



RCSP

RWANDA CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM
(RCSP)

CIVIL SOCIETY CONTRIBUTION TO RWANDA'S DEVELOPMENT UNDER NST1 (2017-2024)

Evidence, Impact, Partnerships and Strategic Perspectives
for NST2 and Vision 2050



ECONOMIC
TRANSFORMATION



SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATION



TRANSFORMATIONAL
GOVERNANCE



NST2 &
VISION 2050



COMMUNITY
EMPOWERMENT



INCLUSIVE
DEVELOPMENT



GOVERNANCE &
SOCIAL COHESION



Prepared for:
Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP)



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Date:
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“ Civil Society Organizations have been strategic partners in Rwanda's development journey under NST1, contributing to inclusive growth, social transformation, citizen participation, reconciliation, and community resilience. This report documents their contribution and identifies strategic pathways for strengthening partnerships under NST2 and Vision 2050. ”



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Foreword

This report presents a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the contribution of Rwanda's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to national development during the implementation of the **National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) (2017–2024)**. Prepared for the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), the report documents the scale, diversity, and impact of civil society interventions across the pillars of **Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance**, while generating strategic evidence to support the implementation of **NST2 (2025–2029)** and the realization of **Vision 2050**.

The assessment moves beyond descriptive accounts of projects and activities to provide a rigorous analysis of the value added by the civil society sector to Rwanda's development. Its findings are based on a mixed-methods approach that combines nationwide survey data collected from National Civil Society Organizations (NNGOs), Key Informant Interviews with Government institutions and strategic stakeholders, administrative records from public institutions, and an extensive review of policy, legal, and institutional documents. The systematic triangulation of these multiple sources of evidence provides a robust and credible basis for assessing the contribution of civil society to national development outcomes.

The report demonstrates that Civil Society Organizations are important development partners whose contributions extend beyond service delivery to include employment creation, community empowerment, domestic resource mobilization, social protection, citizen participation, peacebuilding, environmental sustainability, human capital development, and institutional strengthening. It also highlights the partnerships, innovations, challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities that can further enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of Government–Civil Society collaboration.

Beyond documenting achievements under NST1, this report serves as a strategic resource for policymakers, Government institutions, Civil Society Organizations, development partners, the private sector, researchers, and other stakeholders. It provides an evidence base to inform policy dialogue, strengthen mutual accountability, improve coordination and collaboration, and support evidence-based decision-making during the implementation of NST2 and beyond.

It is our hope that the findings and recommendations presented in this report will contribute to a shared understanding of the indispensable role of civil society in Rwanda's development and inspire stronger partnerships that accelerate inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development in line with the aspirations of Vision 2050.

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The Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) wishes to express its sincere appreciation to all individuals and institutions that contributed to the successful completion of this assessment of the contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Rwanda's development during the implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) (2017–2024).

Special gratitude is extended to the National Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), networks, and platforms that participated in the survey and generously shared information, experiences, and evidence on their interventions and achievements. Their contributions formed the foundation of the analysis presented in this report.

We also acknowledge the valuable support and collaboration provided by Government institutions and stakeholders who participated in Key Informant Interviews and contributed administrative data, technical insights, and institutional perspectives. In particular, we extend our appreciation to the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE), the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA), the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA), the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB), and the Private Sector Federation (PSF).

Our appreciation is further extended to district authorities, Joint Action Development Forums (JADFs), development partners, and all stakeholders who contributed information, documentation, and constructive feedback throughout the assessment process.

Finally, RCSP expresses its gratitude to the assessment team for their dedication and professionalism in undertaking this important exercise. Through the combined efforts of all contributors, this report provides an evidence-based account of the contribution of civil society to Rwanda's development and serves as a strategic resource for strengthening Government–Civil Society collaboration under NST2 and advancing the aspirations of Vision 2050.

1. Executive Summary

This report presents a comprehensive assessment of the contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Rwanda's development during the implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) from 2017 to 2024. Commissioned by the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), the assessment was conducted to document the scale, scope, and impact of civil society interventions and to generate strategic proposals for strengthening Government–CSO collaboration under NST2 and Vision 2050.

The assessment adopted a survey-led, mixed-methods approach that triangulated evidence from 70 responding Civil Society Organizations, Key Informant Interviews (KIs) with Government institutions and strategic stakeholders, administrative records from the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA), and Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB), as well as documentary review. Together, these sources provide one of the most comprehensive evidence bases assembled to date on the contribution of Rwanda's civil society sector.

Profile and Reach of the Civil Society Sector

The assessment confirms that Rwanda possesses a vibrant and diversified civil society ecosystem comprising national NGOs, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, networks, and specialized advocacy institutions. Analysis of the 2026 National NGO Registry identified 1,265 registered organizations operating across all districts of Rwanda.

While approximately 60 percent of registered NNGOs are headquartered in Kigali City, survey findings indicate that CSO interventions extend nationwide through decentralized implementation arrangements, partnerships with local authorities, community structures, faith-based institutions, and local development actors.

The thematic profile of the sector demonstrates strong alignment with national priorities. Of the registered organizations, 91.8 percent are engaged in Social Transformation, 29.5 percent contribute to Economic Transformation, and 16.7 percent operate within Transformational Governance. More than one-third of organizations work across multiple NST1 pillars, reflecting increasingly integrated approaches to development challenges.

Economic Footprint and Contribution to Economic Transformation

The assessment demonstrates that CSOs are not only development actors but also important contributors to Rwanda's formal economy.

Survey findings show that responding organizations:

- Employed 2,398 permanent staff and 295 project staff;
- Mobilized 12,974 volunteers;
- Supported 409,788 trainees;
- Facilitated the creation of 389,505 jobs;
- Generated 90,745 temporary and project-based employment opportunities.

CSOs also made substantial contributions to entrepreneurship, livelihoods, agriculture, and financial inclusion. Responding organizations reported:

- Supporting 604,234 beneficiaries through entrepreneurship programmes;
- Providing vocational and skills training to 405,169 beneficiaries;
- Supporting 36,044 MSMEs and cooperatives;
- Reaching 4.3 million farmers through agricultural interventions;
- Supporting 669,706 climate-smart agriculture adopters;
- Facilitating access to financial services for more than 2.6 million people;
- Mobilizing approximately RWF 16.8 billion in savings and facilitating access to over RWF 214 billion in loans and credit.

Administrative data further confirm the economic significance of the sector. Matching RGB and RRA records identified 429 fiscally traceable CSOs, representing approximately one-third of registered organizations.

By 2024, this fiscally traceable subset:

- Employed 7,202 formal workers;
- Reported annual turnover exceeding RWF 12.29 billion;
- Generated RWF 61.10 billion in PAYE remittances between 2020 and 2024;
- Contributed approximately RWF 92.60 billion in taxes and statutory payments between 2019 and 2024;
- Contributed more than RWF 24.7 billion to RSSB social security schemes between 2017 and 2024.

The analysis further demonstrates that PAYE accounted for approximately 84.7 percent of all taxes paid, confirming that the largest fiscal contribution of CSOs to Rwanda's economy is through formal employment creation and workforce remuneration. These findings provide compelling administrative evidence that civil society organizations contribute not only through development programming but also through domestic resource mobilization, tax compliance, employment creation and participation in Rwanda's formal economy.

Contribution to Social Transformation

CSOs played an extensive role in improving health, education, gender equality, youth empowerment, disability inclusion and social protection.

The assessment shows that responding organizations:

- Supported **393,082** beneficiaries through Early Childhood Development initiatives;
- Assisted **390,597** learners through school enrolment support;
- Reached **362,638** students through education programmes;
- Supported **245,468** scholarship beneficiaries;
- Empowered more than **3 million women and girls**;
- Assisted nearly **88,000** survivors of gender-based violence;
- Reached more than **412,000 youth** through skills development and entrepreneurship initiatives;
- Supported over **94,000 vulnerable households** through social protection interventions.

These interventions significantly strengthened human capital, resilience and social inclusion throughout the NST1 implementation period.

Contribution to Transformational Governance

The report demonstrates that CSOs made important contributions to governance, accountability, peacebuilding and citizen participation.

Responding organizations supported more than **1.3 million citizens** through civic education, public dialogue, social accountability, legal aid, peacebuilding, reconciliation and citizen engagement initiatives.

Government institutions consistently recognized CSOs as trusted intermediaries capable of strengthening citizen participation, accountability, transparency and constructive engagement between communities and public institutions.

Partnerships, Challenges and Strategic Priorities

Government institutions emerged as the principal strategic partners of CSOs, followed by district authorities, development partners, faith-based organizations and private sector institutions.

Stakeholders identified the comparative advantage of CSOs in:

- reaching vulnerable populations;
- mobilizing communities;
- piloting innovative development approaches;

- complementing public service delivery;
- strengthening local ownership; and
- generating evidence to inform policy.

Key challenges identified include dependence on external financing, coordination constraints, fragmented data systems, uneven institutional capacity, staff retention challenges and difficulties in scaling successful interventions.

Strategic Implications for NST2 and Vision 2050

The assessment concludes that Rwanda's civil society sector represents a strategic national asset capable of making even greater contributions under NST2 and Vision 2050. Future efforts should prioritize:

- strengthening Government–CSO coordination mechanisms;
- enhancing institutional sustainability and leadership;
- improving evidence generation and data systems;
- expanding domestic resource mobilization and diversified financing;
- scaling successful livelihood and resilience models;
- strengthening social cohesion and citizen participation; and
- accelerating innovation and digital transformation.

A phased roadmap is proposed to guide the progressive strengthening of Rwanda's civil society sector from institutional consolidation toward innovation, collective impact and deeper integration into the implementation of Vision 2050.

Overall Conclusion

The assessment provides robust survey and administrative evidence that Civil Society Organizations are **development partners, major employers, taxpayers, investors in communities and important contributors to Rwanda's formal economy**. Their contribution extends well beyond service delivery to encompass employment creation, domestic resource mobilization, social protection, human capital development, financial inclusion, citizen participation, governance, peacebuilding and community resilience.

As Rwanda advances the implementation of NST2, the evidence suggests that the priority is no longer to demonstrate the relevance of civil society, but rather to strengthen partnerships, financing, evidence systems and institutional capacities that will enable the sector to maximize its contribution to achieving the aspirations of **Vision 2050**.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Meaning
ADRRES	Association pour le Développement Rural et la Réhabilitation Environnementale et Sociale
AEE	African Evangelistic Enterprise
AGHR	Association Générale des Handicapés du Rwanda
AJEMA	Association de Jeunesse en Matière Agricole et Culturelle
AJPRODHO-JIJUKIRWA	Association des Jeunes pour la Promotion des Droits de l'Homme et du Développement
APVD	Association for Promotion of Vulnerable in Development
ARDEC	Association Rwandaise pour l'Éducation et le Développement Communautaire
ARPDI	Association Rwandaise pour la Promotion du Développement Intégré
ASFR	Association de Solidarité des Femmes Rwandaises
AVEGA Agahozo	Association des Veuves du Génocide Agahozo
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CLADHO	Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda
COPORWA	Community of Potters of Rwanda
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FAWE Rwanda	Forum for African Women Educationalists Rwanda
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFPG	Initiative pour la Promotion de la Famille et du Genre
INADES-Formation	Institut Africain pour le Développement Économique et Social – Formation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum
KII	Key Informant Interview
LODA	Local Administrative Entities Development Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINUBUMWE	Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organization

NST1	National Strategy for Transformation (2017–2024)
NST2	National Strategy for Transformation (2025–2029)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAYE	Pay As You Earn
PPCP	Public–Private–Civil Society Partnership
PSF	Private Sector Federation
PWD	Person with Disability
RCSP	Rwanda Civil Society Platform
READO	Rural Environment and Development Organization
REB	Rwanda Education Board
REDO	Reinforcement of Developing Initiatives in Rural Environment
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RRA	Rwanda Revenue Authority
RSSB	Rwanda Social Security Board
RWN	Rwanda Women Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SILC	Savings and Internal Lending Community
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TI-Rwanda	Transparency International Rwanda
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UWEZO	Uwezo Youth Empowerment
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WOP	Withholding Tax on Service Fees
YWCA	Young Women’s Christian Association

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General Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have long been important partners in Rwanda's development journey. Working alongside Government institutions, communities, development partners, faith-based organizations, and private sector actors, CSOs contribute to improving livelihoods, expanding access to social services, strengthening social cohesion, promoting citizen participation, and supporting inclusive development. Their interventions often complement public programmes by reaching vulnerable populations, piloting innovative approaches, mobilizing communities, and responding to emerging social and economic challenges.

The implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) (2017–2024) provided an important framework through which Government institutions and development partners worked collectively to accelerate Rwanda's progress toward Vision 2050. NST1 was organized around three interrelated pillars: Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance. These pillars sought to promote inclusive economic growth, improve human development outcomes, strengthen resilience, and enhance citizen-centred governance.

Throughout the NST1 period, CSOs implemented a wide range of interventions that contributed directly and indirectly to national development priorities. These interventions covered areas such as agriculture, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, employment creation, health, education, social protection, gender equality, youth empowerment, disability inclusion, peacebuilding, reconciliation, human rights, accountability, and citizen engagement. While the contribution of civil society has long been recognized qualitatively, there has been limited consolidated evidence quantifying the scale and breadth of the sector's contribution across NST1.

Recognizing the importance of evidence-based policy dialogue, the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) commissioned this assessment to document and analyse the contribution of Civil Society Organizations to Rwanda's development during NST1. The assessment also seeks to generate strategic evidence to inform the National Dialogue between Government and Civil Society and to strengthen collaboration under NST2 (2025–2029) and Vision 2050.

1.2 Purpose of the Assessment

The overall purpose of the assessment was to evaluate the contribution of Civil Society Organizations to the implementation of NST1 and to identify opportunities for strengthening the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of civil society interventions under NST2.

Specifically, the assessment sought to:

- Document the contribution of CSOs to the Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance pillars of NST1;
- Assess the economic footprint of the civil society sector, including employment creation, tax contributions, social security contributions, and resource mobilization;
- Analyse the extent to which CSOs reached vulnerable and underserved populations;
- Examine the partnerships, coordination mechanisms, and enabling factors that supported implementation;
- Identify challenges, lessons learned, and emerging opportunities for strengthening Government–CSO collaboration;
- Generate evidence-based recommendations to inform NST2 implementation and Vision 2050.

1.3 Assessment Methodology and Evidence Base

The assessment adopted a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative and qualitative sources of evidence.

The primary source of information was a nationwide survey administered to Civil Society Organizations in June 2026. The survey collected data on organizational characteristics, beneficiary outreach, employment creation, financial inclusion, livelihoods, agriculture, health, education, social protection, governance, social cohesion, and cross-cutting priorities.

Survey findings were triangulated with:

- Key Informant Interviews (KIs) conducted with Government institutions and strategic stakeholders;
- Administrative records obtained from the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA), and Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB);
- Documentary review of national policies, strategies, institutional reports, and sector publications.

This triangulation approach strengthened the reliability of findings by combining self-reported organizational data with independent administrative and institutional evidence.

1.4 Scope of the Assessment

The assessment focused primarily on registered national Civil Society Organizations operating in Rwanda during the NST1 period (2017–2024). The analysis examined contributions across all three NST1 pillars and covered interventions implemented at national, provincial, district, sector, cell, and community levels.

In addition to programmatic contributions, the assessment analysed the broader economic footprint of the sector, including employment generation, tax compliance, social security contributions, financial inclusion outcomes, and support to national development objectives.

The assessment also explored institutional dimensions of civil society engagement, including partnerships, coordination mechanisms, governance, leadership, sustainability, and innovation.

1.5 Significance of the Assessment

This assessment represents one of the most comprehensive efforts undertaken to document the contribution of Rwanda's civil society sector to national development. By combining survey evidence, administrative data, and stakeholder perspectives, the report moves beyond anecdotal accounts and provides a robust evidence base on the value added by civil society.

The findings contribute to ongoing national discussions regarding the role of non-state actors in development and provide practical insights for strengthening collaboration among Government institutions, CSOs, development partners, the private sector, and communities.

The report is intended to support evidence-based decision-making, strengthen accountability, inform policy dialogue, and promote a shared understanding of how civil society can contribute more effectively to the achievement of NST2 objectives and the long-term aspirations of Vision 2050.

1.6 Structure of the Report

The report is organized into **four parts comprising twelve chapters**.

- **Part I (Chapters 1–2):** Introduces the assessment, methodology, and provides an overview of Rwanda's civil society sector.
- **Part II (Chapters 3–7):** Presents evidence on CSO contributions to the NST1 pillars, including Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, Transformational Governance, and cross-cutting priorities.
- **Part III (Chapters 8–10):** Examines partnerships, coordination mechanisms, international benchmarking, implementation challenges, and lessons learned.
- **Part IV (Chapters 11–12):** Presents strategic perspectives, recommendations, and a roadmap for strengthening the contribution of civil society under NST2 and Vision 2050.

PART I – INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT AND PROFILE OF RWANDA'S CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR

Part I establishes the conceptual, methodological, and institutional foundation of the assessment. It introduces the rationale for undertaking the study, its objectives, scope, and significance within the context of Rwanda's development agenda and the implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1). It also presents the methodological framework adopted to ensure a rigorous, credible, and evidence-based assessment, describing the mixed-methods approach, sources of evidence, data triangulation process, and analytical framework used throughout the report. In addition, this part provides a comprehensive overview of Rwanda's civil society sector, examining its organizational characteristics, geographical distribution, thematic areas of intervention, institutional diversity, and the population groups served. By establishing both the methodological credibility of the assessment and the broader profile of the civil society ecosystem, Part I provides the essential context for understanding the findings and conclusions presented in the subsequent sections of the report.

Chapter 1. Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Background and Rationale

Rwanda's development journey has been shaped by strong partnerships among Government institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), the private sector, development partners, and citizens. Over the past three decades, CSOs have emerged as important contributors to national development, supporting communities across a wide range of sectors and complementing Government efforts to improve the wellbeing of Rwandans. Through their close engagement with citizens, community structures, and local institutions, CSOs have played a vital role in promoting inclusive development, strengthening social cohesion, advancing citizen participation, and ensuring that development interventions reach vulnerable and underserved populations.

As the leading platform representing civil society in Rwanda, the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) brings together national umbrella organizations and affiliated CSOs working across diverse thematic areas. RCSP champions the localization agenda by promoting the meaningful participation of local actors in development processes and decision-making that affect their communities. Through coordination, advocacy, capacity strengthening, and policy engagement, RCSP seeks to amplify the voice and impact of civil society in Rwanda's development landscape.

During the implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) (2017–2024), Rwanda pursued ambitious targets under the pillars of Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance. In response, CSOs aligned their programmes, investments, and interventions with national priorities and contributed to a broad range of development outcomes. These contributions included support to employment creation, agricultural transformation, financial inclusion, environmental sustainability, health, education, social protection, gender equality, disability inclusion, youth empowerment, national unity, reconciliation, accountability, and citizen participation.

Although individual organizations have regularly reported their achievements to regulators, umbrella organizations, development partners, and other stakeholders, evidence on the collective contribution of the civil society sector has often remained fragmented across institutions, projects, and sectors. As a result, there has been limited consolidated documentation of the scale, scope, and overall impact of CSO interventions on Rwanda's development process.

To address this gap, the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) commissioned this assessment to develop a comprehensive and evidence-based account of the contribution of Civil Society Organizations to Rwanda's development during NST1 (2017–2024). The assessment responds directly to RCSP's objective of strengthening the visibility of CSO contributions, enabling stakeholders to better appreciate the sector's role in national development, and fostering stronger collaboration among civil society, Government, development partners, and other actors.

The report adopts a survey-led sector performance approach that places evidence from responding CSOs at the centre of the analysis. Survey findings are systematically triangulated with Key Informant Interviews conducted with Government institutions and other stakeholders, administrative records from institutions such as RGB, RRA and RSSB, and a review of relevant policy, strategic, and institutional documents. This mixed-methods approach provides a robust basis for assessing the contribution of CSOs across the NST1 pillars while identifying lessons learned, emerging opportunities, and strategic priorities for strengthening civil society engagement under NST2 and Vision 2050.

By documenting both quantitative achievements and qualitative contributions, the report provides a comprehensive picture of the role of civil society in Rwanda's development journey. It is intended to support policy dialogue, strengthen mutual accountability, inform future programming, and contribute to building more effective partnerships that advance inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development.

1.2 Objectives of the Assessment

The overall objective of this assessment is to provide a comprehensive, evidence-based evaluation of the contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Rwanda's development during the implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) from 2017 to 2024. The assessment seeks to strengthen the visibility and recognition of the civil society sector, document its contribution to national development outcomes, and generate strategic evidence to inform future collaboration under NST2 and Vision 2050.

Specifically, the assessment aims to:

1. **Document and consolidate evidence of CSO contributions across the three NST1 pillars—**Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance—highlighting both quantitative achievements and qualitative development outcomes.
2. **Assess the economic footprint of the civil society sector**, including employment creation, resource mobilization, investments in communities, support to livelihoods and entrepreneurship, promotion of financial inclusion, and contributions to domestic revenue systems through taxes and statutory remittances.
3. **Examine the contribution of CSOs to social transformation**, including improvements in health, education, social protection, gender equality, youth empowerment, inclusion of vulnerable groups,

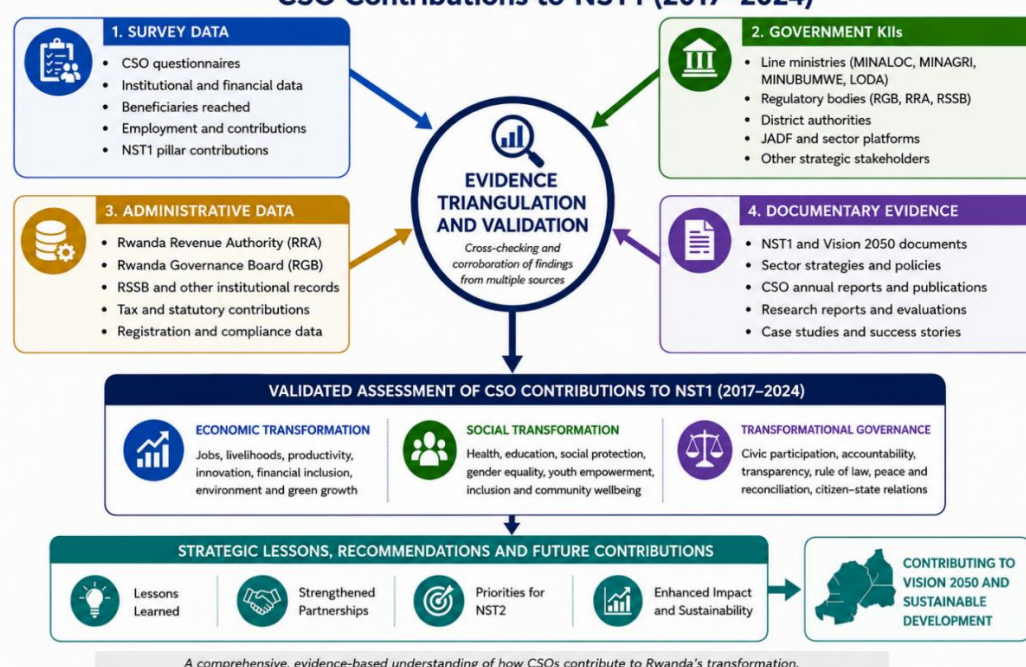
4. **Evaluate the role of CSOs in advancing transformational governance**, including citizen participation, civic engagement, accountability, transparency, peacebuilding, national unity, reconciliation, active citizenship, and strengthened relationships between citizens and public institutions.
5. **Assess the effectiveness of Government–CSO collaboration and partnership mechanisms**, including participation in Joint Action Development Forums (JADFs), sector working groups, policy dialogue platforms, decentralized development processes, and other coordination structures that support national development implementation.
6. **Identify the comparative advantages, innovations, and added value of civil society organizations** in complementing public institutions, reaching vulnerable populations, mobilizing communities, piloting innovative solutions, and promoting citizen-centred development.
7. **Document lessons learned, challenges, and emerging opportunities** affecting the effectiveness, sustainability, visibility, and impact of civil society interventions during NST1.
8. **Capture CSO perspectives and stakeholder priorities for NST2**, including areas where strengthened partnerships, improved coordination, enhanced evidence systems, and greater policy engagement can contribute to the achievement of Vision 2050 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
9. **Provide an evidence base for the National Dialogue between Government and Civil Society**, while generating actionable recommendations to strengthen collaboration, accountability, mutual learning, and collective contribution to Rwanda’s future development aspirations.

Through these objectives, the assessment moves beyond a descriptive inventory of activities and achievements to provide a holistic understanding of the economic, social, governance, and institutional value generated by Rwanda’s civil society sector during NST1.

1.3 Methodology

This assessment adopted a mixed-methods, evidence-based approach designed to generate a comprehensive and credible account of the contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Rwanda’s development during the implementation of NST1 (2017–2024). Consistent with the Terms of Reference and the methodological framework established in the Inception Report, the assessment combined quantitative and qualitative data collection, institutional validation, administrative evidence, and documentary review to ensure robust triangulation of findings.

Evidence Triangulation Framework for Assessing CSO Contributions to NST1 (2017–2024)



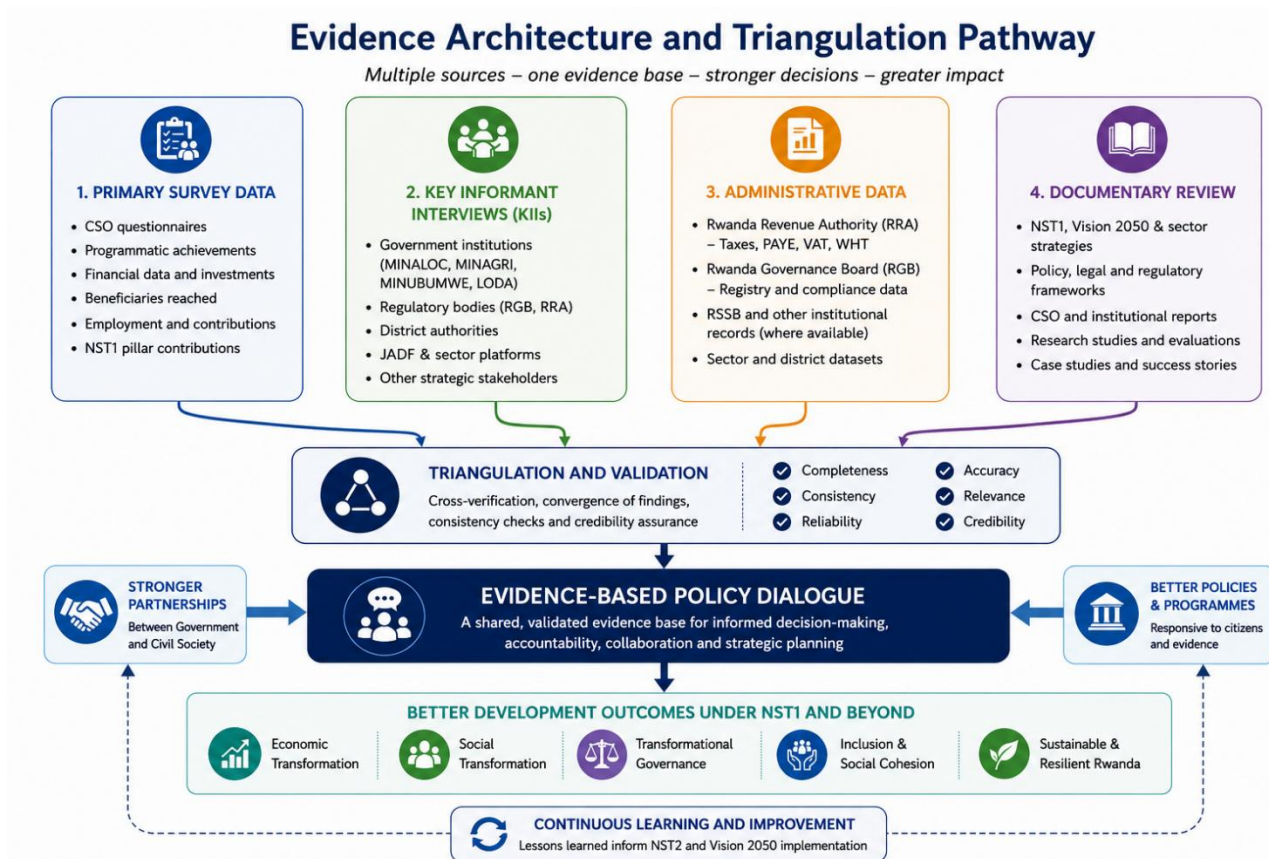


Figure 2. Methodological Approach and Data Triangulation Process

The methodology was guided by five analytical lenses:

- (i) the NST1 Pillars Lens, which assessed contributions under Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance;
- (ii) the Economic Value Lens, which examined investments, employment creation, livelihoods support, financial inclusion, and fiscal contributions;
- (iii) the Active Citizenship Lens, which explored civic engagement, participation, accountability, and social cohesion outcomes;
- (iv) the Contribution and Attribution Lens, which assessed the specific value added by CSOs to development outcomes; and
- (v) the Future Strategy Lens, which examined lessons learned and strategic implications for NST2 and Vision 2050.

To strengthen the reliability and credibility of the findings, the assessment employed a five-tier evidence architecture:

A. Primary Survey Data (Core Evidence Base)

The principal source of evidence was a nationwide survey administered to Civil Society Organizations operating across Rwanda. The survey collected information on institutional characteristics, thematic and geographic coverage, target populations, staffing profiles, funding levels, beneficiaries reached, contributions to NST1 pillars, employment generation, Government partnerships, coordination mechanisms, taxes and statutory contributions, significant change stories, and priorities for NST2. Supporting documentary evidence submitted by participating organizations was also reviewed and incorporated into the analysis.

B. Key Informant Interviews (Institutional Validation Evidence)

Semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with selected Government institutions, regulatory bodies, local authorities, umbrella organizations, and other strategic stakeholders.

These consultations provided sector-specific validation of survey findings, institutional perspectives on the significance of CSO contributions, assessments of Government–CSO collaboration mechanisms, identification of policy and coordination challenges, and recommendations for strengthening partnerships under NST2. Attention was given to perspectives from institutions including MINALOC, MINAGRI, MINUBUMWE, LODA, RGB, RRA, RSSB, PSF, and district authorities.

C. Administrative and Institutional Data

To complement self-reported survey information, the assessment utilized administrative records and institutional datasets obtained from public institutions. These included data from the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA), Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB), Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), and other relevant agencies where available. Administrative records were particularly important for assessing the economic footprint of the sector, including formal employment, tax compliance, statutory remittances, and institutional visibility. Such data were treated as conservative estimates of the contribution of fiscally traceable organizations and were used to validate broader trends emerging from survey responses.

D. Documentary and Secondary Literature Review

A comprehensive review of policy, legal, strategic, and institutional documents was undertaken to contextualize the findings. Key documents reviewed included Vision 2050, the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), NST1 progress reports, sector strategies, RCSP publications, RGB reports, annual reports from selected CSOs, and other relevant studies. The documentary review provided contextual understanding, policy alignment analysis, and supporting evidence for interpreting survey and KII findings.

E. Impact Stories and Case Illustrations

In addition to quantitative evidence, the assessment incorporated qualitative impact stories and selected case studies documenting significant changes attributable to CSO interventions. These narratives helped illustrate how civil society contributions translated into improvements in livelihoods, social inclusion, active citizenship, reconciliation, governance, resilience, and community development outcomes. The case studies were used to complement statistical findings and provide practical examples of transformative change at community level.

The final analysis was based on systematic triangulation across these evidence streams. Survey findings were validated through Government stakeholder consultations, administrative records, documentary evidence, and case studies. This approach enhanced the credibility of the findings while ensuring that the report presents a balanced and evidence-based assessment of the contribution of civil society to Rwanda's development under NST1 and its future role in supporting NST2 and Vision 2050.

1.4 Limitations

While every effort was made to ensure the credibility, comprehensiveness, and robustness of the assessment, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

- First, the assessment focused primarily on National Civil Society Organizations (National NGOs) operating in Rwanda and did not systematically cover the contributions of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). Although many national CSOs implement programmes in partnership with INGOs and development partners, the findings presented in this report should be interpreted as reflecting the contribution of the national civil society sector rather than the entirety of civil society actors operating in Rwanda. Consequently, the overall contribution of civil society to Rwanda's development under NST1 is likely to be greater than what is captured in this assessment.
- Second, the assessment relied significantly on self-reported data provided by participating Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Although data verification procedures, supporting documentation reviews, and triangulation with Government stakeholders were undertaken, the accuracy and completeness of some information remain dependent on the quality of organizational records and reporting systems maintained by individual CSOs.
- Third, despite extensive outreach efforts, not all targeted CSOs participated in the survey.

Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as representative of the responding organizations and indicative of broader sectoral trends rather than as a complete census of all national CSOs operating during the NST1 period.

- Fourth, variations in institutional capacity, monitoring and evaluation systems, and record-keeping practices among CSOs affected the consistency and level of detail available for certain indicators. In some cases, historical data covering the entire NST1 period (2017–2024) were incomplete or unavailable, requiring the use of estimates, proxies, or partial reporting.
- Fifth, the administrative analysis conducted using data from the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) and the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB) was based on a subset of Civil Society Organizations for which valid Tax Identification Numbers (TINs) could be obtained and matched. While RGB provided the registry of CSOs, TIN information was not available in the registry records. Consequently, the RRA team compiled and validated a list of CSOs with identifiable TINs, which was subsequently used for RSSB data requests. As a result, the administrative datasets do not cover the entire population of registered CSOs in Rwanda. The findings derived from RRA and RSSB records should therefore be interpreted as conservative estimates of the sector's economic, fiscal, employment, and social security contributions rather than a complete representation of all CSOs operating during the NST1 period.
- Sixth, the assessment was designed primarily to evaluate the contribution of CSOs rather than to establish direct attribution of national development outcomes. Many development results observed under NST1 were achieved through the combined efforts of Government institutions, communities, development partners, the private sector, faith-based organizations, and civil society organizations. Consequently, the report focuses on identifying and documenting the contribution of CSOs within broader development processes rather than claiming sole responsibility for observed outcomes.
- Seventh, while Key Informant Interviews provided important institutional validation of survey findings, perspectives collected through stakeholder consultations may reflect the experiences and priorities of individual institutions and may not capture the full diversity of views across all sectors and districts.

Despite these limitations, the triangulation of survey data, Key Informant Interviews, administrative records, documentary review, and case studies provides a robust evidence base for assessing CSO contributions to Rwanda's development under NST1. The findings highlight the scale, diversity, and strategic value of the sector while informing opportunities to strengthen its role under NST2 and Vision 2050.

Chapter 2. Profile of the Civil Society Sector During NST1

Findings in this chapter are derived from a triangulation of CSO survey responses, Key Informant Interviews, administrative records, and documentary review.

2.1 Characteristics of Responding Organizations

Survey findings indicate that the responding Civil Society Organizations represent a diverse and well-established segment of Rwanda's civil society ecosystem. The 70 participating organizations include national NGOs, faith-based organizations, community development organizations, networks, umbrella organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, women's organizations, youth-focused organizations, environmental organizations, human rights institutions, and service delivery organizations operating across multiple sectors and districts.

The profile of respondents reflects the broad thematic diversity of Rwanda's civil society sector. Participating organizations are actively engaged in governance and human rights promotion, peacebuilding and reconciliation, gender equality and women's empowerment, disability inclusion, youth development, education, health, social protection, agriculture, environmental sustainability, climate resilience, livelihood development, and community empowerment. Several organizations also operate across multiple thematic areas, demonstrating the increasingly integrated nature of civil society programming.

Table 1: Indicative Survey Profile of Responding CSOs

Source of Funding	CSOs	Percentage
International NGOs	34	26.98
Government grants	21	16.67
Membership fees	17	13.49
Foundations and Philanthropy	17	13.49
Self-generated income	16	12.7
Bilateral	9	7.14
Multilateral	9	7.14
Donors	3	2.38
Total	126	100
Network / Platform	CSOs	Percentage
None-Member	26	38.81
RCSP District Platforms	12	17.91
RCSP District Platforms (duplicate category)	12	17.91
Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP)	10	14.93
RCSP Faith-Based Platform	2	2.99
Other (Specify)	2	2.99
RCSP Other Platform Affiliations	2	2.99
District/JDAF Coordination Platforms	1	1.49
Total	67	100

The survey findings indicate that responding CSOs rely on a diverse mix of funding sources. Based on total number of respondents, International NGO partnerships represent the largest reported source of funding (26.98%), followed by Government grants (16.67%), membership fees (13.49%), foundations and philanthropic organizations (13.49%), and self-generated income (12.70%).

While external financing remains important, the presence of membership-based resources, self-generated income, and Government support suggests ongoing efforts by organizations to diversify their funding base and strengthen institutional sustainability.

The findings further indicate varying levels of participation in coordination and networking platforms. Among respondents who provided information on network affiliation, a significant proportion reported membership in RCSP-related platforms at national and district levels, highlighting the important role played by the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) in facilitating coordination, representation, information sharing, and collective engagement within the sector. At the same time, the number of organizations reporting no formal network affiliation suggests opportunities to further strengthen collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action among civil society actors.

The composition of responding organizations also demonstrates the sector's strong commitment to inclusion and citizen-centred development. Several respondents represent women, youth, persons with disabilities, genocide survivors, rural communities, vulnerable households, and other groups that may face barriers to participation and access to services. This diversity strengthens the ability of civil society to reach communities, articulate citizen needs, and contribute to inclusive development outcomes.

Overall, the survey results portray a mature and diversified civil society sector characterized by broad thematic coverage, varied financing arrangements, strong grassroots presence, and evolving coordination mechanisms. The evidence suggests that Rwanda possesses a robust civic ecosystem capable of contributing across all dimensions of national development while serving as an important partner in the implementation of NST2 and the realization of Vision 2050.

Key Insight: The responding CSOs reflect the breadth of Rwanda's civil society landscape, combining service delivery, advocacy, community mobilization, social inclusion, economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and governance interventions within a nationwide development ecosystem

2.2 Geographic Footprint

Responding CSOs reported implementing interventions across all provinces and districts of Rwanda, demonstrating the extensive territorial reach of the civil society sector. Survey findings indicate that civil society organizations operate in both urban and rural settings and contribute to development outcomes across a wide range of thematic areas including livelihoods, agriculture, education, health, governance, social protection, environmental sustainability, and community resilience.

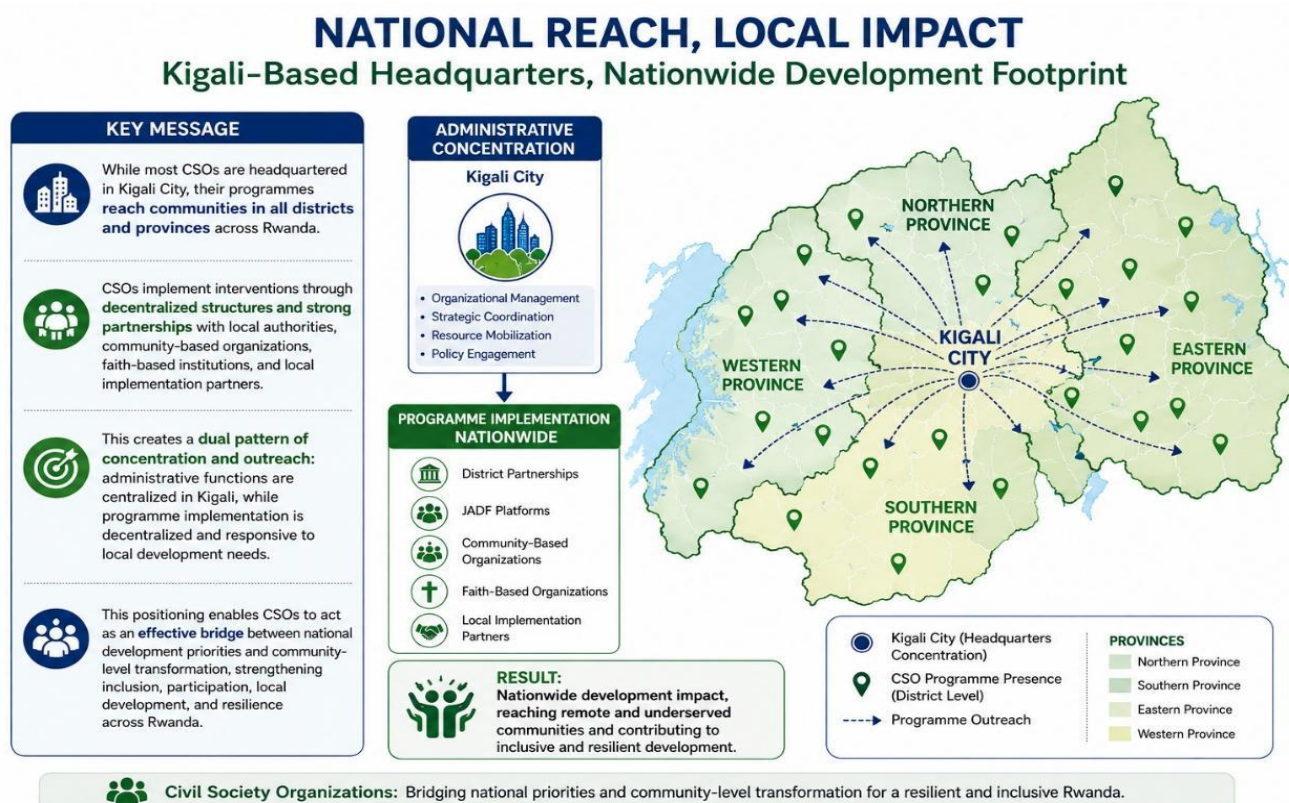


Figure 3. Geographic Distribution of Participating CSOs by Province

To complement the survey findings, an analysis of the 2026 National Non-Governmental Organization (NNGO) Registry was undertaken to examine the geographical distribution of registered organizations. The analysis reveals a significant concentration of organizations within Kigali City, which hosts 763 registered NNGOs, representing approximately 60.3 percent of all registered organizations in the country. Outside Kigali, the Southern Province accounts for 169 organizations (13.4%), followed by the Eastern Province with 144 organizations (11.4%), the Western Province with 95 organizations (7.5%), and the Northern Province with the remaining share of registered organizations.

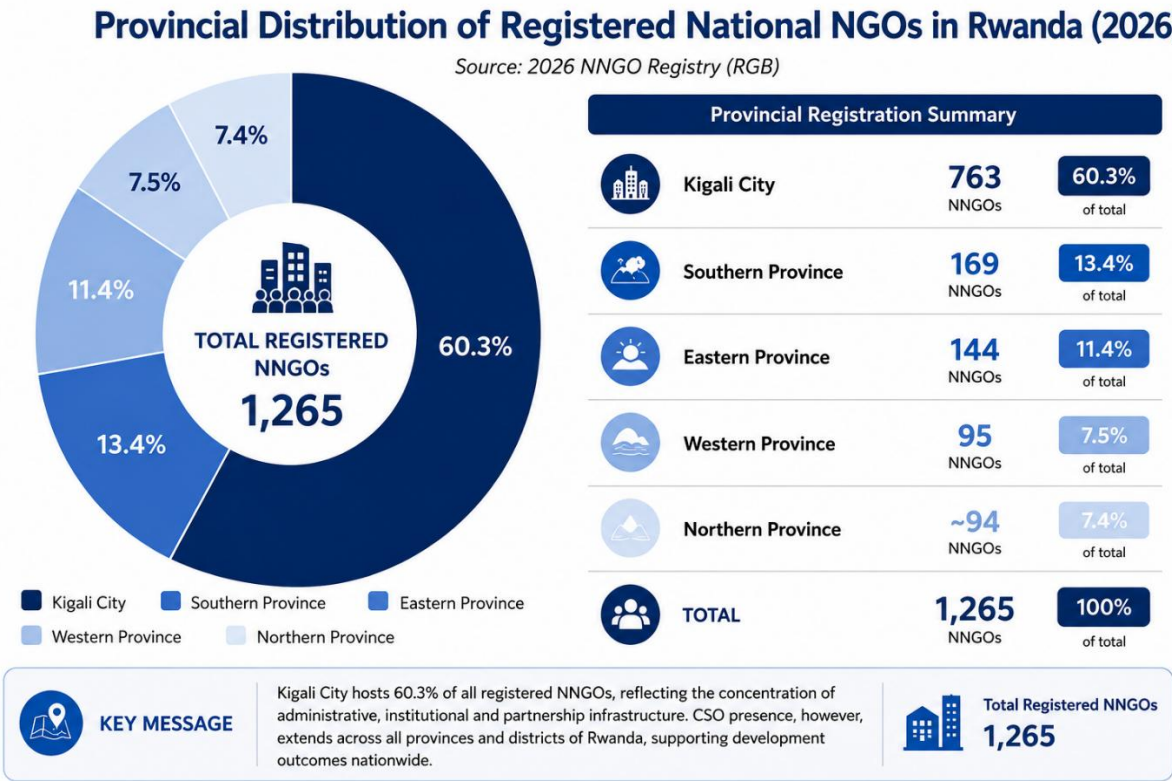


Figure 4. Provincial distribution of registered National NGOs in Rwanda (2026)

At district level, the highest concentration of registered organizations is found in Gasabo District with 434 organizations, followed by Kicukiro (164) and Nyarugenge (163). Together, these three districts account for a substantial proportion of registered NNGOs, reflecting the concentration of administrative, financial, institutional, and development partner infrastructure within the City of Kigali.

Outside Kigali, the districts hosting the largest numbers of registered organizations include Musanze (49), Huye (44), Bugesera (41), Rubavu (38), Kamonyi (36), Muhanga (31), and Rwamagana (26). These districts serve as important regional centres for civil society programming, coordination, and service delivery.

District Hotspots of Registered NGOs (2026)

Source: 2026 NNGO Registry (RGB)

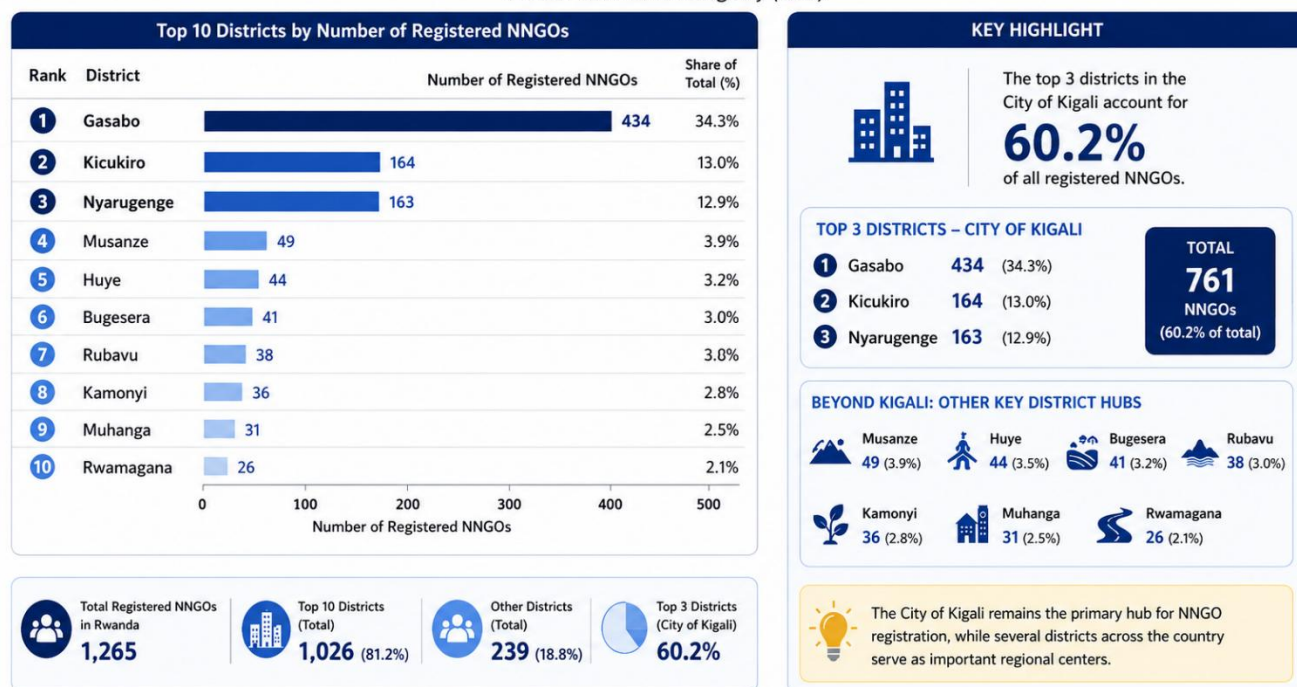


Figure 5. District hotspots of Registered NGOs (2026)

The geographical distribution of headquarters should not, however, be interpreted as the geographical extent of CSO interventions. Survey findings indicate that many organizations headquartered in Kigali implement programmes across multiple districts and provinces through decentralized structures, partnerships with local authorities, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, and local implementation partners. As a result, while organizational registration is highly concentrated in Kigali City, the actual development footprint of the sector extends nationwide.

The evidence therefore points to a dual pattern of concentration and outreach. Administrative and organizational functions remain largely centralized in Kigali, while programme implementation is increasingly decentralized and responsive to local development needs throughout the country. This positioning enables civil society organizations to act as an effective bridge between national development priorities and community-level transformation.

The nationwide presence of CSOs is particularly important in the context of NST1 implementation, as it facilitated the delivery of interventions in remote and underserved communities while strengthening citizen participation, social inclusion, local development, and resilience-building efforts across Rwanda.

2.3 Thematic Areas of National CSOs Interventions

The 2026 National Non-Governmental Organization (NNGO) Registry records 1,265 registered organizations operating across a wide range of development sectors and thematic areas. To better understand their alignment with national priorities, registered organizations were mapped against the three pillars of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1): Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance.



Figure 6. Thematic areas of National NGOs interventions

The analysis reveals a strong concentration of organizations within the Social Transformation pillar, with 1,161 organizations (91.8%) undertaking interventions related to health, education, social protection, gender equality, youth empowerment, disability inclusion, community development, and other human development priorities. This reflects the historically important role played by civil society in supporting vulnerable populations and strengthening social wellbeing across Rwanda.

A total of 373 organizations (29.5%) were classified under the Economic Transformation pillar. These organizations contribute to livelihood development, agriculture, food security, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, climate resilience, environmental sustainability, skills development, and local economic development. While proportionally smaller than the Social Transformation pillar, this segment represents an important source of innovation and community-based economic empowerment that directly supports inclusive growth and poverty reduction objectives.

The Transformational Governance pillar comprises 211 organizations (16.7%) engaged in activities related to civic education, citizen participation, accountability, transparency, legal aid, peacebuilding, reconciliation, human rights, and policy dialogue. Although smaller in number, organizations operating in this space play a strategically important role in strengthening citizen-centred governance, promoting social cohesion, and enhancing constructive engagement between citizens and public institutions.

Importantly, the analysis identifies 450 organizations (35.6%) that operate across more than one NST1 pillar. These multi-pillar organizations demonstrate the increasingly integrated nature of civil society programming, recognizing that development challenges are interconnected and often require simultaneous interventions in economic, social, and governance domains. The presence of a substantial number of multi-pillar organizations suggests that Rwanda's civil society sector possesses significant capacity to implement integrated development approaches that link livelihoods, social inclusion, resilience, environmental sustainability, and governance outcomes.

This is particularly relevant for NST2, which places increasing emphasis on systems thinking, territorial development, climate resilience, youth employment, and citizen-centred service delivery.

Overall, the thematic distribution confirms that Rwanda possesses a broad and diversified civil society ecosystem capable of contributing across all dimensions of national development. The evidence suggests that the challenge for NST2 is not the absence of civic capacity, but rather the need to strengthen coordination, strategic partnerships, knowledge sharing, and evidence-based collaboration in order to maximize the sector's contribution to Rwanda's long-term development ambitions under Vision 2050.

Table 2: Registry-based distribution of registered NNGOs by NST1 pillar

NST1 Pillar	Count	Percentage
Social Transformation	1,161	91.8%
Economic Transformation	373	29.5%
Transformational Governance	211	16.7%
Multi-pillar organizations	450	35.6%

Note: Totals exceed 100% because organizations can be classified under multiple pillars.

Table 3: Dominant thematic signals from the NNGO registry

Theme	Count	Strategic Interpretation
Social protection	189	Strong grassroots capacity for household resilience.
Sport	94	Platform for youth engagement and cohesion.
Education	88	Sustained focus on human capital development.
Health	56	Preventive health and community awareness base.
Agriculture	49	Livelihood and rural productivity focus.
Justice, law & order	23	Strategic niche for mediation and rights awareness.

Interpretation of Dominant Thematic Signals

The thematic distribution of registered NNGOs provides important insights into the comparative strengths and strategic orientation of Rwanda's civil society sector. The prominence of organizations working in social protection, education, health, and agriculture indicates a strong concentration of efforts around *human development, community resilience, and poverty reduction*. These areas closely align with Rwanda's NST1 priorities and demonstrate the sector's long-standing commitment to supporting vulnerable populations and improving household wellbeing.

The largest thematic category—social protection—suggests the existence of substantial grassroots capacity capable of reaching communities through interventions related to livelihoods, social inclusion, gender equality, child protection, disability support, and resilience-building. This positions civil society as an important partner in efforts to reduce vulnerability and ensure that development gains are broadly shared.

The significant presence of organizations working in sport highlights an often underappreciated dimension of civil society contribution. Beyond recreation, sport serves as a platform for youth engagement, social cohesion, peacebuilding, leadership development, and community mobilization. The concentration of organizations in this area reflects the growing recognition of sport as a tool for social transformation and inclusion.

Education and health remain core pillars of civil society engagement, reinforcing Rwanda's emphasis on human capital development. Organizations operating in these sectors contribute to learning opportunities, skills development, awareness creation, preventive health initiatives, community outreach, and support for vulnerable groups, thereby complementing Government investments in public services.

Although smaller in absolute numbers, organizations active in agriculture play a strategically important role in supporting rural livelihoods, food security, climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and economic empowerment. Their interventions contribute directly to household income generation and broader economic transformation objectives.

Similarly, the presence of organizations working in justice, law, and order, while relatively limited in number, reflects an important niche within the civil society ecosystem. These organizations contribute to legal empowerment, mediation, human rights awareness, accountability, conflict prevention, and citizen participation, all of which are essential elements of transformational governance.

Overall, the thematic profile reveals a civil society sector that is strongly oriented toward people-centred development while maintaining the capacity to contribute to economic transformation and governance outcomes. The diversity of thematic engagement further suggests significant potential for integrated programming that simultaneously addresses social, economic, and governance challenges under NST2 and Vision 2050.

2.4 Target Populations Served

Civil Society Organizations in Rwanda serve a broad spectrum of beneficiaries across all provinces and districts. While interventions target the general population in many sectors, both survey findings and stakeholder consultations indicate a deliberate focus on vulnerable, marginalized, and underserved groups whose needs require targeted support and community-based interventions.

The survey results show that responding CSOs collectively reached diverse categories of beneficiaries during the NST1 implementation period, including women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, smallholder farmers, vulnerable households, genocide survivors, elderly persons, and other groups at risk of social and economic exclusion.

Table 4: Target Population Groups Served by CSOs during NST1 (2017–2024)

Target Population Group	CSOs	Percentage (%)
Women & Girls	52	56.52
Other	28	30.43
Youth	6	6.52
Persons with Disabilities	4	4.35
Rural Communities	2	2.17
Total	92	100.00

The survey findings indicate that women and girls were the most frequently reported primary target group among responding CSOs, representing 56.52 percent of responses. This reflects the strong emphasis placed on gender equality, women's empowerment, financial inclusion, livelihoods, leadership development, and the prevention of gender-based violence. A further 30.43 percent of organizations reported serving other specialized beneficiary groups, highlighting the diversity of civil society interventions and the broad range of populations supported.

The survey results should be interpreted alongside evidence from Key Informant Interviews, which consistently highlighted the ability of CSOs to reach populations facing barriers to accessing public services and economic opportunities. MINALOC noted that many CSO programmes specifically targeted vulnerable households, women-headed households, persons with disabilities, genocide survivors, and rural communities experiencing poverty and exclusion.

Similarly, MINAGRI emphasized the contribution of CSOs in supporting smallholder farmers, women, youth, and climate-vulnerable rural households through agricultural extension services, food security programmes, agribusiness development initiatives, savings groups, and climate resilience interventions. MINUBUMWE further highlighted the role of CSOs in supporting genocide survivors, vulnerable youth, returnees, former combatants, and communities affected by trauma through reconciliation, healing, psychosocial support, and social reintegration programmes.

Across sectors, stakeholder consultations revealed a strong focus on women's empowerment and youth development through interventions related to skills development, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, leadership, civic education, technical and vocational training, and employment promotion. While youth, persons with disabilities, and rural communities were less frequently identified as primary target groups in the survey, evidence from Government consultations confirms that these populations were widely reached through cross-sectoral programmes implemented by CSOs.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the comparative advantage of Rwanda's civil society sector lies in its ability to identify, reach, and support vulnerable and underserved populations. This people-centred approach has been a defining feature of CSO engagement and an important contributor to the Social Transformation and Transformational Governance pillars of NST1.

PART II – CONTRIBUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO RWANDA'S DEVELOPMENT UNDER NST1

Part II presents the core evidence on the contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Rwanda's development during the implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) (2017–2024). Drawing on nationwide survey data, Key Informant Interviews, administrative records, and documentary review, this part provides a comprehensive analysis of the scale, scope, and impact of civil society interventions across the three pillars of NST1: Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance. It begins by examining the broader economic footprint of the sector—including employment creation, resource mobilization, domestic revenue contributions, investments, and support to livelihoods—before analyzing the specific contributions of CSOs to economic growth, human development, governance, and citizen well-being. The analysis also highlights cross-cutting contributions in areas such as gender equality, youth empowerment, disability inclusion, climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion. Together, these chapters provide robust evidence of the strategic role played by Civil Society Organizations in complementing Government efforts, reaching vulnerable populations, fostering innovation, strengthening community resilience, and advancing Rwanda's national development objectives under NST1.

Chapter 3. Economic Footprint of CSOs Under NST1

Findings in this chapter are derived from a triangulation of CSO survey responses, Key Informant Interviews, administrative records, and documentary review. Administrative records are used to validate trends and provide conservative estimates of the sector's economic footprint.

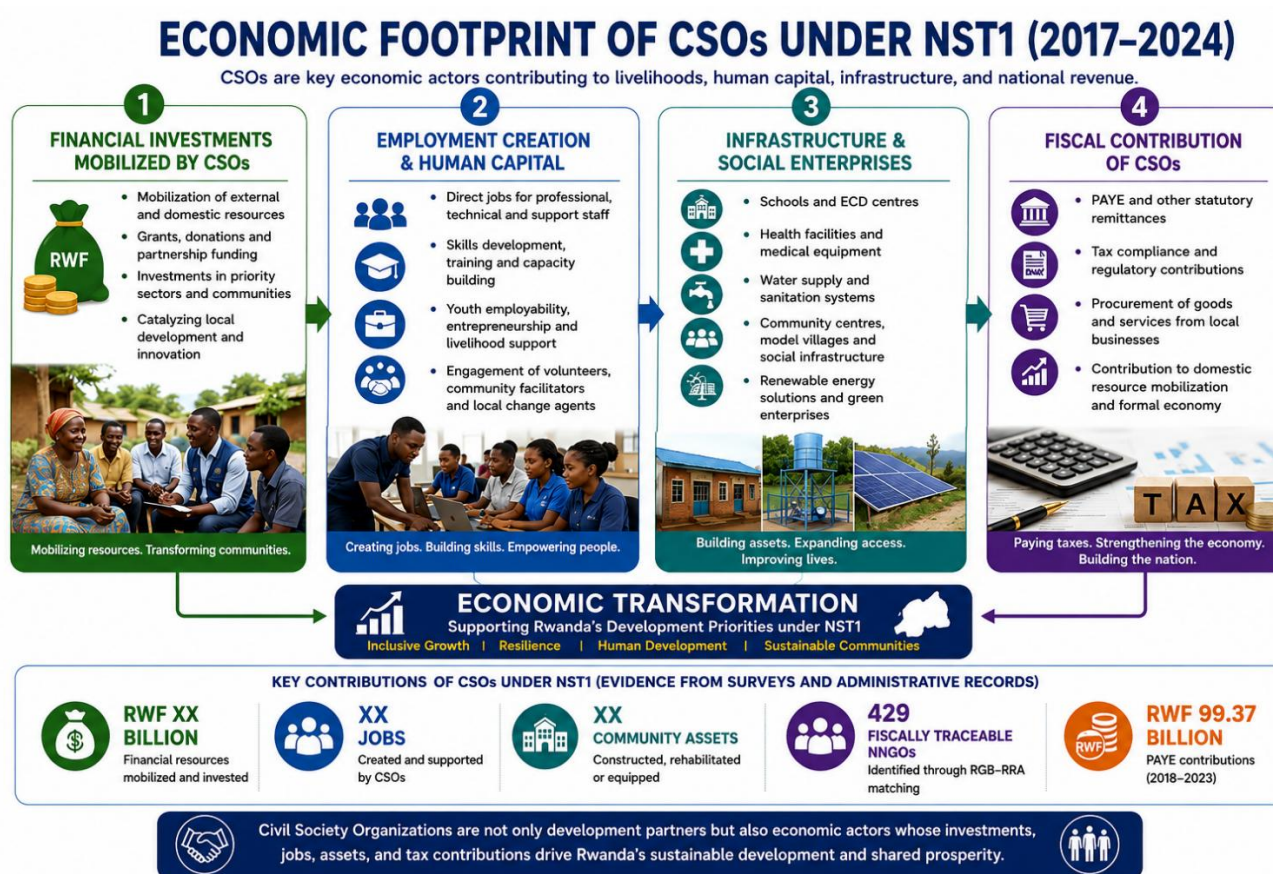


Figure 7. Economic Footprint of Rwanda's Civil Society Sector

3.1 Financial Investments Mobilized by CSOs

The survey findings indicate that Civil Society Organizations mobilized substantial financial resources in support of Rwanda's development priorities during the implementation of NST1. These investments supported a wide range of interventions across the Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance pillars, including livelihoods development, agriculture, education, health, social protection, financial inclusion, climate resilience, governance, and community development.

Table 5: individuals who gained access to formal financial services

Individual	Number	Percentage
Male	547,740	21.00
Female	888,683	34.10
Youth	1,167,094	44.80
People with Disabilities	827	0.0317

The survey findings indicate that youth accounted for the largest share of beneficiaries gaining access to formal financial services (44.8%), followed by women (34.1%) and men (21.0%). These results reflect the strong emphasis placed by CSOs on promoting youth economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, savings mobilization, and access to financial products and services. Women similarly emerged as a key target group, consistent with broader efforts to strengthen financial inclusion, livelihoods, and economic empowerment among women and women-led households.

Key Informant Interviews confirmed the strategic importance of these interventions. MINALOC highlighted the significant contribution of CSOs in promoting community-based financial inclusion mechanisms, particularly through savings groups and livelihood programmes targeting vulnerable households, women, youth, and rural communities. Stakeholders noted that these interventions often served as entry points for beneficiaries to access formal financial services, credit facilities, and income-generating opportunities.

Similarly, consultations emphasized the role of CSOs in strengthening entrepreneurship, cooperative development, financial literacy, and economic resilience, particularly among populations facing barriers to accessing conventional financial services. Through partnerships with financial institutions, local governments, and development partners, CSOs helped bridge gaps in financial access and contributed to broader national efforts to promote inclusive economic growth. Beyond facilitating access to financial services, these interventions strengthened household resilience, supported enterprise development, enhanced savings culture, and improved economic participation among vulnerable populations. The contribution of CSOs to financial inclusion therefore extends beyond access to banking services and encompasses wider efforts to promote economic empowerment and sustainable livelihoods.

Overall, the evidence suggests that CSOs played an important role in advancing financial inclusion during NST1, particularly among youth, women, and vulnerable populations, thereby contributing to Rwanda's broader objectives of inclusive growth, poverty reduction, and economic transformation.

3.2 Employment Creation and Human Capital

Civil Society Organizations constitute an important source of employment, skills development, and human capital formation in Rwanda. Beyond their role as development actors, CSOs directly employ professional, technical, administrative, and field-based personnel while also mobilizing large numbers of volunteers, trainees, community facilitators, and outreach workers who support programme implementation across the country.

Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs made significant contributions to employment creation and workforce development during the NST1 period.

Table 6: Employment Profile of Responding CSOs during NST1 (2017–2024)

Employment Generated	Total Number
Paid Staff (Formal Employees)	2,103
Part-time / Project Staff	295
Volunteers	12,974
Trainees Supported	409,788
Jobs Created	389,505
Temporary / Project Jobs	90,745
Formal Employees (Jobs-based)	2,103

The survey findings reveal that the contribution of CSOs to employment extends well beyond their direct workforce. While responding organizations reported employing more than 2,100 formal staff and engaging nearly 13,000 volunteers, their most significant contribution was through human capital development and livelihood creation. CSOs supported approximately **409,788 trainees** and facilitated the creation of **389,505 jobs**, demonstrating the sector's substantial role in enhancing employability, skills acquisition, entrepreneurship, and income-generation opportunities. The large number of temporary and project-based jobs further highlights the sector's role in creating short-term employment opportunities linked to development programmes and community initiatives.

Key Informant Interviews confirmed the sector's contribution to employment creation and human capital development. MINALOC noted that CSOs supported youth employability through entrepreneurship programmes, technical and vocational skills development, digital literacy initiatives, financial inclusion programmes, and livelihood interventions that enhanced economic opportunities for vulnerable populations. Many organizations also provided mentoring, coaching, apprenticeship opportunities, and capacity-building services that strengthened workforce readiness and productivity.

Similarly, MINAGRI highlighted the role of CSOs in strengthening human capital within the agricultural sector through farmer field schools, extension services, technical training, agribusiness incubation, cooperative development, and support to women and youth engaged in agricultural enterprises. These interventions enhanced skills, productivity, innovation, and income-generation opportunities in rural communities.

Evidence from MINUBUMWE further demonstrates the sector's investment in community-based human capital. Through peacebuilding, reconciliation, civic education, and social cohesion programmes, CSOs supported the development of community facilitators, peer educators, youth leaders, and local change agents who continue to play an important role in strengthening resilience, social cohesion, and citizen participation at community level.

Beyond direct employment, CSOs contribute to the development of skills, leadership, social capital, and workforce competencies that strengthen Rwanda's broader human resource base. The sector therefore serves not only as an employer but also as an important platform for knowledge transfer, volunteerism, capacity development, entrepreneurship promotion, and community empowerment.

Key Insight: While direct employment within CSOs remains relatively modest, the sector's greatest contribution to Rwanda's labour market lies in its ability to build human capital, strengthen employability, create livelihood opportunities, and equip hundreds of thousands of people with the skills and capabilities needed to participate in economic development.

Overall, the evidence suggests that CSOs make a significant contribution to Rwanda's labour market by creating employment opportunities, strengthening workforce skills, supporting youth development, and investing in the human capital required to sustain inclusive growth and long-term national development. The findings reinforce the role of civil society as both an employer and a catalyst for employment creation and human capital development under NST1.

3.3 Physical Assets and Infrastructure Investments

Beyond programme implementation, Civil Society Organizations contributed to Rwanda's development through investments in physical infrastructure and community assets that enhanced

access to services, improved living conditions, and strengthened local development outcomes. These investments complemented Government infrastructure programmes and often targeted underserved and vulnerable communities. Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs financed, constructed, rehabilitated, or equipped a range of community assets and facilities during the NST1 period.

Table 7: Physical Assets and Infrastructure Owned or Supported by Responding CSOs

Physical Asset	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Office Building	20	83.33
Other Physical Assets	3	12.50
Community Centre	1	4.17
Total	24	100.00

The survey findings indicate that responding CSOs invested in physical infrastructure and assets to support programme implementation, organizational sustainability, and community engagement. Office buildings accounted for the majority of reported assets (83.33%), while other infrastructure investments included community facilities and related assets.

Key Informant Interviews revealed that the contribution of CSOs extends far beyond organizational infrastructure. Stakeholders highlighted CSO investments in Early Childhood Development centres, health facilities, water and sanitation systems, community centres, model villages, renewable energy solutions, and other facilities that improved access to essential services and enhanced community wellbeing. These investments complemented Government infrastructure programmes, particularly in underserved communities, and created durable assets that continue to support local development beyond the lifespan of individual projects.

Key Insight: CSOs contributed not only through service delivery but also through investments in community infrastructure and productive assets that strengthened access to services, improved living conditions, and supported sustainable local development.

3.4 Social Enterprises

Although the assessment questionnaire did not include a dedicated module to quantify the prevalence, scale, employment, or financial performance of social enterprises established by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the issue emerged consistently during Key Informant Interviews (KIs) and stakeholder consultations as an increasingly important dimension of the sector's contribution to Rwanda's economic transformation. The analysis presented in this section therefore draws primarily on qualitative evidence from Government institutions, the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), the Private Sector Federation (PSF), and participating CSOs.

Beyond traditional development programming, an increasing number of Civil Society Organizations have adopted social enterprise models as a strategy for strengthening institutional sustainability, reducing dependence on external donor funding, creating employment opportunities, and expanding the long-term impact of their interventions. During the implementation of NST1, social enterprises increasingly complemented grant-funded programmes by combining social objectives with market-based approaches that generated both economic and social value.

Stakeholder consultations with the Private Sector Federation (PSF) highlighted the growing contribution of CSOs to entrepreneurship development, business incubation, cooperative strengthening, financial inclusion, value chain development, and market access. These initiatives have enabled vulnerable populations—including women, youth, and rural entrepreneurs—to participate more actively in local economic development while creating opportunities for collaboration between civil society organizations and private sector actors.

Similarly, consultations with MINALOC indicated that many CSOs integrated savings groups, entrepreneurship promotion, financial literacy, vocational skills development, and livelihood programmes into broader community development initiatives. Community-based financial inclusion mechanisms such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILCs) have evolved beyond savings platforms into effective instruments

for enterprise development, household resilience, women's economic empowerment, and local wealth creation.

Discussions with the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) and participating CSOs further revealed that several organizations have established income-generating enterprises to support their institutional missions and improve financial sustainability. These initiatives span diverse sectors, including education, health services, agricultural production and processing, vocational training, microfinance, hospitality, research, and community development. Examples cited during stakeholder consultations include schools, health centres, vocational training centres, agricultural processing units, community enterprises, hospitality facilities, research centres, and microfinance initiatives that simultaneously generate income and deliver social services.

Beyond supporting organizational sustainability, stakeholders emphasized the broader economic contribution of these enterprises. Social enterprises create permanent and temporary employment opportunities, stimulate local procurement, strengthen agricultural and business value chains, support entrepreneurship, and enhance income-generating opportunities for women and young people. They also enable organizations to retain skilled personnel, finance core operational costs, and maintain essential services during periods of reduced donor funding.

Consultations with MINAGRI similarly highlighted the important contribution of CSOs to agribusiness development, cooperative strengthening, value addition, climate-smart agriculture, and rural enterprise development. These interventions demonstrate how socially driven business models can simultaneously contribute to employment creation, food security, private sector development, and inclusive economic growth while reinforcing community resilience.

Overall, stakeholder consultations suggest that social enterprises represent an emerging strategic dimension of Rwanda's civil society sector. By combining commercial discipline with social objectives, they provide an opportunity to strengthen institutional sustainability while expanding employment, supporting entrepreneurship, improving access to essential services, and increasing the long-term development impact of Civil Society Organizations. As Rwanda advances the implementation of NST2 and Vision 2050, strengthening the enabling environment for social enterprises—including access to finance, business development services, strategic partnerships, and appropriate policy support—could further enhance the contribution of CSOs to national



Figure 8.: Why Social enterprises matter?

Key Insight: Social enterprises are emerging as an important pillar of institutional sustainability within Rwanda's civil society sector. By combining social impact with commercially viable activities, they strengthen organizational resilience, reduce reliance on donor funding, create employment, support entrepreneurship, and expand the long-term contribution of Civil Society Organizations to Rwanda's inclusive economic and social development.

3.5 Fiscal Contribution of CSOs

While Civil Society Organizations are primarily recognized for their social and developmental contributions, administrative records from the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) demonstrate that they also constitute an important component of Rwanda's formal economy. Through employment creation, tax compliance, procurement activities, and statutory remittances, CSOs contribute directly to domestic resource mobilization and economic activity.

To assess this contribution, registry information from the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) was matched with tax records from the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA). The resulting dataset provides a profile of the fiscally traceable segment of the civil society sector and offers important insights into organizational visibility, economic activity, employment generation, and tax compliance.

3.5.1 Fiscal Visibility of Registered CSOs

To assess the economic footprint of Rwanda's civil society sector, the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) National NGO Registry was matched with Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) administrative records. Of the 1,265 National Non-Governmental Organizations (NNGOs) registered by RGB in 2026, 429 organizations (33.9%) were successfully identified within the RRA database, constituting the fiscally traceable subset used for this assessment.

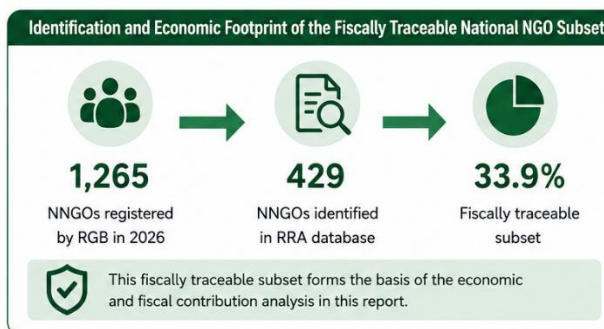
The matching exercise demonstrates that a significant segment of Rwanda's civil society sector actively participates in the formal economy through employment creation, tax compliance, social security contributions, and other economic transactions. While the analysis does not capture all

registered CSOs, it provides a robust and conservative evidence base for measuring the sector's measurable economic and fiscal contribution.

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Concentration in Kigali City: Fiscally active NNGOs are mainly located in Kigali City—especially **Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge**—reflecting the country's concentration of administrative, institutional, and development activities.

Sectoral focus: Organizations working in **social protection, education, and health** represent the largest share of organizations interacting with the national tax administration system.

Overall, the fiscally traceable subset provides compelling administrative evidence that CSOs are not only **development partners** but also **significant contributors** to Rwanda's formal economy through domestic resource mobilization, job creation, and compliance with national fiscal obligations. Although representing only **one-third** of registered NNGOs, the findings offer a credible and conservative estimate of the broader economic contribution of Rwanda's civil society sector under NST1.



Figure 9. Identification and Economic Footprint of the Fiscally Traceable National NGO Subset

The analysis further shows that fiscally active NNGOs are predominantly concentrated in Kigali City, particularly in the districts of Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge, reflecting the country's concentration of administrative, institutional, and development activities. Sectorally, organizations working in social protection, education, and health account for the largest share of organizations interacting with the national tax administration system, underscoring the strong linkage between social service delivery and formal economic participation.

Overall, the fiscally traceable subset provides compelling administrative evidence that Civil Society Organizations are not only development partners but also significant contributors to Rwanda's formal economy through domestic resource mobilization, employment generation, and compliance with national fiscal obligations. Although representing only one-third of registered NNGOs, the findings offer a credible and conservative estimate of the broader economic contribution of Rwanda's civil society sector under NST1.

3.5.2 Organizational Turnover and Economic Activity

Available turnover records indicate a significant increase in the volume of economic activity generated by reporting CSOs between 2020 and 2024. Total reported turnover increased from approximately RWF 2.3 billion in 2020 to more than RWF 12.3 billion in 2024, representing growth of approximately 434 percent over the five-year period.

Turnover trend among reporting NNGOs in RRA records, 2020–2024

Annual Turnover (RWF)

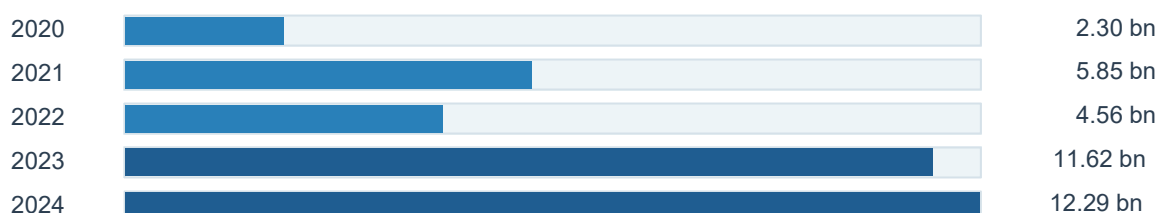


Table 8: NGO turnover and reporting organizations, 2020–2024

Year	Total Turnover (RWF)	Reporting CSOs
2020	2,303,087,405	22
2021	5,851,000,000	26
2022	4,555,000,000	23
2023	11,623,000,000	23
2024	12,290,778,379	21

Turnover among this subset grew approximately 433.7% from 2020 to 2024, with a rising average turnover per reporting CSO.

The upward trend suggests increasing organizational scale, stronger resource mobilization capacities, and growing economic significance among reporting organizations.

3.5.3 Employment and PAYE Contributions

Administrative records from the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) demonstrate that registered Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) make a significant contribution to Rwanda's formal economy through employment generation and compliance with national tax obligations. Between 2020 and 2024, the 429 fiscally traceable organizations employed between 5,185 and 7,202 workers annually, while the number of organizations remitting Pay As You Earn (PAYE) increased steadily from 198 to 280, reflecting the expanding participation of CSOs in the formal labour market.

During the same period, total PAYE remittances amounted to RWF 61.10 billion, increasing from RWF 15.46 billion in 2020 to RWF 16.77 billion in 2021, before declining to RWF 8.39 billion in 2022 and recovering to RWF 11.15 billion in 2024. Despite these year-to-year fluctuations, the sustained level of PAYE contributions demonstrates that CSOs are not only development partners delivering essential social and economic services but also important taxpayers supporting Rwanda's domestic resource mobilization agenda.

Employment and PAYE trends among reporting NNGOs, 2020–2024

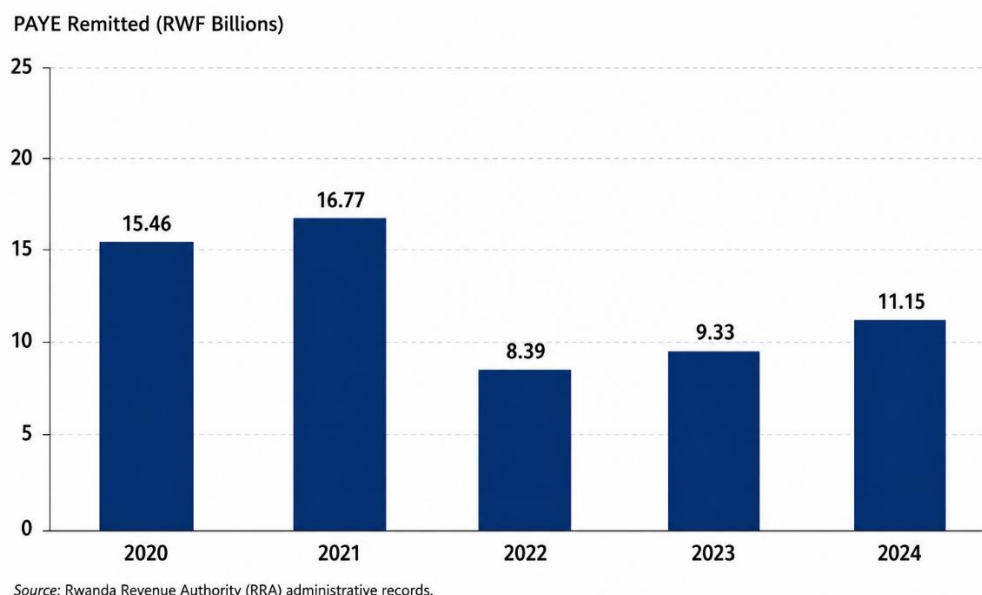


Figure 11: PAYE Remittances by Registered CSOs (2020–2024)

These findings provide strong administrative evidence that Rwanda's civil society sector contributes to national development through both employment creation and fiscal contributions, reinforcing its role in achieving the objectives of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1).

Table 9: Employment and PAYE Trends among Reporting NNGOs (2020–2025)

Year	Total Employees	Perm. Staff	Total PAYE Remitted	CSOs Remitting
2020	5,185	63.0%	RWF 15.46 bn	198
2021	5,818	62.2%	RWF 16.77 bn	216
2022	6,799	56.3%	RWF 8.39 bn	234
2023	6,964	59.7%	RWF 9.33 bn	250
2024	7,202	67.6%	RWF 11.15 bn	280
Total / Average		61.8%*	RWF 61.10 bn	

*2025 figures are partial and should be interpreted cautiously.

Source: Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) administrative records.

3.5.4 Contribution to Domestic Revenue Mobilization

Administrative records from the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) indicate that registered Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) contribute to Rwanda's domestic revenue mobilization through multiple tax instruments, including Pay as You Earn (PAYE), withholding taxes on service fees, PAYE quarterly declarations, corporate income tax, value added tax (VAT), withholding taxes, and other statutory taxes and administrative fees.

Between 2019 and 2024, the fiscally traceable National NGOs remitted more than RWF 92.6 billion in taxes and statutory payments to the Government of Rwanda. PAYE represented the largest source of revenue, accounting for RWF 78.41 billion (84.7%) of all recorded tax payments. This was followed by withholding tax on service fees (WOP–Service Fees) amounting to RWF 11.38 billion (12.3%), while PAYE Quarterly declarations contributed RWF 1.61 billion. The remaining tax categories—including corporate income tax, VAT, withholding taxes on public supplies and board

allowances, motor vehicle taxes, and other statutory payments—collectively accounted for approximately RWF 1.20 billion.

These findings demonstrate that the contribution of CSOs extends well beyond employment-related taxes. Through compliance with a wide range of fiscal obligations, registered CSOs make a measurable contribution to Rwanda's domestic resource mobilization while reinforcing accountability, transparency, and participation in the formal economy.

Table 10: Dominant Tax Interaction Profile (2019–2026)

Tax Category	Cumulative Amount (Frw)
PAYE	78.41 billion
WOP – Service Fees	11.38 billion
PAYE Quarterly	1.61 billion
Other Taxes and Fees*	1.20 billion
Total Tax Payments (2019–2024)	92.60 billion

Other taxes and fees include Corporate Income Tax (CIT), CIT quarterly prepayments, Personal Income Tax (PIT), VAT and VAT quarterly payments, withholding taxes on public supplies, board allowances, motor vehicle taxes, RRA administrative fees, and other statutory payments recorded by the Rwanda Revenue Authority.

COMPOSITION OF TAX CONTRIBUTIONS BY CSOs (2019–2024)

Share of cumulative taxes paid by fiscally traceable NNGOs, 2019–2024.



KEY INSIGHT

The tax profile of fiscally traceable NNGOs is overwhelmingly dominated by Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE), which accounts for more than four-fifths (84.7%) of all taxes paid between 2019 and 2024. This confirms that the most significant fiscal contribution of civil society organizations to Rwanda's economy is through employment creation and workforce remuneration.

* Other taxes and fees include Corporate Income Tax (CIT), CIT quarterly prepayments, Personal Income Tax (PIT), VAT and VAT quarterly payments, withholding taxes on public supplies and board allowances, motor vehicle taxes, RRA administrative fees, and other statutory payments.

Source: Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) administrative records.

Figure 12 : Composition of Tax contributions by CSOs (2019-2026)

The number of organizations interacting with the tax system also increased steadily over time, reflecting greater formalization, compliance, and economic participation.

3.5.5 Strategic Interpretation of Administrative Data

The broad interpretation of the RRA records is clear. Although the dataset captures only a subset of registered NGOs, the evidence strongly suggests that the civil society sector contributes to

Rwanda's economy not only through development programming but also through formal employment creation, wage-based taxation, procurement activities, and participation in domestic revenue systems.

These findings challenge the perception of CSOs solely as service delivery organizations. A significant portion of the sector is fiscally visible, labour-generating, tax-compliant, and economically consequential.

Consistent with the methodology adopted in this report, these figures should be interpreted as conservative estimates of the sector's fiscal and economic footprint. The RRA-linked records represent only the fiscally traceable subset of organizations and should not be considered a complete census of all CSOs operating in Rwanda.

Nevertheless, the findings provide compelling evidence that civil society constitutes an important economic actor and development partner whose contribution extends beyond social programming to include employment generation, domestic resource mobilization, and support to Rwanda's broader economic transformation agenda.

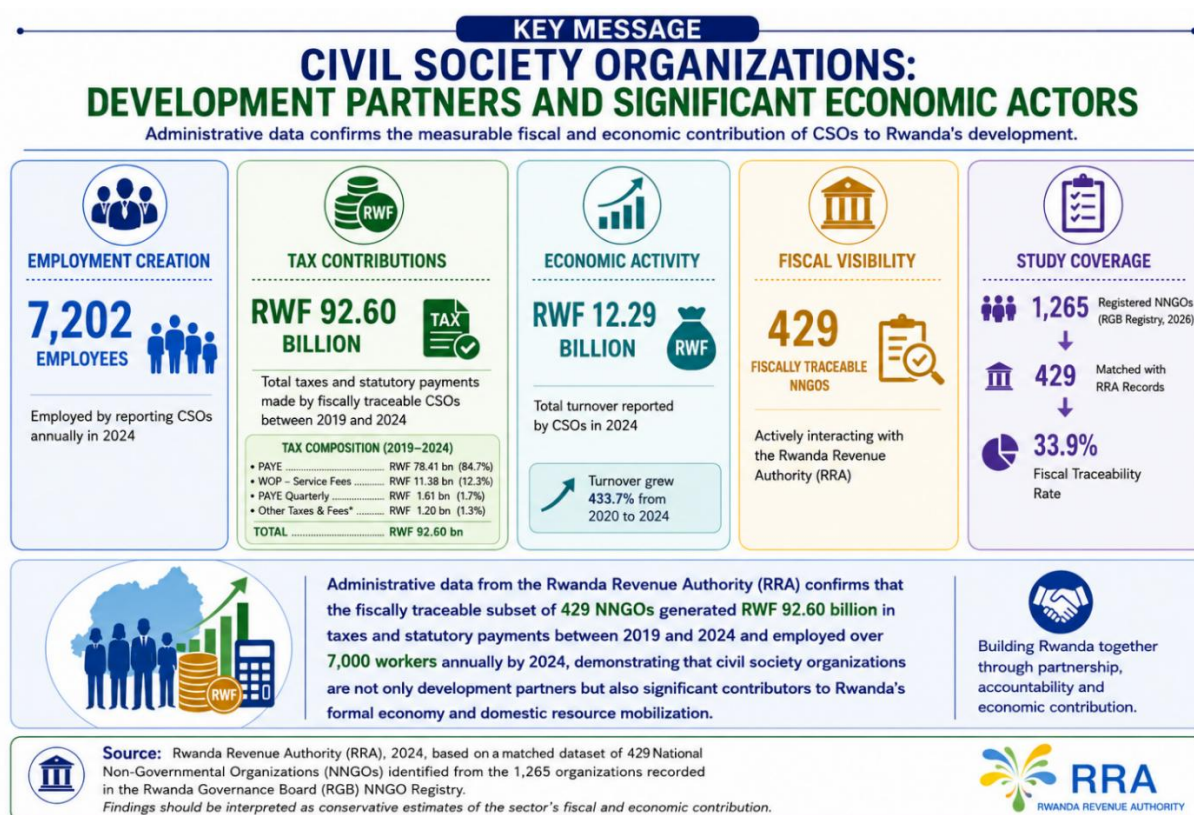


Figure 13: Key Economic Contributions of National CSOs to Rwanda's Development

3.6 Contribution of CSOs to Social Security and Formal Employment

Beyond their contribution to employment creation and tax compliance, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) also contribute significantly to Rwanda's social protection system through mandatory social security contributions administered by the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB).

Administrative records obtained from RSSB demonstrate a steady increase in the number of active CSOs participating in the formal social security system during the NST1 period. The number of registered and active CSOs contributing to RSSB increased from 158 organizations in 2017 to 279 organizations in 2024, representing a growth of approximately 77 percent.

Similarly, the number of workers covered under RSSB schemes expanded steadily throughout the period. Total registered employees increased from 3,636 workers in 2017 to 6,742 workers in 2024, reflecting the growing role of CSOs as employers within Rwanda's formal labour market.

Table 11: RSSB Coverage of Active CSOs and Employees (2017–2024)

Year	Active CSOs	Employees Covered
2017	158	3,636
2018	179	3,695
2019	184	4,339
2020	200	4,602
2021	218	5,192
2022	233	5,951
2023	252	6,197
2024	279	6,742

The data further indicate a relatively balanced workforce composition. During the review period, women represented approximately 37 percent of covered employees while men represented approximately 63 percent. This demonstrates that CSOs provide significant employment opportunities for both women and men while supporting broader national objectives related to inclusive employment and economic participation.

Table 12: Cumulative Employment Covered by RSSB (2017–2024)

Category	Number	Percentage
Female Employees	7,292	36.73%
Male Employees	12,560	63.27%
Total Employees	19,852	100 %

RSSB records also reveal substantial contributions to Rwanda's social protection financing system. Between 2017 and 2024, CSOs contributed more than RWF 15.85 billion across pension, maternity leave, and occupational hazards schemes.

Table 13. Cumulative RSSB Contributions by CSOs (2017–2024)

Scheme	Total Contributions (RWF)	Share
Pension Scheme	11,060,218,866	69.8%
Maternity Leave Scheme	1,106,021,887	7.0%
Occupational Hazards Scheme	3,686,739,622	23.2%
Total	24,701,155,468	100%

The pension scheme accounted for nearly 70 percent of total contributions while occupational hazards insurance represented more than 23 percent, highlighting the role of CSOs not only in supporting retirement security but also in protecting workers against occupational risks.

Table 14: Growth in Total RSSB Contributions

Year	Total RSSB Contributions (RWF)
2017	1,201,521,435
2018	1,417,976,048
2019	1,588,050,364
2020	1,521,177,262
2021	1,930,154,614
2022	2,302,161,155
2023	2,643,631,226
2024	3,248,308,271

Total annual RSSB contributions increased from RWF 1.20 billion in 2017 to RWF 3.25 billion in 2024, representing growth of approximately 170 percent over the NST1 period. This growth closely mirrors the expansion in the number of active CSOs, and workers covered by the social security system

Interpretation: The RSSB data provide strong evidence that CSOs contribute to Rwanda's economy not only through development programming but also through formal employment creation and social protection financing.

Three key conclusions emerge:

1. CSOs are important formal-sector employers: The steady increase in active organizations and covered workers demonstrates the growing institutionalization and professionalization of Rwanda's civil society sector. The near doubling of covered employment between 2017 and 2024 reflects the sector's increasing role in creating formal jobs and supporting livelihoods.

2. CSOs contribute meaningfully to domestic resource mobilization: Combined with PAYE contributions exceeding RWF 99 billion among the fiscally traceable segment of the sector, RSSB contributions of nearly RWF 16 billion demonstrate that CSOs generate significant economic activity while contributing directly to national revenue and social protection financing systems.

3. CSOs strengthen social protection and economic resilience: Through pension, maternity leave, and occupational hazards contributions, CSOs help provide income security, workplace protection, maternity benefits, and long-term retirement coverage for thousands of employees. These contributions strengthen both individual wellbeing and the sustainability of Rwanda's broader social protection framework.



CSOs' CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL PROTECTION AND FORMAL EMPLOYMENT (2017–2024)



EVIDENCE FROM RSSB ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

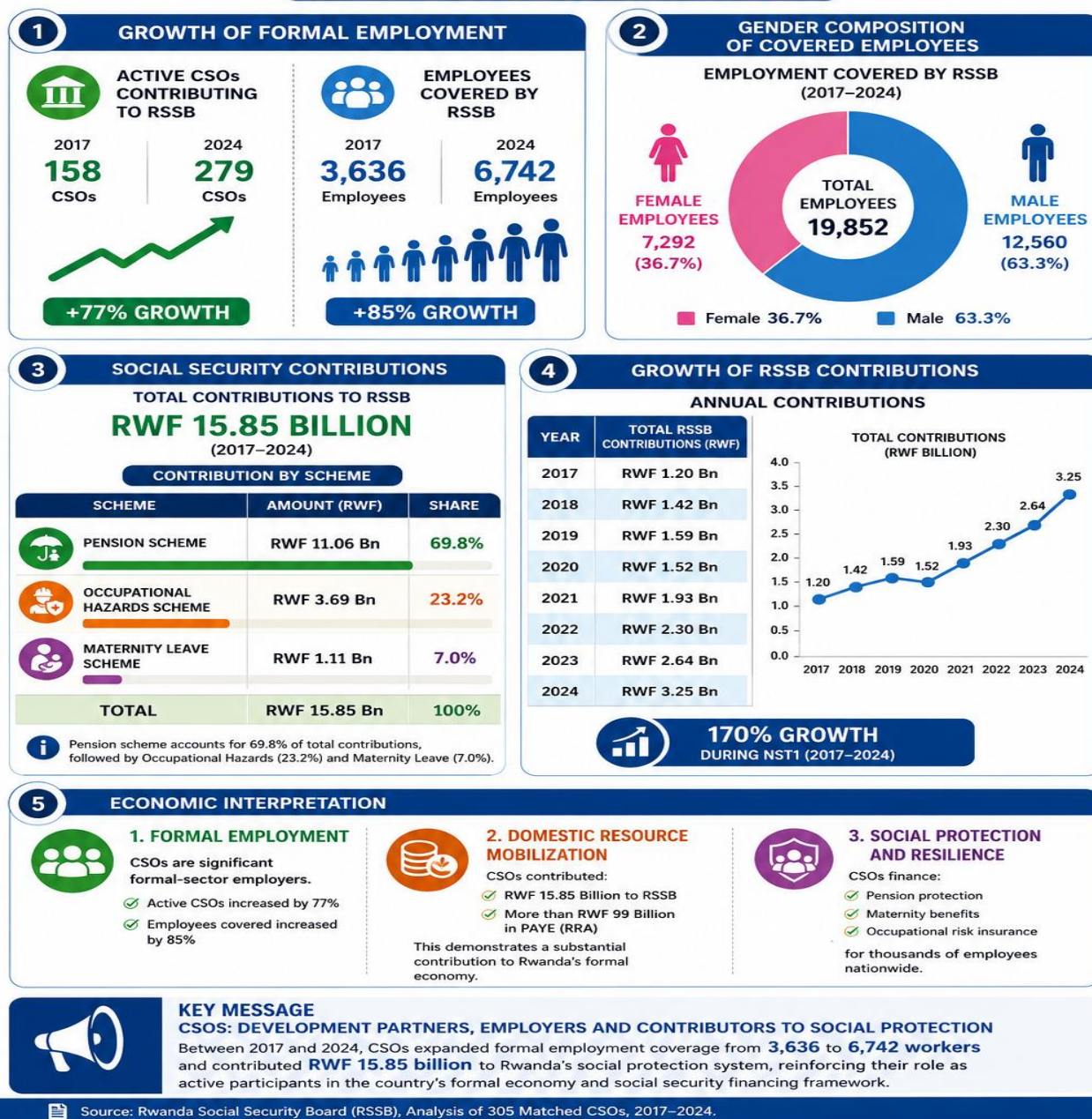


Figure 14: Administrative Evidence of CSOs' Contribution to Formal Employment and Social Protection (2017–2024)

Overall, RSSB administrative records reinforce the conclusion that CSOs should be recognized not only as development partners but also as employers, contributors to social security financing, and active participants in Rwanda's formal economy. Their contribution extends beyond programme implementation to supporting decent work, social protection coverage, and inclusive economic development.

Chapter 4. Contribution to Economic Transformation

Findings in this chapter are derived from a triangulation of CSO survey responses, Key Informant Interviews, administrative records, and documentary review.

4.1 Jobs and Livelihoods

CSO CONTRIBUTION PATHWAY TO JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

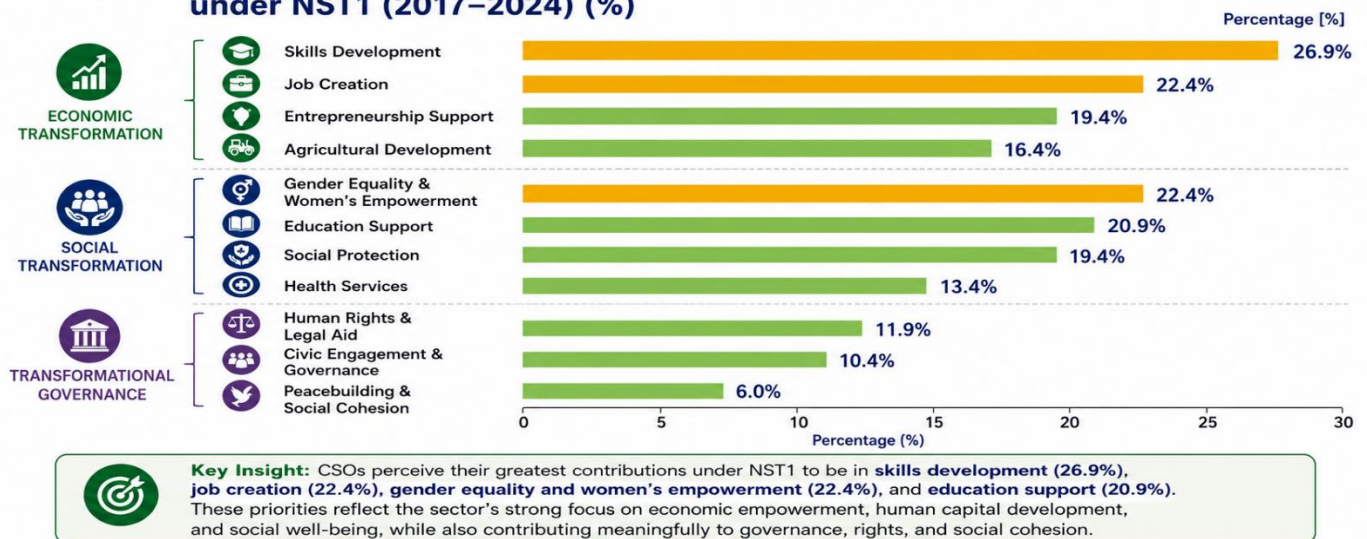
How Civil Society Organizations contributed to employment creation, economic empowerment and household resilience under NST1



Figure 15: CSO contribution pathway to Jobs and livelihoods

Job creation, employability enhancement, and livelihood improvement were important pathways through which Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) contributed to Rwanda's Economic Transformation pillar under NST1. While NST1 generated 942,324 cumulative decent and productive jobs nationally, evidence from both survey findings and Government stakeholder consultations indicates that CSOs played a complementary role in expanding economic opportunities, strengthening workforce skills, supporting entrepreneurship, and improving household resilience.

Areas of Greatest Contribution Reported by Responding CSOs under NST1 (2017–2024) (%)



Source: Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), National CSO Contribution Assessment Survey, June 2026.

Note: Percentages reflect the proportion of responding CSOs identifying each area as a major contribution under NST1 (2017–2024). Multiple responses were permitted.

Figure 16: Areas of greatest contribution reported by responding CSOs under NST-1 (2027-2024)

Survey findings indicate that CSOs perceive their greatest contributions under NST1 to have been in skills development (26.9%), job creation (22.4%), gender equality and women's empowerment (22.4%), and education support (20.9%). Economic empowerment-related interventions dominate the ranking, reflecting the sector's strong engagement in employability, entrepreneurship, and livelihood development. At the same time, significant contributions were reported in social protection, environmental sustainability, health, governance, and social cohesion, illustrating the

Table 15: Employment Generation and Economic Empowerment Impact Overview

Category	Indicator	Value
Employment Generated	Paid Staff	2,103
Employment Generated	Part-time / Project Staff	295
Employment Generated	Volunteers	12,974
Employment Generated	Trainees Supported	409,788
Employment Generated	Jobs Created	389,505
Employment Generated	Temporary / Project Jobs	90,745
Employment Generated	Formal Employees	2,103
Economic Empowerment	Entrepreneurship Support	604,234 (57.8%)
Economic Empowerment	MSMEs Supported	36,044 (3.4%)
Economic Empowerment	Vocational Training	405,169 (38.8%)

The survey findings demonstrate the substantial contribution of CSOs to both employment generation and economic empowerment. Responding organizations reported supporting more than 409,000 trainees, facilitating the creation of nearly 390,000 jobs, and engaging almost 13,000 volunteers. Economic empowerment interventions reached over one million beneficiaries, with entrepreneurship support accounting for the largest share (57.8%), followed by vocational and technical skills development (38.8%) and support to MSMEs (3.4%). These results highlight the sector's strong emphasis on building employability, promoting entrepreneurship, strengthening livelihoods, and supporting income-generating activities.

As illustrated in Figure 15, CSOs contributed to employment and livelihood outcomes through a combination of community mobilization, skills development, enterprise support, agricultural productivity enhancement, and financial inclusion initiatives. These interventions generated both direct and indirect employment opportunities while strengthening income-generating capacities among vulnerable populations.

Key Informant Interviews further confirmed these contributions. MINALOC emphasized the role of CSOs in community-based economic empowerment and support to vulnerable households, while MINAGRI highlighted their contribution to rural livelihoods through farmer training, cooperative development, value-chain support, and climate-smart agriculture. LODA noted the alignment of CSO livelihood initiatives with local development priorities, and MINUBUMWE emphasized economic empowerment programmes targeting vulnerable and socially excluded groups. Collectively, these interventions contributed to improved household incomes, enhanced economic resilience, greater participation of women and youth in productive activities, and broader efforts to promote inclusive growth and poverty reduction under NST1.

4.2 Enterprise Development

CSO CONTRIBUTION PATHWAY TO ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

How Civil Society Organizations support entrepreneurship, MSMEs and local economic growth under NST1



Figure 17: CSO contribution pathway to enterprise development

Enterprise development constituted an important pathway through which Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) contributed to Rwanda's Economic Transformation agenda under NST1. By promoting entrepreneurship, strengthening micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), supporting cooperatives, facilitating access to finance, and developing local value chains, CSOs helped create opportunities for self-employment, income generation, and local economic growth. Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs supported enterprise development through a range of interventions, including entrepreneurship training, business incubation, cooperative strengthening, access-to-finance initiatives, savings and credit schemes, mentorship programmes, market linkage support, and value-chain development.

Key Informant Interviews consistently highlighted the contribution of CSOs to entrepreneurship and enterprise development. MINALOC emphasized that many organizations worked directly with women, youth, and vulnerable populations to establish and strengthen income-generating activities, cooperatives, and small businesses. Through community-based economic empowerment initiatives, CSOs supported beneficiaries in moving from subsistence activities toward more sustainable and market-oriented economic opportunities.

MINAGRI underscored the role of CSOs in strengthening agricultural enterprises and agribusiness development. Interventions included support to farmer cooperatives, producer organizations, agro-processing initiatives, post-harvest management, market access programmes, and value-chain development. These efforts contributed to increased productivity, commercialization of agricultural production, and improved incomes for rural households.

LODA highlighted the contribution of CSOs to local economic development through entrepreneurship promotion, capacity building, business development services, and support to community enterprises aligned with district development priorities. By strengthening local capacities and facilitating economic participation, CSOs complemented Government efforts to stimulate inclusive growth at community level.

Stakeholder consultations also pointed to the growing role of CSOs in promoting financial inclusion

and enterprise sustainability. Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), savings groups, financial literacy programmes, and access-to-finance initiatives were frequently cited as mechanisms through which civil society organizations supported enterprise creation and expansion, particularly among women and youth.

Several CSOs further contributed to innovation and enterprise growth through business incubation, skills development, mentorship, and support to emerging entrepreneurs. These interventions helped strengthen entrepreneurial capacities, reduce barriers to business development, and improve the survival and growth prospects of small enterprises.

Overall, the evidence suggests that CSOs acted as important catalysts for enterprise development by strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems, supporting local value chains, promoting financial inclusion, and expanding economic opportunities for vulnerable populations. Their contribution helped advance NST1 objectives related to job creation, income generation, economic inclusion, and sustainable local development.

Key Insight: The comparative advantage of CSOs in enterprise development lies in their ability to reach underserved populations, strengthen grassroots entrepreneurship, and connect small producers and emerging businesses to skills, finance, markets, and value-chain opportunities that support sustainable economic growth.

4.3 Agriculture and Food Security

CSO CONTRIBUTION PATHWAY TO AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

How Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) complement Government efforts under NST1



Figure 18: CSO contribution pathway to agriculture and food security

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of Rwanda's economy and a key driver of poverty reduction, food security, employment, and rural development. During the implementation of NST1, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) complemented Government efforts by supporting agricultural transformation, strengthening household resilience, improving nutrition outcomes, and promoting sustainable natural resource management.

Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs implemented a broad range of agriculture and food security interventions across the country.

Table 16: Agriculture and Food Security Beneficiaries Supported by CSOs during NST1 (2017–2024)

Agriculture Intervention	Number	Percentage (%)
Farmers Supported	4,300,359	62.5
Agricultural Inputs Beneficiaries	1,716,956	25.0
Climate-Smart Agriculture Adopters	669,706	9.7
Livestock Beneficiaries	168,739	2.5
Cooperatives Supported	24,373	0.4
Total	6,880,133	100.0

The survey findings demonstrate the significant contribution of CSOs to agricultural development and food security. Support to farmers represented the largest intervention category, accounting for 62.5 percent of all reported beneficiaries, followed by access to agricultural inputs (25.0%) and climate-smart agriculture initiatives (9.7%). These results highlight the sector's strong focus on enhancing agricultural productivity, improving food security, strengthening climate resilience, and supporting the livelihoods of rural households. The large number of beneficiaries reached also reflects the scale at which CSOs complemented national efforts to modernize agriculture and improve rural wellbeing.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) confirmed that CSOs played an important complementary role in advancing agricultural development objectives, particularly through community-based approaches that facilitated the adoption of improved agricultural practices and technologies. According to MINAGRI, many organizations supported farmer mobilization, capacity building, and knowledge transfer through farmer field schools, demonstration plots, training programmes, and community extension activities.

CSOs were also actively involved in promoting climate-smart agriculture and environmental sustainability. Key interventions included watershed rehabilitation, afforestation, erosion control, soil conservation measures, sustainable land management practices, and climate resilience initiatives aimed at protecting agricultural productivity while preserving natural resources. In the area of food security and nutrition, MINAGRI highlighted the contribution of CSOs to the promotion of kitchen gardens, biofortified crops, fruit tree planting, dietary diversification, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture. These interventions contributed to improved household food availability, enhanced dietary quality, and increased awareness of nutrition among vulnerable communities.

Stakeholder consultations further revealed a strong emphasis on strengthening agricultural livelihoods and market participation. CSOs supported smallholder farmers through improved farming practices, promotion of farmer organizations and cooperatives, market linkages, post-harvest management, agribusiness development, and value-chain strengthening initiatives aimed at increasing productivity and incomes.

Particular attention was given to women, youth, and vulnerable rural households. MINAGRI noted that many CSO programmes targeted women farmers and youth agribusiness entrepreneurs through training, enterprise development support, and initiatives designed to improve access to productive resources and economic opportunities.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs were important partners in advancing agriculture, food security, nutrition, and climate resilience under NST1. Through support to millions of farmers and agricultural beneficiaries, the sector contributed to improved productivity, stronger rural livelihoods, enhanced food security, and greater resilience among farming communities.

4.4 Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion emerged as one of the most significant areas of contribution by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under NST1. Through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILCs), financial literacy programmes, savings groups,

and community-based financing mechanisms, CSOs expanded access to financial services among populations traditionally excluded from the formal financial sector

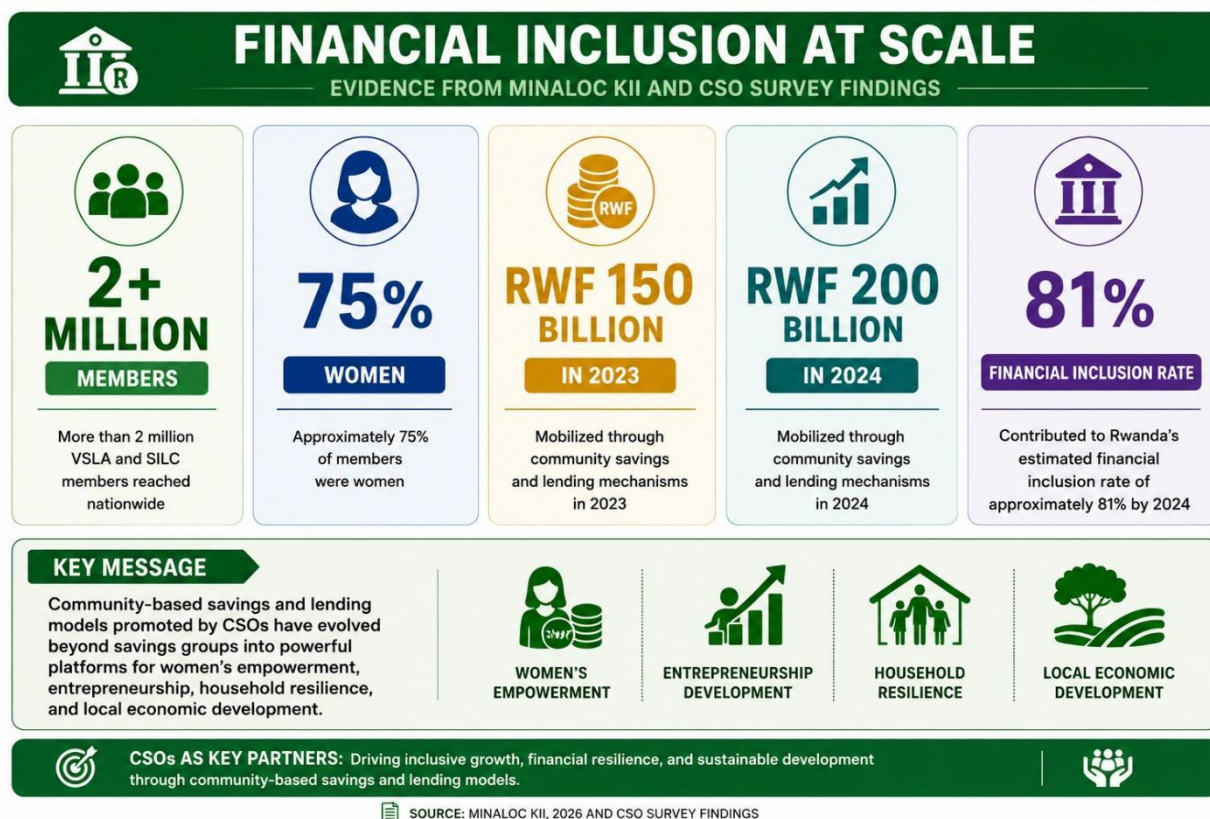


Figure 19: CSOs as Drivers of Financial Inclusion and Household Economic Resilience

Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs supported financial inclusion through the establishment and strengthening of savings groups, financial literacy initiatives, access-to-finance programmes, and economic empowerment interventions targeting women, youth, rural households, and other vulnerable populations.

Table 17: Individuals Gaining Access to Formal Financial Services through CSO Interventions

Beneficiary Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	547,740	21.0
Female	888,683	34.1
Youth	1,167,094	44.8
Persons with Disabilities	827	0.03
Total	2,604,344	100.0

Table 18: MSME Development Results Supported by CSOs

MSME Development Outcome	Number	Percentage (%)
MSMEs Established	515,226	62.3
MSMEs Expanded	257,032	31.1
MSMEs Strengthened	54,119	6.5
Total MSMEs Supported	826,377	100.0

Table 19: Beneficiaries Reached through MSME Development Programmes

Beneficiary Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Male Beneficiaries	158,074	23.8

Female Beneficiaries	238,804	36.0
Youth Beneficiaries	266,098	40.1
Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)	716	0.1
Total Beneficiaries	663,692	100.0

Table 20: Savings Mobilization and Access to Finance Results

Indicator	Value
Savings Mobilized (RWF)	16,825,230,530
Beneficiaries Accessing Loans/Credit	2,477,255
Total Value of Loans/Credit Accessed (RWF)	214,236,011,700

The survey findings demonstrate the substantial contribution of CSOs to financial inclusion and economic empowerment. Through savings groups, financial literacy programmes, entrepreneurship support, and community-based financing mechanisms, responding organizations facilitated access to formal financial services for more than 2.6 million individuals, with youth (44.8%) and women (34.1%) representing the largest beneficiary groups.

CSOs also supported the establishment, expansion, or strengthening of more than 826,000 MSMEs, benefiting over 663,000 entrepreneurs and business owners, particularly youth and women. In addition, CSO-supported financial inclusion initiatives mobilized approximately RWF 16.8 billion in savings and facilitated access to more than RWF 214 billion in loans and credit for nearly 2.5 million beneficiaries, underscoring the sector's significant contribution to entrepreneurship, household resilience, and inclusive economic growth.

Key Informant Interviews with MINALOC confirmed that community-based savings and lending mechanisms have become one of the most successful and scalable models promoted by CSOs across Rwanda. According to MINALOC, VSLA and SILC programmes reached more than 2 million members nationwide, approximately three-quarters of whom were women. These platforms facilitated savings, access to credit, entrepreneurship, household investment, and community solidarity.

MINALOC further reported that community-based financial mechanisms mobilized approximately RWF 150 billion in savings and loans in 2023 and RWF 200 billion in 2024, demonstrating their growing contribution to local economic development and poverty reduction. Stakeholders emphasized that women, youth, and vulnerable households particularly benefited from increased access to financial services, entrepreneurship opportunities, and productive investments. The consultations also noted that the widespread adoption of VSLA and SILC models complemented national efforts to expand access to financial services and contributed to Rwanda's estimated 81 percent financial inclusion rate by 2024.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs played a transformative role in deepening financial inclusion, strengthening entrepreneurship, expanding access to finance, and improving household resilience. Through community-based financial mechanisms, the sector contributed significantly to inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction under NST1.

Key Insight: Community-based savings and lending mechanisms evolved beyond simple savings groups into powerful platforms for entrepreneurship, women's empowerment, household resilience, and local economic development, making financial inclusion one of the most significant contributions of CSOs to Rwanda's Economic Transformation agenda.

Findings in this chapter are derived from a triangulation of CSO survey responses, Key Informant Interviews, administrative records, and documentary review.

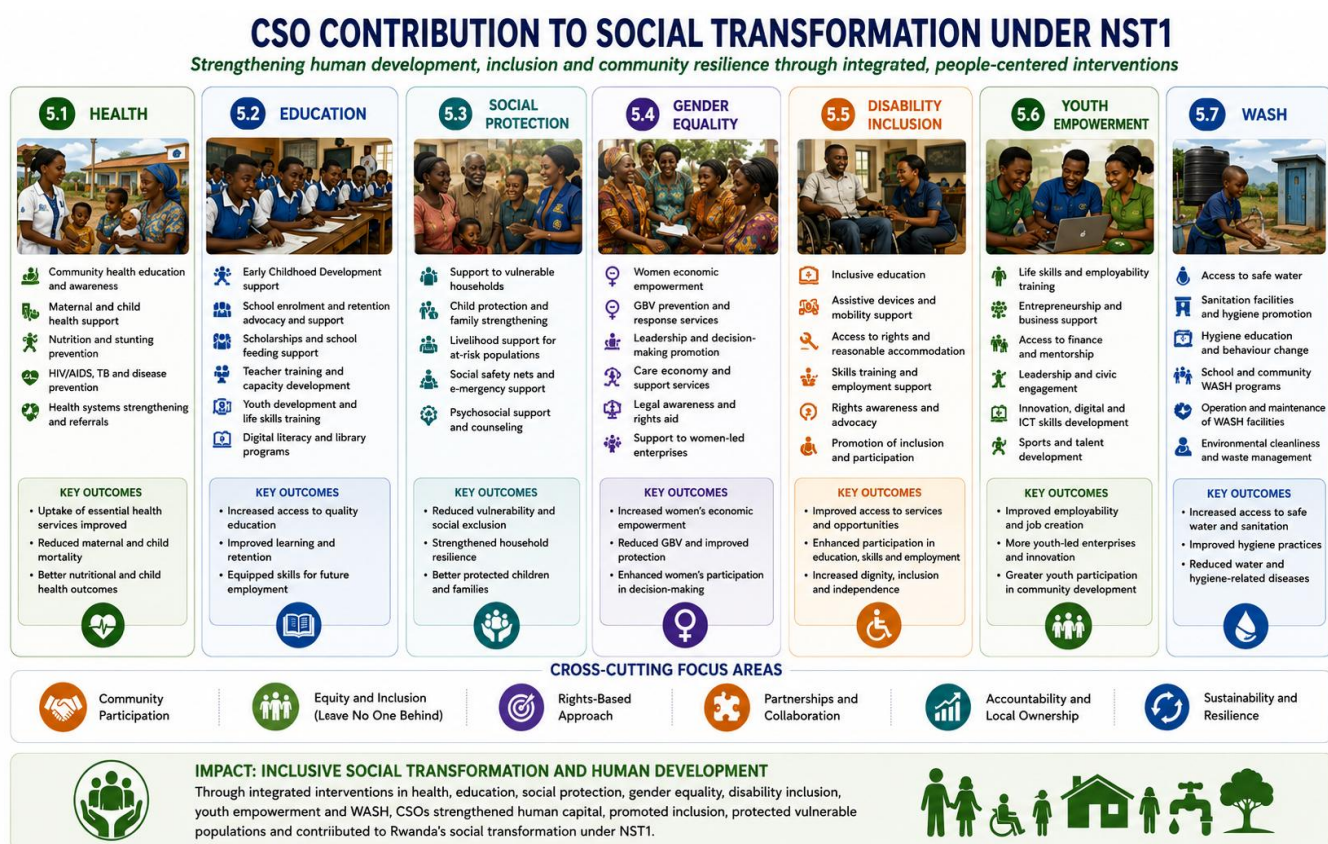


Figure 20: CSO contribution to social transformation under NST-1

5.1 Health

Health was one of the most prominent areas of CSO engagement during the implementation of NST1. Through community-based health interventions, health promotion campaigns, maternal and child health programmes, nutrition initiatives, HIV/AIDS prevention, mental health services, and community outreach activities, CSOs complemented Government efforts to improve health outcomes and expand access to essential health services.

Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs implemented a wide range of health interventions across Rwanda, while also supporting health infrastructure and service delivery systems.

Table 21: Health Facilities Supported by Responding CSOs

Facility Type	Number	Percentage (%)
Health Facilities Supported	2,256	97.3
Health Facilities Constructed/Rehabilitated	39	1.7
Health Facilities Equipped	23	1.0
Total	2,318	100.0

The survey findings indicate that CSOs primarily focused on strengthening the capacity and functionality of existing health facilities, which accounted for 97.3 percent of all reported interventions. Additional support included the construction, rehabilitation, and equipping of health facilities, demonstrating the sector's contribution to improving access to quality health services and strengthening community health systems.

Table 22: Health Interventions Implemented by Responding CSOs

Health Area	Number of CSOs	Percentage (%)
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)	19	18.3
Nutrition	14	13.5
Mental Health	12	11.5
HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria	11	10.6
Maternal Health	10	9.6
Community Health Insurance	9	8.7
Health Insurance Support	7	6.7
Child Health	6	5.8
Disability-Inclusive Health Services	5	4.8
Other Health Interventions	4	3.8
Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)	4	3.8
Disability Services	2	1.9
Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) / WASH	1	1.0
Total Responses	104	100.0

The survey results reveal a broad spectrum of health interventions, with the greatest concentration in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), nutrition, mental health, HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria prevention, and maternal health. This reflects the sector's strong focus on preventive healthcare, community wellbeing, and improving access to essential health services for vulnerable populations.

Key Informant Interviews with MINALOC confirmed that CSOs played an important role in strengthening community health systems and extending services to underserved populations. Stakeholders highlighted contributions in health awareness, nutrition improvement, maternal and child health, disease prevention, mental health support, and community-based health promotion programmes.

These interventions were implemented within a context where Rwanda continued to address key public health challenges, including stunting, maternal and child health outcomes, and access to preventive health services. Stakeholders noted that CSO-supported programmes contributed to improved health-seeking behaviour, increased community awareness, and greater access to health information and services.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs served as important partners in strengthening health systems, improving community health outcomes, and expanding access to essential health services. Their contribution supported national efforts to improve public health, enhance community resilience, and advance the Social Transformation objectives of NST1.

5.2 Education

Civil Society Organizations made important contributions to Rwanda's human capital development agenda through interventions aimed at improving access to education, learning outcomes, school retention, and skills development. Their programmes complemented Government investments by targeting vulnerable learners, underserved communities, and populations facing barriers to educational participation.

Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs supported education through Early Childhood Development (ECD), school enrolment support, scholarships, literacy programmes, vocational training, inclusive education, teacher support, and educational infrastructure development.

Table 23: Education Outcomes Supported by Responding CSOs

Education Intervention	Number	Percentage (%)
Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres Supported	393,082	27.3
School Enrolment Support	390,597	27.1
Learners/Students Supported	362,638	25.1
Scholarships and Educational Sponsorships	245,468	17.0
Advocacy and Other Education Interventions	31,747	2.2
Inclusive and Special Needs Education	8,212	0.6
Teachers Trained or Supported	7,495	0.5
Schools/Classrooms Constructed, Rehabilitated or Equipped	3,028	0.2
Total	1,442,267	100.0

The survey findings demonstrate the substantial contribution of CSOs to expanding educational opportunities and strengthening human capital development. The largest areas of support included Early Childhood Development (27.3%), school enrolment support (27.1%), direct support to learners (25.1%), and scholarships and educational sponsorships (17.0%). These interventions reflect a strong emphasis on improving access to education, reducing barriers to learning, and strengthening educational outcomes for children and young people.

Stakeholder consultations further highlighted the important role of CSOs in supporting disadvantaged children, girls, children with disabilities, vulnerable households, and out-of-school learners. Through partnerships with schools, communities, local authorities, and development partners, CSOs helped address barriers to enrolment, retention, inclusion, and educational achievement.

In addition to improving access to education, CSOs contributed to skills development, literacy, vocational training, digital learning, and inclusive education initiatives that strengthened learning opportunities and future employability. Their support to ECD centres and school enrolment programmes also contributed to building strong foundations for lifelong learning and human development.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs were important partners in advancing educational access, inclusion, and human capital development during NST1. Their interventions contributed to improved enrolment, learning opportunities, educational inclusion, and skills development, thereby supporting Rwanda's objective of building a capable, productive, and skilled population.

5.3 Social Protection

Social protection represented one of the largest thematic areas of engagement among Rwanda's civil society organizations. Through direct support to vulnerable households, psychosocial assistance, resilience-building programmes, peacebuilding initiatives, child protection services, and community-based support mechanisms, CSOs complemented Government social protection systems and helped reach populations at risk of exclusion and vulnerability.

Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs implemented a wide range of social protection, resilience, and social cohesion interventions across Rwanda.

Table 24: Social Protection, Resilience and Social Cohesion Interventions Implemented by Responding CSOs

Intervention	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Trauma and Psychosocial Support	16	22.2
Resilience Building	15	20.8
Social Cohesion Promotion	15	20.8
Peacebuilding	14	19.4
Rehabilitation and Reintegration	6	8.3
Other Interventions	6	8.3
Total Responses	72	100.0

The survey findings reveal a strong focus on strengthening community resilience, psychosocial wellbeing, and social cohesion. Trauma and psychosocial support represented the largest

intervention area (22.2%), followed by resilience-building and social cohesion initiatives (20.8% each) and peacebuilding programmes (19.4%). Collectively, these interventions accounted for more than four-fifths of reported responses, highlighting the sector's important role in supporting vulnerable populations, promoting healing, and strengthening community resilience.

Key Informant Interviews emphasized that CSOs often served as first responders and community-based partners capable of identifying and supporting vulnerable groups that formal systems did not always reach effectively. Beneficiaries included children, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, women-headed households, genocide survivors, returnees, vulnerable youth, and households experiencing poverty or social exclusion.

Stakeholders further noted that CSOs played a critical role in providing psychosocial support, promoting social reintegration, strengthening community resilience, and supporting reconciliation and social cohesion initiatives. Through community-based approaches, CSOs helped address the social and economic vulnerabilities that often undermine wellbeing, inclusion, and long-term development outcomes.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs made an important contribution to strengthening social protection, resilience, and inclusion during NST1. By supporting vulnerable populations and promoting social cohesion, psychosocial wellbeing, and community resilience, the sector contributed significantly to Rwanda's Social Transformation agenda and the objective of ensuring that no one is left behind.

5.4 Gender Equality

Gender equality was a cross-cutting priority in many CSO interventions implemented during NST1. Through women's economic empowerment programmes, financial inclusion initiatives, leadership development, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response, advocacy, and community mobilization, Civil Society Organizations complemented national efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

Table 25: Gender Equality Outcomes Supported by Responding CSOs

Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)
Women and Girls Empowered	3,005,279	96.2
GBV Victims Supported	87,793	2.8
GBV Prevention and Response Activities	30,866	1.0
Total Beneficiaries/Interventions	3,123,938	100.0

The survey findings demonstrate the significant scale of CSO contributions to gender equality. More than 3 million women and girls benefited from empowerment initiatives, representing over 96 percent of all reported gender-related interventions. In addition, CSOs supported nearly 88,000 survivors of gender-based violence and implemented over 30,000 GBV prevention and response activities, highlighting the sector's dual focus on both empowerment and protection.

Key Informant Interviews confirmed the important role played by CSOs in advancing gender-responsive development. MINALOC emphasized their contribution to women's economic empowerment through savings groups, entrepreneurship support, financial literacy, livelihood programmes, and access-to-finance initiatives that strengthened the economic resilience of women and vulnerable households.

MINUBUMWE further highlighted the role of CSOs in promoting gender equality through awareness raising, prevention and response to gender-based violence, women's leadership development, family strengthening programmes, and advocacy for the rights and protection of women and girls. These interventions complemented Government efforts to promote inclusive development and strengthen social protection mechanisms.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs played a critical role in advancing gender equality under NST1 by expanding opportunities for women and girls, strengthening protection mechanisms, promoting economic empowerment, and addressing social and structural barriers that limit women's participation in economic, social, and leadership spheres.

Key Insight: CSOs contributed to gender equality not only by empowering millions of women and girls but also by strengthening prevention and response mechanisms for gender-based violence, thereby supporting more inclusive, resilient, and equitable development outcomes.

5.4 Disability Inclusion

Disability inclusion and the broader inclusion of vulnerable populations were important cross-cutting dimensions of CSO interventions during NST1. Through awareness raising, inclusive service delivery, livelihood support, skills development, psychosocial assistance, accessibility improvements, and community empowerment initiatives, Civil Society Organizations promoted equal opportunities and sought to ensure that vulnerable groups were not left behind in Rwanda's development process.

Table 26: Social Inclusion Outcomes Supported by Responding CSOs

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Total Vulnerable Individuals/Households Reached	6,040,732	100
Male	3,227,831	53.4
Female	2,900,645	48.0
Youth	4,049,345	67.0
Elderly Persons	7,503	0.1
Refugees/Displaced Persons	5,276	<0.1
Persons with Disabilities	1,737	<0.1

The survey findings demonstrate the extensive reach of CSO social inclusion interventions, with more than **6 million vulnerable individuals and households** benefiting from various programmes during the NST1 period. Youth represented the largest beneficiary group (67%), followed by women and men reached through livelihood, education, health, social protection, and community development initiatives. While persons with disabilities accounted for a relatively small proportion of reported beneficiaries, disability inclusion was frequently integrated as a cross-cutting principle within broader programmes rather than implemented through standalone interventions.

Key Informant Interviews confirmed that disability inclusion was embedded across many CSO programmes. MINALOC highlighted the role of civil society organizations in supporting persons with disabilities through community-based interventions aimed at improving access to services, strengthening economic empowerment, reducing social exclusion, and promoting participation in local development processes. Many initiatives specifically targeted vulnerable households and sought to ensure that persons with disabilities were included in development opportunities.

MINUBUMWE further emphasized the contribution of CSOs in promoting social inclusion, human dignity, and equal opportunities for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, elderly persons, refugees, and socially marginalized populations. Through advocacy, awareness campaigns, psychosocial support, livelihood assistance, and community engagement initiatives, CSOs contributed to reducing stigma, strengthening social participation, and improving access to services and opportunities.

These interventions helped address barriers related to discrimination, accessibility, limited economic opportunities, and social exclusion. By mainstreaming inclusion across education, livelihoods, health, social protection, and community development programmes, CSOs contributed to advancing the principle of leaving no one behind under NST1.

Key Insight: The contribution of CSOs to disability and social inclusion extended beyond targeted assistance to the promotion of inclusive development approaches that strengthened participation, reduced exclusion, and expanded opportunities for vulnerable populations across Rwanda.

5.5 Youth Empowerment,

Youth empowerment featured prominently across CSO programmes implemented during NST1. Through skills development, vocational training, digital literacy, entrepreneurship promotion, leadership development, civic engagement, and livelihood support initiatives, Civil Society Organizations contributed to enhancing the economic and social participation of young people across Rwanda.

Table 27: Youth Empowerment Outcomes Supported by Responding CSOs

Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)
Literacy, Digital Literacy and Life Skills Beneficiaries	212,124	51.5
Youth Trained under TVET and Skills Development Programmes	199,891	48.5
Total Youth Beneficiaries	412,015	100.0

The survey findings demonstrate the significant contribution of CSOs to youth development and employability. More than 412,000 young people benefited from literacy, digital literacy, life skills, vocational training, and technical skills development programmes. The relatively balanced distribution between life skills and technical skills interventions reflects a comprehensive approach that combines employability, entrepreneurship, and personal development.

Key Informant Interviews confirmed the important role played by CSOs in expanding opportunities for young people. MINALOC highlighted that many civil society interventions focused on youth employability, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, leadership development, and community participation. Through vocational training, business development support, savings groups, and income-generating initiatives, CSOs helped equip young people with the skills and opportunities required for productive engagement in the economy.

MINAGRI emphasized the contribution of CSOs to youth empowerment through agricultural livelihoods and agribusiness development. Programmes supporting youth farmers, agricultural cooperatives, value-chain participation, climate-smart agriculture, and agribusiness entrepreneurship created economic opportunities for young people in rural areas while contributing to productivity and income growth.

MINUBUMWE further noted the role of CSOs in supporting vulnerable youth through social inclusion, civic education, peacebuilding, reconciliation, psychosocial support, and leadership development programmes. These interventions strengthened resilience, promoted active citizenship, and facilitated the social and economic integration of vulnerable young people.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs made an important contribution to youth empowerment by strengthening skills, employability, entrepreneurship, leadership, and civic participation. By investing in the capabilities of young people, the sector contributed to building a more productive, resilient, and engaged generation capable of supporting Rwanda's long-term development aspirations under NST1.

Key Insight: CSOs contributed to youth empowerment not only through skills development and employment support, but also by strengthening leadership, resilience, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship, thereby positioning young people as key actors in Rwanda's transformation and future development.

5.7 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) constituted an important area of CSO engagement during the implementation of NST1. Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs contributed to improving access to safe water, sanitation facilities, hygiene services, and community health through infrastructure development, behaviour change campaigns, school WASH programmes, and community-based awareness initiatives.

Key Informant Interviews confirmed the significant contribution of CSOs to improving community access to WASH services, particularly among vulnerable and underserved populations. MINALOC highlighted the role of civil society organizations in supporting the construction and rehabilitation of water and sanitation infrastructure, promoting hygiene practices, and strengthening community awareness on public health and disease prevention. These interventions complemented Government efforts to improve living conditions and reduce health risks at household and community levels.

Stakeholders further noted that many CSOs integrated WASH interventions within broader programmes on health, nutrition, education, and social protection. School-based sanitation facilities, handwashing campaigns, access to clean water, and community hygiene promotion were frequently cited as important contributions to improving public health outcomes and enhancing the well-being of children and vulnerable households.

MINUBUMWE emphasized that WASH interventions often contributed to the dignity, protection, and inclusion of vulnerable groups, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, and disadvantaged households. Improved access to water and sanitation services helped reduce inequalities while supporting healthier and safer living environments.

The evidence suggests that CSOs played an important complementary role in expanding access to safe water and sanitation services while promoting sustainable hygiene practices. Through community-based approaches, they contributed to improved public health, reduced exposure to water- and sanitation-related diseases, and strengthened community resilience.

Key Insight: The contribution of CSOs to WASH extended beyond infrastructure provision to promoting behavioural change, public health awareness, and equitable access to essential services, thereby supporting healthier communities and improved quality of life under NST1.

Chapter 6. Contribution to Transformational Governance

Findings presented in this chapter are derived from a triangulation of survey responses from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Key Informant Interviews with Government institutions, administrative records, and documentary review. Collectively, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs made important contributions to strengthening citizen participation, accountability, social cohesion, access to justice, and citizen–state engagement during the implementation of NST1.

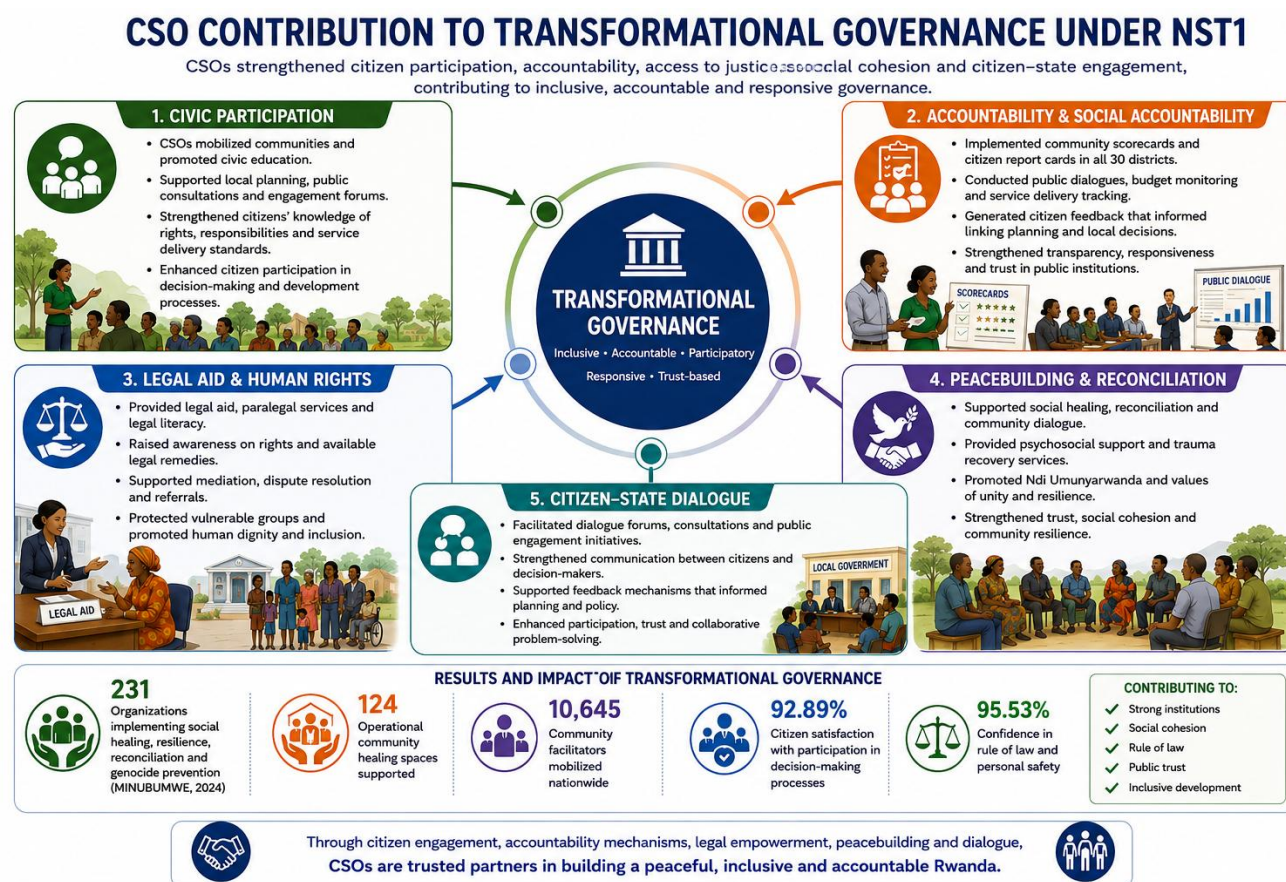


Figure 21: CSOs contribution to Transformational Governance under NST-1

6.1 Civic Participation

Civic participation is a cornerstone of Rwanda's transformational governance agenda. Throughout NST1, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) played an important role in promoting citizen engagement in local development processes, public decision-making, community mobilization, civic education, and accountability initiatives. Through community-based approaches, CSOs helped strengthen citizen awareness, participation, and dialogue between communities and public institutions.

Table 28: Citizens Participating in Governance, Accountability and Civic Engagement Activities Supported by CSOs

Category	Number
Total Participants	1,329,132
Male	599,964
Female	729,168
Youth	665,559
Persons with Disabilities	1,249

The survey findings demonstrate the significant contribution of CSOs to citizen participation and civic engagement. More than **1.3 million citizens** participated in governance, accountability, civic engagement, or public dialogue activities supported by responding organizations. Women accounted for a slightly larger share of participants than men, while youth represented a substantial proportion of beneficiaries, reflecting deliberate efforts to promote inclusive participation in governance processes.

Key Informant Interviews with MINALOC confirmed that CSOs contributed significantly to civic participation through community mobilization, public awareness campaigns, citizen engagement forums, social accountability initiatives, and support to decentralized governance structures. These interventions encouraged citizens to participate actively in local planning processes, community development initiatives, public consultations, and performance monitoring mechanisms.

Stakeholders further noted that CSOs played an important role in strengthening citizens' understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for participation in public affairs. Through civic education, awareness campaigns, policy dialogue forums, and community engagement platforms, civil society organizations helped enhance the quality, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of citizen participation.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs made an important contribution to transformational governance by expanding opportunities for citizen engagement, strengthening public awareness, and promoting participatory approaches to local development and decision-making. These interventions contributed to greater citizen ownership, accountability, and responsiveness in governance processes under NST1.

Key Insight: By engaging more than 1.3 million citizens in governance and civic participation activities, CSOs strengthened the connection between citizens and public institutions, contributing to more inclusive, participatory, and citizen-centred governance.

6.2 Accountability and Social Accountability

Accountability and social accountability emerged as important areas of CSO contribution during NST1. Through civic education, policy advocacy, citizen engagement, transparency initiatives, public dialogues, human rights promotion, and participatory monitoring mechanisms, Civil Society Organizations strengthened citizen oversight and encouraged constructive engagement between communities and public institutions.

Table 29: Governance and Social Accountability Interventions Implemented by Responding CSOs

Governance Area	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Citizen Participation	9	21.9
Policy Advocacy	6	14.6
Civic Education	5	12.2
Peacebuilding	5	12.2
Accountability	4	9.8
Human Rights	4	9.8
Transparency	3	7.3
Legal Aid	2	4.9
Unity and Reconciliation	2	4.9
Anti-Corruption	1	2.4
Total Responses	41	100.0

The survey findings indicate that CSOs contributed to governance primarily through citizen participation, policy advocacy, civic education, peacebuilding, and accountability initiatives. Together, these intervention areas accounted for more than 60 percent of reported governance-related activities, reflecting a strong emphasis on strengthening citizen engagement, promoting transparency, and supporting responsive governance.

Key Informant Interviews with MINALOC confirmed the important role of CSOs in strengthening social accountability through community scorecards, citizen report cards, public dialogues, and participatory monitoring mechanisms. According to stakeholders, these tools were implemented across all 30 districts and generated valuable citizen feedback that informed local planning processes, service delivery improvements, and Imihigo implementation.

These interventions strengthened transparency, responsiveness, and accountability at local government level by creating structured channels through which citizens could express concerns, assess public service performance, and engage constructively with public officials. Stakeholders further noted that CSOs played an important role in building citizens' capacity to understand governance processes, monitor development programmes, and participate in public decision-making.

The contribution of CSOs is reflected in broader governance outcomes. National governance indicators show high levels of citizen satisfaction with participation in decision-making processes and strong confidence in public institutions, the rule of law, and personal safety. While these achievements reflect the collective efforts of Government, communities, and development partners, stakeholder consultations recognized CSOs as important contributors through civic education, accountability initiatives, policy advocacy, and citizen engagement programmes.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs played an important role in strengthening accountability and citizen-centred governance during NST1 by promoting transparency, facilitating citizen feedback, supporting policy dialogue, and creating mechanisms for public oversight and participation.

Key Insight: CSOs enhanced accountability by creating practical mechanisms through which citizens could monitor public services, provide feedback, and engage constructively with public institutions, thereby strengthening transparency, responsiveness, and trust between citizens and government.

6.3 Legal Aid and Human Rights

Access to justice and the protection of human rights remained important areas of CSO engagement throughout NST1. Through legal aid services, paralegal support, legal literacy programmes, human rights education, awareness campaigns, mediation initiatives, and community outreach activities, Civil Society Organizations contributed to strengthening legal empowerment and promoting respect for human rights, particularly among vulnerable populations.

Table 30: Legal Aid and Human Rights Outcomes Supported by Responding CSOs

Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)
Human Rights Education Beneficiaries	272,462	96.15
Legal Aid and Access-to-Justice Services	9,993	3.53
Human Rights Awareness Campaigns	905	0.32
Total	283,360	100.0

The survey findings demonstrate that CSOs placed strong emphasis on human rights awareness and legal empowerment. Human rights education accounted for more than 96 percent of reported interventions, reaching over 272,000 beneficiaries, while nearly 10,000 individuals received legal aid and access-to-justice services. These results highlight the sector's focus on strengthening awareness of rights, promoting legal literacy, and improving access to justice for citizens and communities.

Key Informant Interviews highlighted the important role played by civil society organizations in improving access to justice, particularly for women, children, persons with disabilities, vulnerable households, and other groups facing barriers to legal services. Through community paralegals, legal clinics, awareness campaigns, mediation services, and referral mechanisms, CSOs helped strengthen legal empowerment and increase awareness of rights and available remedies.

Stakeholders further noted that CSOs contributed to dispute resolution, conflict prevention, legal awareness, and the promotion of human dignity through community-based approaches that complemented formal justice institutions. These interventions helped bridge the gap between citizens and the justice system while promoting inclusion, accountability, and respect for human rights.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs played an important role in strengthening access to justice, promoting human rights awareness, and supporting the rule of law during NST1. Their interventions enhanced legal empowerment, increased access to information and services, and contributed to more inclusive and equitable governance outcomes.

Key Insight: The comparative advantage of CSOs in legal aid and human rights promotion lies in their ability to reach vulnerable populations, provide community-based support, strengthen legal awareness, and bridge the gap between citizens and formal justice institutions.

6.4 Peacebuilding and Reconciliation

Peacebuilding and reconciliation constitute one of the most distinctive contributions of Rwanda's civil society sector. Throughout NST1, Civil Society Organizations implemented a wide range of interventions focused on social healing, reconciliation, conflict prevention, trauma recovery, psychosocial support, genocide prevention, community dialogue, and resilience-building. These interventions complemented national efforts to strengthen unity, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence.

Table 31: Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Outcomes Supported by Responding CSOs

Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)
Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Beneficiaries	46,091	98.63
Community Dialogues and Mediation Sessions	643	1.37
Total	46,734	100.0

The survey findings demonstrate the important contribution of CSOs to peacebuilding and social cohesion. More than **46,000 individuals** benefited directly from peacebuilding and reconciliation programmes, while hundreds of community dialogues and mediation sessions were conducted to facilitate conflict resolution, foster mutual understanding, and strengthen social harmony. These interventions reflect the sector's continued commitment to promoting healing, reconciliation, and community resilience.

Key Informant Interviews with MINUBUMWE identified CSOs, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), and NGOs as among the Government's most important partners in advancing national unity and reconciliation. Their interventions supported healing processes among genocide survivors, former perpetrators, returnees, vulnerable youth, and communities affected by trauma and social divisions.

Stakeholder consultations further emphasized that CSOs contributed to strengthening trust, rebuilding relationships, promoting dialogue, and reinforcing social cohesion through locally grounded and participatory approaches. Through community dialogues, psychosocial support, reconciliation programmes, and peace education initiatives, civil society organizations helped create safe spaces for engagement, healing, and collective action.

These interventions complemented national programmes aimed at consolidating unity, preventing divisionism, promoting peaceful coexistence, and strengthening community resilience. By addressing both the social and psychological dimensions of reconciliation, CSOs contributed to creating an enabling environment for sustainable development, citizen participation, and inclusive governance.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that CSOs played a vital role in supporting peacebuilding and reconciliation during NST1. Their interventions strengthened social cohesion, fostered trust among communities, and reinforced the foundations of unity and resilience that underpin Rwanda's long-term development aspirations.

Key Insight: The contribution of CSOs to peacebuilding extends beyond reconciliation activities to strengthening social cohesion, trust, resilience, and collective action at community level, thereby reinforcing the social foundations necessary for sustainable development and transformational governance.

6.5 Citizen–State Dialogue

Citizen–State dialogue represents one of the most important governance functions facilitated by CSOs. Through interaction between citizens and public institutions, civil society organizations contributed to strengthening responsiveness, trust, participation, and collaborative problem-solving.

Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs organized dialogue forums, consultation processes, public engagement initiatives, community meetings, and policy discussions aimed at improving communication between citizens and decision-makers.

MINUBUMWE emphasized that CSOs, FBOs, and NGOs remain critical partners in promoting citizen engagement, national unity, and transformational governance. A 2024 mapping exercise identified 231 organizations implementing programmes related to social healing, resilience, reconciliation, and genocide prevention.

The Ministry further reported that CSOs actively promoted initiatives such as *Ndi Umunyarwanda*, supported 124 operational community healing spaces, and mobilized approximately 10,645 community facilitators nationwide. These platforms created opportunities for dialogue, healing, civic participation, and citizen engagement while strengthening relationships between communities and public institutions.

MINALOC similarly highlighted the contribution of CSOs to participatory governance through community dialogues, public consultations, accountability forums, and citizen feedback mechanisms that informed local development planning and implementation.

Collectively, these interventions strengthened communication channels between citizens and the State, enhanced citizen trust in public institutions, and contributed to a more inclusive and participatory governance environment.

Key Insight: CSOs played a unique bridging role between citizens and public institutions, helping transform participation from a consultation exercise into an ongoing process of dialogue, accountability, trust-building, and collaborative governance.

Findings presented in this chapter are derived from a triangulation of CSO survey responses, Key Informant Interviews, administrative records, and documentary review. While gender equality, youth empowerment, disability inclusion, climate resilience, and social cohesion were discussed under the relevant NST1 pillars, evidence suggests that these themes were not implemented as standalone interventions. Rather, they were systematically mainstreamed across CSO programmes, contributing to more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development outcomes.

7.1 Mainstreaming of Cross-Cutting Priorities

The contribution of Civil Society Organizations under NST1 extended beyond sector-specific interventions to the systematic integration of cross-cutting priorities within programme design, implementation, monitoring, and beneficiary targeting. Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs mainstreamed inclusion, sustainability, resilience, and social cohesion considerations across a wide range of development interventions.

Table 32: Cross-Cutting Priorities Mainstreamed by Responding CSOs

Cross-Cutting Theme	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	34	19.43
Youth Inclusion and Empowerment	31	17.71
Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience	25	14.29
Disability Inclusion	25	14.29
Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups	22	12.57
Environmental Sustainability	20	11.43
Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion	17	9.71
Other	1	0.57
Total Responses	175	100.0

The survey findings demonstrate that gender equality and women's empowerment emerged as the most frequently mainstreamed priority (19.4%), followed by youth inclusion and empowerment (17.7%). Climate resilience, disability inclusion, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and peacebuilding were also widely integrated across programmes. The relatively balanced distribution across themes suggests that CSOs increasingly adopt holistic and inclusive approaches that recognize the interconnected nature of development challenges.

Key Informant Interviews consistently confirmed the importance of mainstreaming approaches. Stakeholders noted that interventions in livelihoods, agriculture, health, education, governance, financial inclusion, social protection, and peacebuilding frequently incorporated measures to ensure the inclusion of women, youth, persons with disabilities, vulnerable populations, and climate resilience considerations.

MINALOC highlighted that community development programmes increasingly prioritized vulnerable households, women, youth, and persons with disabilities through targeted and inclusive approaches. MINAGRI emphasized that climate-smart agriculture, environmental sustainability, and resilience-building had become integral components of agricultural and food security interventions. MINUBUMWE stressed the importance of embedding social cohesion, reconciliation, and resilience within broader development programmes rather than treating them as standalone activities. Similarly, PSF noted that entrepreneurship, employability, and economic empowerment initiatives increasingly targeted women and youth while promoting inclusive participation in economic opportunities.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that cross-cutting priorities have become embedded within the operational approaches of Rwanda's civil society sector. Rather than being implemented as separate interventions, issues such as gender equality, youth empowerment, disability inclusion, climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion are increasingly integrated across programme portfolios, thereby enhancing the inclusiveness, effectiveness, and sustainability of development outcomes under NST1.

Key Insight: The mainstreaming of cross-cutting priorities reflects the growing maturity of Rwanda's civil society sector, with organizations increasingly adopting integrated approaches that simultaneously advance inclusion, resilience, sustainability, and social cohesion across multiple development sectors.

7.2 Contribution to Inclusive and Sustainable Development

The evidence suggests that cross-cutting priorities enhanced the effectiveness and sustainability of CSO interventions by ensuring that development benefits reached vulnerable populations while strengthening resilience and social cohesion. These approaches helped maximize the contribution of CSOs to NST1 by promoting inclusion, reducing inequalities, strengthening community ownership, and improving the sustainability of development outcomes.

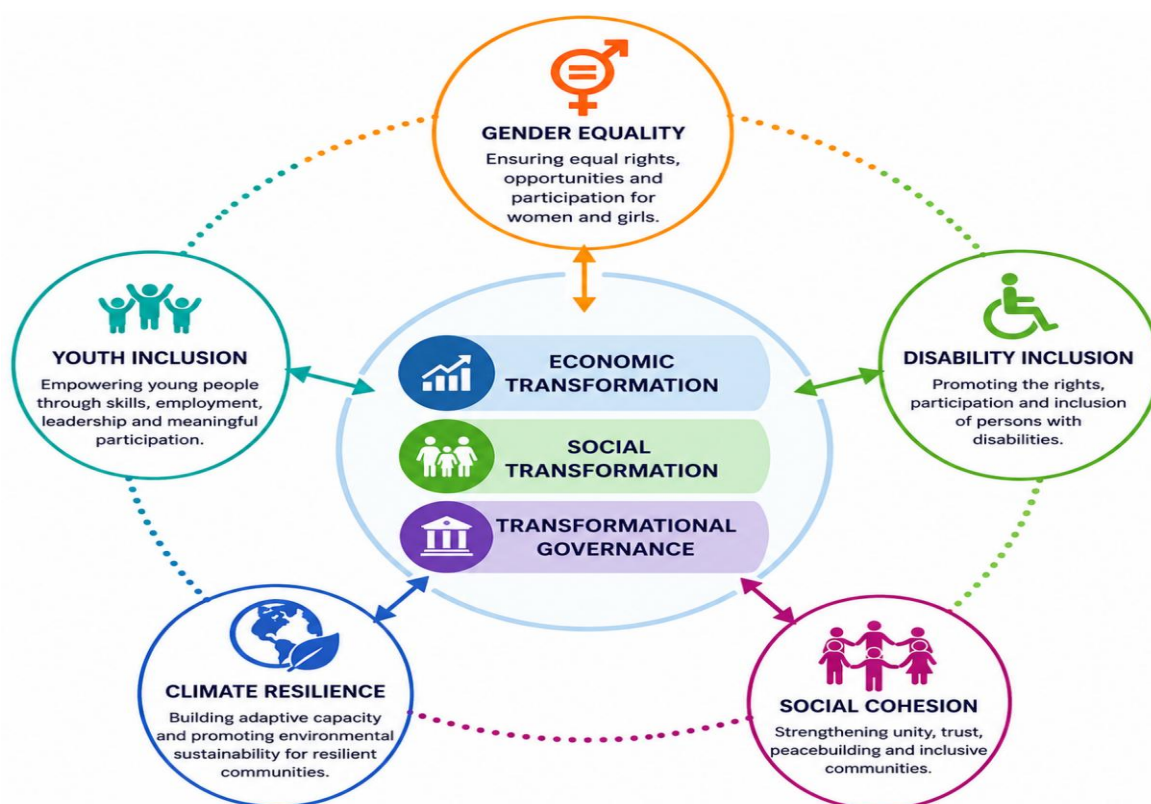


Figure 22: Cross-Cutting Priorities Supporting NST1 Outcomes

Key Insight: The most significant contribution of CSOs was not only the delivery of sector-specific interventions but also the systematic integration of cross-cutting priorities—gender equality, youth inclusion, disability inclusion, climate resilience, and social cohesion—across economic transformation, social transformation, and transformational governance programmes. This mainstreaming approach strengthened the inclusiveness, effectiveness, and sustainability of development outcomes under NST1.

PART III – PARTNERSHIPS, PERFORMANCE AND LESSONS LEARNED

Part III examines the institutional and operational environment that shaped the contribution of Civil Society Organizations during the implementation of NST1. Building on the evidence presented in the preceding chapters, it explores the partnerships, coordination mechanisms, governance arrangements, and comparative advantages that enabled CSOs to contribute to national development, while also identifying the institutional, financial, regulatory, and operational challenges that constrained their effectiveness. Through an analysis of Government–CSO collaboration, stakeholder perspectives, and selected international benchmarking, this part assesses how Rwanda's partnership ecosystem compares with good practices from other countries and identifies lessons that can strengthen future collaboration. It also examines the experiences, innovations, and lessons learned during NST1, highlighting opportunities to improve coordination, accountability, evidence generation, knowledge management, resource mobilization, institutional sustainability, and collective impact. Together, these analyses provide a deeper understanding of the enabling conditions required for Civil Society Organizations to maximize their contribution to the successful implementation of NST2 and the realization of Vision 2050.

Chapter 8. Partnerships, Coordination and Added Value

Findings presented in this chapter are derived from a triangulation of survey responses from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), administrative records, and documentary review. The evidence demonstrates that partnerships and coordination mechanisms were among the most important enablers of CSO effectiveness during NST1. Through collaboration with Government institutions, development partners, private sector actors, local governments, and civil society networks, CSOs mobilized resources, expanded outreach, strengthened service delivery, and increased development impact.

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Table 33: Partnerships and Coordination Arrangements Reported by Responding CSOs

Partner / Funding Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government Ministries / Grants	37	44.55
District Authorities	23	34.33
Development Partners	21	31.34
International NGOs	34	26.98
Foundations & Philanthropy	17	13.49
Membership Fees	17	13.49
Self-Generated Income	16	12.70
Private Sector	6	8.96
Bilateral Donors	9	7.14
Multilateral Donors	9	7.14
Faith-Based Organizations	5	7.46
Other Donors	3	2.38

Note: Categories are overlapping and hence the total exceeds 100%

The survey findings reveal a highly interconnected civil society ecosystem characterized by strong collaboration with Government institutions, local authorities, development partners, international NGOs, and private sector actors. Government ministries and public grants emerged as the most frequently reported partnership category, followed by district authorities, development partners, and international NGOs.

These findings confirm that partnerships are central to the operational model of Rwanda's civil society sector and play a critical role in enabling organizations to deliver development results at scale.

8.1 Government Partnerships and Coordination

Government institutions emerged as the most important strategic partners for CSOs throughout NST1 implementation. Consultations with MINALOC, LODA, MINAGRI, and MINUBUMWE consistently highlighted the role of CSOs as complementary actors supporting the implementation of national and local development priorities.

MINALOC emphasized that CSOs contributed significantly to community mobilization, citizen participation, social accountability, social protection, financial inclusion, and local development initiatives. Through decentralized governance structures and Joint Action Development Forums (JADFs), CSOs worked closely with districts to align interventions with local priorities, district development strategies, and community needs.

LODA similarly noted that CSOs played an important role in supporting local economic development, livelihoods, poverty reduction, entrepreneurship promotion, and community resilience programmes. Their interventions often enabled local governments to reach vulnerable populations and address development challenges beyond available public resources.

MINAGRI highlighted the value of partnerships with CSOs in promoting climate-smart agriculture, farmer field schools, agricultural extension, cooperative development, food security, environmental sustainability, and agricultural value chains. MINUBUMWE emphasized the strategic role of CSOs in advancing national unity, reconciliation, social cohesion, civic engagement, and resilience-building initiatives through community-based and locally grounded approaches.

Collectively, the evidence suggests that Government–CSO partnerships significantly strengthened the localization of development interventions and enhanced the effectiveness of NST1 implementation across all sectors.

8.2 Development Partner Collaboration

Development partners remained an essential source of financial, technical, and institutional support for civil society organizations during NST1. Survey findings indicate that responding CSOs benefited from a diversified support base that included development partners, international NGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies, foundations, faith-based networks, and philanthropic organizations.

Beyond financing, stakeholder consultations indicated that development partners contributed technical assistance, knowledge transfer, capacity development, monitoring systems, research, innovation, and policy dialogue support. These partnerships enabled CSOs to mobilize resources, strengthen institutional capacity, pilot innovative approaches, generate evidence, and extend services to underserved populations.

The diversity of funding sources reported in the survey also suggests that many organizations are pursuing more sustainable financing models through membership contributions, self-generated income, and blended resource mobilization strategies. Nevertheless, development partner support remains a critical enabler of CSO effectiveness and outreach, particularly for programmes targeting vulnerable and marginalized populations.

8.3 Private Sector Engagement and Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships

Evidence from the Private Sector Federation (PSF) indicates that CSOs made important contributions to Rwanda's economic transformation by complementing Government and private sector efforts to promote inclusive economic growth. Although private sector partnerships represented a smaller share of reported collaborations, stakeholder consultations revealed substantial opportunities for strengthening engagement between civil society and business actors.

PSF identified entrepreneurship and business development as among the most significant areas of CSO contribution. Through entrepreneurship training, business incubation, coaching, mentoring, market access support, and financial literacy programmes, CSOs helped strengthen start-ups, cooperatives, micro-enterprises, and small businesses, particularly among women and youth.

Stakeholders further highlighted the contribution of CSOs to workforce development and employability through technical and vocational training, apprenticeships, internships, digital literacy programmes, and business development services. These interventions strengthened human capital and improved access to employment opportunities, especially for young people.

Within the agricultural sector, CSOs contributed to farmer training, climate-smart agriculture, cooperative strengthening, post-harvest management, market access, value addition, and agricultural commercialization. These interventions enhanced agricultural productivity while strengthening linkages between smallholder farmers and market actors.

PSF described collaboration between CSOs and private sector actors as generally positive and mutually beneficial. Key areas of collaboration included MSME development, youth employment, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, social enterprises, agricultural value chains, and women's economic empowerment. However, consultations revealed that many partnerships remain project-based and could be strengthened through more structured and long-term collaboration frameworks.

Looking ahead to NST2, stakeholders identified significant opportunities for expanding Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships (PPCPs), particularly in youth employment, innovation, digital economy initiatives, climate-smart enterprises, MSME development, agribusiness, cooperative strengthening, and women-led businesses. Stronger collaboration between civil society and private sector actors is expected to play an increasingly important role in advancing inclusive growth and sustainable development.

8.4 Coordination Platforms and Collective Action

The effectiveness of CSO partnerships was further reinforced through formal coordination mechanisms operating at national, district, and sector levels.

Table 34: Coordination Mechanisms and Partnership Platforms

Level	Platform	Level
National	Sector Working Groups	National
District	JADF (Joint Action Development Forum)	District
Sectoral	RCSP and Thematic Umbrella Organizations	Sectoral

Stakeholders consistently identified the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) as one of the most effective platforms for coordination, alignment, information sharing, and accountability at district level. JADF provides a structured mechanism through which local governments, CSOs, development partners, faith-based organizations, and private sector actors coordinate interventions, reduce duplication, and monitor development results.

At national level, sector working groups facilitate policy dialogue and collaboration between Government institutions, development partners, and civil society actors. Similarly, RCSP and thematic umbrella organizations play an important role in strengthening coordination, representation, advocacy, knowledge sharing, and collective action within the civil society sector.

8.5 Added Value of Partnerships

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that the effectiveness of Rwanda's civil society sector is closely linked to its ability to build and sustain partnerships. The sector's added value lies not only in programme implementation but also in its capacity to connect communities, Government institutions, development partners, private sector actors, and citizens around shared development objectives.

By serving as conveners, facilitators, innovators, and trusted intermediaries, CSOs helped leverage resources, strengthen accountability, improve service delivery, promote citizen participation, and expand the reach of development interventions. These collaborative arrangements enabled the sector to maximize its contribution to NST1 while creating a strong foundation for deeper partnerships and more integrated development approaches under NST2 and Vision 2050.

Key Insight: Partnerships were a critical success factor behind the contribution of CSOs to Rwanda's development. The sector's greatest strength lies in its ability to bridge institutions and communities, creating collaborative solutions that enhance development effectiveness, inclusion, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

8.6 Civil Society Coordination and the Role of RCSP

The Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), thematic umbrella organizations, and civil society networks played an important role in strengthening coordination, representation, knowledge sharing, advocacy, and collective action across the sector.

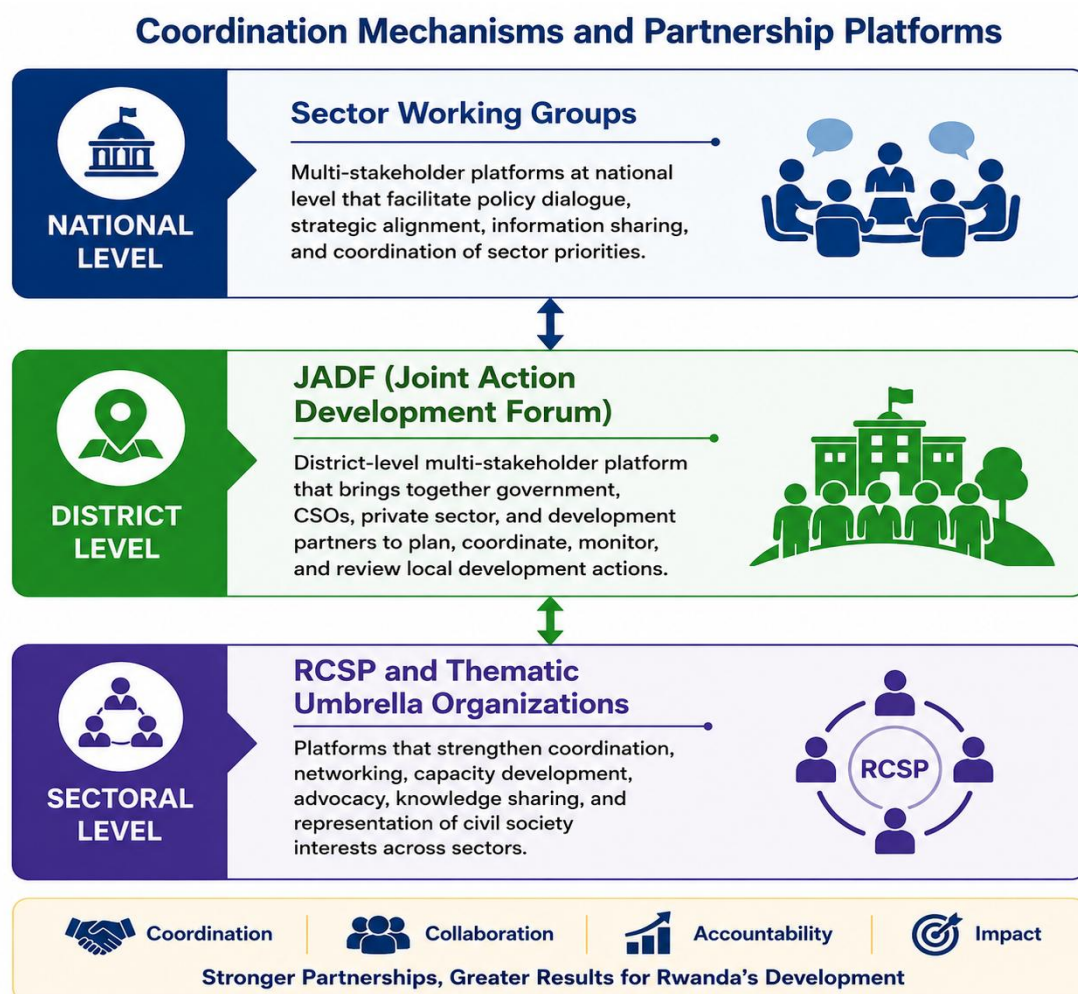


Figure 23: Civil Society Coordination mechanisms and the Role of RCSP

Consultations highlighted the role of RCSP in facilitating dialogue between civil society, Government, development partners, and other stakeholders. RCSP provided an important platform for information sharing, policy engagement, capacity development, networking, and collective representation of civil society interests.

Similarly, thematic umbrella organizations and networks contributed to improved coordination, reduced duplication of efforts, promoted learning and knowledge exchange, and strengthened collective advocacy. These coordination mechanisms enhanced the visibility and effectiveness of civil society interventions while facilitating alignment with national development priorities.

8.7 Added Value of Civil Society Organizations

Across all consultations, stakeholders consistently emphasized that the value of CSOs extends beyond programme implementation. Their comparative advantage lies in their ability to mobilize communities, reach vulnerable and marginalized populations, strengthen citizen participation, pilot innovative approaches, build trust, and facilitate collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

Government institutions recognized CSOs as important partners in extending service delivery, strengthening social cohesion, promoting accountability, and supporting local development. Development partners highlighted their flexibility, innovation, and ability to reach underserved communities. PSF emphasized their contribution to human capital development, entrepreneurship, economic inclusion, and local economic transformation.

Key Insight: The distinctive added value of CSOs lies in their ability to bridge communities, Government institutions, development partners, and private sector actors while promoting inclusion, innovation, citizen participation, and sustainable development outcomes.

The assessment demonstrates that partnerships and coordination mechanisms were fundamental to the contribution of CSOs under NST1. Government institutions, development partners, private sector actors, RCSP, and local coordination platforms collectively created an enabling ecosystem that enhanced the reach, effectiveness, and sustainability of civil society interventions. Strengthening these partnerships—particularly Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships—will be essential for maximizing the contribution of CSOs to NST2 and Vision 2050.

The findings presented in previous chapters demonstrate that Rwanda has established a relatively strong institutional framework for collaboration between Government institutions and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Through mechanisms such as the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), Sector Working Groups, and the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), CSOs have been actively engaged in local development, service delivery, citizen participation, accountability, and policy dialogue.

The findings presented throughout this assessment demonstrate that Rwanda has developed a mature and increasingly collaborative framework for engagement between Government institutions and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Through mechanisms such as the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), Sector Working Groups, District Development Planning processes, and the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), CSOs have become recognized partners in service delivery, citizen engagement, social accountability, local development, and policy implementation.

The evidence generated from the survey, Key Informant Interviews, and documentary review suggests that the contribution of CSOs under NST1 was not only a function of individual organizational interventions, but also of the broader partnership ecosystem that enabled collaboration between Government, civil society, development partners, private sector actors, and communities.

To identify opportunities for strengthening this ecosystem under NST2 and Vision 2050, Rwanda's Government–CSO collaboration framework was benchmarked against selected international good practices, including OECD principles for engaging civil society, UNDP approaches to resilient and inclusive development, and multi-stakeholder partnership models promoted for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The purpose of this benchmarking exercise is not to replicate external models, but rather to identify practical opportunities for strengthening existing mechanisms, improving partnership effectiveness, and enhancing collective impact in support of Rwanda's long-term development ambitions.

9.1 Rwanda's Partnership Architecture: Strengths and Foundations

Evidence from stakeholder consultations indicates that Rwanda has already established many of the institutional foundations associated with effective Government–CSO collaboration.

Key strengths identified include:

- Strong decentralization and local governance structures;
- Functional Joint Action Development Forums (JADFs) operating in all districts;
- Regular engagement of CSOs in sector consultations and policy dialogue;
- Growing recognition of CSOs as development and implementation partners;
- Presence of umbrella organizations and coordination platforms, notably RCSP;
- Increasing alignment of CSO interventions with national priorities, District Development Strategies, and Imihigo;
- Established mechanisms for citizen engagement and community participation.

Stakeholders consistently emphasized that these structures have facilitated coordination, reduced duplication of interventions, strengthened accountability, and improved the localization of development programmes. Compared to many countries in the region, Rwanda benefits from a relatively well-organized institutional environment that enables constructive engagement between Government and civil society.

The experience documented throughout this assessment suggests that the challenge for NST2 is no longer one of establishing partnership structures, but rather one of maximizing their effectiveness, strategic value, and contribution to development outcomes.

9.2 Benchmarking Results

The benchmarking exercise indicates that Rwanda compares favorably with international good practices in several areas, particularly decentralization, stakeholder coordination, and structured dialogue mechanisms. However, it also highlights opportunities to evolve from coordination-oriented partnerships toward deeper co-creation, shared accountability, collective learning, and evidence-based collaboration.

Table 35: Rwanda Government–CSO Collaboration Benchmarking Matrix

Dimension	Rwanda Current Practice	Benchmark Practice	Opportunity for Strengthening	Suggested NST2 Action
Institutional Dialogue Platforms	JADF and sector consultations	Linked multi-level partnership platforms	Greater predictability of engagement	Publish annual Government–CSO dialogue calendar
Representation of Umbrella Bodies	RCSP participates in consultations	Formalized co-convening arrangements	Move from consultation to institutionalized participation	Formalize RCSP representation in key working groups
Frequency of Engagement	Periodic and issue-based consultations	Rules-based engagement cycles	Improve continuity and follow-up	Establish quarterly and semi-annual partnership reviews
Joint Planning	Alignment with Government priorities and Imihigo	Joint priority setting and co-design	Strengthen co-creation of programmes	Promote thematic co-planning under NST2
Data Sharing and Evidence	Fragmented reporting systems	Integrated evidence and learning systems	Improve aggregation of sector-wide results	Develop Government–CSO data-sharing protocols
Financing Arrangements	Predominantly project-based funding	Partnership and pooled financing mechanisms	Reduce fragmentation and transaction costs	Explore basket-funding and partnership financing models
Monitoring and Learning	Implementation-focused reviews	Strategic learning and adaptive management	Strengthen institutional learning	Introduce annual partnership learning reviews
Citizen Participation and Policy Influence	Consultations and feedback forums	Structured response and accountability loops	Improve visibility of follow-up actions	Develop policy response and feedback tracking mechanisms

The benchmarking findings suggest that Rwanda's partnership framework is strongest in coordination and stakeholder engagement, while the greatest opportunities for improvement lie in institutionalization, joint planning, evidence generation, learning, and long-term financing arrangements.

9.3 From Coordination to Collective Impact

A recurring message emerging from stakeholder consultations is that Government–CSO collaboration has evolved significantly during NST1. In many sectors, relationships have moved beyond traditional implementation arrangements toward more strategic forms of partnership.

However, most collaboration remains centred on project implementation and consultation processes. International experience suggests that the next stage of partnership maturity involves moving toward collective impact approaches characterized by:

- Shared development priorities and jointly defined outcomes;
- Co-design of programmes and interventions;
- Integrated monitoring and learning systems;
- Joint evidence generation and knowledge management;
- Structured accountability and feedback mechanisms;
- Long-term partnership financing models.

Such approaches are increasingly relevant under NST2, where development challenges—including youth employment, climate resilience, urbanization, social protection, digital transformation, and citizen-centred service delivery—require coordinated responses from multiple actors.

9.4 Strategic Implications for NST2 and Vision 2050

The benchmarking exercise suggests that Rwanda's Government–CSO partnership architecture is already well established and compares favorably with many international practices. The next phase of development should therefore focus less on creating new institutions and more on strengthening the effectiveness, predictability, and strategic value of existing mechanisms.

Priority areas for NST2 include:

- Institutionalizing regular Government–CSO dialogue processes;
- Strengthening co-design and co-implementation of development programmes;
- Enhancing data-sharing, evidence generation, and knowledge management systems;
- Expanding Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships (PPCPs);
- Strengthening partnership financing and resource mobilization mechanisms;
- Promoting joint monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes;
- Deepening citizen participation and structured feedback mechanisms;
- Strengthening the role of RCSP and thematic umbrellas in sector coordination and policy engagement.

These improvements would enable Government institutions, civil society organizations, development partners, and private sector actors to work more effectively toward shared development outcomes while maximizing the contribution of each stakeholder group to NST2 and Vision 2050.

Key Insight: Rwanda's Government–CSO partnership architecture is already strong by regional and continental standards. The principal opportunity for NST2 lies not in creating new coordination structures, but in deepening collaboration, institutionalizing co-creation, strengthening evidence systems, expanding multi-stakeholder partnerships, and enhancing collective accountability for development results.

Chapter 10. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Findings presented in this chapter are derived from a triangulation of survey responses from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Key Informant Interviews with Government institutions, administrative records, and documentary review. While the evidence presented in previous chapters demonstrates the significant contribution of CSOs to Rwanda's development under NST1, stakeholders also identified a number of operational, institutional, and systemic challenges that affected the effectiveness, scale, and sustainability of interventions.

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Table 36: Key Challenges Reported by Responding CSOs

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
COVID-19 Impacts	29	43.3
Coordination Issues	27	40.3
Data Collection and Reporting Challenges	25	37.3
Limited Community Participation	15	22.4
Regulatory Barriers	12	17.9

The survey findings indicate that the most significant challenge experienced by responding CSOs during NST1 was the impact of COVID-19, reported by over 43 percent of respondents. The pandemic disrupted programme implementation, community engagement, resource mobilization, and service delivery across multiple sectors. Coordination challenges and data collection constraints were also widely reported, reflecting the complexity of operating within multi-stakeholder environments and the need for stronger monitoring, reporting, and information management systems. Although reported less frequently, limited community participation and regulatory constraints also affected implementation effectiveness in certain contexts.

10.1 Key Challenges Identified

Key Informant Interviews largely confirmed the challenges reported by survey respondents.

- **Coordination and Alignment Challenges.** MINALOC noted that while CSOs play an important role in complementing Government efforts, coordination across institutions, sectors, and development actors remains uneven in some areas. Stakeholders highlighted the need for stronger mechanisms to harmonize interventions, reduce duplication, improve information sharing, and strengthen alignment with district and sector priorities.
- **Sustainability and Scaling Constraints.** MINAGRI emphasized that many successful innovations and community-based approaches developed by CSOs remain localized and face difficulties in scaling beyond pilot phases. Project-based financing, resource limitations, and varying institutional capacities often constrain the long-term sustainability and replication of successful interventions.
- **Long-Term Financing Challenges.** MINUBUMWE similarly highlighted the challenge of sustaining peacebuilding, reconciliation, and social cohesion initiatives beyond project cycles. While many organizations have demonstrated effective approaches to healing, resilience-building, and community dialogue, maintaining long-term engagement and securing predictable financing remain persistent concerns.
- **Data and Evidence Gaps.** LODA emphasized the importance of strengthening data systems, monitoring frameworks, and evidence-generation mechanisms. Stakeholders noted that fragmented reporting systems and limited interoperability of data across institutions can reduce the visibility of CSO contributions and limit opportunities for evidence-based planning and decision-making.

- **Institutional Capacity Constraints.** Across consultations, stakeholders identified dependence on external funding, increasing competition for development resources, compliance and reporting requirements, staff turnover, and difficulties in attracting and retaining specialized technical expertise as recurring challenges affecting the sector's long-term effectiveness and resilience.

Despite these constraints, stakeholders consistently acknowledged the resilience, adaptability, and innovation demonstrated by CSOs throughout NST1. The sector's ability to continue serving communities during periods of disruption, including the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrates its importance as a development partner and community-level actor.

10.2 Key Lessons Learned

The experience of NST1 generated several important lessons that can inform Government–CSO collaboration and sector development under NST2 and Vision 2050.

Lesson 1: Strong Partnerships Enhance Development Outcomes

Evidence from MINALOC, MINAGRI, MINUBUMWE, LODA, and PSF demonstrates that the most successful interventions were those implemented through close collaboration between Government institutions, local authorities, communities, development partners, private sector actors, and CSOs. Partnership-based approaches improved ownership, coordination, resource mobilization, sustainability, and impact.

Lesson 2: Community-Based Approaches Remain a Comparative Advantage of CSOs

Stakeholders consistently emphasized the ability of CSOs to reach vulnerable populations, mobilize communities, facilitate behavioural change, strengthen social cohesion, and promote citizen participation. This proximity to communities remains one of the sector's greatest strengths and a critical complement to Government service delivery systems.

Lesson 3: Integrated Interventions Generate Greater Impact

Successful programmes frequently combined economic empowerment, social protection, education, health, governance, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion interventions. Integrated approaches were found to address multiple dimensions of vulnerability simultaneously and generate more sustainable development outcomes.

Lesson 4: Evidence and Data Strengthen Policy Influence

Survey findings and stakeholder consultations highlighted the importance of strengthening monitoring, evaluation, learning, and data management systems. Better evidence generation improves accountability, demonstrates impact, supports resource mobilization, and strengthens the ability of CSOs to contribute meaningfully to policy dialogue and decision-making.

Lesson 5: Scaling Successful Models Should Be a Priority Under NST2

Across sectors, stakeholders identified numerous examples of successful pilot initiatives in areas such as financial inclusion, climate-smart agriculture, youth empowerment, social cohesion, and livelihoods development. Greater attention should be given to documenting, financing, replicating, and institutionalizing proven models that have demonstrated measurable impact.

Lesson 6: Sustainable Financing Is Essential for Long-Term Impact

The experience of NST1 demonstrates that sustaining development gains requires more predictable and diversified financing mechanisms. Reducing reliance on short-term project funding, strengthening domestic resource mobilization, and exploring innovative financing approaches will be important for enhancing the resilience and sustainability of the sector.

10.3 Looking Ahead to NST2

The challenges and lessons identified through this assessment suggest that the future effectiveness of Rwanda's civil society sector will depend on its ability to strengthen partnerships, improve evidence systems, diversify financing sources, and scale successful interventions. At the same time, continued investment in coordination mechanisms, institutional capacity, innovation, and community engagement will be critical to maximizing the contribution of CSOs to NST2 and Vision 2050.

Key Insight: The experience of NST1 demonstrates that CSOs are most effective when they operate within a coordinated ecosystem that combines Government leadership, community ownership, strong partnerships, evidence-based programming, and sustainable financing. Addressing the challenges identified in this chapter will be essential to unlocking the full potential of civil society as a strategic partner in the implementation of NST2 and the realization of Vision 2050.

PART IV – STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR NST2 AND VISION 2050

Part IV builds on the evidence generated throughout the assessment to identify the strategic priorities, policy directions, and institutional actions required to strengthen the contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) during the implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) (2025–2029) and in advancing Rwanda's Vision 2050. Drawing on survey findings, stakeholder consultations, administrative evidence, benchmarking, and lessons learned from NST1, this part moves beyond documenting past achievements to outline a forward-looking agenda for deepening Government–CSO collaboration, strengthening institutional capacity, improving coordination and accountability mechanisms, enhancing evidence generation and sustainable financing, and fostering innovation across the civil society sector. It concludes with a set of actionable recommendations and an implementation roadmap designed to support policymakers, Government institutions, RCSP, Civil Society Organizations, development partners, the private sector, and other stakeholders in maximizing the contribution of civil society to Rwanda's inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development aspirations.

Chapter 11. Strategic Perspectives for NST2 and Vision 2050



Figure 24: Strategic perspectives for NST2 and Vision 2050

The findings presented in this report demonstrate that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have evolved beyond their traditional role as service providers to become important development partners contributing to economic transformation, social development, and transformational governance. The experience of NST1 highlights the sector's ability to mobilize resources, reach vulnerable populations, strengthen citizen engagement, promote innovation, and complement Government efforts across multiple sectors.

As Rwanda enters the implementation of NST2 and advances toward the ambitions of Vision 2050, the role of civil society is expected to become increasingly important. Emerging development priorities, demographic transitions, technological change, climate risks, urbanization, and evolving social dynamics require adaptive, community-driven, and inclusive approaches in which CSOs possess significant comparative advantages.

Drawing on survey findings, stakeholder consultations, and documentary evidence, several strategic priorities emerge for enhancing the contribution of civil society under NST2 and Vision 2050.

11.1 Strengthening Domestic Resource Mobilization and Financial Sustainability

The economic footprint analysis demonstrates that CSOs are not only recipients of development resources but also contributors to Rwanda's formal economy through employment creation, procurement, and tax compliance. Future efforts should focus on strengthening financial sustainability, diversifying funding sources, and expanding innovative financing mechanisms.

Strategic priorities include:

- Strengthening Government–CSO financing partnerships for the implementation of national and local development priorities;
- Expanding domestic philanthropy, corporate social responsibility, and local resource mobilization initiatives;
- Promoting social enterprises and impact-oriented business models that generate sustainable income streams;
- Expanding Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships (PPCPs) and private sector investment in development initiatives;
- Enhancing access to blended finance, impact investment, and innovative development financing instruments;
- Strengthening organizational financial management, resource mobilization capacities, and institutional resilience;
- Encouraging diversified funding portfolios that combine Government support, donor resources, private sector partnerships, and internally generated income.

11.2 Accelerating Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship

The findings highlight the significant contribution of CSOs to skills development, entrepreneurship promotion, agricultural livelihoods, and youth empowerment. Given Rwanda's youthful population and employment aspirations under Vision 2050, CSOs can play a catalytic role in supporting youth transitions into productive employment.

Strategic priorities include:

- Expanding entrepreneurship and business incubation programmes;
- Strengthening digital skills and future-oriented competencies;
- Supporting youth-led enterprises and innovation ecosystems;
- Promoting youth participation in agribusiness and green economy opportunities;
- Strengthening pathways between training, employment, and enterprise development.

11.3 Advancing Climate Resilience and Green Development

Evidence from MINAGRI and survey findings demonstrates the contribution of CSOs to climate-smart agriculture, environmental conservation, watershed rehabilitation, afforestation, and community resilience. As climate risks intensify, civil society will remain an important partner in supporting adaptation and resilience-building efforts.

Strategic priorities include:

- Scaling climate-smart agriculture initiatives;
- Supporting ecosystem restoration and sustainable land management;
- Expanding community-based climate adaptation programmes;
- Increasing access to climate finance for local initiatives;
- Promoting green livelihoods and environmentally sustainable enterprises.

11.4 Supporting Digital Transformation and Inclusive Innovation

Digital transformation presents new opportunities for service delivery, citizen engagement, financial inclusion, education, and economic development. CSOs can help bridge digital divides and ensure that vulnerable populations benefit from technological advances.

Strategic priorities include:

- Expanding digital literacy programmes;
- Supporting digital entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Strengthening digital inclusion for women, youth, and persons with disabilities;
- Utilizing digital platforms for citizen engagement and accountability;
- Promoting safe and responsible digital participation.

11.5 Deepening Social Cohesion, Reconciliation, and Community Resilience

Consultations with MINUBUMWE underscore the continuing importance of social healing, reconciliation, and community resilience as foundations for sustainable development. The experience of NST1 demonstrates the critical role played by CSOs, FBOs, and community organizations in supporting national unity and social cohesion.

Strategic priorities include:

- Institutionalizing successful community healing models;
- Expanding psychosocial support and community mental health services;
- Strengthening reconciliation and genocide prevention initiatives;
- Supporting vulnerable youth and families through resilience-building programmes;
- Sustaining community dialogue and social cohesion platforms.

11.6 Strengthening Citizen Participation and Accountable Governance

The governance findings demonstrate that CSOs remain important bridges between citizens and public institutions. Future efforts should focus on deepening citizen participation, enhancing accountability mechanisms, and strengthening evidence-based policy dialogue.

Strategic priorities include:

- Expanding social accountability mechanisms;
- Strengthening citizen feedback systems;
- Promoting participatory planning and monitoring;
- Enhancing civic education and legal empowerment;
- Strengthening citizen-state dialogue platforms.

11.7 Strengthening Data Systems, Evidence Generation, and Learning

One of the key lessons emerging from this assessment is the importance of stronger evidence systems capable of capturing and demonstrating the contribution of civil society to national development outcomes.

Strategic priorities include:

- Establishing harmonized CSO data and reporting frameworks;
- Strengthening monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems;
- Enhancing data sharing between Government and CSOs;
- Expanding the use of administrative data for sector analysis;
- Promoting evidence-based decision-making and policy engagement.

11.8 Towards a Strategic Partnership Model for NST2

The experience of NST1 demonstrates that the greatest impact is achieved when Government institutions, local authorities, communities, development partners, and CSOs work collaboratively

toward shared development objectives. Under NST2 and Vision 2050, the relationship between Government and civil society should increasingly evolve from a *project-based approach toward a strategic partnership model focused on co-creation, innovation, accountability, and sustainable development outcomes*.

Strategic Outlook: The evidence presented throughout this report suggests that CSOs are well positioned to serve as catalysts of inclusive development under NST2. Their comparative advantage lies in their ability to mobilize communities, reach vulnerable populations, test innovative solutions, strengthen citizen engagement, and complement public service delivery. By investing in stronger partnerships, sustainable financing, digital transformation, climate resilience, and evidence-based programming, Rwanda can maximize the contribution of civil society to achieving NST2 targets and realizing the long-term aspirations of Vision 2050.

Chapter 12. Recommendations

12.1 Introduction

The findings of this assessment demonstrate that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) made substantial contributions to Rwanda's development during the implementation of NST1 (2017–2024). Across the Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance pillars, CSOs mobilized financial resources, generated employment, strengthened financial inclusion, supported agricultural transformation, improved access to health and education services, expanded social protection, promoted gender equality and youth empowerment, advanced social cohesion, and strengthened citizen participation.

The assessment further demonstrates that CSOs are not only development actors but also important contributors to Rwanda's economy through employment creation, tax payments, social security contributions, and local economic development. However, the findings also highlight persistent challenges related to financing sustainability, data management, evidence generation, coordination, institutional capacity, and the scaling of successful interventions.

As Rwanda implements NST2 and advances towards the ambitions of Vision 2050, there is an opportunity to build on the achievements of NST1 and further strengthen the contribution of civil society through enhanced partnerships, stronger evidence systems, sustainable financing mechanisms, innovation, and collective action.

The recommendations presented below are organized according to the principal stakeholders responsible for implementation.



Figure 25: Strategic Framework for Strengthening the Contribution of CSOs to NST2 and Vision 2050

12.2 Recommendations for Government Institutions and Public Coordination Structures

The assessment confirms that Government institutions remain the most important strategic partners of civil society organizations. Rwanda has established a strong foundation for Government–CSO collaboration through structures such as the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), sector working groups, policy dialogue platforms, and decentralized planning mechanisms. Under NST2, efforts should focus on strengthening and institutionalizing these mechanisms to improve effectiveness, predictability, and development impact.

Strengthen Government–CSO Partnership Mechanisms

Government institutions should further institutionalize structured engagement with CSOs at national and decentralized levels through:

- Government–CSO dialogue forums each 2-3 years at national and district levels;
- Strengthening the effectiveness of JADF coordination mechanisms;
- Formalizing CSO participation in sector planning and policy review processes;
- Promoting joint planning, implementation, and monitoring of selected NST2 programmes;
- Strengthening the role of RCSP as a strategic coordination and engagement platform.

Strengthen Data, Evidence and Learning Systems

The assessment identified significant opportunities to improve the visibility and measurement of CSO contributions through stronger evidence systems.

Government institutions should:

- Develop harmonized CSO reporting frameworks aligned with NST2 indicators;
- Establish Government–CSO data-sharing protocols;
- Strengthen collaboration among RGB, RRA, RSSB, NISR, sector ministries, and districts;
- Institutionalize periodic reporting on CSO contributions to national development;
- Promote evidence-based planning and policy dialogue.

Promote Sustainable Financing Partnerships

Survey findings indicate that Government grants already constitute one of the most important sources of support for responding CSOs. Building on this foundation, Government should strengthen financing partnerships that support long-term development outcomes.

Priority actions include:

- Establishing partnership financing mechanisms for CSO-led development initiatives;
- Expanding co-financing arrangements between Government institutions and CSOs;
- Promoting domestic philanthropy and corporate social investment;
- Exploring matching grants and innovative financing mechanisms;
- Strengthening Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships (PPCPs).

Scale Successful Development Models

Numerous successful interventions implemented by CSOs remain localized despite demonstrating strong results.

Government institutions should support the scaling of proven models in:

- Financial inclusion and savings groups;
- Youth employment and entrepreneurship;
- Women's economic empowerment;
- Climate-smart agriculture;
- Community health and nutrition;

- Social protection;
- Peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Strengthen the Enabling Environment for Civil Society

Government should continue improving the operational environment for CSOs through:

- Streamlining administrative and compliance procedures;
- Strengthening institutional coordination;
- Enhancing transparency and predictability of engagement processes;
- Supporting organizational capacity development;
- Promoting innovation and digital transformation.

12.3 Recommendations for the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP)

As the umbrella organization representing civil society in Rwanda, RCSP has a critical role to play in strengthening coordination, learning, advocacy, and sector-wide visibility under NST2.

RCSP should prioritize the establishment of a sector-wide monitoring and reporting framework that tracks CSO contributions to national development priorities. Building on the findings of this assessment, RCSP should institutionalize the production of periodic State of Civil Society reports to document the economic, social, and governance contributions of the sector.

To strengthen collective action and knowledge sharing, RCSP should:

- Strengthen coordination among national, thematic, district, and faith-based platforms;
- Establish a civil society knowledge management and learning hub;
- Facilitate peer learning and dissemination of successful practices;
- Support research, evidence generation, and policy analysis;
- Promote joint advocacy on issues affecting the sector;
- Strengthen institutional capacity support for member organizations.

These efforts will contribute to a more coordinated, evidence-driven, and influential civil society sector capable of supporting the implementation of NST2 and Vision 2050.

12.4 Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations

The assessment demonstrates that CSOs remain among Rwanda's most important development actors. To sustain and expand their contribution under NST2, organizations should continue investing in institutional strengthening, sustainability, innovation, and strategic partnerships.

Strengthen Leadership, Governance and Institutional Effectiveness

Strong leadership and governance systems are essential for enhancing organizational credibility, accountability, sustainability, and development impact. As the civil society sector becomes increasingly important in supporting national development priorities, organizations should invest in strengthening governance structures and leadership capacities.

CSOs should therefore:

- Strengthen the effectiveness and oversight role of Boards of Directors and governing bodies;
- Promote strategic leadership, succession planning, and institutional continuity;
- Enhance governance policies, internal controls, and accountability mechanisms;
- Strengthen risk management, compliance, and ethical standards;
- Improve transparency and stakeholder accountability through regular reporting and disclosure;
- Invest in leadership development for executive teams, managers, and emerging leaders;

- Promote diversity, gender balance, and inclusion in leadership and governance structures;
- Strengthen organizational planning, performance management, and results-based decision-making.

Strengthen Institutional Sustainability

Dependence on external funding remains one of the most significant challenges facing the sector. CSOs should therefore strengthen their financial resilience by:

- Diversifying funding sources;
- Expanding self-generated income initiatives;
- Developing social enterprise and impact-oriented business models;
- Strengthening resource mobilization capacities;
- Improving financial management and sustainability planning.

Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Systems

Improved evidence generation is essential for accountability, resource mobilization, policy influence, and organizational learning.

CSOs should:

- Invest in monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems;
- Strengthen impact measurement and results-based management;
- Improve data quality and reporting systems;
- Document good practices and lessons learned;
- Promote knowledge management and organizational learning.

Strengthen Partnerships and Collective Action

The assessment consistently demonstrates that collaboration enhances effectiveness and development impact.

CSOs should:

- Increase participation in RCSP and other coordination platforms;
- Promote consortium and joint implementation approaches;
- Strengthen collaboration with Government institutions and districts;
- Expand partnerships with academia and research institutions;
- Develop stronger linkages with private sector actors;
- Share knowledge, expertise, and resources.

Scale High-Impact Development Interventions

Emphasis should be placed on expanding interventions that demonstrated strong results during NST1, including:

- Financial inclusion and savings groups;
- Youth employment and entrepreneurship;
- Women's economic empowerment;
- Agricultural transformation and food security;
- Climate resilience and environmental sustainability;
- Social protection and community resilience;
- Community health and nutrition;
- Peacebuilding and social cohesion.

Accelerate Digital Transformation and Innovation

Emerging development challenges require more adaptive and innovative approaches.

CSOs should:

- Adopt digital tools for programme management and service delivery;
- Strengthen digital literacy among staff and beneficiaries;
- Improve data collection and reporting systems;
- Utilize technology for citizen engagement and accountability;
- Promote innovation and adaptive programming.

Deepen Inclusion and Leave No One Behind Approaches

CSOs should continue mainstreaming cross-cutting priorities across all interventions, particularly:

- Gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Youth inclusion and leadership development;
- Disability inclusion;
- Climate change adaptation and resilience;
- Social cohesion and reconciliation;
- Support to vulnerable and marginalized populations.

12.5 Recommendations for Development Partners

Development partners remain critical enablers of Rwanda's civil society ecosystem and have played an important role in supporting the achievements documented under NST1.

Future support should increasingly focus on strengthening institutional sustainability and local ownership rather than solely financing individual projects.

Development partners should:

- Provide longer-term and more flexible financing arrangements;
- Support institutional strengthening and organizational development;
- Invest in monitoring, evaluation, learning, and evidence systems;
- Support innovation and scaling of successful models;
- Promote localization and leadership by national CSOs;
- Encourage collaborative and consortium-based approaches;
- Support knowledge sharing and learning across the sector.

These interventions will contribute to a stronger, more resilient, and sustainable civil society sector.

12.6 Recommendations for the Private Sector

The assessment identified significant opportunities for stronger collaboration between civil society organizations and private sector actors, particularly in areas related to entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, skills development, and job creation.

Private sector institutions and the Private Sector Federation should strengthen engagement with CSOs through:

- Entrepreneurship and MSME development programmes;
- Apprenticeships, internships, and workforce readiness initiatives;
- Financial inclusion and access-to-finance programmes;
- Social enterprise and impact investment initiatives;
- Climate-smart agriculture and value-chain development programmes;

- Digital innovation and technology partnerships;
- Corporate social responsibility and social investment programmes.

Such partnerships will contribute to more inclusive economic growth while strengthening opportunities for women, youth, and vulnerable populations.

12.7 Strategic Recommendation

The overarching lesson emerging from this assessment is that Rwanda's greatest development gains are achieved when Government institutions, civil society organizations, development partners, private sector actors, and communities work collaboratively towards shared objectives.

As Rwanda advances the implementation of NST2 and pursues the aspirations of Vision 2050, the country's development model should increasingly evolve from coordination towards co-creation. This requires stakeholders to move beyond consultation and project-based collaboration toward jointly designing, implementing, monitoring, financing, and learning from development interventions.

A strengthened whole-of-society approach should be built around:

- Shared accountability for development results;
- Evidence-based decision-making;
- Sustainable financing mechanisms;
- Innovation and digital transformation;
- Strong citizen participation and community ownership;
- Effective Government–CSO partnerships;
- Expanded Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships.

By strengthening these foundations, Rwanda will be better positioned to maximize the contribution of civil society to Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance while accelerating progress toward the ambitions of NST2 and Vision 2050.

12.8. Roadmap for Strengthening Civil Society Contribution under NST2 and Vision 2050

The recommendations emerging from this assessment require a phased and coordinated approach to implementation. While Rwanda's civil society sector has demonstrated substantial contributions to national development under NST1, maximizing its contribution under NST2 and Vision 2050 will require continued investments in institutional capacity, leadership and governance, sustainable financing, evidence generation, innovation, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The roadmap presented below provides a strategic pathway for strengthening the contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) over time. It outlines four progressive phases through which the sector can evolve from institutional strengthening and coordination toward innovation, co-creation, and collective impact. The roadmap recognizes that achieving Rwanda's long-term development aspirations will depend on effective collaboration among Government institutions, CSOs, development partners, the private sector, and communities.

ROADMAP FOR STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY CONTRIBUTION UNDER NST2 AND VISION 2050

A progressive pathway to a strong, sustainable and impactful civil society ecosystem for Rwanda's transformation

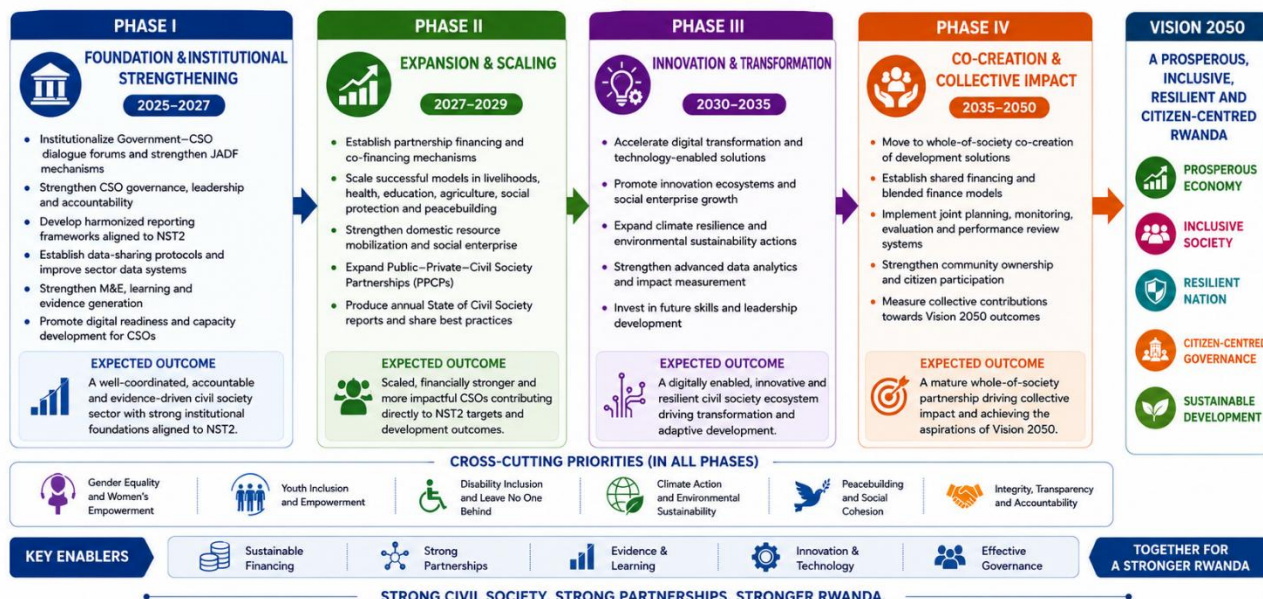


Figure 26: Roadmap for Strengthening Civil Society Contribution under NST2 and Vision 2050

ANNEXES

The annexes provide supplementary evidence, methodological details, and supporting documentation underpinning the findings presented in this report. They are intended to enhance transparency, facilitate verification of results, and provide additional information for policymakers, development partners, researchers, and civil society stakeholders.

Table A1. List of Annexes

Annex	Title	Description
Annex 1	Methodology and Data Sources	Summary of the assessment approach, data collection methods, evidence sources, and triangulation framework.
Annex 2	Participating Institutions and Key Informants	List of institutions consulted and key informants interviewed during the assessment.
Annex 3	Statistical Profile of Responding CSOs	Detailed profile of surveyed organizations, including geographical distribution, thematic focus, and target populations.
Annex 4	Detailed Survey Results Tables	Supplementary statistical tables supporting findings presented in Chapters 3–6.
Annex 5	Administrative Data Analysis (RGB, RRA and RSSB)	Detailed analysis of NNGO registry data, fiscal traceability, employment, tax and social contribution trends.
Annex 6	Selected Case Studies and Success Stories	Illustrative examples demonstrating CSO contributions across NST1 pillars.
Annex 7	Strategic Recommendations Matrix	Expanded recommendations indicating lead institutions, supporting actors, timelines, and priorities.
Annex 8	Survey Questionnaire and Key Informant Interview Guides	Data collection instruments used during the assessment.

Annex 1. Methodology and Data Sources

A1.1 Assessment Approach

This assessment adopted a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. The methodology was designed to generate robust evidence on the contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Rwanda's development under the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) (2017–2024), while ensuring triangulation across multiple sources of information.

The assessment framework was guided by the three NST1 pillars:

- Economic Transformation;
- Social Transformation; and
- Transformational Governance.

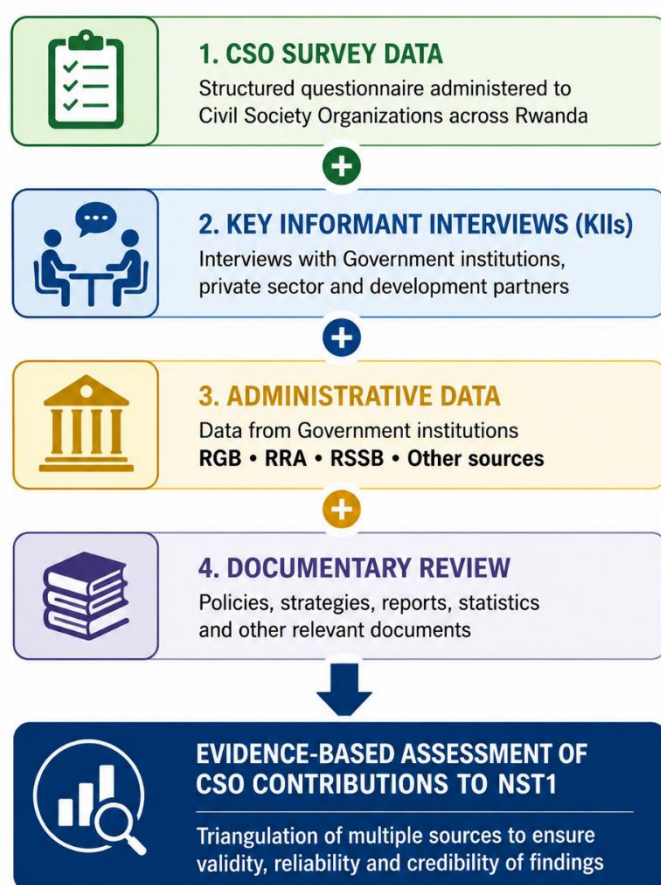
The analysis sought to document not only the activities implemented by CSOs but also their contribution to development outcomes, institutional strengthening, citizen engagement, and national transformation.

A1.2 Evidence Architecture

The assessment relied on four complementary sources of evidence:

Figure A1. Evidence Architecture and Triangulation Framework

Figure A1. Evidence Architecture and Triangulation Framework



A1.3 Primary Data Collection

CSO Survey

A structured questionnaire was administered to Civil Society Organizations operating across Rwanda. The survey collected information on:

- Organizational characteristics;
- Geographic coverage;
- Financial resources mobilized;

- Employment and human capital;
- Beneficiary outreach;
- Contributions to NST1 priorities;
- Partnerships and collaboration;
- Challenges and lessons learned;
- Strategic perspectives for NST2 and Vision 2050.

Survey data constituted the primary source of quantitative evidence presented throughout the report.

Key Informant Interviews (KIs)

Key Informant Interviews were conducted with representatives of Government institutions and strategic stakeholders to validate survey findings and capture institutional perspectives on the contribution of CSOs.

Institutions consulted included:

- Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC);
- Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE);
- Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI);
- Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA);
- Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA);
- Rwanda Governance Board (RGB);
- Private Sector Federation (PSF);
- Other relevant stakeholders.

The KIs provided qualitative insights on sector achievements, partnership dynamics, challenges, and future opportunities.

A1.4 Administrative Data Analysis

To complement survey findings, administrative records from Government institutions were analyzed.

Rwanda Governance Board (RGB)

Data from the National Non-Governmental Organization Registry were used to establish:

- Number of registered organizations;
- Geographic distribution;
- Thematic areas of intervention;
- Alignment with NST1 pillars.

Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA)

Administrative records from the Rwanda Revenue Authority were used to assess the fiscal footprint of the civil society sector, including:

- Tax compliance trends;
- Employment declarations;
- PAYE contributions;
- Other tax categories;
- Fiscal traceability of registered organizations.

Administrative data provided an independent source of evidence for validating the economic contribution of CSOs.

A1.5 Documentary Review

A comprehensive review of national policies, strategies, reports, and sector documents was undertaken to contextualize findings and align the analysis with national development priorities.

Key documents reviewed included:

- Vision 2050;
- National Strategy for Transformation (NST1);

- NST2 Framework;
- Rwanda Governance Scorecards;
- National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) publications;
- Sector strategic plans and annual reports;
- Government policy documents;
- Previous studies and evaluations related to civil society and development.

A1.6 Data Analysis and Triangulation

Data analysis combined descriptive statistics, thematic analysis, and evidence triangulation.

Survey results were analyzed quantitatively, while qualitative information obtained through KIs and documentary review was coded and synthesized around the major themes of the assessment.

Findings were validated through triangulation across:

- Survey responses;
- Key Informant Interviews;
- Administrative records; and
- Documentary evidence.

This approach enhanced the credibility, consistency, and robustness of the assessment findings.

A1.7 Study Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings:

- The assessment relied partly on self-reported information provided by participating CSOs.
- Survey response rates varied across thematic areas and indicators.
- Administrative records were available only for organizations captured within Government databases.
- Some indicators required aggregation and validation across multiple sources.
- The assessment focused primarily on contribution rather than attribution, recognizing that development outcomes result from the combined efforts of multiple actors.

Despite these limitations, the use of multiple data sources and triangulation techniques provides a reliable basis for assessing the contribution of Civil Society Organizations to Rwanda's development under NST1.

Annex 2. Participating Institutions and Key Informants

The assessment adopted a multi-stakeholder consultation approach to capture perspectives from Government institutions, regulatory agencies, local government authorities, the private sector, social security institutions, and civil society actors. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted to validate survey findings, triangulate evidence, and identify strategic lessons and recommendations for strengthening CSO contributions under NST2 and Vision 2050.

Table A2. Key Informant Interviews Conducted

Institution	Respondent(s)	Position	Key Themes Discussed
Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC)	Mr. Jean Claude Ingabire	Director General, Local Government Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Civic participation, social accountability, JADF coordination, financial inclusion, social protection, citizen–state dialogue
Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE)	Mr. Jean Marie Vianney Habanabakize	Director General, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	Peacebuilding, reconciliation, community healing, resilience, genocide prevention, citizen engagement
Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI)	Dr. Chantal Ingabire	Director General, Planning	Climate-smart agriculture, farmer field schools, cooperative development, food security, agricultural value chains, youth and women agribusiness
Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA)	Mr. Maurice Nsabibaruta	Division Manager, Community Development and Strategy Coordination	Local economic development, livelihoods, poverty reduction, district partnerships, community mobilization
Rwanda Governance Board (RGB)	Ms. Judith Kazaire	Head of Civil Society and Political Organizations Department	Civil society landscape, NGO registration, governance, thematic distribution, coordination mechanisms
Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA)	Research and Planning Department	Institutional Respondents	Fiscal contribution of CSOs, PAYE, tax compliance, employment, fiscal traceability
Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB)	Research and Planning Department	Institutional Respondents	Employment trends, social security coverage, pension contributions, labour market participation
Private Sector Federation (PSF)	Office of the Chief Executive Officer	Institutional Respondents	Entrepreneurship, MSME development, employability, value chains, Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships
Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP)	Ms. Uwantege Kayumba Liliane	Executive Director	Coordination of the civil society sector, contribution to NST1, challenges, opportunities, strategic priorities for NST2
Gasabo District	Ms. Domina Ntakabanoza	JADF Coordinator	District coordination, citizen participation, partnerships with CSOs
Rusizi District	Mr. Theogene Mutarutinya	JADF Coordinator	Local development coordination, community engagement, CSO partnerships
Rulindo District	Ms. Judith Mukanyirigira	Mayor	Local development, agriculture,

			livelihoods, citizen participation
Nyamagabe District	Mr. Hildebrand Niyomwungeri	Mayor	Social protection, community development, coordination with CSOs
Gicumbi District	Mr. Emmanuel Nzabonimpa	Mayor	Agriculture, resilience, youth empowerment, local partnerships
Gatsibo District	Mr. Richard Gasana	Mayor	Community development, livelihoods, social cohesion, collaboration with CSOs
RWAMREC	Ms. Gisèle Umutoniwase	Director of Programs	Programme achievements, gender equality, beneficiaries reached, lessons learned and recommendations
CLADHO	Mr. Evariste Murwanashyaka	Program Manager	Human rights, governance, programme achievements, lessons learned
Duterimbere NGO	Ms. Dativa Mukeshimana; Mr. Wellars Bayingana	Executive Secretary; Project Coordinator	Women's economic empowerment, livelihoods, financial inclusion, institutional experiences
Duterimbere IMF	Mr. Alphonse Ngabonziza	Chief Executive Officer	Financial inclusion, microfinance, entrepreneurship support
DUHAMIC-ADRI	Mr. Benjamin Mugirwa	Executive Secretary	Community development, livelihoods, housing, resilience
Rwanda Women's Network (RWN)	Mr. Jean Paul Bushayija	Program Manager	Gender equality, health, women's empowerment, community resilience
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Rwanda	Mr. Jean Berckmans Harindintwari	Technical Advisor	Youth empowerment, gender equality, leadership development, social inclusion

Summary of Institutional Coverage

Stakeholder Category	Number of Institutions Consulted
Central Government Ministries and Agencies	4
Regulatory and Administrative Institutions	3
Social Security Institution	1
Private Sector Institution	1
Civil Society Coordination Platform	1
District Local Government Authorities	5
Civil Society Organizations	Survey Respondents
Total Institutional Stakeholders Consulted	15+

Geographic Coverage of Local Government Consultations

To ensure territorial representation and capture local perspectives on CSO contributions, consultations included district leadership representing all provinces and the City of Kigali.

Geographic Area Representation

City of Kigali	One District Mayor
Northern Province	One District Mayor
Southern Province	One District Mayor

Geographic Area	Representation
Eastern Province	One District Mayor
Western Province	One District Mayor

Key Value of the Consultations

The consultations provided:

- Validation of survey findings and administrative data;
- National and local government perspectives on CSO contributions to NST1;
- Evidence on sector achievements, challenges, and opportunities;
- Insights on Government–CSO–Private Sector partnerships;
- Perspectives on employment, social protection, governance, and social cohesion;
- Strategic recommendations for strengthening civil society contributions under NST2 and Vision 2050.

The findings from these consultations were triangulated with survey results, administrative records, and documentary evidence to enhance the credibility, reliability, and policy relevance of the assessment.



PARTICIPATING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Responding to the Survey (n = 70)

The following Civil Society Organizations participated in the survey and contributed data to the assessment of CSO contributions to Rwanda's development under NST1 (2017–2024).



70 CSOs

from diverse thematic areas contributed to the survey.

SURVEY CONDUCTED: June 2026



1. GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS, PEACEBUILDING & SOCIAL COHESION

- 1 Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda (CLADHO)
- 2 Never Again Rwanda
- 3 Transparency International Rwanda
- 4 Safer Rwanda
- 5 Tubibe Amahoro Association
- 6 Collectif des Artisans de Paix et la Réconciliation
- 7 AJPRODHO-Igijihozo
- 8 Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP)
- 9 Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (CCOAB)
- 10 Rwanda Organizational of Trauma Counsellors



2. GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

- 11 Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe
- 12 Haguruka
- 13 Association de Solidarité des Femmes Rwandaises (ASOFERWA)
- 14 Initiative pour la Promotion de la Famille et du Genre (IPFG)
- 15 Réseau de Développement des Femmes Pauvres
- 16 Association Rwandaises des Travailleurs Chrétiens Féminins
- 17 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA Rwanda)
- 18 Rwanda Women Network (RWN)
- 19 Forum for African Women Educationalists Rwanda (FAWE Rwanda)
- 20 Avega Agahozo



3. DISABILITY INCLUSION & VULNERABLE GROUPS

- 21 Umbrella of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS and Health Promotion
- 22 Rwanda Organization of Persons with Deaf-Blindness
- 23 Rwanda Organization of Persons with Physical Disabilities and Wheelchair Users
- 24 Rwanda Union of the Blind
- 25 Organisation d'Intégration et de Promotion des Personnes Atteintes d'Albinisme
- 26 Association Générale des Handicapés du Rwanda
- 27 RECOPDO
- 28 APVD – Association for Promotion of Vulnerable in Development



4. EDUCATION, YOUTH & HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

- 29 Rwanda Education for All Coalition (REFAC)
- 30 Rwanda Youth Organization Forum (RYAF)
- 31 Rwanda Scouts Association
- 32 Association des Guides du Rwanda
- 33 Akazi Kanoze Access
- 34 Uwezo Youth Empowerment
- 35 The Future in Our Minds Rwanda
- 36 Mission des Jeunes pour Christ Internationale
- 37 Komera Project
- 38 Sapienswise Organisation



5. AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

- 39 Association de Jeunesse en Matière Agricole et Culturelle
- 40 Reinforcement of Developing Initiatives in Rural Environment
- 41 Rural Development Initiative
- 42 Friends of Environment and Social Development
- 43 Ubutabera n'Amayambere y'Icyaro
- 44 Association Rwandaises pour la Promotion du Développement Intégré
- 45 Rwanda Organization for Development Initiatives
- 46 Indes-Formation Rwanda
- 47 Rwanda Climate Change and Development Network
- 48 Rural Environment and Development Organization



6. HEALTH, SOCIAL PROTECTION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- 49 African Evangelistic Enterprise
- 50 Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative
- 51 Beningnauwe Organization
- 52 Duterimbere ONG
- 53 Seruka
- 54 Faith Victory Association
- 55 Caritas Gikongoro
- 56 ADREES
- 57 Mbwirindumva Initiative
- 58 Coalition Umwana ku Isonga
- 59 Beinhayika
- 60 Igijihozo Association
- 61 ActionAid Rwanda
- 62 Association Rwandaise pour l'Éducation et le Développement Communautaire
- 63 Association pour le Développement et la Transformation Sociale
- 64 Strive Foundation Rwanda
- 65 Afro Ark

OUR COLLECTIVE STRENGTH

These 70 organizations represent the diversity, commitment and expertise of Rwanda's civil society in advancing inclusive and sustainable development.



70

Civil Society Organizations participated in the survey



Nationwide Reach

Representing national, provincial and local levels



Diverse Thematic Areas

Covering governance, social, economic and environmental development



Stronger Together

Working collectively for Rwanda's transformation and Vision 2050

SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

● Governance, Human Rights & Peacebuilding	10
● Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment	10
● Disability Inclusion & Vulnerable Groups	8
● Education & Youth Development	10
● Agriculture, Environment & Economic Transformation	15
● Health, Social Protection & Community Development	17

TOTAL RESPONDING CSOs

70



These organizations play a vital role in building resilient communities, promoting inclusion, protecting rights, creating opportunities and contributing to Rwanda's development agenda.

Data Source: Survey, June 2026

Annex 4. Detailed Survey Results Tables

A4.1 Introduction

This annex presents the detailed results of the survey conducted among 70 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in June 2026 as part of the assessment of CSO contributions to Rwanda's development under NST1 (2017–2024). The tables provide the quantitative evidence underpinning the findings presented in the main report and are intended to serve as a reference for policymakers, development partners, researchers, and civil society stakeholders.

A4.2 Survey Dashboard Summary

Table A4.1: Key Survey Highlights

Indicator	Result
Responding CSOs	70
Survey Period	June 2026
Provinces Covered	All Provinces and Kigali City
Jobs Created	389,505
Paid Staff Employed	2,103
Volunteers Mobilized	12,974
Trainees Supported	409,788
Farmers Supported	4,300,359

A4.3 Profile of Responding Organizations

Table A4.2: Sources of Funding Reported by Responding CSOs

Source of Funding	CSOs	Percentage (%)
International NGOs	34	26.98
Government Grants	21	16.67
Membership Fees	17	13.49
Foundations & Philanthropy	17	13.49
Self-Generated Income	16	12.70
Bilateral Donors	9	7.14
Multilateral Donors	9	7.14
Other Donors	3	2.38
Total	126	100

Table A4.3: Network and Platform Membership

Platform	CSOs	Percentage (%)
No Formal Membership	26	38.81
RCSP District Platforms	24	35.82
RCSP National Platform	10	14.93
RCSP Faith-Based Platform	2	2.99
Other RCSP Platforms	2	2.99
Other Networks	3	4.46
Total	67	100

Table A4.4: Target Population Groups Served

Target Group	CSOs	Percentage (%)
Women and Girls	52	56.52
Other Groups	28	30.43
Youth	6	6.52
Persons with Disabilities	4	4.35
Rural Communities	2	2.17
Total	92	100

A4.4 Economic Transformation**Table A4.5: Employment Generated by Responding CSOs**

Employment Category	Number
Paid Staff	2,103
Part-Time Staff	295
Volunteers	12,974
Trainees Supported	409,788
Jobs Created	389,505
Temporary / Project Jobs	90,745

Table A4.6: Economic Empowerment Outcomes

Intervention	Beneficiaries	Percentage (%)
Entrepreneurship Support	604,234	57.8
Vocational Training	405,169	38.8
MSMEs Supported	36,044	3.4
Total	1,045,447	100

Table A4.7: Agriculture and Food Security Outcomes

Intervention	Number	Percentage (%)
Farmers Supported	4,300,359	62.5
Agricultural Inputs Beneficiaries	1,716,956	25.0
Climate-Smart Agriculture Adopters	669,706	9.7
Livestock Beneficiaries	168,739	2.5
Cooperatives Supported	24,373	0.4
Total	6,880,133	100

Table A4.8: Financial Inclusion Outcomes

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	547,740	21.0
Female	888,683	34.1
Youth	1,167,094	44.8
Persons with Disabilities	827	0.03
Total	2,604,344	100

Table A4.9: MSME Development Results

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
MSMEs Established	515,226	62.3
MSMEs Expanded	257,032	31.1
MSMEs Strengthened	54,119	6.5
Total MSMEs Supported	826,377	100

Table A4.10: Savings and Credit Mobilization

Indicator	Value
Savings Mobilized	RWF 16,825,230,530
Beneficiaries Accessing Loans	2,477,255
Value of Loans Accessed	RWF 214,236,011,700

Table A4.11: Physical Assets and Infrastructure

Asset Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Office Buildings	20	83.33
Other Physical Assets	3	12.50
Community Centres	1	4.17
Total	24	100

A4.5 Social Transformation**Table A4.12: Health Facilities Supported**

Facility Type	Number	Percentage (%)
Health Facilities Supported	2,256	97.3
Facilities Constructed/Rehabilitated	39	1.7
Facilities Equipped	23	1.0
Total	2,318	100

Table A4.13: Education Outcomes

Intervention	Number	Percentage (%)
ECD Centres Supported	393,082	27.3
School Enrolment Support	390,597	27.1
Learners Supported	362,638	25.1
Scholarships	245,468	17.0
Advocacy & Other Interventions	31,747	2.2
Inclusive Education	8,212	0.6
Teachers Trained	7,495	0.5
Schools/Classrooms Supported	3,028	0.2
Total	1,442,267	100

Table A4.14: Social Protection and Cohesion Interventions

Intervention	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Trauma & Psychosocial Support	16	22.2
Resilience Building	15	20.8
Social Cohesion Promotion	15	20.8
Peacebuilding	14	19.4
Rehabilitation & Reintegration	6	8.3
Other	6	8.3
Total	72	100

Table A4.15: Gender Equality Outcomes

Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)
Women & Girls Empowered	3,005,279	96.2
GBV Victims Supported	87,793	2.8
GBV Prevention Activities	30,866	1.0
Total	3,123,938	100

Table A4.16: Social Inclusion Outcomes

Category	Number
Vulnerable Individuals/Households Supported	6,040,732
Male Beneficiaries	3,227,831
Female Beneficiaries	2,900,645
Youth Beneficiaries	4,049,345
Persons with Disabilities	1,737
Elderly Persons	7,503

Table A4.17: Youth Empowerment Outcomes

Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)
Literacy / Digital Literacy / Life Skills	212,124	51.5
TVET / Skills Development	199,891	48.5
Total	412,015	100

A4.6 Transformational Governance**Table A4.18: Civic Participation Outcomes**

Indicator	Number
Total Participants	1,329,132
Male	599,964
Female	729,168
Youth	665,559
Persons with Disabilities	1,249

Table A4.19: Governance and Accountability Areas

Area	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Citizen Participation	9	13.43
Policy Advocacy	6	8.96
Civic Education	5	7.46
Peacebuilding	5	7.46
Accountability	4	5.97
Human Rights	4	5.97
Transparency	3	4.48
Legal Aid	2	2.99
Unity & Reconciliation	2	2.99
Anti-Corruption	1	1.49

Table A4.20: Legal Aid and Human Rights Outcomes

Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)
Human Rights Education Beneficiaries	272,462	96.15
Legal Aid Beneficiaries	9,993	3.53
Human Rights Awareness Campaigns	905	0.32
Total	283,360	100

Table A4.21: Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Outcomes

Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)
Peacebuilding Beneficiaries	46,091	98.63
Community Dialogues / Mediation Sessions	643	1.37
Total	46,734	100
Indicator	Number	Percentage (%)

A4.7 Cross-Cutting Priorities**Table A4.22: Mainstreamed Cross-Cutting Themes**

Theme	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment	34	19.43
Youth Inclusion & Empowerment	31	17.71
Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience	25	14.29
Disability Inclusion	25	14.29
Social Inclusion	22	12.57
Environmental Sustainability	20	11.43
Peacebuilding & Social Cohesion	17	9.71
Other	1	0.57
Total	175	100

A4.8 Partnerships and Coordination**Table A4.23: Partnerships Reported by Responding CSOs**

Partner Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government Ministries/Grants	37	44.55
International NGOs	34	26.98
District Authorities	23	34.33
Development Partners	21	31.34
Foundations & Philanthropy	17	13.49

A4.9 Challenges and Lessons Learned**Table A4.24: Main Challenges Reported by Responding CSOs**

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
COVID-19 Impacts	29	43.28
Coordination Issues	27	40.30
Data Collection Challenges	25	37.31
Limited Community Participation	15	22.39
Regulatory Barriers	12	17.91

A4.10 Survey Respondent Directory

Table A4.25: List of Participating Civil Society Organizations (n = 70)

Thematic Clusters

1. Governance, Human Rights, Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion
2. Gender Equality, Women and Family Development
3. Disability Inclusion and Vulnerable Groups
4. Education, Youth and Human Capital Development
5. Agriculture, Environment and Economic Transformation
6. Health, Social Protection and Community Development

The complete list of responding organizations is presented in Table A4.25., Annex-3

Annex 5. Administrative Data Analysis (RGB, RRA and RSSB)

This annex presents findings derived from administrative records obtained from the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) and the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA). These datasets provide an independent evidence base for validating survey findings and assessing the organizational footprint, fiscal visibility, employment contribution, and tax contribution of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in Rwanda.

Annex 5.1 RGB Registry Analysis

The 2026 National Non-Governmental Organization (NNGO) Registry maintained by RGB identified **1,265 registered NNGOs** operating across Rwanda. The registry provides valuable information on the geographic distribution and thematic orientation of the civil society sector.

Table A5.1. Registered NNGOs by Geographic Concentration

District	Number of NNGOs
Gasabo	434
Kicukiro	164
Nyarugenge	163
Musanze	49
Huye	44
Bugesera	41
Rubavu	38
Kamonyi	36
Muhanga	31
Rwamagana	26

The distribution demonstrates a strong concentration of registered organizations within the City of Kigali, particularly in Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge districts, which together account for approximately 60 percent of all registered NNGOs. Nevertheless, organizations are represented across all provinces and districts, reflecting a nationwide civil society presence.

Table A5.2. Dominant Thematic Areas of Registered NNGOs

Theme	Number of Organizations
Social Protection	189
Sport	94
Education	88
Health	56
Agriculture	49
Justice, Reconciliation and Rule of Law	23

The registry suggests that civil society engagement is strongly concentrated in social protection, education, health, agriculture, youth development, and community wellbeing, indicating broad alignment with Rwanda's social and economic development priorities.

Key Insight: The RGB registry confirms the existence of a large and geographically diverse civil society sector comprising 1,265 registered NNGOs, with particularly strong engagement in social protection, education, health, agriculture, and community development.

Annex 5.2 RRA Fiscal Analysis

To assess the economic footprint of the sector, RGB registry records were matched against RRA administrative databases.

Table A5.3. Fiscal Traceability of Registered NNGOs

Indicator	Value
Registered NNGOs (RGB Registry)	1,265
NNGOs Matched with RRA Records	429
Fiscal Traceability Rate	33.9%

Approximately one-third of registered NNGOs were identifiable within the RRA database, creating a fiscally traceable subset that provides valuable insights into the formal economic contribution of Rwanda's civil society sector.

Employment Contribution

Administrative records indicate that the fiscally traceable segment of the sector generated substantial employment opportunities.

Table A5.4. Employment Trends among Fiscally Traceable NNGOs

Year	Total Employees
2020	5,185
2021	5,818
2022	6,053
2023	6,703
2024	7,319
2025*	7,214

*Based on available administrative records.

The number of employees increased steadily during the period, demonstrating the growing role of civil society organizations as employers and contributors to human capital development.

PAYE Contributions

Table A5.5. PAYE Contributions by Fiscally Traceable NNGOs

Year	Number of NNGOs Remitting PAYE	PAYE Paid (RWF)
2020	198	5.39 billion
2021	214	5.95 billion
2022	230	6.49 billion
2023	241	7.27 billion
2024	265	8.27 billion
2025*	288	8.96 billion

The increasing number of organizations remitting PAYE and the growth in total PAYE contributions demonstrate the expanding fiscal footprint of the civil society sector.

Overall Tax Contributions

Table A5.6. Total Taxes Paid by Fiscally Traceable NNGOs

Year	Number of Taxpaying NNGOs	Total Taxes Paid (RWF)
2019	187	19.06 Billion
2020	203	17.44 Billion
2021	222	22.98 Billion
2022	245	9.77 Billion
2023	262	10.49 Billion
2024	289	12.80 Billion
2025*	323	18.15 Billion
2026*	288	7.01 Billion

*Partial-year administrative records.

Key Insight: Administrative records demonstrate that civil society organizations are not only development partners but also important contributors to Rwanda's formal economy through employment creation, tax compliance, and domestic resource mobilization.

Annex 5.3 Detailed Tax Contribution Tables

Table A5.7. Principal Tax Categories Paid by NNGOs (Cumulative 2019–2026)

Tax Category	Strategic Interpretation
PAYE	Largest source of tax contribution, reflecting employment creation and formal labour market participation.
WOP – Service Fees	Demonstrates procurement activity and engagement with service providers.
PAYE Quarterly	Additional evidence of payroll-related compliance.
Corporate Income Tax (CIT) and Prepayments	Indicates taxable income-generating activities among some organizations.
VAT and VAT Quarterly	Reflects participation in taxable economic transactions.
Other Withholding Taxes	Demonstrates compliance with statutory obligations.

Composition of Tax Contributions

Analysis of cumulative tax payments shows that:

- **PAYE constitutes the largest share of tax contributions;**
- **Withholding tax on service fees (WOP-Service Fees)** represents the second-largest category;
- Other taxes collectively account for a relatively small proportion of total payments.

Table A5.8. Taxpayer Participation Trends

Indicator	2019	2026
Organizations Paying Taxes	187	288
Organizations Remitting PAYE	171	251
Organizations Paying WOP-Service Fees	76	130

The growing number of organizations appearing in tax records suggests increasing formalization and fiscal participation within the sector.

Overall Conclusion: The combined RGB and RRA administrative datasets provide strong evidence that Rwanda's civil society sector extends beyond traditional development programming. The fiscally traceable

subset of 429 NGOs generated substantial employment, contributed significantly to domestic tax revenues, and maintained increasing levels of participation within Rwanda's formal economy. These findings reinforce the position of CSOs as both development partners and economic actors contributing to the achievement of national development objectives under NST1.

Annex 5.3 RSSB Raw Data

Pension							
Year	Active CSOs	Employees Covered	Female Employees	Male Employees	Employer Contributions (RWF)	Employee Contributions (RWF)	Total Contributions (RWF)
2017	158	1,347	2,289	3,636	419,135,384	419,135,384	838,270,768
2018	179	1,414	2,281	3,695	494,642,807	494,642,807	989,285,615
2019	184	1,821	2,518	4,339	553,971,057	553,971,057	1,107,942,115
2020	200	1,911	2,691	4,602	530,643,231	530,643,231	1,061,286,462
2021	218	2,126	3,066	5,192	673,309,749	673,309,749	1,346,619,498
2022	233	2,465	3,486	5,951	803,079,473	803,079,473	1,606,158,946
2023	252	2,646	3,551	6,197	922,196,939	922,196,939	1,844,393,878
2024	279	2,915	3,827	6,742	1,133,130,792	1,133,130,792	2,266,261,585
Grand Total	305	5,268	7,292	12,560	5,530,109,433	5,530,109,433	11,060,218,866
Maternity Leave							
Year	Active CSOs	Employees Covered	Female Employees	Male Employees	Employer Contributions (RWF)	Employee Contributions (RWF)	Total Contributions (RWF)
2017	158	1,347	2,289	3,636	41,913,538	41,913,538	83,827,077
2018	179	1,414	2,281	3,695	49,464,281	49,464,281	98,928,561
2019	184	1,821	2,518	4,339	55,397,106	55,397,106	110,794,212
2020	200	1,911	2,691	4,602	53,064,323	53,064,323	106,128,646
2021	218	2,126	3,066	5,192	67,330,975	67,330,975	134,661,950
2022	233	2,465	3,486	5,951	80,307,947	80,307,947	160,615,895
2023	252	2,646	3,551	6,197	92,219,694	92,219,694	184,439,388
2024	279	2,915	3,827	6,742	113,313,079	113,313,079	226,626,158
Grand Total	305	5,268	7,292	12,560	553,010,943	553,010,943	1,106,021,887
Occupational Hazards							
Year	Active CSOs	Employees Covered	Female Employees	Male Employees	Employer Contributions (RWF)	Employee Contributions (RWF)	Total Contributions (RWF)
2017	158	1,347	2,289	3,636	279,423,589		279,423,589
2018	179	1,414	2,281	3,695	329,761,872		329,761,872
2019	184	1,821	2,518	4,339	369,314,038		369,314,038
2020	200	1,911	2,691	4,602	353,762,154		353,762,154
2021	218	2,126	3,066	5,192	448,873,166		448,873,166
2022	233	2,465	3,486	5,951	535,386,315		535,386,315
2023	252	2,646	3,551	6,197	614,797,959		614,797,959
2024	279	2,915	3,827	6,742	755,420,528		755,420,528
Grand Total	305	5,268	7,292	12,560	3,686,739,622		3,686,739,622
All together							
Year	Active CSOs	Employees Covered	Female Employees	Male Employees	Employer Contributions (RWF)	Employee Contributions (RWF)	Total Contributions (RWF)
2017	158	1,347	2,289	3,636	740,472,512	461,048,923	1,201,521,435
2018	179	1,414	2,281	3,695	873,868,960	544,107,088	1,417,976,048
2019	184	1,821	2,518	4,339	978,682,201	609,368,163	1,588,050,364
2020	200	1,911	2,691	4,602	937,469,708	583,707,554	1,521,177,262
2021	218	2,126	3,066	5,192	1,189,513,890	740,640,724	1,930,154,614
2022	233	2,465	3,486	5,951	1,418,773,735	883,387,420	2,302,161,155
2023	252	2,646	3,551	6,197	1,629,214,592	1,014,416,633	2,643,631,226
2024	279	2,915	3,827	6,742	2,001,864,400	1,246,443,871	3,248,308,271
Grand Total	305	5,268	7,292	12,560	9,769,859,999	6,083,120,377	15,852,980,375

* 305 are sampled CSOs for the purpose of this study

Annex 6. Selected Case Studies and Success Stories

Introduction

The following case studies illustrate selected examples of how Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) contributed to Rwanda's development under NST1 (2017–2024). While not exhaustive, they highlight the diversity of civil society interventions and demonstrate how community-based approaches complemented Government efforts across the Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance pillars.

The cases were selected based on evidence gathered through the survey, Key Informant Interviews, administrative data, and stakeholder consultations.

Case Study 1.: Expanding Financial Inclusion through Community Savings Groups

The Challenge: Many rural households, particularly women and youth, continued to face barriers in accessing formal financial services, savings opportunities, and affordable credit.

CSO Response: Civil Society Organizations supported the establishment and strengthening of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILCs), financial literacy programmes, and entrepreneurship initiatives.

Results

- 2.6 million individuals gained access to formal financial services.
- More than 2.4 million beneficiaries accessed loans and credit.
- RWF 16.8 billion in savings was mobilized.
- RWF 214.2 billion in loans and credit was accessed.
- Women and youth accounted for the majority of beneficiaries.

Why It Matters

Community-based financial inclusion models emerged as one of the most successful mechanisms for improving household resilience, promoting entrepreneurship, supporting women's empowerment, and reducing poverty.

NST1 Pillar: Economic Transformation

Case Study 2.: Strengthening Agricultural Productivity and Food Security

The Challenge: Smallholder farmers continued to face challenges related to productivity, climate variability, market access, and food security.

CSO Response: CSOs implemented farmer training programmes, climate-smart agriculture initiatives, agricultural input support, cooperative strengthening, livestock programmes, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture interventions.

Results

- 4.3 million farmers supported.
- 1.7 million beneficiaries accessed agricultural inputs.
- 669,706 farmers adopted climate-smart agriculture practices.
- More than 24,000 cooperatives received support.

Why It Matters

The interventions improved agricultural productivity, strengthened food security, enhanced climate resilience, and increased incomes among rural households.

NST1 Pillar: Economic Transformation

Case Study 3.: Advancing Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

The Challenge: Women continued to face barriers to economic participation, leadership opportunities, financial inclusion, and protection from gender-based violence.

CSO Response: Organizations implemented savings groups, entrepreneurship programmes, leadership development initiatives, financial literacy training, advocacy campaigns, and GBV prevention and response interventions.

Results

- More than 3 million women and girls empowered.
- Nearly 88,000 GBV survivors supported.
- More than 30,000 GBV prevention and awareness interventions conducted.
- Women represented a significant share of financial inclusion beneficiaries.

Why It Matters

The interventions strengthened women's economic participation, improved access to opportunities and resources, and contributed to gender-responsive development.

NST1 Pillar: Social Transformation

Case Study 4.: Promoting Peacebuilding, Reconciliation and Social Cohesion

The Challenge: Sustaining national unity, healing trauma, and strengthening social cohesion remain long-term priorities in post-genocide Rwanda.

CSO Response: CSOs, Faith-Based Organizations, and community groups implemented reconciliation programmes, psychosocial support initiatives, community dialogues, mediation sessions, trauma healing activities, and resilience-building interventions.

Results

- More than 46,000 beneficiaries reached through peacebuilding and reconciliation programmes.
- Hundreds of community dialogue and mediation sessions conducted.
- Significant contributions to trauma healing, resilience building, and social cohesion.

Why It Matters

Civil society organizations played a unique role in supporting reconciliation, rebuilding trust, and strengthening peaceful coexistence at community level.

NST1 Pillar: Transformational Governance

Case Study 5.: Strengthening Citizen Participation and Social Accountability

The Challenge: Citizen participation and accountability are essential for responsive governance and effective service delivery.

CSO Response: CSOs facilitated civic education, public dialogues, community scorecards, citizen report cards, policy advocacy initiatives, legal aid programmes, and citizen engagement forums.

Results

- More than 1.3 million citizens participated in governance and civic engagement activities.
- Enhanced citizen participation in local planning and development processes.
- Strengthened feedback mechanisms between citizens and public institutions.
- Improved awareness of rights, responsibilities, and public accountability.

Why It Matters

The interventions strengthened participatory governance, enhanced accountability, and reinforced citizen ownership of development processes.

NST1 Pillar: Transformational Governance

Key Lessons Emerging from the Case Studies

The five case studies demonstrate that CSOs are most effective when they:

- Work in close partnership with Government institutions and communities;
- Apply community-based and people-centred approaches;

- Integrate economic, social, and governance interventions;
- Target vulnerable and underserved populations;
- Combine service delivery with empowerment and capacity development;
- Strengthen citizen participation, resilience, and local ownership.

Collectively, these experiences illustrate the significant value added by Rwanda's civil society sector and provide practical examples that can be scaled and replicated under NST2 and Vision 2050.

Annex 7. ROADMAP FOR STRENGTHENING CSO CONTRIBUTION UNDER NST2 AND VISION 2050

Phase I: Foundation and Institutional Strengthening (2026–2027)

Strategic Objective: Strengthen governance systems, institutional capacity, coordination mechanisms, and evidence systems required for effective CSO engagement under NST2.

Strategic Area	Key Actions	Lead Stakeholders	Expected Outcome
Government–CSO Coordination	Institutionalize annual Government–CSO dialogue forums and strengthen JADF mechanisms	MINALOC, RGB, Districts, RCSP	Improved coordination and policy engagement
Data and Evidence Systems	Develop harmonized reporting frameworks and data-sharing protocols	RGB, NISR, RRA, RSSB, RCSP	Improved visibility and measurement of CSO contributions
RCSP Strengthening	Establish sector-wide monitoring framework and knowledge hub	RCSP	Stronger sector coordination and learning
Leadership and Governance	Strengthen Boards, leadership systems, internal controls and accountability mechanisms	CSOs, RCSP	Improved organizational effectiveness and credibility
Monitoring and Evaluation	Strengthen impact measurement and reporting systems	CSOs, Development Partners	Enhanced evidence-based programming

Key Milestone by End of 2027: A coordinated, accountable, and evidence-driven civil society sector aligned with NST2 priorities.

Phase II: Expansion and Scaling (2027–2029)

Strategic Objective: Scale successful development models, strengthen partnerships, and improve the financial sustainability of the civil society sector.

Strategic Area	Key Actions	Lead Stakeholders	Expected Outcome
Sustainable Financing	Establish partnership financing mechanisms and co-financing arrangements	MINECOFIN, Government Institutions, Development Partners	More sustainable CSO financing
Resource Mobilization	Promote domestic philanthropy and social enterprise models	CSOs, Private Sector, RCSP	Reduced dependence on external funding
Economic Transformation	Scale youth employment, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and agribusiness initiatives	CSOs, Private Sector, Government	Increased jobs and livelihoods
Social Transformation	Expand successful health, education, social protection and gender interventions	CSOs, Government Institutions	Improved human development outcomes
Partnership Development	Strengthen Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships (PPCPs)	Government, PSF, RCSP	Increased collaboration and development impact

Key Milestone by End of 2029: Scaled, financially stronger, and more impactful CSOs contributing directly to NST2 targets.

Phase III: Innovation and Transformation (2030–2035)

Strategic Objective: Position civil society as a leading partner for innovation, resilience, and adaptive development solutions.

Strategic Area	Key Actions	Lead Stakeholders	Expected Outcome
Digital Transformation	Adopt advanced digital systems and technology-enabled service delivery	CSOs, Private Sector, Development Partners	Improved efficiency and outreach
Innovation Ecosystems	Promote innovation labs, social enterprises and digital entrepreneurship	CSOs, Private Sector, Universities	Increased innovation capacity
Climate Resilience	Expand climate-smart and resilience-focused interventions	Government, CSOs, Development Partners	Enhanced environmental sustainability
Advanced Evidence Systems	Strengthen analytics, impact measurement and sector dashboards	RCSP, Government, CSOs	Better decision-making and accountability
Future Skills Development	Invest in digital literacy, leadership and future workforce skills	CSOs, Private Sector, Government	Increased competitiveness and adaptability

Key Milestone by End of 2035: A digitally enabled, innovative and resilient civil society ecosystem supporting Rwanda's transformation agenda.

Phase IV: Co-Creation and Collective Impact (2035–2050)

Strategic Objective: Establish a mature whole-of-society partnership model that maximizes collective impact toward Vision 2050.

Strategic Area	Key Actions	Lead Stakeholders	Expected Outcome
Joint Development Planning	Institutionalize co-design of development programmes	Government, RCSP, CSOs, Private Sector	Stronger ownership and alignment
Shared Financing	Develop collective financing mechanisms and blended finance models	Government, Development Partners, Private Sector	Sustainable long-term financing
Shared Accountability	Implement joint monitoring and performance review systems	All Stakeholders	Enhanced accountability and transparency
Citizen-Centred Development	Strengthen community ownership and participation mechanisms	Government, CSOs, Communities	Increased citizen engagement
Collective Impact Framework	Measure contributions against national Vision 2050 outcomes	Government, RCSP, NISR	Evidence of long-term development impact

Key Milestone by 2050: A mature whole-of-society partnership model where Government, civil society, private sector, development partners, and communities jointly contribute to a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and citizen-centred Rwanda.

Summary Roadmap

Phase	Period	Strategic Focus	Expected Result
Phase I	2025–2027	Foundation and Institutional Strengthening	Strong governance, coordination and evidence systems
Phase II	2027–2029	Expansion and Scaling	Greater impact, partnerships and financial sustainability
Phase III	2030–2035	Innovation and Transformation	Digitally enabled and innovation-driven civil society
Phase IV	2035–2050	Co-Creation and Collective Impact	Whole-of-society partnership supporting Vision 2050

Annex 8. Survey Questionnaire and KII Guides

Annex 8.1 CSO Survey Questionnaire

Purpose of the Survey

The Civil Society Organization (CSO) Survey was developed to collect quantitative and qualitative evidence on the contribution of CSOs to Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) during the period 2017–2024. The survey served as the primary source of organization-level data and was designed to capture information on institutional characteristics, financial investments, employment creation, service delivery, beneficiary reach, governance contributions, and lessons learned.

The questionnaire was administered electronically through KoboToolbox and targeted national NGOs, international NGOs, faith-based organizations, networks, platforms, foundations, and community-based organizations operating across Rwanda.

Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of four major sections aligned with the NST1 pillars and the objectives of the assessment.

Section	Content Area	Main Information Collected
Section A	Organizational Profile and Capacity	Organization characteristics, geographic coverage, thematic focus, target populations, funding sources, staffing, volunteers, organizational assets, social enterprises, investments, beneficiaries, financial resources mobilized, and tax contributions.
Section B	Economic Transformation	Employment creation, entrepreneurship, MSME support, agriculture and rural development, financial inclusion, livelihoods, digital literacy, innovation, economic outcomes, and success stories.
Section C	Social Transformation	Health, education, social protection, gender equality, youth development, support to vulnerable populations, social cohesion, peacebuilding, and community resilience interventions.
Section D	Transformational Governance	Civic engagement, citizen participation, accountability, human rights, governance, national unity, reconciliation, peacebuilding, advocacy, and institutional strengthening.

Key Variables Captured

The questionnaire collected information in the following thematic areas:

Survey Dimension	Key Variables Captured
A. Organizational Characteristics	Year of establishment; Geographic coverage and districts of operation; Network and platform membership; Thematic areas of intervention; Primary target populations; Sources of funding.
B. Institutional Capacity	Number of paid staff; Part-time and project-based personnel; Volunteers and trainees; Gender, youth and disability representation; Employment conditions and contracts.
C. Financial and Economic Footprint	Annual value of projects and programmes implemented; Total development investments during NST1; Physical infrastructure investments; Social enterprises and income-generating activities; Taxes and statutory contributions paid; Expenditure on consultants and service providers.
D. Economic Transformation Outcomes	Jobs created and sustained; Entrepreneurship and MSME support; Vocational and technical skills development; Agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods; Financial inclusion and savings mobilization; Access to credit and financial services; Digital literacy and digital transformation initiatives.
E. Social Transformation Outcomes	Health and nutrition services; Maternal and child health interventions; Education and skills development; Early Childhood Development (ECD); Support to vulnerable groups; Social protection and resilience-building programmes; Community wellbeing and inclusion initiatives.
F. Governance and	Citizen participation and civic engagement; Accountability and transparency

Social Cohesion Outcomes	initiatives; Human rights promotion; National unity and reconciliation; Peacebuilding and conflict prevention; Community dialogue and social cohesion.
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We also had:

Survey Dimension	Key Variables Captured
G. Cross-Cutting Themes	Gender equality and women's empowerment; Youth inclusion and empowerment; Disability inclusion; Social inclusion of vulnerable groups; Environmental sustainability; Climate change adaptation and resilience; Peacebuilding and social cohesion.
H. Open-Ended Questions and Strategic Perspectives	Success stories and notable achievements; Innovative approaches and best practices; Evidence of impact on beneficiaries; Lessons learned during NST1 implementation; Strategic priorities and recommendations for NST2 and Vision 2050.

Use of Survey Data

Survey responses were aggregated and triangulated with Key Informant Interviews, administrative records (RGB, RRA and RSSB), and documentary review. The resulting dataset provided the primary empirical basis for assessing the contribution of Civil Society Organizations to Rwanda's Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Transformational Governance under NST1.

Annex 8.2 Key Informant Interview Guides

Institution	Primary Focus of the Interview Guide	Key Themes Covered
MINALOC	Overall contribution of CSOs to national and local development under NST1	Economic transformation, social transformation, governance, citizen participation, JADF effectiveness, Government–CSO collaboration, enabling environment, NST2 priorities and Vision 2050.
MINAGRI	Contribution of CSOs to agricultural transformation and rural development	Agricultural productivity, food security, farmer capacity building, value chains, climate-smart agriculture, environmental sustainability, livelihoods, Government–CSO collaboration and future agricultural priorities.
MINUBUMWE	Contribution of CSOs to national unity, civic engagement and transformational governance	National unity, reconciliation, social cohesion, civic education, accountability, active citizenship, empowerment of vulnerable groups, Government–CSO collaboration, and priorities for NST2.
LODA	Contribution of CSOs to local development and decentralized service delivery	Local economic development, employment, poverty reduction, social services, citizen participation, accountability, local governance, JADF coordination and district-level partnerships.
Ministry of Health (MoH)	Contribution of CSOs to health and social transformation	Access to health services, maternal and child health, nutrition, disease prevention, community health, health-related social protection, health systems strengthening and Government–CSO partnerships.
Private Sector Federation (PSF)	Contribution of CSOs to economic transformation from a private sector perspective	Entrepreneurship, youth employment, women's economic empowerment, skills development, financial inclusion, support to MSMEs and cooperatives, value chains, private-sector collaboration and future Public–Private–Civil Society Partnerships.
RSSB	Administrative and employment footprint of CSOs	Number of active CSOs contributing to RSSB, employment coverage, gender composition of employees, payroll declarations, employer and employee contributions, and social protection coverage.