

Building a Vibrant and Resilient Civil Society

**RCSP Strategic Plan 2024–2029
[Revised]**

July 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1: INTRODUCTION	5
2: BACKGROUND AND RCSP ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE	6
Background and Mandate	6
Vision	6
Mission	6
Core values	6
Governance structure	6
3: RCSP ACHIEVEMENTS, SUCCESS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED	8
4: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH	8
5: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS	9
SWOT Analysis	9
External Context Outlook and Analysis (PESTEL)	9
6: STRATEGIC PLAN ORIENTATON 2024-2029	11
Rationale and Alignment	11
Theory of Change	11
Strategic Goal 2024-2029	12
Priority areas 2024-2029	12
Strategic area 1: organisational and institutional capacity strengthening of RCSP and Civil Society.	13
Strategic area 2: research and public policy advocacy for csos and citizen interests.	13

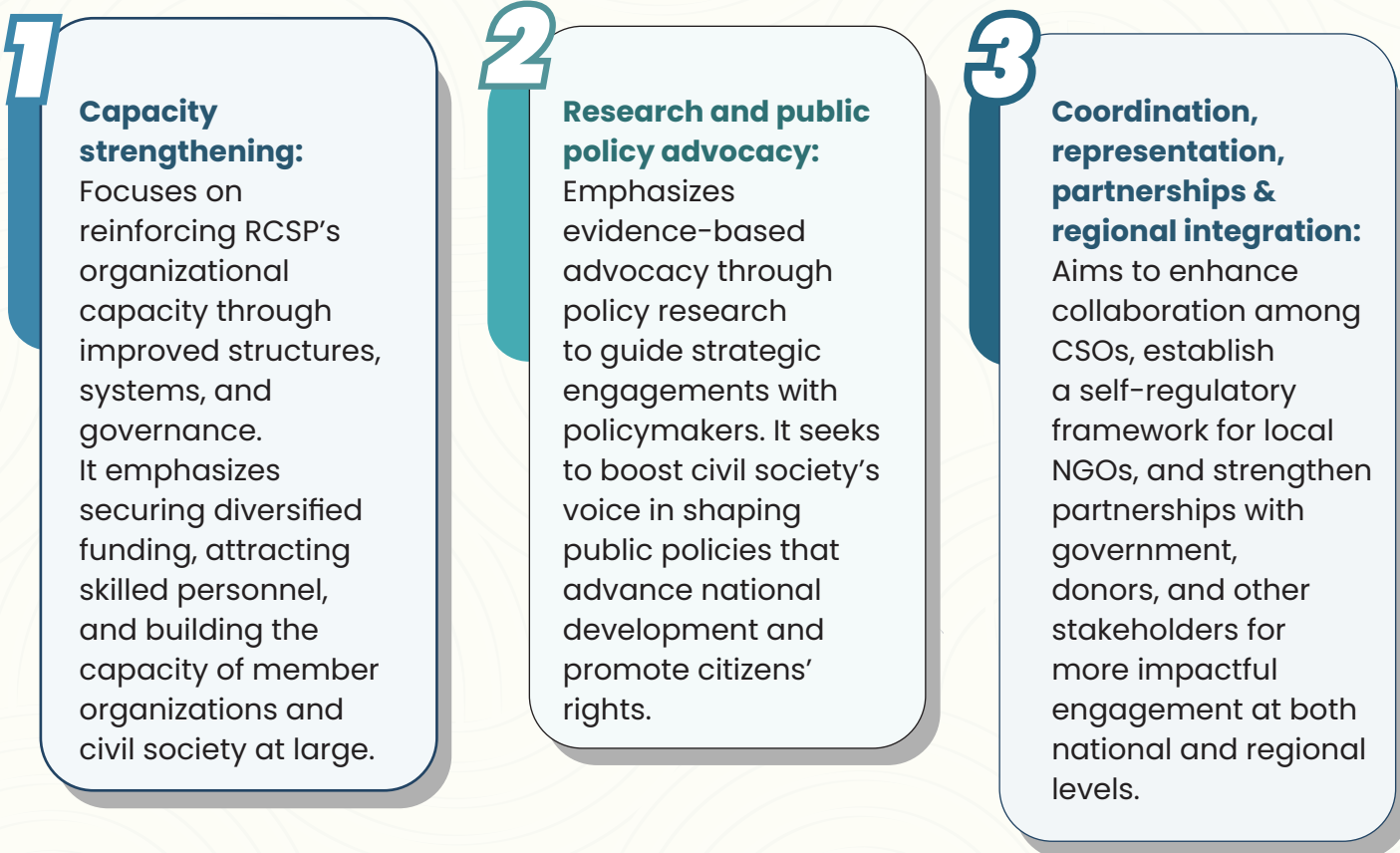
Strategic area 3: Partnership, Coordination, Representation and Regional Integration	14
Implementation strategic mechanisms and stakeholder collaboration	14
7: OUTCOMES, ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES	15
8: RESOURCES AND FINANCING	15
Human Resources	15
Infrastructure, Equipment and Materials	15
Financial resources 2024-2029 (Budget summary)	15
9: MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND LEARNING	16
CONCLUSION	17



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2024–2029 Strategic Plan is the outcome of an inclusive process involving document reviews, stakeholder consultations, interviews, and workshops. It serves as a guiding framework for RCSP's priorities over the next six years, aimed at strengthening internal capacity, improving coordination, and ensuring all stakeholders work towards shared goals. The plan sets a clear direction for planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and resource mobilization, with the ultimate goal of enhancing RCSP's efficiency and effectiveness in delivering on its mandate.

The strategy is built around three key priority areas:



A comprehensive logical framework supports this strategy, detailing goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and performance indicators. A robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) system will track progress, support decision-making, and ensure accountability through periodic reviews, including mid-term and final evaluations.

The Strategic plan 2024 – 2029 requires a total of **4.2 billion RWF (approx. 3. million USD)**. A targeted fundraising strategy will be developed by year two to identify donors and diversify funding sources.

Implementation will be led by RCSP's Executive Committee and Secretariat, supported by strong M&E and reporting mechanisms. Regular stakeholder engagement, quarterly and annual reviews, and transparent progress reporting will ensure effective execution and lasting impact.

1: INTRODUCTION

Civil society is a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, social progress, and sustainable development worldwide. It encompasses a diverse range of non-state actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, faith-based organizations, and other voluntary groups that operate independently from government or private sector control. Civil society plays a crucial role in advocating for human rights, social justice, transparency, and accountability, often serving as a bridge between governments and citizens to promote inclusive and participatory decision-making processes.

From a good governance perspective, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are recognized as a vital 'third sector' alongside the state and private sector, characterized by their non-profit and non-partisan nature. They provide a platform for collective action where individuals and groups unite to advance public interests, empower communities, and contribute to sustainable development. In Rwanda, particularly in the post-genocide period, CSOs have played a significant role in national recovery, reconciliation, and reconstruction efforts. Over the past two decades, the Government of Rwanda has closely collaborated with CSOs to promote good governance, social cohesion, and economic resilience.

In response to the need for coordinated action, various CSOs particularly umbrellas came together in 2004 to establish the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP). RCSP is a non-profit Forum of umbrella organizations comprising fourteen (14) national umbrella organizations and their members. Its mission is to provide a framework for information sharing, consultation, and advocacy, strengthening solidarity among CSOs and amplifying their collective voice at national, regional, and international levels. RCSP plays a crucial role in fostering dialogue, context analysis, and evidence-based advocacy to promote the well-being of Rwandan society.

To effectively fulfil its mission and adapt to evolving challenges, RCSP requires a clear and well-structured strategic plan. This plan serves as a roadmap, guiding our organization's direction. By setting measurable objectives and defining implementation strategies, this strategic plan enhances RCSP's operational efficiency, strengthens accountability, and fosters its sustainability. The development of the RCSP 2024-2029 Strategic Plan was informed by a thorough assessment of the 2019-2023 strategic plan to build on past achievements and address emerging needs.

By providing a structured framework, this strategic plan will help RCSP leaders and managers visualize the bigger picture—where the organization stands, where it needs to go, and how it will get there. Through-out the nine (9) Chapters of this reference document, RCSP reaffirms its commitment to strengthening civil society's role in development and inspiring positive change in Rwanda and beyond.

This strategic plan will help RCSP leaders and managers visualize the bigger picture—where the organization stands, where it needs to go, and how it will get there.



2: BACKGROUND AND RCSP ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Background and Mandate

Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) was established in 2004 as a Forum of Umbrellas, information sharing and advocacy framework that coordinates and represents civil society organizations in Rwanda. The Platform is composed of 14 national umbrellas with a total number of 317 member organizations across the country.



Vision

RCSP aspires to “**A vibrant and resilient civil society that champions citizen voices and promotes accountable governance for equitable and sustainable development**”.



Mission

RCSP’s **mission** is to empower, coordinate, represent, and amplify the voice of civil society organizations in Rwanda

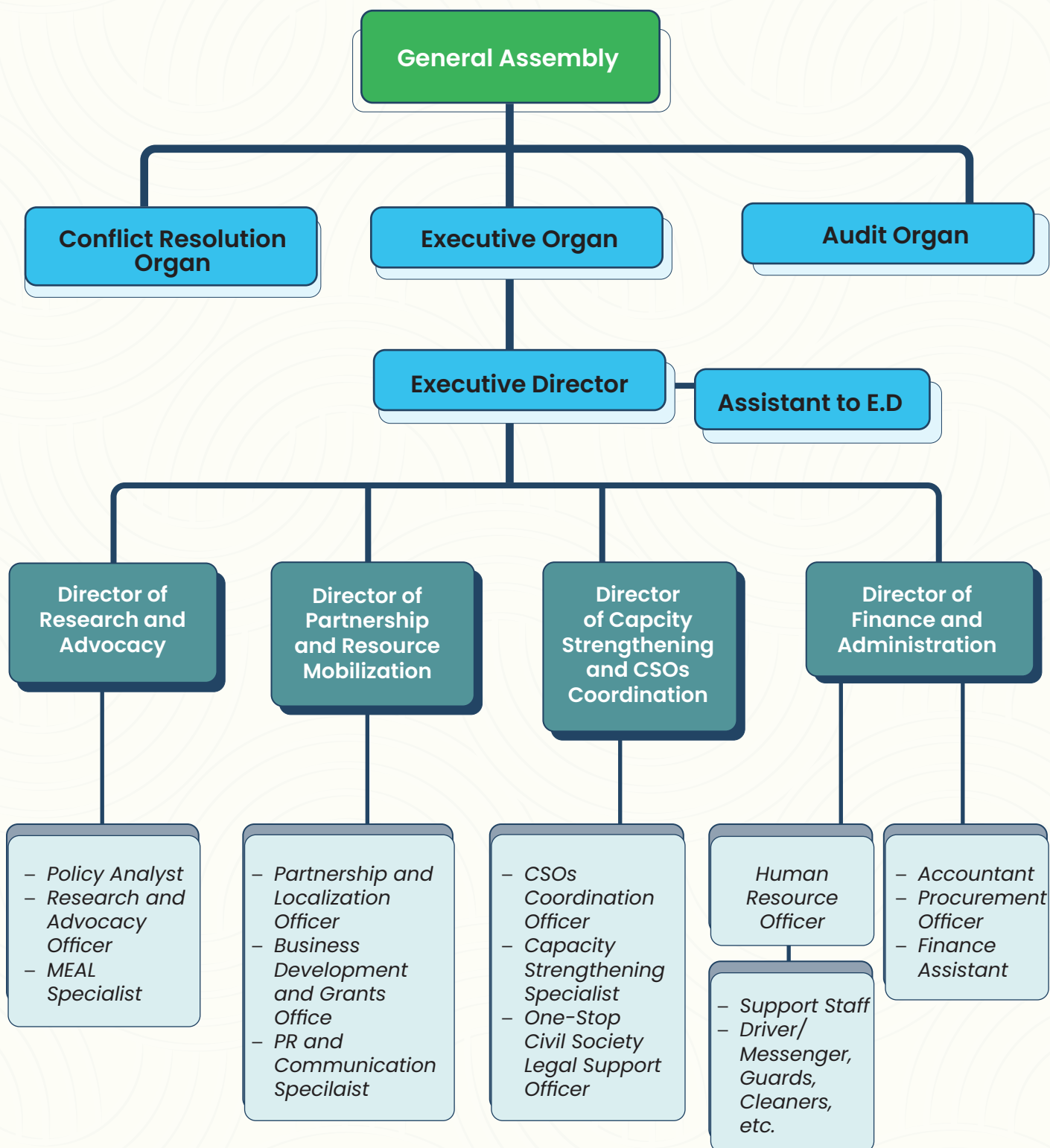


Core values

Our values are rooted in **solidarity, transparency, resilience, accountability, and professionalism**. These principles guide our actions, shape our partnerships, and define our commitment to serving society.

Governance Structure

Figure 1: Governance Structure

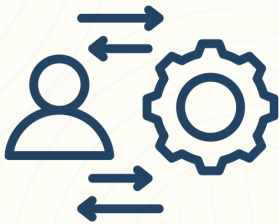


The structure is subject to amendment upon the approval of the Executive Committee.



3: RCSP ACHIEVEMENTS, SUCCESS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Between 2019–2023, RCSP made significant strides in strengthening civil society coordination, governance, and policy advocacy. It improved internal systems by adopting key policies and launching initiatives like Thematic Working Groups and the e-huriro digital platform. RCSP influenced national policy debates on labor reforms, gender-based violence, and more. Strategic partnerships, notably with Pro-Femmes and Care International, supported capacity-building efforts such as the LTA Mentorship Program. However, challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, limited funding (only 34.8% secured), human resource gaps, and weak member engagement affected progress. Key lessons include the need for stronger governance tools, digital engagement, diversified funding, and greater CSO visibility. Despite the hurdles, RCSP remains committed to enhancing civil society's impact and sustainability in Rwanda through its 2024–2029 strategic plan.



4: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The RCSP 2024–2029 Strategic Plan was developed through a participatory, evidence-based process aligned with RCSP's mandate, national priorities, and legal frameworks.

Stage 1 involved a **desk review** of past plans, reports, laws, and development strategies like NST1/NST2.

Stage 2 focused on **stakeholder consultations** with CSOs, government, and donors to gather insights.

In **Stage 3**, a **planning workshop** was held to define priorities using SWOT and PESTEL analyses.

Stage 4 led to the **drafting** of the plan, detailing objectives, implementation, and M&E.

Stage 5 was an **internal validation** by RCSP leadership and members.

Stage 6 included a **national validation** with stakeholders to ensure alignment with NST2 and the NGO Law.

Finally, in **Stage 7**, the plan was **finalized and launched**, initiating its implementation phase.



5: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

SWOT Analysis

RCSP's **internal strengths** include its legal status, structured governance, updated internal policies, and strong legitimacy among government, partners, and CSOs. Its proven track record in advocacy, skilled staff, and broad partnerships at local and international levels further solidify its position. Financial accountability and established networks enhance its operational credibility.

However, **internal weaknesses** remain. Key policies and strategies including Resource Mobilization Strategy are required. Financial sustainability is a major concern due to overreliance on donor funding coupled with, limitations in member contributions, limited income-generating activities. Weak branding, low visibility, and limited capacity for evidence-based advocacy also hinder RCSP's effectiveness.

Externally, RCSP benefits from Rwanda's stable political climate, enabling civil society policies (e.g., Vision 2050, NST2), and donor localization trends. Government platforms like SWGs and JADFs, and private sector interest in CSR, offer space for policy influence and resource mobilization. However, threats include limited long-term funding, restrictive regulatory framework, lack of direct government support for CSOs, global economic instability, and regional insecurity.

In response, the 2024–2029 Strategic Plan focuses on strengthening governance, evidence-based advocacy, financial sustainability, digital transformation and visibility—positioning RCSP to lead civil society development in Rwanda.

External Context Outlook and Analysis (PESTEL)

As Rwanda continues its ambitious journey toward economic transformation, governance efficiency, and social progress, the RCSP must position itself strategically to navigate the evolving landscape. A thorough PESTEL analysis examining the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal contexts provides a foundation for understanding both opportunities and challenges that will shape the role of RCSP and civil society in the coming years.

Political context:

Rwanda offers political stability, effective governance, and structured citizen engagement through decentralized platforms like Umushyikirano and JADFs. However, legal restrictions—such as those in the new NGO Law—curb freedom of assembly. Regional instability, notably with the DRC, adds further uncertainty for CSOs involved in advocacy and humanitarian work.

Economic context:

Rwanda's economy is growing rapidly, with targets to become a middle-income country by 2035 and high-income by 2050, driven by NST2 and Vision 2050. Despite GDP growth, challenges persist: youth unemployment, shrinking agriculture land, weak job sustainability, and limited support for CSOs. External economic threats include inflation, donor fatigue, and geopolitical conflicts that could restrict funding for civil society.

Socio-cultural context:

Rwanda's population is growing (13.2M in 2022), and investment in education and healthcare has increased. However, gaps remain in education quality, health staff availability, and equitable access, especially in rural areas.

Technological context:

Rwanda is advancing in ICT, digital government, and mobile connectivity. While digital transformation offers CSOs new tools, many—including RCSP—lack digital capacity, cybersecurity infrastructure, and resources to adapt. High costs and limited access in remote areas exacerbate the digital divide.

Environmental context:

Rwanda is committed to green growth and climate resilience through strategies like GGCRS and Vision 2050. Key focus areas include sustainable land use, waste management, and renewable energy. However, implementation is challenged by limited funding, urbanization pressures, and weak coordination among stakeholders.

Legal context:

Significant positive trends achieved so far, including

- (1) the low level of corruption to create a conducive environment for growth,*
- (2) the way the judiciary developed from almost non-existent into a more professional and effective power within the state, the efforts made in order to create a fair justice system, and*
- (3) the great strides forward made with respect to access to justice through legal aid mechanisms in place both public and private.*

To maintain the positive trend, RCSP will also play its role in monitoring and advocating on key aspects of legal framework, human rights, and promoting civil rights resilience through community engagement and raising awareness especially among the most vulnerable.

In conclusion, by leveraging opportunities and addressing gaps, RCSP will better serve civil society organizations and advance sustainable development in Rwanda.



6: STRATEGIC PLAN ORIENTATION 2024–2029

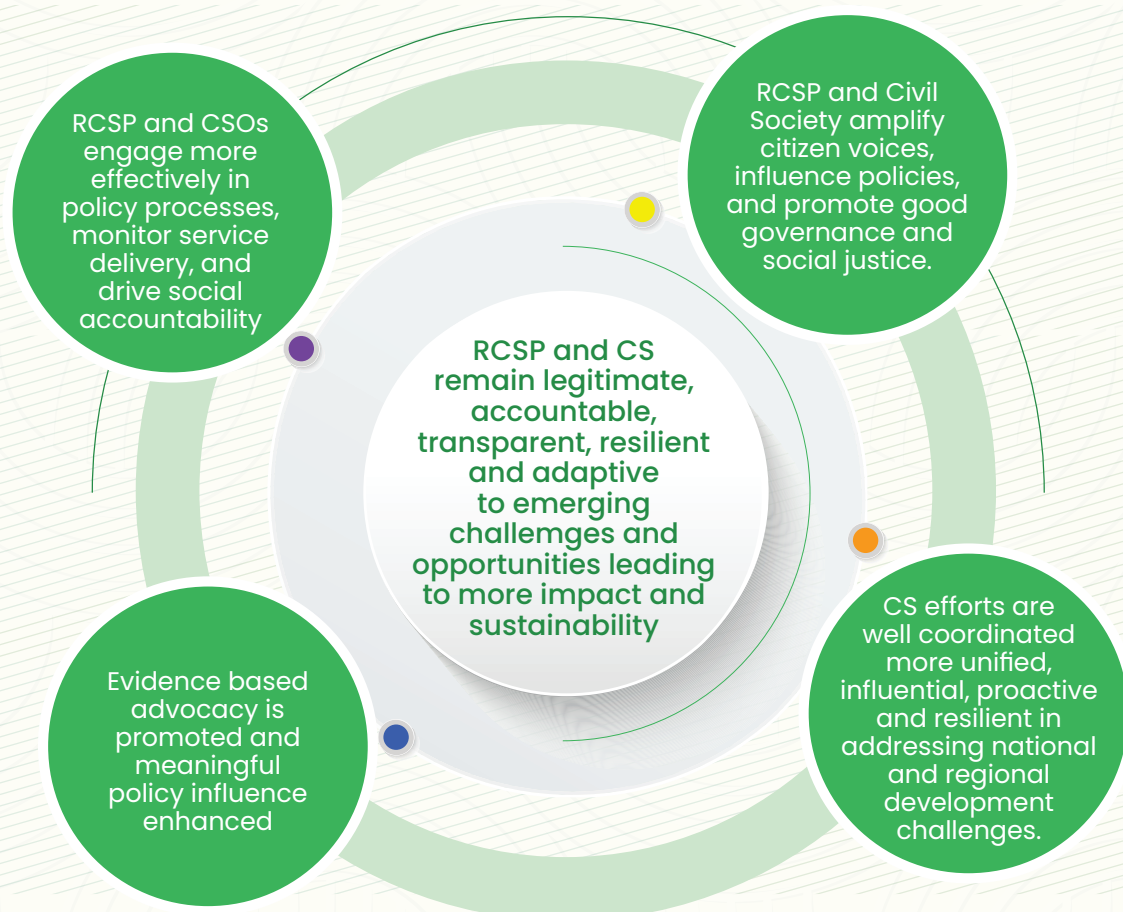
Rationale and alignment

The 2024–2029 RCSP Strategic Plan focuses on strengthening civil society’s role in governance, policy advocacy, and social accountability. It enhances institutional capacity, resource mobilization, and digital transformation. Aligned with SDGs, Vision 2050, and NSTI, the plan aims to empower CSOs, foster inclusive development, and promote citizen participation, ensuring civil society remains a key partner in driving sustainable and equitable growth in Rwanda.

Theory of Change

Civil society in Rwanda is vital to governance and development but faces challenges like limited capacity, weak coordination, and restricted civic space. Adapting to shifting policies and donor trends, RCSP must strengthen coordination, advocacy, sustainability, and stakeholder engagement. Doing so will empower CSOs to influence policy, promote accountability, and boost citizen participation, fostering transparent, inclusive, and sustainable development in Rwanda.

Figure 2: Theory of Change Diagram



Strategic goal 2024–2029

The overall goal of this strategic plan is "To strengthen civil society's capacity, coordination, partnership, and advocacy to pro-actively influence public policy processes for sustainable development in Rwanda".

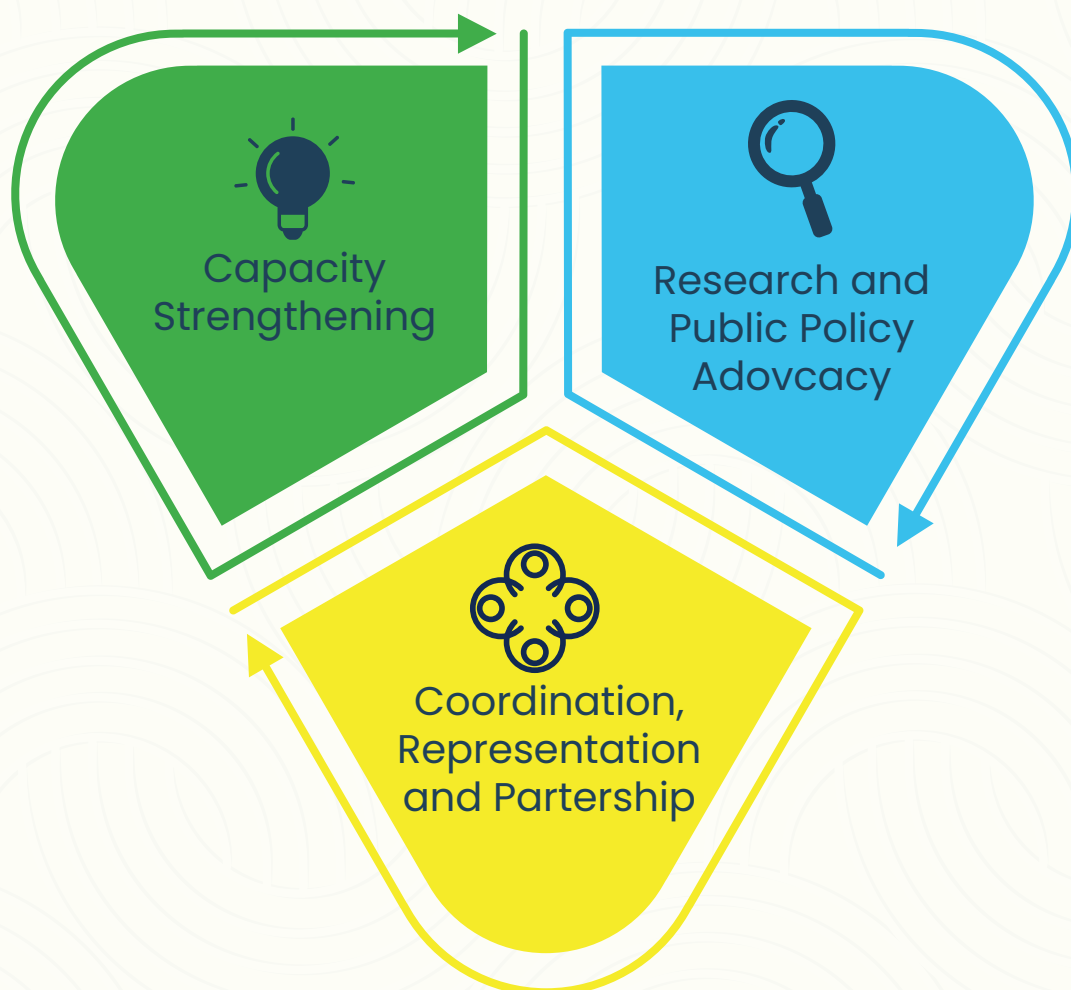
If this goal is achieved, RCSP believes to become a reliable platform for a strengthened, vibrant and resilient civil society that pro-actively influences policy advocacy for public interests in the next six years.

Priority areas 2024–2029

To achieve the strategic goal, this Strategic Plan (2024–2029) has set the following three major strategic areas:

- (i) Capacity strengthening of RCSP and Civil Society,
- ii) Research and Public Policy Advocacy,
- iii) Coordination, Representation, Partnership and Regional Integration.

Figure 2: Priority Areas 2024 - 2029



Strategic area 1: Organisational and institutional capacity strengthening of RCSP and Civil Society.

Strategic objective 1: Strengthen the institutional and organizational capacities of RCSP and civil society organizations (CSOs) for enhanced effective leadership and sustainable community development.	
Outcome	Outputs
Outcome 1.1. RCSP and CSOs institutional governance, management structures and leadership are enhanced.	Output 1.1.1.: Strengthened leadership, governance and decision-making policies and frameworks within RCSP and CSOs.
	Output 1.1.2.: Improved administrative and financial management structures, systems and procedures of RCSP and CSOs.
Outcome 1.2. RCSP and CSOs programming and their daily operations are effective, relevant to citizens' needs.	Output 1.2.1.: Fundraising, resource mobilization strategies and organizational resilience are strengthened.
	Output 1.2.2.: Improved programs/projects design and management, M&E, Learning, reporting, and impact assessment.

Strategic area 2: Research and public policy advocacy for CSOs and citizen interests.

Strategic objective 2: To enhance research and evidence-based advocacy for civil society organizations to influence inclusive, transparent, and responsive policy-making.	
Outcome	Outputs
Outcome 2.1: Civil society organizations have increased capacity and influence to generate and use credible research for an effective adoption and implementation of inclusive and evidence-driven policies.	Output 2.1.1.: Policy research, analysis and evidence-based advocacy consolidation enhanced.
	Output 2.1.2.: Advocacy capacity and policy engagement of RCSP and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) improved.
	Output 2.1.3.: Civil society voice is amplified and heard for a strengthened inclusive decision-making, social justice, and accountability.

Strategic area 3: Partnership, coordination, representation and regional integration

Strategic objective 3: Improve coordination, representation and partnership mechanisms at the national and regional level.

Outcome	Outputs
Outcome 3.1.: Coordination, representation and partnership mechanisms among RCSP and Key strategic partners at national and regional level are strengthened and effective.	Output 3.1.1.: Improved coordination, representation and strengthened collaboration for more synergy among RCSP and CSO members.
	Output 3.1.2.: Strengthened relationships with development partners, donors and other relevant stakeholders to secure funding and technical support for national development.
	Output 3.1.3.: Strengthened collaboration with public agencies and other relevant stakeholders to advance Localization agenda and CS sustainability.
	Output 3.1.4.: A fair, effective and long-term partnership between RCSP, CSOs and Rwanda Private Sector Federation (RPSF) for shared goals and common interests is established and operational.
	Output 3.1.5. Regional integration and cross-border engagement on national, regional, and global issues aligned with RCSP mandate is promoted.

Implementation strategic mechanisms and Stakeholder collaboration

Effective implementation of RCSP's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan requires strong internal commitment, efficient structures, and resource capacity. Success depends on partnerships with government, NGOs, INGOs, development partners, and community networks. Multi-sector collaboration will mobilize resources, enhance advocacy, and strengthen civil society's impact in governance, accountability, and inclusive development.



7: OUTCOMES, ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

As RCSP embarks on the implementation of its 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, it is essential to outline the expected outcomes that will drive its impact in strengthening civil society coordination, advocacy, and capacity building. However, the realization of these outcomes is not without challenges. Various risks ranging from financial constraints to policy shifts may hinder effective implementation.

This section presents RCSP’s planned outcomes, the potential risks that could affect their achievement, and the strategic mitigation measures to ensure successful delivery. By proactively identifying and addressing risks, RCSP aims to enhance resilience, optimize resource utilization, and sustain its contributions to civil society engagement in Rwanda.



8: RESOURCES AND FINANCING

Human Resources

Currently, RCSP has only 6 out of the 12 required staff members. To effectively implement the 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, six (6) additional staff members must be recruited, particularly in Programs Management, Finance and Administration, Research, advocacy, Legal support, Monitoring & Evaluation, and IT and Communications.

Infrastructure, Equipment and Materials

RCSP requires improved infrastructure, modern equipment, and essential materials to enhance operational efficiency, support digital transformation, and strengthen service delivery to its members.

Financial Resources 2024–2029 (Budget summary)

The implementation of this SP 2024–2029 will require an estimated total amount of **Four Billion Two Hundred Fifty Million Three Hundred Eighty-Six Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy-Seven Rwandan Francs** (4,250,386,977 Rwf) equivalent to **Three Million Seven thousand eighty-four United States Dollars** (3,007,084 USD), that will be mobilized from RCSP members, key partners including donors, government agencies and private sector.

#	OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS	TOTAL IN RWF	TOTAL IN USD	%
Pillar #1	Organizational and institutional capacity strengthening	1,845,101,865	1,310,144	38.71
Pillar #2	Research and public policy advocacy	1,045,405,685	731,336	21.93
Pillar #3	Coordination, representation, partnership and localization	813,743,260	577,811	17.07
Pillar #4	Administration, supervision and operations	1,061,883,432	754,007	22.28
	GRAND TOTAL	4,766,134,242	3,373,299	100.00

Note: 1\$=1408.32Rwf @BNR on 06th March 2025.



9: MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND LEARNING

RCSP's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan includes a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework to ensure effective implementation and evidence-based decision-making. The Executive Secretariat, accountable to the Board and donors, will oversee progress tracking using predefined indicators and regular stakeholder engagement. Key mechanisms include continuous monitoring to align activities with goals, and evaluations namely the Mid-Term Review for strategic adjustments, and a Final External Evaluation.

Reporting will be structured from quarterly updates to comprehensive Annual Reports, with reviews by senior management and regular stakeholder feedback sessions. A strong focus on learning and adaptive management will guide the refinement of strategies, integration of best practices, and responsiveness to emerging challenges. This MEL system promotes transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement across RCSP's work.



CONCLUSION

RCSP's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan aims to strengthen governance, CSO effectiveness, research for advocacy, and partnerships. Achieving this requires collaboration with government, donors, and CSOs. RCSP will build member capacity, advocate for citizen-focused policies, and engage stakeholders to drive change. With joint effort, civil society can shape a more inclusive, accountable Rwanda where it plays a key role in governance and development.

————— END —————





B.P 6333 Kigali
e-mail: info@rcsprwanda.org
www.rcsprwanda.org