

**DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE  
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE**

**Cancels & replaces the same document of 6 February 2025**

**Update on the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance & the DAC-CSO Framework for Dialogue**

DAC Meeting, 20 February 2025

This document is submitted to the DAC for DISCUSSION– see the Draft Annotated DAC Agenda [DCD/DAC/A(2025)3].

The discussion aims to inform DAC members of progress made to disseminate, implement and monitor the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance since the March 2023 update [[DCD/DAC\(2023\)15/FINAL](#)].

The discussion also aims to update DAC members on progress made to implement the Framework for Dialogue between the DAC and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) since the December 2023 update [[DCD/DAC\(2023\)57/FINAL](#)]. The purpose is also to hear members' views on the proposed draft agenda for the 2025 edition of the OECD DAC Civil Society Days.

This cancel and replace version reflects minor wording edits.

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**JT03559504**

## *Update on the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance & the DAC–CSO Framework for Dialogue*

### 1. Introduction

1. The RPDI civil society workstream has two main, mutually-reinforcing areas of work: **(1) policy research, analysis and standard-setting**, in collaboration with the DAC Community of Practice on Civil Society and in line with the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance [[OECD/LEGAL/5021](#)] (hereafter, the “DAC Recommendation”); and **(2) dialogue and engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs)**, grounded in the 2018 Framework for Dialogue between the DAC and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) [DCD/DAC(2018)28/FINAL].

2. Since the DAC Committee Progress Report covering activities up to June 2024 [DCD/DAC(2024)42], the civil society workstream continued to support DAC members’ engagement with, and policies towards, civil society as well as civil society’s contribution to development under intermediate output result (IOR) 2.4 in the 2023-24 DAC PWB [DCD/DAC(2022)23/REV2].

3. The present document focuses on both areas of work, including achievements in line with the 2023-24 DAC PWB [DCD/DAC(2022)23/REV2] and plans under the 2025-26 PWB. The workstream’s deliverables in line with the 2025–26 DAC PWB [DCD/DAC(2024)29/REV3] under IOR 3.2 “Effectiveness and reform of the development co-operation system”, which are :

1. **More effective and impactful policies and practices to enable civil society and protect civic space in collaboration with the DAC Community of Practice (CoP) on Civil Society<sup>1</sup> and line with the DAC Recommendation** through:
  - Providing policy analysis and technical guidance, support and peer learning to implement the DAC Recommendation’s three pillars (protecting civic space, supporting civil society, and incentivising CSO accountability)
  - A multi-stakeholder learning and monitoring event (2025 Civil Society Days)
  - Integrating the DAC Recommendation’s implications horizontally in DAC and OECD work
  - Monitoring the DAC Recommendation’s implementation and expanded adherence

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<sup>1</sup> The DAC CoP on Civil Society comprises technical experts and leads on civil society in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance from DAC members’ headquarters. It was created in 2019 to facilitate peer learning, exchange, and evidence-gathering among DAC members. It helped develop the [2020 DAC Members and Civil Society study](#) and spearheaded the 2021 DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society.

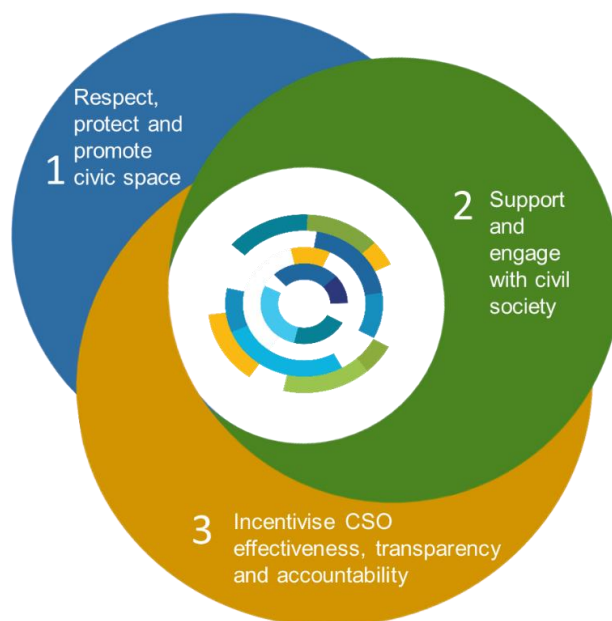
2. **Strengthened dialogue between civil society, the DAC, informal and formal bodies, and the Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) in line with the Framework for Dialogue between the DAC and CSOs** through:
- Coordinating the annual DAC-CSO Dialogues and pre-H/SLM meetings
  - Guiding and supporting additional thematic dialogues with informal and formal bodies and the DCD
  - Managing the relationship with the DAC-CSO Reference Group (CSO RG)<sup>2</sup>
4. These deliverables are also in line with the 2023 DAC High Level Meeting commitment to “continue to strengthen engagement with CSOs as well as efforts to protect civic space, guided by the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance” and to “step up implementation of this recommendation and report on progress in 2026.”
5. This document covers progress made to disseminate, implement and monitor the DAC Recommendation since the March 2023 update [DCD/DAC(2023)15/FINAL]; progress made to implement the Framework for Dialogue between the DAC and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) since the December 2023 update [DCD/DAC(2023)57/FINAL]; as well as the proposed draft agenda for the 2025 edition of the OECD DAC Civil Society Days (CSDs).

## 2. The DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance

6. On 6 July 2021, the DAC adopted the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance [[OECD/LEGAL/5021](#)], marking an important milestone for the DAC and the DCD' civil society workstream. This is the first international standard by development co-operation and humanitarian assistance providers that is specific to enabling civil society to maximise its contribution to the UN 2030 Agenda as well as to inclusive sustainable development, effective humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding and strengthening democracy. Adherents broke new ground by committing to the DAC Recommendation's three pillars: (1) respecting, protecting, and promoting civic space; (2) supporting and engaging with civil society; and (3) incentivising CSOs' effectiveness, transparency, and accountability (see Figure 2.1).

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<sup>2</sup> The DAC CSO Reference Group is a self-organising open coalition of CSOs, the Secretariat of which co-ordinates and facilitates CSO engagement with the DAC to implement the Framework for Dialogue between the DAC and CSOs. Members of the CSO Reference Group also organise themselves in thematic working groups that engage with the DAC and Secretariat on key areas of mutual interest.

**Figure 2.1. The three pillars of the DAC Recommendation**

Source: DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance [[OECD/LEGAL/5021](#)].

7. A key feature and value-added of the DAC Recommendation is the complementarity across the three pillars. Evidence gathered through discussions and consultations during its development demonstrated that these three pillars are interconnected – progress in one area depends on progress in the others. This emphasises that fostering an enabling environment for civil society requires coordinated action across three pillars. And while the DAC Recommendation primarily targets policy and practice change among DAC members and other providers, inclusion of the three pillars in the DAC Recommendation underscores that there is a shared responsibility for enabling civil society, with civil society actors also needing to enhance their effectiveness and accountability. Furthermore, the DAC Recommendation is underpinned by a recognition of the diversity within civil society and the varied roles civil society actors play.

8. Following the adoption of the DAC Recommendation, in December 2021 a roadmap of priority actions was endorsed by the DAC CoP on Civil Society to reach the three following objectives: (1) Disseminate the DAC Recommendation; (2) Implement the DAC Recommendation, with support from the Secretariat; and (3) Monitor progress of the DAC Recommendation’s implementation. Noting that the DAC is set to develop a report on the implementation of the DAC Recommendation in 2026, five years after the DAC Recommendation’s adoption, the following section provides a brief overview of progress made thus far on each of the above objectives and forward plans.

## 2.1. Progress on dissemination

9. Members of the DAC CoP on Civil Society have continued to take important steps to disseminate the DAC Recommendation through diverse methods and engaging a wide range of stakeholders. For example, Switzerland incorporated references to the DAC Recommendation into its International Cooperation Strategy 2025–28 and its guidance for engagement with Swiss CSOs. Switzerland and Finland organised webinars and workshops with their Agency and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, CSOs and embassy staff to promote and disseminate the DAC Recommendation and toolkits. Portugal and Poland translated the DAC Recommendation into Portuguese and Polish respectively, sharing it with embassies and experts to ensure broader accessibility. Ireland hosted a high-level event in Dublin to discuss the DAC Recommendation with stakeholders, including political representatives and Irish partners. Canada disseminated the DAC Recommendation internally as well as with the Civil Society Policy Advisory Group, the latter to inform prioritisation for the DAC Recommendation's implementation. Further examples of dissemination efforts by DAC members, sometimes supported by the Secretariat, can be found in Annex A, as shared by DAC CoP on Civil Society members at the CoP's biannual meetings.

10. The Secretariat has also continued to disseminate the DAC Recommendation to audiences beyond DAC members with the support of the DAC CoP on Civil Society. As part of the 2023-24 PWB, the Secretariat held a DAC CoP on Civil Society – Planning and Priorities survey in April 2024 to inform the Secretariat's and CoP's forward planning in relation to the DAC Recommendation. Respondents emphasised the need for engaging and easily shareable tools to support the dissemination of the DAC Recommendation and the associated toolkits. To that end, the civil society workstream developed tools for dissemination including brochures, PowerPoint presentations and talking points, and a [visual guide](#) of key messages from the Funding Civil Society in Partner Countries and Shifting Power with Partners toolkits. The DAC Recommendation, associated toolkits, the visual guide and related events are promoted through the OECD Civil Society Newsletter, delivered monthly to more than 40,000 subscribers, which also features broader DCD and OECD work related to civil society.

11. The Secretariat also seized various opportunities to disseminate the DAC Recommendation in international events with global audiences, such as at the 2023 Summit for Democracy in collaboration with the Summit's Civic Space cohort. Other examples include the International Civic Forum (ICF) organised by the International Civil Society Centre in October 2024, as well as conversations with UN actors, such as at an Inter-mechanism meeting held in October 2024 with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Rights Defenders, among other mandate-holders. A presentation was made to Nordic DAC members' UN focal points to raise awareness of the DAC Recommendation and support their efforts to disseminate it across the UN system. The workstream also disseminates the DAC Recommendation beyond Adherents through collaboration across the OECD, such as through participation in the Public Governance Directorate (GOV)-led Civic Space Network.

12. The DAC CoP on Civil Society – Planning and Priorities survey revealed that 82% of respondents considered it "important" or "very important" to sustain dissemination efforts for the purpose of expanding adherence beyond DAC members. In line with this feedback, the Secretariat has continued to undertake dissemination initiatives to expand adherence beyond DAC members. The Secretariat also conducted a mapping of potential actors for adherence, including OECD Members not part of the DAC, OECD and

DAC accession countries, non-OECD Members and other international organisations and agencies, and developed key messages targeting potential Adherents. Despite these efforts, broadened adherence has not been achieved to date. While expanding adherence was given importance in CoP members' responses to the 2024 survey, subsequent discussion within the CoP indicates satisfaction with maintain a community of Adherents committed to and focused on dissemination, implementation and monitoring of the DAC Recommendation.

## 2.2. Progress on implementation

13. As part of the policy and technical support to Adherents of the DAC Recommendation, the Secretariat is developing toolkits to offer guidance on what the DAC Recommendation's provisions look like in practice. Given that many of the provisions are inter-linked and mutually reinforcing, the Secretariat clustered the provisions around priority topic areas prior to toolkit development. This clustering and prioritisation exercise was undertaken based on surveys of, and discussion with, the DAC CoP on Civil Society and informed by input from the CSO RG. Overall, a pragmatic step-by-step approach is being taken to the development of toolkits, with toolkits rolling out over time through the 2023-24 PWB and subsequent PWBs including the 2025-26 PWB. The DAC CoP on Civil Society – Planning and Priorities survey held in April 2024 provided valuable insights on the usefulness of toolkits (74% of survey respondents found the toolkits “very useful” or “useful”), and on priority topics from the DAC Recommendation that need further implementation support.

14. In line with the work under the 2023-24 DAC PWB, the Secretariat published two toolkits to support development cooperation and humanitarian assistance providers in their engagement with civil society. The DAC CoP on Civil Society prioritised localising funding as key to strengthening local ownership and supporting partner-country civil society as independent development actors, and the first two toolkits serve this overarching goal. The toolkits were developed based on desk research and peer learning exchanges and sharing of practices, particularly with the DAC CoP on Civil Society and the CSO RG. For each toolkit the DAC CoP on Civil Society established sub-groups (Sounding Boards), with Global South and North CSO RG involvement. The Sounding Boards contributed evidence, shared knowledge, and provided input throughout the toolkits' preparations. Additional consultations included written and verbal inputs from colleagues across DCD and the OECD.

15. The first toolkit, [Funding Civil Society in Partner Countries](#), offers development co-operation and humanitarian assistance providers structured guidance on funding-related decisions to support civil society actors in partner countries. The toolkit describes funding-related choices and trade-offs to consider in relation to: reflecting on and articulating values and principles; setting a funding target; dedicating human resources; determining a funding channel and modality; selecting partners; administrative and financial procedures and compliance requirements; transparency; and monitoring. The second toolkit, [Shifting Power with Partners](#), published in July 2024, offers development cooperation and humanitarian assistance providers guidance for establishing and incentivising equitable partnerships with and between CSOs. It provides guidance for supporting more equitable partnerships in five areas: enabling complementarity of diverse civil society actors; enabling equitable decision-making and inclusive dialogue; enabling mutual and locally led capacity strengthening; shifting power through funding and compliance; and inclusive communication, language, imagery, and storytelling.

16. The third toolkit under development focuses on Coordinating Action for Civic Space. It aims to provide adherents with guidance on the different forms of coordination

for civic space, including with CSOs, within provider governments for policy coherence, among providers and with international and regional bodies, on dialogue and monitoring of openings and restrictions of civic space and on programmes to foster stronger, more coherent proactive and preventive actions. In line with previous practice, a Sounding Board composed of CoP members and CSO RG representatives is working with the Secretariat in developing the toolkit. Throughout 2024, a series of consultation meetings were held with the Sounding Board and in the framework of the DAC CoP on Civil Society bi-annual meetings to develop a draft version of this toolkit.

17. The civil society workstream also collaborates horizontally with OECD and DCD to integrate the DAC Recommendation into relevant work in ways that can further support implementation by Adherents. For example, substantive contributions were provided to the OECD DCD report [Pathways towards Effective Locally Led Development Co-operation](#) that strives to develop a common understanding of locally led development co-operation, and provides examples of policies, financing mechanisms, partnerships, and management processes on locally led development co-operation. Contributions were also provided to the 2024 OECD GOV report [Practical Guide for Policymakers on Protecting and Promoting Civic Space](#), particularly on protecting civic space both domestically as well as in non-OECD Member countries as part of a coherent policy approach, and to the [OECD Working Paper Towards Meaningful Civil Society Participation at the International Level: Success Factors, Opportunities, and Challenges](#), highlighting the DAC Recommendation.

18. The civil society workstream provides implementation support to Lithuania, in the scope of the European Union (EU) DG REFORM project 23LT02. Lithuania joined the DAC in 2022 with an ambition to strengthen its development co-operation through new partnerships. The project focuses on enhancing partnerships with the private sector, academia, multinational organisations, and civil society, and strengthening tools, systems, and capacity for effective policy programming, implementation, and reporting. The civil society workstream provides guidance to Lithuania on improving the enabling environment for effective partnerships with CSOs (both national, and in partner countries), in line with the DAC Recommendation and related toolkits to support its implementation. Secretariat support involves assessing partnerships approaches and degree of alignment of Lithuania to the DAC Recommendation, proposing an action plan to develop effective partnerships with CSOs, providing advisory guidance on the pilot project on civil society, and providing a training module in line with toolkits that support the implementation of the DAC Recommendation.

19. DAC members made relevant progress on reforming policies and practices in line with the DAC Recommendation. The DAC CoP on Civil Society biannual meetings, and DAC Peer Reviews, are key sources of valuable insight on DAC members' implementation of the DAC Recommendation. Some measures by DAC members included integrating the DAC Recommendation into new civil society policies and multi-annual strategies. For example, France launched its five-year civil society strategy (2023–2027) with a strong emphasis on aligning with the DAC Recommendation. The DAC Recommendation is referenced in Portugal's new development cooperation strategy, including in bilateral agreements and action plans to support local CSOs. The DAC Recommendation and the two toolkits also guided DAC member countries in revising their funding mechanisms. For example, Ireland and Italy embedded the DAC Recommendation into their civil society funding mechanisms, requiring international CSOs to have a localisation approach. The DAC Recommendation is also used to inform embassy strategies and development policies, ensuring alignment with locally led development principles, such as in the case of Finland. Luxembourg promotes CSO effectiveness and accountability by engaging in long-term institutional support and capacity strengthening of CSOs. Slovenia updated its CSO

guidelines in 2023 in line with the DAC Recommendation, establishing a basis for dialogue with CSOs, and setting modalities for strategic partnerships with selected humanitarian CSOs. Some DAC member countries' practices are featured in the [OECD Development Co-operation - Tools, Insights and Practices \(TIPs\)](#) peer learning platform, for example, Ireland's Civil Society Partnership funding mechanism which is geared to strengthening CSOs' capacity to plan ahead and adapt to context, and brings together development and humanitarian funding in line with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace. Annex A outlines further examples of progress made by different DAC members in implementing the DAC Recommendation, as gathered through the DAC CoP on Civil Society biannual meetings and DAC Peer Reviews.

20. The DAC CoP on Civil Society continues to evolve into an important forum for implementation support among DAC members. It provides a space for peer learning where members share highlights from key policies and programmes within their institutions to implement the three pillars of the DAC Recommendation, as well as high-level updates that impact civil society's enabling environment at a broader level, and members' ability to implement the Recommendation. The DAC CoP on Civil Society meetings are designed to facilitate meaningful exchange and peer learning among members, as well as to identify opportunities for collaboration. Feedback from the DAC CoP on Civil Society – Planning and Priorities survey conducted in April 2024 indicates that the peer learning aspect of the CoP is highly valued by the members, with many appreciating the opportunity to learn from each other's practices. Similarly, the evaluation survey of May 2024 DAC CoP on Civil Society meeting underscored the CoP's impact with 95% of the respondents expressing to have found the meeting "very useful" or "useful" for getting inspired by members' policies and practices, networking opportunities and having a better understanding of the DAC Recommendation. Additionally, 80% of respondents expressed feeling "very engaged" or "engaged" during the meeting. The DAC CoP on Civil Society meetings increasingly serve as a platform for deeper engagement with the CSO RG. These meetings offer a valuable opportunity for substantive dialogue, enabling the CoP members to gain critical insights from the CSO RG that can inform and enhance their work, while also allowing the CSO RG to shape their own initiatives. Feedback received from the participants of November 2024 DAC CoP on CS meeting highlighted that increased engagement with the CSO RG during select sessions was highly appreciated.

### 2.3. Progress on monitoring

21. The civil society workstream contributes to the civil society coverage under the DAC Peer Review mechanism since 2017. Specific coverage of the DAC Recommendation has been included in Peer Reviews since 2022. Since the March 2023 update to the DAC on the DAC Recommendation, inputs were provided to the following DAC Peer Reviews in line with the DAC Recommendation: Czechia (2023), France (2023), Korea (2023), Poland (2023), The Netherlands (2023), Finland (2024), Luxembourg (2024), Slovenia (2024), Slovak Republic (ongoing), Switzerland (ongoing) and Canada (ongoing).

22. The CoP's biannual meetings became an important forum for monitoring progress. Since 2022, CoP meetings include a tour-de-table agenda item, and meeting summaries document the shared policy and practice developments in line with the DAC Recommendation. Monitoring efforts shared during the CoP meetings include developing measurable indicators and conducting structured dialogues with CSOs to track progress and ensure alignment with the DAC Recommendation. For example, the EU established a CSO-led monitoring index to provide early warnings about enabling environments, while France assesses its five-year civil society strategy through structured dialogues with CSOs. Further examples of monitoring efforts by DAC members can be found in Annex A.

23. Analysis and dissemination of DAC ODA statistics on flows for CSOs as compiled by the Secretariat also provide a continuous part of the monitoring work, which also informs the policy and technical support conducted by the civil society workstream. In that regard, the annual Aid for CSOs report is a resource highly valued by members of the DAC CoP on Civil Society and CSOs.

#### **2.4. Next steps in line with the 2025-26 DAC PWB**

24. The civil society workstream will continue working in line with the DAC PWB 2025-26 deliverables related to the DAC Recommendation, including on dissemination efforts in events with members of the DAC CoP on Civil Society and with international audiences. In 2025, the workstream will organise a public webinar to support the implementation of the DAC Recommendation. The webinar will feature a presentation of key messages from the related toolkits, showcase good practices shared by members of the DAC CoP on Civil Society and CSOs, and include an interactive Q&A session. It will aim to broaden awareness of the DAC Recommendation and its toolkits while offering practical guidance to support implementation, and will be recorded for future use by interested stakeholders. DAC members will also continue to organise national meetings and events to disseminate the DAC Recommendation. For instance, Italy is planning a meeting with national networks of CSOs involved in development co-operation to discuss the relevance of the DAC Recommendation and its dissemination modalities in 2025. Conversations on possible adherence previously initiated with OECD Members and UN bodies will continue. The Secretariat will continue to invest in collaboration with other organisations and entities that can help broaden and deepen the Recommendation's reach, such as the Open Government Partnership.

25. In terms of implementation support, the Secretariat will continue developing the Coordinating Action for Civic Space toolkit, with an aim to publish and launch it at the 2025 OECD DAC CSDs in June 2025. "Pillar 1/para 3: Co-ordinate among providers to monitor civic space and take proactive and preventative actions" provision which the upcoming toolkit focuses on, was identified among the priorities in the 2024 DAC CoP on Civil Society – Planning and Priorities survey. Moving forward, the DAC CoP on Civil Society and the CSO Reference Group will continue to play a key role in the development of toolkits. Consultation within the DAC CoP on Civil Society and with CSO RG will guide the prioritisation of future toolkits and/or policy briefs, focusing on the DAC Recommendation provisions where additional guidance is most needed.

26. Monitoring efforts will focus on elaborating the report to the DAC on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of the DAC Recommendation in view of the upcoming five-year mark in July 2026 since adoption. The Secretariat has begun preparations and will follow the practice of recent reports on the implementation of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus [DCD/DAC/INCAF(2023)1/FINAL] and of the DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response [DCD/DAC(2024)33/FINAL]. The methodology will consist of a survey for Adherents and another survey for CSOs. Previous and ongoing monitoring efforts will also constitute essential input sources for the five-year report. These include the DAC CoP on Civil Society meetings, which will continue to provide a forum not only for lessons-sharing but also to monitor implementation progress. Monitoring will also continue through the workstream's contributions to each Peer Review and mid-term review. Furthermore, the analysis of DAC ODA statistics on flows for CSOs will also be a key monitoring input. To complement these sources, a number of consultation points will be organised with the DAC CoP on civil society, the CSO RG and the DAC.

The 2025 edition of the CSDs will provide a consultation opportunity with external stakeholders for developing the report, for example through an open consultation with the DAC CoP on Civil Society, CSO Reference Group members and other participants.

27. Throughout, the DAC CoP on Civil Society will continue to be the primary forum for peer learning, providing a source of mutual, practical support to each other's and other Adherents' implementation efforts, complemented by ongoing DAC CoP on Civil Society engagements with the CSO RG.

### 3. The Framework for Dialogue between the DAC and CSOs

28. Approved by the DAC in July 2018, the Framework for Dialogue (hereinafter "the Framework") establishes a structure for the dialogue between the DAC and CSOs based on joint principles and commitments. The joint commitments are supported by the following four main engagement mechanisms:

- **One annual substantial dialogue meeting between the DAC and CSOs** to discuss key issues of mutual concern, known as the annual DAC-CSO Dialogue.
- **CSO participation in the DAC High and Senior-level meetings (H/SLMs) and pre-H/SLM consultation** meetings with CSOs.
- **Discussions on topics of joint interest**, such as at thematic, technical meetings or webinars.
- **Joint work planning** on potential areas of consultation and collaboration through webinars or calls.

29. The governance of the framework is divided between CSOs, the DAC and the civil society workstream in the OECD Secretariat. From the CSO side, engagement with the DAC is facilitated and coordinated by the CSO RG, a self-governing CSO coalition. The CSO RG self-organises thematic working groups of its participants on key areas of mutual interest, such as on Development Effectiveness, Peace and Security, and the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society. The CSO RG nominates their representatives for DAC and DCD engagement with the DAC and the OECD Secretariat, aiming to foster diversity in CSO representation across geographic regions and types of organisations.

30. On the DAC side, a small group of interested DAC delegates came together in early 2019 to facilitate coordination with the Committee on the Framework's implementation. This informal co-planning group of DAC delegates is open to interested delegates of DAC members and has fluctuated over time.<sup>3</sup> Its role is to guide and advise the Secretariat and to liaise with the Committee on the implementation of the Framework.

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<sup>3</sup> Until the late 2024 - early 2025 rotation of DAC delegates, this informal co-planning group of DAC delegates was made up of Australia, the European Union, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, and the United States. Updates to the composition of this group are ongoing in Q1 2025.

### 3.1. What has the Framework achieved since December 2023?

31. The main engagement mechanisms of the Framework are being implemented and continue to be strengthened. Since the December 2023 update of the Framework [DCD/DAC(2023)57/FINAL], the Secretariat has continued to guide and support the DAC and the DCD in implementing and strengthening the Framework learning from lessons from the past. Progress made has been in line with the guidance provided by the DAC at the December 2023 meeting and the recommendations from the light touch stocktake of the Framework conducted in 2022.

32. The sixth edition of the annual DAC-CSO Dialogue took place on 18 November 2024. As suggested in the stocktake, a number of joint preparatory meetings were held between the informal co-planning group of DAC delegates, CSO RG co-coordinators, DAC Chair, DCD Director, the civil society workstream of the Secretariat and other relevant DCD colleagues. These proved to be instrumental in shaping the Dialogue's agenda towards a topic of mutual interest and of particular relevance and timeliness for the CSO RG and the DAC, the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) taking place in June-July 2025 in Seville, Spain. As regards format, breakout groups were set up with sufficient time allocated and DCD colleagues' facilitation to encourage discussions and interactions among participants. The event was deemed a success in fostering an actual dialogue with balanced participation and frank exchanges. As decided by the DAC, the SLM was cancelled for 2024, and by consequence the pre-SLM.

33. Ad hoc engagement mechanisms have continued to allow ever-more integration of the Dialogue across the DAC's work. Examples of this since December 2023 include, but are not limited to:

- **participation of CSOs in various events**, such as the launch of the Development Co-operation Report (DCR) (2024), and the annual ODA statistics launch (2024, 2025).
- **consultations with CSOs to provide inputs**, such as for the Development Cooperation Principles on Relevant and Effective Support to Media and the Information Environment (2024), the Reports on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance (implementation Reports) of the DAC Recommendations on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (2024) and on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (2024), the proposed strengthening of the ODA graduation process, the Strategic Joint Evaluation of the Collective International Development and Humanitarian Assistance Response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the toolkits on Shifting Power with Partners (2024) and on Coordinating Action for Civic Space (ongoing).
- **broader and deeper engagements with CSOs at the level of formal and informal DAC bodies**, such as the DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT), the DAC Community of Practice on Poverty and Inequalities, and the DAC Community of Practice on Civil Society.

34. The Secretariat has strived to foster more systematic engagement from CSOs with the DAC's work. In terms of planning and as per previous practice, the Secretariat shared with the CSO RG in early 2024 and 2025 the broad themes planned to be discussed by the DAC according to the DAC's Indicative Roadmap for Discussions and Decisions. Conversations were held with the CSO RG co-coordinators and the informal co-planning group of DAC delegates to identify key topics of mutual interest for possible engagement over the year.

35. The Secretariat has increased communication efforts to raise awareness about the Framework and the CSO RG. The 2024 Induction Session for new DAC delegates included a session on the Framework for Dialogue with CSOs and on the DAC-CSO RG. The Secretariat also regularly communicates with DCD teams to provide guidance and support to implement and strengthen the Framework.

36. The Secretariat has coordinated closely with the CSO RG to foster diversity and increased representation across regions and types of organisations. For instance, annual Dialogues have representatives from Global South and North CSOs from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and North America. Recognising the CSO RG's resource constraints, in advance of the 2024 annual Dialogue the DCD Director and DAC Chair raised the possibility to DAC delegates of supporting in-person CSO participation in the Dialogue. The Secretariat has also connected diverse Global South and North CSOs to diversify the participation in the CSO RG, including with DAC members' national CSO networks/umbrella organisations.

### 3.2. Increased access to DAC documents

37. The Secretariat, with the DAC Chair's support, began implementation of a plan to increase transparency and access to DAC documents by CSOs. The rationale for the plan was outlined in the note by the DAC Chair and DCD Director on increasing CSOs' access to documents [DCD/DAC/RD(2024)14] presented at the DAC's October 2024 meeting. Prior to that, at the DAC December 2023 meeting [DCD/DAC(2023)57/FINAL], DAC members had expressed support for sharing relevant documentation with CSOs in view of enabling informed exchanges and strengthening their quality and outcomes. Strengthening CSO access to documents responds to the CSO RG's calls for access to information such as heard at the 2023 pre-HLM and HLM, and supported by the DAC's 2023 HLM Communiqué commitment to advance open, strategic and inclusive dialogue and engagement, as well as transparency.

38. The plan to increase transparency will rely on an updated Roadmap for Decisions and Discussions in the DAC and will be supported by the dissemination across DCD of an internal guidance to support the Secretariat in taking a strategic approach to for classification and declassification of documents. The plan was developed in line with OECD rules and established practices, and in consultation with the Directorate for Legal Affairs, DAC Chair and DCD Director's offices, and DCD teams. The updated Roadmap now includes a new column to inform DAC delegates of the document classification for each agenda item. The Secretariat and DAC Chair will take stock of the implementation and update the DAC on progress and lessons learned at the end of 2025, including any adjustments that might be needed.

### 3.3. External evaluation

39. The Framework for Dialogue underwent a first [external evaluation](#) in 2024, as stipulated in the Framework itself (para. 7). The objective of the evaluation was to take stock of the experience acquired from the Framework since its approval and to identify ways to strengthen its implementation. The evaluation built from the [light touch stocktake of the Framework](#) conducted in 2022. It is based on document analysis related to the Framework, 33 interviews with DAC delegates, CSO RG representatives and OECD staff, and 2 surveys circulated among DAC delegates and CSO RG representatives.

40. The evaluation found all stakeholders support the necessity and relevance of the Framework. They highlighted several key benefits, including providing structure and entry points for engagement, facilitating access to diverse knowledge and expertise, enhancing legitimacy and accountability, and enabling mutual influence.

41. The evaluation also found there is scope to enhance the relevance and impact of the Framework. Based on the survey responses and interviews, the evaluation identifies key areas for improvement. The following sections summarise the main findings from the evaluation, its proposed recommendations and the suggested way forward from the Secretariat.

### ***3.3.1. Main findings of the external evaluation report***

#### *The Framework design: objectives and principles*

42. Although stakeholders expressed strong support for having a space for continued dialogue with CSOs on development co-operation policies, they were mostly unaware of the specific objectives of the Framework. This lack of clarity may disincentivise stakeholders to actively support and participate in the engagement mechanisms of the Framework.

43. Survey responses revealed key areas for improvement that could enhance the Framework's relevance. The low response rate from CSOs to the survey could indicate a sense of disengagement or lack of interest, and that the progress made in the past years to expand membership and diversity of the CSO RG merits further attention. CSOs perceive themselves as more willing to engage in dialogue than DAC delegates, raising concerns about the level of DAC participation alongside concerns regarding CSO RG members' limited capacity to engage meaningfully.

#### *Progress and impact: Is the Framework achieving its objectives?*

44. The Framework lacks a mechanism to assess whether objectives are being achieved. A more systematic tracking and monitoring of engagements with CSOs could help to better identify impact areas. The absence of such a mechanism may, in part, explain the limited knowledge of the Framework or the limited awareness of the actions taken to improve and to address challenges. Most stakeholders identified specific results of the Framework's implementation. However, more information is needed to illustrate its progress and value-added. Monitoring was previously reported by the DCD in the OECD Directorate for Communications (COM) annual Communications Report to Council.<sup>4</sup> Recognising this gap, the Framework would benefit significantly from designing and implementing a tracking tool to monitor the progress of engagements, ensure data quality, and validate the findings. Such a tool could include indicators to capture the results of engagements with CSOs and could also help improve the Framework's overall performance. However, this would require dedicated oversight and resources.

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<sup>4</sup> Since 2020, OECD Directorates report to the Directorate for Communications (COM, formerly known as Public Affairs and Communications, PAC) on each year's engagements with CSOs for inclusion in the annual Communications and Engagement Reports to Council. Reports were interrupted in 2023 due to the major restructuring in COM, and discussion is underway about the possibility of revising and resuming them.

45. More can be done to increase the impact of the main engagement mechanisms, particularly the annual DAC-CSO Dialogue. Stakeholders expressed that the format and planning of the annual Dialogue were not sufficiently conducive to meaningful engagement. However, stakeholders recognised the continuous efforts made by the Secretariat to make the annual Dialogue more dynamic, including on implementing the lessons from the systematic debriefs conducted after every annual Dialogue with the CSO RG and the informal co-planning group of DAC delegates. For instance, as suggested at the 2023 debrief, the 2024 Dialogue started the co-planning process earlier and involved the DAC Chair's office in the co-planning. As raised in 3.1 above, the 2024 Dialogue was deemed a success in fostering a lively conversation on a timely topic of mutual interest.

46. Ad hoc engagement mechanisms should continue to be enhanced. Stakeholders consistently emphasised these mechanisms as a valuable opportunity to influence policy decisions made by the DAC, its formal and informal bodies, and the DCD. The flexibility and responsiveness of these mechanisms is deemed effective, as it fosters adaptability based on needs and interests of the CSO RG and of the relevant bodies engaged with.

*Efficiency: how well are resources being used?*

47. The coordination and management of the Framework are functioning effectively. The evaluation found that there is a positive working relationship among key stakeholders directly involved in the Framework. These include the DAC Chair and DCD Director's offices, the civil society workstream, various DCD teams, the informal co-planning group of DAC delegates, the CSO RG co-coordinators, and the CSO RG Thematic Working Groups leads. This structure has gradually addressed challenges and lessons learned, to strengthen the Framework as a continuous and shared effort. Reinforcing the OECD Secretariat's capacity would allow implementing recommendations from the evaluation, for instance, to develop and implement a robust tracking tool of engagements.

48. The CSO RG faces resource constraints that hinder its capacity to effectively engage in the Framework. The lack of adequate resources for a secretariat function of the CSO RG affects its overall capacity to share information and support coordination for engagement, which ultimately impacts their capacity to contribute. The need to expand participation and diversity of the CSO RG, notably with Global South CSOs, requires direct funding of the CSO RG to enable a more active involvement in the Framework's engagement mechanisms, including in the annual Dialogue.

49. Ongoing efforts to increase transparency and enhance access to DAC documents could yield significant improvements. CSOs consistently raised the need to increase transparency for more meaningful engagement. Progress has been made at the level of individual formal and informal bodies, which have implemented practices to enable fruitful dialogues on thematic issues while maintaining a balance between transparency and confidentiality. At a broader level, the ongoing implementation of the plan to increase transparency in the DAC and DCD addressed in section 3.2 could substantially enhance timely access to information.

*The future of the Framework: will the benefits last?*

50. The long-term sustainability of the Framework is essential to avoid the risk of disengagement from key stakeholders. The institutionalisation of engagement with CSOs through the Framework for Dialogue is considered a strong foundation for its sustainability. Looking ahead, the management and implementation of the Framework should continue to be improved as an ongoing effort, while also addressing the challenges identified throughout the evaluation.

### *3.3.2. Proposed recommendations from the evaluation and the forward plans from the Secretariat*

51. Based on the assessment and key findings, the evaluation proposes a series of recommendations to address the key areas for improvement. The recommendations are summarised in the following sections and include the forward plans from the Secretariat.

#### *Ensure the sustainable and more diverse engagement of CSOs*

- **External evaluation recommendation:** The DAC could establish a multi-donor pooled fund to support the work of the CSO RG and facilitate engagements of CSOs. Entry points for participation of a broader range of CSOs beyond those currently represented and coordinated by the CSO RG could also be sought.
- **Secretariat forward plans:** The Secretariat will relay to DAC delegates engagement opportunities for which the CSO RG needs support to ensure diverse CSO participation (e.g. annual Dialogues), as relevant. The Secretariat will connect DAC members expressing interest in supporting the CSO RG, such as through a multi-donor pooled fund, to each other and to the CSO RG co-coordinators. The Secretariat will continue to seek entry points for participation of a broader range of CSOs through the DAC, its formal and informal bodies, and the DCD. The Secretariat will increase coordination efforts with the CSO RG to foster diversity and expand CSO representation from partner countries and OECD countries, while upholding the self-organisation governing principle of the CSO RG.

#### *Strengthen the monitoring of the Framework's effectiveness*

- **External evaluation recommendation:** A straightforward system to plan, manage, measure and record information will improve the quality of the dialogue, showing its added value to all those involved. Introducing a tracking tool, in coordination with other ongoing initiatives to benchmark engagements with civil society, can serve to examine how interactions, knowledge and influence are effectively taking place and being utilised.
- **Secretariat forward plans:** The Secretariat is actively engaged in discussions with COM about the possibility of revising and resuming the COM annual Communications Report to Council to align efforts for a potential tracking tool for the Framework for Dialogue. Consideration will be given to whether and how best such a tool could track engagement results and provide data to identify areas for improving engagements. The Secretariat will continue to engage in the new COM-led internal Community of Practice on Stakeholder Engagement to share experience and lessons.

#### *Re-think the Annual Dialogue*

- **External evaluation recommendation:** Continue to introduce changes to improve the annual Dialogue. The DCD could prepare a user-friendly evaluation to gather the diverse views of participants at the next annual Dialogue. Based on the feedback received, a formula could be developed to incorporate improvements into future editions of the annual Dialogue.

- **Secretariat forward plans:** The Secretariat will continue efforts to continuously improve the annual Dialogue, notably with early joint planning between the informal co-planning group of DAC delegates, CSO RG co-coordinators, DAC Chair and DCD Director's offices, the civil society workstream and relevant DCD colleagues and by shaping the meeting format for active participation from participants to enable frank dialogue among participants. Consideration will also be made to develop a post-annual Dialogue evaluation for meeting participants.

*Continue to incorporate improvements into the parameters of debates and access to documents*

- **External evaluation recommendation:** Present the practical steps to implement the note from the DAC Chair and DCD Director on enhancing dialogue through increased access to DAC documents [DCD/DAC/RD(2024)14/FINAL]. Gather examples of best practices that have successfully struck a balance between engaging CSOs while keeping the necessary level of confidentiality in DAC meetings and documents.
- **Secretariat forward plans:** The Secretariat will continue implementing the plan to increase transparency and access to DAC documents by CSOs in close coordination with the OECD Directorate for Legal Affairs. As noted, the Secretariat and DAC Chair will take stock of the implementation of the plan and update the DAC on progress and lessons learned at the end of 2025, including any adjustments that might be needed.

*Identify areas of mutual interest*

- **External evaluation recommendation:** Continue improving the annual planning process to increase the interest and demand for more meaningful discussions. The 2025 annual Dialogue could have a session to share findings on the effectiveness of the Framework with the data gathered from the tracking tool. The information from the tool could help also identify pressing concerns and offer valuable guidance for the next annual planning process.
- **Secretariat forward plans:** The annual joint planning process will continue to be improved in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Particular attention will be made to enhance communication with the CSO RG to identify areas of interest. Consideration will be given to share findings on the effectiveness of the Framework in the 2025 or 2026 annual Dialogue, pending the progress made with development and implementation of the tracking tool.

*Boost awareness raising, outreach and communication*

- **External evaluation recommendation:** Regular awareness-raising sessions about the Framework could be organised, in addition to the existing ones, such as the Framework and CSO RG induction session for new DAC delegates.
- **Secretariat forward plans:** In close collaboration with DCD teams, the civil society workstream will continue to seek opportunities to raise awareness about the Framework and its value-added, including in meetings of the DAC's formal and informal bodies and at the annual induction sessions for new DAC delegates.

### 3.4. Next steps in line with the 2025-26 DAC PWB

52. The Secretariat will continue to strengthen dialogue between civil society, the DAC and its informal and formal bodies. The work will fall in line with the IOR 3.2 of the 2025-26 DAC PWB and will draw from the key findings and recommendations provided in the external evaluation. The Secretariat welcomes opportunities to share the Framework's model and lessons to implement any HLM 2025 commitments around engagement and dialogue with broader stakeholders.

53. The Secretariat, in coordination with the DAC Chair's office, the informal co-planning group of DAC delegates and the CSO RG will coordinate the main engagement mechanisms of the Framework. The pre-HLM meeting with CSOs will take place on 25 February 2025 and will focus on FfD4 and the new OECD Development Strategy. As provided by the Framework for Dialogue, CSOs will also participate in the subsequent HLM meeting with an observer status and a speaking role. In line with the principle of CSO self-organisation, CSO representatives to these meetings will be selected by the CSO RG.

54. The civil society workstream will continue to guide and support additional thematic dialogues and consultations with the DAC's informal and formal bodies. The Secretariat will also continue to tend to the relationship with the CSO RG, including via ongoing engagement and planning with its co-coordinators.

55. As implementation of the Framework is a shared responsibility between the DAC, the CSO RG, and the Secretariat, the way forward to prioritise and implement next steps would benefit from the DAC's feedback and engagement.

## 4. The 2025 OECD DAC Civil Society Days

56. The OECD DAC Civil Society Days (CSDs) is a biennial forum that explores challenges and opportunities for civil society and builds bridges across stakeholders. The CSDs provide a platform for the DAC and its interlocutors to engage with one another, identify opportunities, and overcome barriers in establishing and implementing a shared vision for enabling civil society as independent development actors. By combining the policy and dialogue dimensions of the civil society workstream, the CSDs present a unique opportunity for civil society actors and the DAC to convene on policy and practice topics of high relevance to civil society. Beyond the DAC and civil society, the CSDs also bring together a wide range of stakeholders such as partner country governments, multilateral institutions, other development co-operation providers, foundations, think tanks, and academia. This diversity makes the CSDs an occasion for development actors to engage in substantive discussions and interactions that might not happen elsewhere, enhancing dialogue, mutual understanding, and collective action. The CSDs also provide a platform for work being undertaken by the DAC, by other OECD committees, and by various DCD and OECD Directorate workstreams, to be shared and consulted on. Further, the CSDs showcase to OECD Committees and Directorates the value of engaging civil society, illustrating good practices for systematic civil society involvement.

57. Following the DAC's approval of the Framework for Dialogue between the DAC and CSOs in July 2018 [DCD/DAC(2018)28/FINAL], the first edition of the CSDs in 2019 involved several back-to-back meetings, including the annual DAC-CSO Dialogue and the DAC CoP on Civil Society's biannual meeting. This format, which continued through subsequent CSDs, allowed for broad, deep, and open discussions on civil society-related issues of interest to the DAC. The 2019 edition emphasised the challenges faced by civil society, drawing on evidence such as the preliminary findings of the [2020 DAC Members](#)

[and Civil Society](#) study. Building on the 2019 edition, the 2021 CSDs called for action to support civil society in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, especially in light of their vital roles during the COVID-19 pandemic and in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda. This call to action marked a pivotal moment leading up to the DAC's adoption of the Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society. Additionally, the 2021 CSDs provided valuable insights and good practices to address operational challenges in enabling civil society, contributing to launch the development of toolkits to support the implementation of the DAC Recommendation. The 2023 edition of the CSDs served as a milestone in taking stock of the dissemination and implementation of the DAC Recommendation. It provided a platform to reflect on progress, identify areas for further action, and advance discussions on important topics such as locally led development, shifting power dynamics, and the protection of civic space.

58. The 2025 edition of CSDs will build on past editions, offering a dynamic programme of multi-stakeholder meetings and technical workshops designed to foster dialogue and learning among participants. Scheduled from 16 to 19 June, the first one and a half days will begin with the biannual meeting of the DAC CoP on Civil Society. The primary participants at the DAC CoP on Civil Society will be DAC CoP members, CSO RG members (select sessions), and the Secretariat, with DAC delegates welcome to follow the meeting's proceedings. Potential topics to be covered in the DAC CoP on Civil Society agenda include: highlights from members, focused on progress and challenges in implementing the DAC Recommendation; harmonising due diligence requirements in partnerships with CSOs (with the Effectiveness team in DCD's Reforms and Partnerships for Development Impact (RPDI) Division); challenges faced in supporting and engaging with CSOs; joint peer learning session led by CoP members; locally led development with CSOs; the five-year implementation report of the DAC Recommendation; and consultation on the draft OECD Guidance on Reducing Poverty and Inequalities through Development Co-operation (with the Poverty and Inequalities (P&I) team in DCD's Policies and Networks (PAN) Division).

59. Following the DAC CoP on Civil Society meeting, the CSDs will continue with a roundtable discussion and technical sessions, encouraging active engagement among DAC delegates, CSO representatives, and the other invited stakeholders. The 2025 CSDs will continue as a flagship OECD DAC event involving strong horizontal collaboration across the DCD and with other OECD Directorates (e.g. GOV, COM, the Development Centre). **Table 4.1** below outlines the draft agenda developed in collaboration with various DCD and OECD teams.

60. The 2025 CSDs roundtable and technical sessions will center on the theme of civic space, a critical component of effective development. Over the past decades, civic space has been shrinking at an alarming pace with restrictive measures seen across the globe. According to the CIVICUS 2024 State of Civil Society Report, 30.6% of the global population now lives in countries with closed civic space (CIVICUS, 2024<sub>[1]</sub>). The erosion of civic space is intertwined with broader trends of democratic backsliding and escalating global conflicts, which are reshaping the landscape of international development cooperation. Since 2009, the share of the world's population living in autocratising countries exceeded those living in democratising countries (V-Dem Institute, 2024<sub>[2]</sub>), and one in six people worldwide is directly impacted by conflict (ACLED, 2024<sub>[3]</sub>). CSOs are key actors in advancing the SDGs, delivering services, fostering accountability, acting on the frontlines of crises, and amplifying the voices of marginalised people. However, they are increasingly operating under constraints that limit their ability to function. For example, many governments are introducing restrictive measures such as foreign influence registry laws, which often include stigmatising registration requirements that hinder CSOs' access

to resources and have a chilling effect on CSO activism. As a consequence, enabling CSOs to thrive in increasingly restrictive environments has become a pressing priority for development actors, including DAC members.

61. The roundtable discussion will focus on key current issues affecting civic space. It will aim to highlight current civic space trends, illustrate practices of different stakeholders to address restrictions, and generate ideas for further action to respect, protect and promote civic space in today's challenging context. Content from the toolkit on Coordinating Action for Civic Space – which will be launched at the 2025 CSDs – will be one among other OECD and external sources drawn from to further frame the roundtable. As with the toolkit, the roundtable will offer participants practical guidance on taking proactive and preventive actions, on dialogue and co-ordination within and between countries, with regional and international bodies, and with CSOs, on the value of inclusive and independent civil society and open civic space.

62. Varied topics intersecting with civic space will be covered by the technical sessions which are being fleshed out with relevant DCD and OECD colleagues (all sessions are TBC). One technical session may address the potential and challenges of CSO engagement in politically constrained environments, while managing the risks of unintended consequences including exacerbating tensions and shrinking civic space (in collaboration with the DCD/PAN/Crisis, Conflict, and Fragility and DCD/RPDI/Effectiveness). A second technical session may focus on practical approaches to supporting women's rights organisations and advancing gender equality in contexts of democratic backsliding (with DCD/PAN/Gender Equality). A third technical session may draw from the OECD Observatory on Civic Space work, for example on monitoring civic space or on online civic space (with GOV/Open Governance Unit). A fourth technical session may build from the work of GovNet to look at effective engagement of community grassroots coalitions and organisations to support more inclusive governance, particularly on climate governance adaption (with PAN/GovNet). A fifth technical session may consult on light guidelines on locally led development (with RPDI/Effectiveness). A sixth technical session may focus on strengthening CSO accountability to counter shrinking civic space. The 2025 CSDs may also feature a consultation session to inform the five-year report on the implementation of the DAC Recommendation, engaging members of the DAC CoP on Civil Society, the CSO Reference Group, and other participants. Additional sessions may be included in the agenda, drawing on existing topical work across the DCD and OECD. Through its comprehensive program, the 2025 CSDs aim to foster a deeper understanding of civic space challenges while offering actionable solutions to strengthen the enabling environment for civil society and thus civil society's role in advancing inclusive, effective, and sustainable development.

**Table 4.1. Draft Agenda for the 2025 OECD DAC Civil Society Days - Closing Gaps not Spaces: Protecting Civic Space in a Turbulent World**

Date	Event Details
16 June (13.30 - 18.00) & 17 June (09.30 - 18.00)	<p><b>DAC Community of Practice on Civil Society Biannual Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Invitation only:</b> DAC CoP on Civil Society members, CSO RG members (for select sessions), DCD/RPDI Civil Society workstream, and other relevant DCD officials. DAC Delegates are welcome to join.</p> <p><b>Format:</b> Hybrid (in-person and online)</p> <p><b>Select agenda items (TBC):</b> Highlights from members, harmonising due diligence requirements in partnerships with CSOs (with RPDI/Effectiveness); workshop on challenges faced in supporting and engaging with CSOs; joint peer learning session led by CoP members; locally led development with CSOs; five-year implementation report of the DAC Recommendation; consultation on the draft OECD Guidance on Reducing Poverty and Inequalities through Development Co-operation (with PAN/P&amp;I).</p>
18 June (09.30 - 18.00) & 19 June (09.30 - 17.00)	<p><b>DAC Civil Society Days</b></p> <p><b>Public (Roundtable) and by invitation (technical sessions):</b> DAC Delegates, DAC Chair, CSO RG members plus other CSOs, DAC CoP on Civil Society members, DCD Director and officials, partner country governments, multilateral institutions, other development co-operation providers, think tanks, academia, philanthropic organisations, DCD and other OECD Directorates and officials.</p> <p><b>Format:</b> Hybrid</p> <p><b>Select agenda items (TBC):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Roundtable:</b> Coordinating Action for Civic Space</li> <li>- <b>Proposed technical sessions:</b> Working with Civil Society in Politically Constrained Environments: Locally Led Development and Other Practical Approaches (with DCD/PAN/Crisis, Conflict, and Fragility, DCD/RPDI/Effectiveness); Shrinking Civic Space and its Impact on Gender Equality (with DCD/PAN Gender Equality); Monitoring Civic Space or Civic Space Online (with GOV/INDIGO); Engaging Civil Society for Inclusive Climate Governance Adaption (with DCD/PAN/GovNet); Consultation on the approach to developing the Light Guidelines on Locally Led Development (with DCD/RPDI/Effectiveness); Strengthening CSO Accountability to Counter Shrinking Civic Space; Consultation on the five-year implementation report of the DAC Recommendation.</li> </ul>

## 5. For discussion

63. Discussion questions for DAC members:
1. What is the DAC guidance for the Secretariat and the DAC CoP on Civil Society as they jointly continue to advance the DAC Recommendation and its five-year implementation Report?
  2. In light of the external evaluation and the forward plans from the Secretariat, what is your guidance to strengthen implementation of the Framework for Dialogue?
  3. Is the proposed agenda for the 2025 OECD DAC Civil Society Days relevant and of interest? Is there specific work your institution or partners are doing that could be featured at the CSDs?

## Annex A. DAC member country examples in line with the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance

1. DAC members have taken important measures to **disseminate, implement and monitor the DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance**. Examples of these measures include events, policies, practices, tools and monitoring. Noting that the DAC is set to develop a report on the implementation of these measures in 2026 at the **five-year mark of the DAC Recommendation's adoption**, the following paragraphs provide an illustrative and non-exhaustive overview of examples shared on a voluntary basis primarily during the **biannual meetings of the DAC Community of Practice (CoP) on Civil Society** of June and November 2023, May and November 2024, and gathered through the DAC Peer Reviews.

### Dissemination

2. **Finland** and **Switzerland** organised capacity-strengthening initiatives around the DAC Recommendation. Finland organised a half-day workshop during its annual Development Days to discuss practical implementation. Switzerland hosted webinars and workshops involving Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) staff, CSOs, and field partners.

3. **Portugal** supported accessibility of the DAC Recommendation by translating it into Portuguese, sharing it with embassies and experts, and using it as an entry point to discuss civil society partnerships in bilateral agreements.

4. **Sweden** circulated the DAC Recommendation widely across Sida's internal networks, embassies, and regional conferences, and presented it at CSO FORUM to engage Swedish international development CSOs.

5. **Ireland** hosted a high-level event in Dublin to engage stakeholders, including political representatives.

### Implementation

6. Several DAC members have actively integrated the DAC Recommendation into their **policies, strategies, and practices**, using it as a framework to **strengthen civil society partnerships, protect civic space, and promote locally led development**.

#### *Policies*

7. **Finland** revised its CSO funding mechanisms based on the DAC Recommendation, increasing flexibility, offering multi-year funding, and aligning language and processes with its guidance.

8. **France** aligned its 2023–2027 civil society strategy with the DAC Recommendation, emphasising CSO autonomy through the "right of initiative" approach and promoting the engagement of local CSOs in French funding mechanisms.

9. **Germany** (BMZ – Germany Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) embedded the DAC Recommendation into its new civil society policy, focusing on nine fields of action, including shrinking civic space and localisation. The toolkits on Funding Civil Society in Partner Countries and Shifting Power with Partners informed workshops addressing equitable partnerships and administrative simplification.

10. **Ireland** used the DAC Recommendation as the framework for its civil society policy review. It introduced a new funding scheme aligning with the DAC Recommendation's principles, requiring funded international CSOs to have localisation policies.

11. **Italy** incorporated the DAC Recommendation into its calls for proposals, requiring partnerships with local CSOs and emphasising capacity-building for locally led development.

12. **Korea** informed its policy-making process with consultations based on the DAC Recommendation, focusing on partnerships, capacity strengthening, and monitoring.

13. **Portugal** referenced the DAC Recommendation in its new development cooperation strategy and bilateral agreements, using it as a framework to deepen engagement with local CSOs.

14. **Switzerland** referenced the DAC Recommendation in its International Cooperation Strategy 2025–28 and updated its Swiss Development Cooperation Guidance for Engagement with Swiss NGOs, incorporating criteria for funding local CSOs and fostering equitable partnerships. A public consultation on the strategy also included reflections on locally led development.

### *Practices*

15. A significant trend among DAC members is the integration of **locally led development** approaches into policies and funding mechanisms. DAC members are increasingly recognising the importance of local actors in ensuring sustainable and context-appropriate development.

- **Australia** launched a new international development policy emphasising locally led approaches, supported by a Civil Society Partnerships Fund. Australia also works on a pass down of funds for local partners to use for administrative and overhead costs.
- **Canada** developed a guidance note on locally led development and pilots projects with small local partners to go beyond "one-size-fits-all" models.
- **Czechia** uses embassy channels to fund grassroots initiatives.
- **Denmark** improved modalities for sub-granting to reach local actors.
- **Germany** (BMZ) committed €15 million to support feminist organisations in Africa and integrated locally led development principles into its civil society strategy.
- The call for proposals for national CSOs in **Italy** now requires local CSO involvement and focus on capacity building and governance improvements.
- **Korea** strengthens local CSO capacity through partnerships with Korean CSOs.
- The **Netherlands** is exploring a pooled donor fund to support local CSOs directly.

- **Switzerland** integrated locally led development into its International Cooperation Strategy 2025–28 and adjusted its funding processes to prioritise local CSOs. Switzerland also defined eight localisation principles to apply in funding relationships between international organisations supported by SDC and their partners in Ukraine.
- Locally led development is not just about funding but also about addressing power dynamics, as seen in **Ireland** and **Luxembourg**, where funding mechanisms emphasise equitable partnerships and local capacity strengthening.

16. Many DAC members are revising funding processes to **reduce administrative burdens and offer more predictable, long-term support to CSOs, while also investing in capacity strengthening.**

- **Canada** streamlined funding modalities for smaller local partners as part of its Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative.
- **Denmark** committed to predictable funding for CSOs and provided increased allocations for humanitarian assistance.
- **Finland** streamlined application processes and increased funding duration to three to four years.
- **Germany** (BMZ) included reducing the administrative burden as part of its civil society policy, particularly to support local partners.
- **Ireland** works on increasing the quality of funding, by covering administrative costs (up to 12%) to Irish CSO, and consequently cascading to local CSOs.
- **Luxembourg** provides flexible funding covering up to five years and includes reallocation options based on changing priorities. Luxembourg also promotes CSO effectiveness and accountability by engaging in long-term institutional support and capacity strengthening of CSOs.
- The **Netherlands** works on revising its Organisational Risk and Integrity Assessment, aiming to move away from a one size fits all approach, making it more flexible and tailored, and aligning it with the locally led development agenda.
- **Slovenia** updated its CSO guidelines in 2023 in line with the Recommendation, establishing a basis for dialogue with CSOs, and setting modalities for strategic partnerships with selected humanitarian CSOs.
- A **sub-group on harmonisation** has been established within the DAC CoP on Civil Society, comprising of **Canada, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, and Switzerland** (and potentially the **United Kingdom**). These countries have expressed a shared interest in advancing harmonisation efforts and are committed to exploring collaborative approaches to achieve this goal.

17. **Shrinking civic space** remains a pressing concern, with DAC members implementing targeted measures to counteract this trend. Many countries are working on creating enabling environments for civil society while mitigating risks associated with political contestation.

- **Denmark** and **Portugal** emphasise the role of civic space in their new strategies.

- The **EU** created a rapid alert mechanism to monitor and address shrinking civic space in partner countries.
- **Ireland** integrated civic space concerns into Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus funding and addresses risk mitigation for local actors.
- The **Netherlands** supports its missions in collaboration with civil society and addresses early signs of civic space restrictions through the launch of internal guidelines that offer intervention options and key considerations.
- **Norway** engages in partnerships with Norwegian CSOs to address shrinking civic space and fosters dialogue on civic space challenges.
- **Switzerland** published a working aid on staying engaged in authoritarian contexts and integrates civic space considerations into its international cooperation strategy.
- The **United Kingdom** developed a civic space diagnostic toolkit and supports human rights defenders through quick-response funding.
- The **United States** used innovative tools such as machine learning to predict and mitigate civic space deterioration.

## Monitoring

18. **DAC Peer Reviews** contribute to the monitoring of the DAC Recommendation's implementation since 2022. In parallel, monitoring efforts by DAC members focus on developing **measurable indicators, benchmarks and frameworks to track progress**, and ensure alignment with the DAC Recommendation.

- The **EU** established a CSO-led monitoring index for enabling environments, which provides early warnings.
- **France** assesses its five-year civil society strategy (2023–2027) through structured dialogues with CSOs, ensuring alignment with the DAC Recommendation.
- **Ireland** implements benchmarks for CSOs to develop locally led development policies and report on the percentage of funding passed to local organisations. Ireland also plans to develop a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning framework focusing on locally led development and Nexus approaches.
- **Korea** organises consultative dialogues with civil society, including on monitoring and evaluation.
- **Luxembourg** introduced an indicator to monitor localisation progress and is committed to publishing updates on CSO implementation efforts.
- **Switzerland** conducted a survey to evaluate civil society support programs.