- Aid harmonisation
- Transparency
- Economic climate
- Foreign influence
- Terrorism



# Response options

### Constraining responses to civil society:

- Restricting civic freedoms.
- Harrassment and intimidation of civil society.
- Taking away control from civil society to decide on their focus and operations.
- Overregulating civil society sector, including de-risking.

- Promoting constructive dialogues among different (opposing) stakeholders.
- Strengthening civil society to address grievances to prevent extremism and violence.
- Implementing risk-based security measures.
- Promote use of open data

Human rights defenders and civil society organizations facilitate opportunities for **all people** to influence decisions that affect them.

**Freedom of Expression**  
Incl. press freedom and freedom of religion and belief.

**Freedom of Assembly**  
Incl. peaceful protest.

**Concerns around Civil Society**

- Aid harmonisation
- Transparency
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**Constraining responses to civil society:**

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<b><u>Roles &amp; responsibilities</u></b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Civil society</b>	<b>Private sector</b>
<b>Advancing civic space</b>	Developing and implementing inclusive laws & policies	Cooperation with government & private sector for more inclusive development	Developing products and services that contribute to inclusivity
<b>Enabling civic space</b>	Including civil society in decision making	Agenda setting and influencing decision making	Consulting civil society in decision making
<b>Minimum responsibility</b>	Protecting civic freedoms and (national) security.	Signalling concerns and abuses	Respecting human rights and national legislation



# Instruments



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## Power of Voices

- Climate
- Trade and Sustainable Value Chains
- Food Security, Water, Wash
- Gender
- Inclusion LHBTI
- Freedom of Speech / FoRB
- Security and Rule of Law



## SDG5 fund

- Power of Women
- SRHR Partnership Fund
- Women Peace and Security



## Other instruments

- VOICE
- Leading from the South
- **Civic Space Fund**





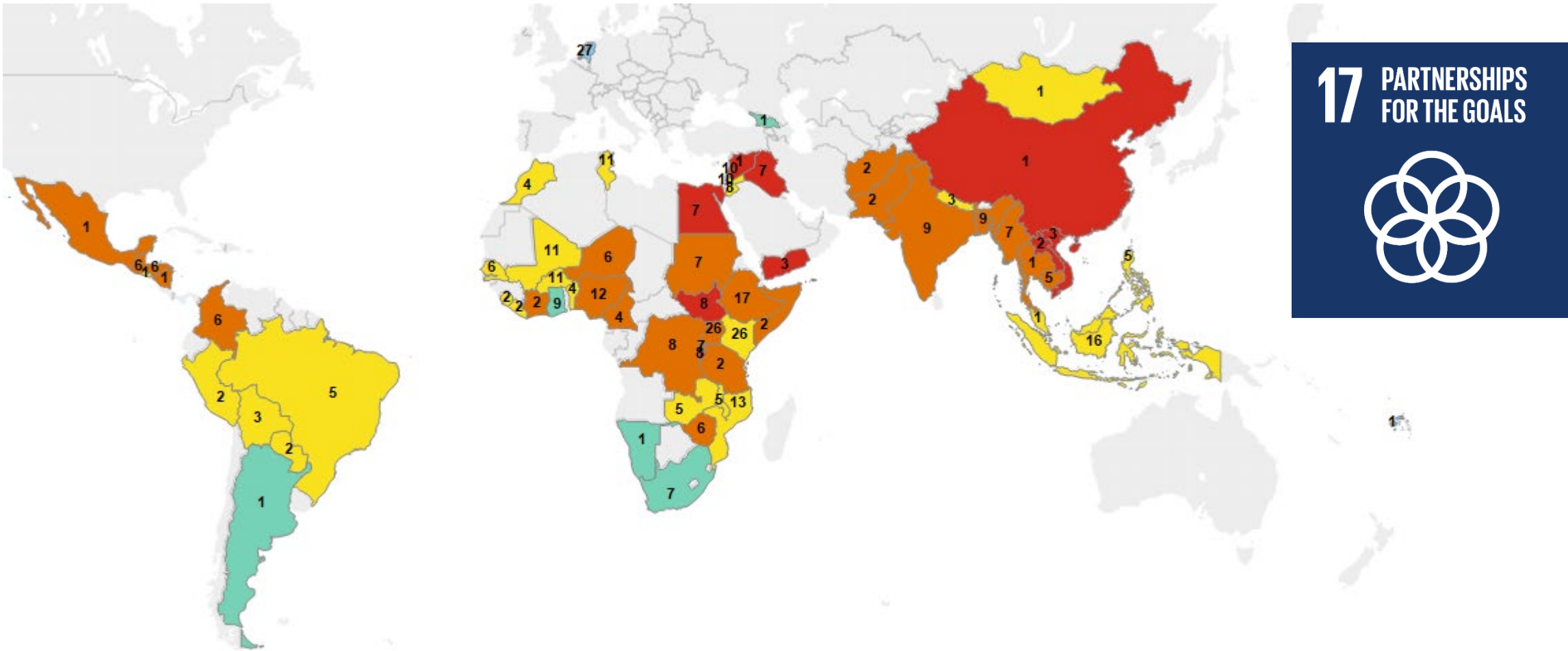


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# Geographical scope

# # Strategic Partners

## Worldmap





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# Civic Space Fund



- Opportunity to offer **direct support to local CSOs**
- The aim is to help create a **strong, vibrant civil society** that holds public and private actors to account
- Direct support to CSOs by Embassies strengthens **local ownership** and leadership and shows that the Netherlands government is serious about supporting such agents of change.
- Moreover, it strengthens **mutual learning** and the network of Embassies.
- The proposed activities must aim to **strengthen the lobbying and advocacy capacity** of local CSOs. The fund cannot be used to finance service delivery activities.



# CSF



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# CSF-Flex

## Annual budget 9 million

- Embassies operationalise CSF as they see fit through annual budget cycle
- Embassies are in charge of how funds are dispersed at country level
- The CSF is open to countries mentioned in the BHOS policy note (focus countries).
- **Thematic priorities:** climate mitigation and adaptation, trade and/or sustainable value chains, food security, sustainable water management and/or WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), SRHR, women's rights and gender equality, freedom of speech or freedom of religion and belief, equal rights LGBTI, peace and law and order.

## Annual budget 1 million\*

- Embassies can apply for CSF-Flex at any time during the year
- The CSF-Flex is open to all OECD-DAC countries (except the Upper Middle Income Countries and Territories) with a Dutch Embassy, see the [DAC list](#).
- **No thematic priority** but a focus on innovative cooperation between organisations is welcomed. Furthermore, organisations working with the most marginalised groups are of first concern, notably women and girls, LGBTIs and people with disabilities. CSOs representing intersex people and youth are encouraged to apply.
- > 100.000 euro per activity

\*) For 2022 and 2023 this budget is raised with an additional 7.5 million euro.



# Questions

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