



STATE RANKING OF CIVIL SOCIETY REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT IN NIGERIA

Evidence-based ranking of the civic space environment in all 36 states and the FCT.



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2025 Research Report



**State Ranking of Civil Society Regulatory
Environment in Nigeria
The 2025 Research Report**

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This Report is developed to shed light on the challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for an improved civil society operational environment in Nigeria.

Research initiative and data primarily sourced from Civil society networks across all states in Nigeria.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BEP -	Budget and Economic Planning
CAMA -	Companies and Allied Matters Act
CAC -	Corporate Affairs Commission
CBOs -	Community-Based Organizations
CSO -	Civil Society Organization
FBOs -	Faith-Based Organizations
FCT -	Federal Capital Territory
FCTA -	Federal Capital Territory Authority
MDA -	Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
NASS -	National Assembly
NGOs -	Non-Governmental Organizations
OGP -	Open Government Partnership
PWD -	Persons with Disabilities

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It is our hope that this assessment will serve as a valuable resource for **civil society organizations, policymakers, development partners, and government institutions** seeking to strengthen Nigeria's civic space and promote a more enabling regulatory environment for citizen participation, accountability, and sustainable development.

Foreword

Civil society organizations (CSOs) remain indispensable partners in advancing democratic governance, protecting human rights, promoting accountability, and driving sustainable development in Nigeria. Their ability to fulfil these roles, however, is shaped by the legal, administrative, and political environments within which they operate. While the Constitution guarantees fundamental freedoms, the realities experienced by CSOs differ significantly across states, creating uneven opportunities for civic participation, collaboration, and engagement with public institutions.

Recognizing these disparities, Global Rights, with support from the European Union, has over the past three years implemented the project *Strengthening a Community of Practice to Improve the CSO Regulatory Environment in Nigeria*. A central pillar of the project has been the generation of credible evidence to better understand the evolving civic space landscape and support informed policy dialogue. The State Ranking Assessment was developed as part of this effort to provide an objective, comparative analysis of the regulatory environment for civil society across Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

The 2025 State Ranking Assessment builds on previous editions and serves as a practical tool for policymakers, regulators, development partners, and civil society actors to identify progress, understand persistent challenges, and promote reforms that strengthen the enabling environment for civic action.

The findings reveal encouraging examples of states that have created more supportive conditions for civil society, while also highlighting persistent barriers that continue to constrain civic participation in many parts of the country. These differences reinforce the important lesson that an enabling environment for civil society is not created by legislation alone, but through transparent institutions, constructive state–civil society engagement, and sustained commitment to protecting fundamental freedoms.

We hope this report serves as a valuable resource for evidence-based decision-making, constructive dialogue, and collaborative reform, and provides a consistent framework for assessing the civic regulatory environment, identifying priority areas for action, and strengthening policies and practices that enable civil society to thrive.

We express our sincere appreciation to the European Union for its continued support, to the researchers and technical experts who led this assessment, and to the many civil society organizations, regulatory institutions, and stakeholders whose insights and contributions made this report possible. We also acknowledge and applaud the Communities of Practice established under this project. Their active and consistent

engagement has helped shape a more informed and collaborative approach to strengthening civic space in Nigeria.

It is our hope that this civil society ranking report inspires a deeper commitment in stakeholders to support positive reforms, strengthen partnerships, and advance a more resilient, inclusive, and enabling environment for civil society across Nigeria.

Abiodun Baiyewu
Executive Director

Executive Summary

Background

Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a central role in strengthening democratic governance, promoting human rights, advancing social development, and fostering accountability in Nigeria.

Across the country, CSOs support service delivery, engage communities, advocate for policy reforms, and contribute to inclusive development processes.

However, the environment within which CSOs operate varies significantly across Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). State-level legal frameworks, administrative practices, and political environments influence the degree to which civil society actors can organize, advocate, and participate in governance processes.

This report presents the findings of the **2025 State Ranking Mapping Assessment of the CSO Regulatory Environment in Nigeria**, building on earlier baseline and update exercises conducted in previous years. The assessment provides a comparative analysis of the enabling or restrictive nature of civic space at the state level and identifies areas where reforms are needed to strengthen the operational environment for civil society.

The study aims to provide policymakers, development partners, and civil society stakeholders with an evidence-based tool for monitoring civic space and promoting reforms that enhance the enabling environment for CSOs across Nigeria.

Objectives of the Assessment

The 2025 assessment pursued three primary objectives:

1. **Review and update the existing protocol** for assessing the regulatory and operational environment for civil society organizations across Nigerian states.
2. **Conduct a nationwide mapping exercise** to evaluate state-level laws, policies, and practices affecting CSO operations across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.
3. **Produce a comparative state ranking and analytical report** highlighting strengths, gaps, and opportunities for reform in the civic regulatory environment.

The assessment also introduces expanded analytical considerations, including **digital civic space protections, operational autonomy, and protections for human rights defenders**, reflecting evolving challenges facing civil society in Nigeria.

Methodology

The assessment employed a mixed-method analytical approach combining desk review, stakeholder consultations, and structured scoring across a standardized protocol.

The methodology included:

- Review of state laws, policies, and regulatory frameworks affecting CSO registration and operations
- Analysis of administrative practices and enforcement patterns
- Consultation with civil society stakeholders across Nigeria's geopolitical zones
- Application of a scoring framework based on internationally recognized standards on freedom of association and assembly

The scoring protocol assessed each state across seven thematic criteria:

1. Legal Recognition
2. Legal Personality
3. Purposes and Activities
4. Sanctions and Remedies
5. Regulatory Regimes Governing Assemblies
6. Protection of Civic Actors
7. Digital Rights Protection and Electronic Freedoms

Each indicator was scored based on the existence, quality, and implementation of relevant legal frameworks and institutional practices.

Key Findings: Significant Variation Across States

The assessment reveals **substantial disparities in the regulatory environment for civil society across Nigeria's states**. While several states demonstrate relatively enabling frameworks that support civil society engagement, others maintain restrictive regulatory environments characterized by administrative burdens, weak legal protections, or limited safeguards for civic freedoms.

These disparities highlight the growing importance of state-level governance in shaping the civic space landscape in Nigeria.

Table 1: 2025 Overall State Ranking Nigerian Civil Society Operational Environment

RANK	STATE	SCORE **
1	Katsina	112.2
2	Bauchi	112
3	Rivers	110.5
4	Ondo	110.3
5	Kogi	109.2
6	Oyo	102.6
7	Abia	102.6
8	Sokoto	98.9
9	Gombe	98.2
10	Ebonyi	95.9
11	Plateau	96.6
12	Nasarawa	96.6
13	Niger	94.6
14	Taraba	91.6
15	Kwara	86.8

16	Yobe	86.7
17	Delta	86
18	Federal Capital Territory (FCT)	85.7
19	Borno	82.9
20	Kebbi	80.2
21	Kano	77.6
22	Ekiti	79.9
23	Benue	75.2
24	Ogun	77.1
25	Akwa Ibom	75.8
26	Jigawa	74.2
27	Imo	73.8
28	Kaduna	72
29	Enugu	70.6
30	Adamawa	69.3
31	Osun	66.4
32	Lagos	66.1
33	Anambra	56.1
34	Zamfara	50.7
35	Edo	50.1
36	Bayelsa	49.7
37	Cross River	47.6

*** Scores: Level 1 – Developing (less than 80); Level 2 - Moderately developed (80-100); Level 3 – Exemplary (above 100)*

States with Stronger Enabling Environments

A number of states consistently ranked highly across multiple assessment criteria. These states generally demonstrate stronger legal recognition of CSOs, clearer operational frameworks, and comparatively greater protection for civic participation.

Among the states performing strongly across several indicators are:

- Rivers
- Ondo
- Katsina
- Bauchi
- Kogi
- Niger
- Sokoto
- Ebonyi
- Oyo
- Nasarawa

These states tend to exhibit relatively stronger frameworks for CSO operations, including clearer recognition of civil society's public benefit role and more supportive conditions for civic engagement.

States with Moderate Regulatory Environments

A large group of states fall within the **moderate performance category**, where basic legal frameworks exist but implementation gaps, administrative burdens, or inconsistent protections affect the operational environment for CSOs.

States in this category include:

- Lagos
- Ogun
- Kwara
- Delta
- Enugu
- Ekiti
- Imo
- Akwa Ibom
- Kebbi
- Benue

In many of these states, the legal framework formally permits CSO activities but operational challenges remain, particularly in areas such as access to information, administrative transparency, and protection from retaliation.

States with More Restrictive Civic Environments

The assessment also identifies several states where the enabling environment for civil society remains comparatively weak.

These states include:

- Anambra
- Zamfara
- Cross River
- Edo
- Bayelsa
- Osun
- Kano
- Jigawa
- Yobe

In these jurisdictions, CSOs may encounter greater barriers, including limited legal protections, weak safeguards for civic participation, or administrative practices that constrain civil society operations.

Persistent Gaps in Protection Mechanisms

Across many states, the assessment identified **insufficient legal protections against retaliation or reprisals targeting civil society actors**. Although some states have provisions recognizing civic freedoms, enforcement mechanisms remain weak in several jurisdictions.

Protection for **human rights defenders and civic actors participating in peaceful assemblies** also remains inconsistent across the country.

Weak Access to Information Frameworks

Access to public information remains a structural weakness in many states. While the national **Freedom of Information framework** exists, state-level adoption and implementation remain uneven. Limited transparency in government decision-making processes restricts the ability of CSOs to perform effective oversight and accountability functions.

Emerging Challenges in Digital Civic Space

The 2025 assessment continues with **Digital Rights Protection** introduced in the previous year as a key analytical dimension. Digital platforms have become increasingly important tools for civic engagement, advocacy, and public accountability.

The findings show a mixed landscape:

- Several states demonstrate strong protections for digital advocacy and online expression.
- Others lack clear frameworks governing digital civic space or exhibit patterns of online harassment, surveillance, or regulatory uncertainty affecting CSOs.

As civic engagement increasingly shifts to digital platforms, ensuring the protection of online freedoms will become a critical element of sustaining an open civic space.

Policy Implications

The findings of this assessment underscore the need for comprehensive reforms aimed at strengthening the enabling environment for civil society across Nigeria's states.

Key reform priorities include:

- Harmonizing state-level regulatory frameworks affecting CSO operations
- Strengthening legal protections for freedom of association and assembly
- Improving administrative transparency and registration procedures
- Enhancing safeguards against retaliation and harassment targeting CSOs
- Expanding access to public information and open governance mechanisms
- Protecting digital civic space and online advocacy

Strengthening these areas would significantly enhance the ability of civil society to contribute to democratic governance, social development, and citizen participation.

Conclusion

Civil society remains a vital pillar of Nigeria's democratic and development architecture. However, the operational environment for CSOs continues to vary widely across states.

By providing a comparative evidence base on the state-level civic environment, this assessment offers an important tool for policymakers, civil society leaders, and development partners seeking to strengthen civic space in Nigeria.

Sustained reforms aimed at improving regulatory frameworks, strengthening protections for civic actors, and promoting transparency will be essential to ensuring that civil society organizations can continue to play their critical role in advancing inclusive development and democratic governance across Nigeria.

Key Findings at a Glance: 2025 State Ranking of the CSO Regulatory Environment in Nigeria

Scope of the Assessment

This nationwide assessment evaluates the regulatory and operational environment for civil society organizations across **36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)** using a standardized protocol based on international civic space standards.

The assessment examines **seven core dimensions** of civic space:

1. Legal Recognition of CSOs
2. Legal Personality and Registration Procedures
3. Purposes and Activities of CSOs
4. Sanctions and Remedies
5. Regulatory Regimes Governing Peaceful Assembly
6. Protection of Civic Actors and Participants
7. Digital Rights and Online Civic Space

Each state was evaluated using a structured scoring framework that assesses both legal provisions and the practical implementation of civic freedoms.

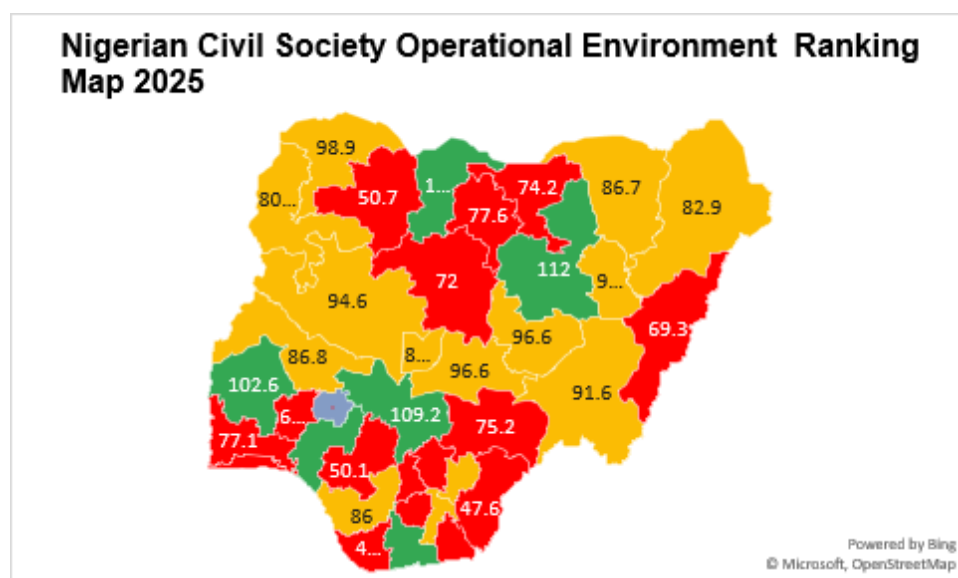


Figure 1: Nigerian Civil Society Operational Environment Ranking Map 2025

Top Performing States (Overall Civic Space Environment)

States that consistently demonstrated **strong enabling environments for CSO operations** across multiple indicators include:

Rivers, Ondo, Katsina, Bauchi, Kogi, Niger, Sokoto, Ebonyi, Oyo, and Nasarawa

These states generally exhibit:

- clearer recognition of the public benefit role of civil society
- stronger operational autonomy for CSOs
- comparatively better protection of civic actors
- relatively supportive digital civic environments

States with Moderate Enabling Environments

Many states fall within a **middle performance tier**, where legal frameworks exist but operational constraints or enforcement gaps affect civic engagement.

Examples include:

Lagos, Ogun, Kwara, Delta, Ekiti, Enugu, Imo, Akwa Ibom, Kebbi, and Benue

Common challenges in these states include:

- inconsistent implementation of regulatory frameworks
- bureaucratic administrative procedures
- limited access to government information
- weak protection against retaliation

States with More Restrictive Civic Environments

Several states demonstrate weaker protections and more constrained civic environments, including:

Anambra, Zamfara, Cross River, Edo, Bayelsa, Osun, Kano, Jigawa, and Yobe

CSOs operating in these states may face:

- limited legal protections
- weak judicial remedies
- restricted civic participation mechanisms
- greater administrative discretion by authorities

Key National Trends

Uneven Civic Space Across States

The regulatory environment for civil society varies widely across Nigeria, reflecting differences in political commitment, legal frameworks, and administrative practices.

Limited Access to Public Information

Many states lack effective **Freedom of Information implementation mechanisms**, limiting transparency and restricting the ability of CSOs to hold public institutions accountable.

Weak Protection Against Retaliation

Several states remain silent on protections for CSOs against reprisals or intimidation, leaving civic actors vulnerable when engaging in advocacy or public oversight.

Inconsistent Protection for Human Rights Defenders

While some states provide safeguards for civic actors, protections for human rights defenders, journalists, and peaceful assembly participants remain uneven across the country.

Emerging Digital Civic Space Challenges

Digital platforms have become central to civic engagement, yet many states lack clear legal frameworks protecting **online advocacy and digital civic freedoms**.

Why This Ranking Matters

The **State Civic Space Ranking** provides an evidence-based tool to:

- Track improvements or declines in civic space over time
- Support policy reforms that strengthen civil society operations
- Encourage healthy competition among states to improve civic environments
- Inform advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening democratic governance

Moving Forward

Improving the enabling environment for civil society in Nigeria requires:

- Harmonization of state-level CSO regulatory frameworks
- Stronger legal safeguards for freedom of association and assembly
- Enhanced transparency and access to public information
- Protection for civic actors and human rights defenders
- Clear protections for digital civic space

Strengthening these areas will enable civil society organizations to continue playing their vital role in democratic governance, development, and citizen participation across Nigeria.



Figure 2: 2025 Overall Ranking Nigerian Civil Society Operational Environment

Executive Summary Dashboard: Trends in the CSO Operational Environment (2023–2025)

Executive Summary Dashboard: CSO Operational Environment Indicators (2023–2025)

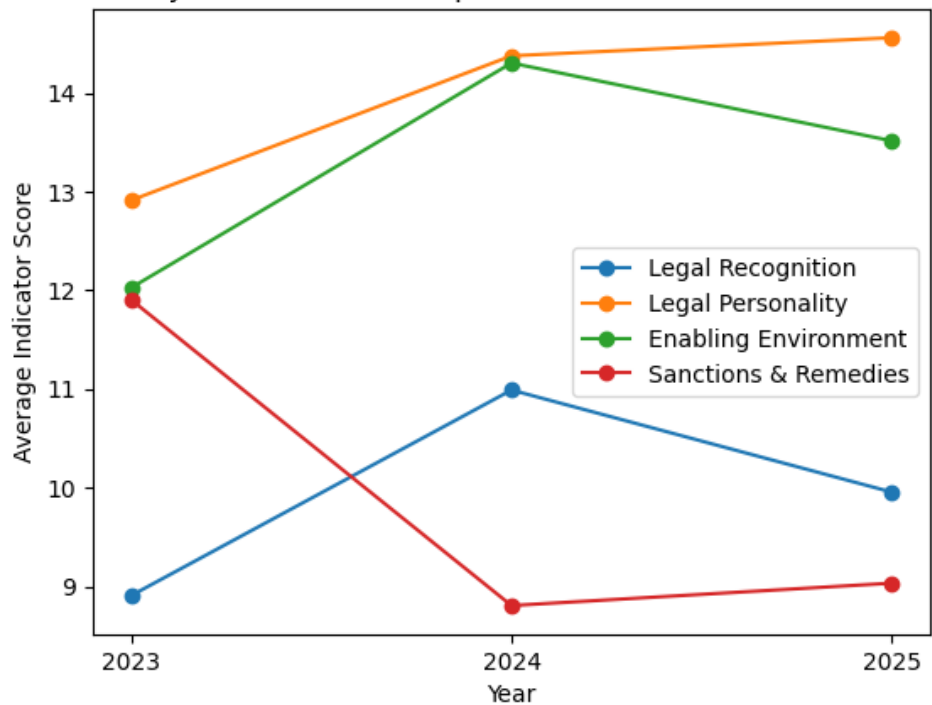


Figure 3: Executive Summary Dashboard: CSO Operational Environment key Indicators (2023-2025)

The Executive Summary Dashboard presents a consolidated view of four key indicators shaping the operational environment for civil society organizations (CSOs) across Nigeria between 2023 and 2025:

1. Legal Recognition
2. Legal Personality
3. Enabling Environment for CSO Activities
4. Sanctions and Remedies Available to CSOs

Overall Trend

The dashboard reveals moderate national progress in strengthening the legal and operational framework for civil society, although improvements are uneven across indicators and states.

Three important patterns emerge:

1. Legal Personality Remains the Strongest Indicator

The legal personality indicator consistently records the highest national scores, **increasing slightly from 2023 to 2025**. This suggests that CSOs in most Nigerian states continue to have relatively strong access to formal legal status and registration mechanisms.

2. Enabling Environment for CSO Activities Improved but Stabilized

The enabling environment indicator improved significantly between 2023 and 2024, reflecting stronger operational space for CSOs in many states. However, the slight moderation in 2025 suggests that gains in civic space remain fragile and sensitive to political and administrative shifts.

3. Legal Recognition Shows Gradual but Uneven Progress

Legal recognition of CSOs improved between 2023 and 2024 but declined slightly in 2025. This suggests that while many states are expanding institutional recognition of civil society actors, regulatory consistency is still evolving.

4. Sanctions and Remedies Remain the Weakest Area

The sanctions and remedies indicator shows the lowest average scores and the greatest volatility across the three-year period. The decline between 2023 and 2024 indicates limited availability of effective mechanisms for CSOs to challenge administrative actions or regulatory restrictions, although a slight improvement appears in 2025.

Strategic Implications

Taken together, the findings suggest that while Nigeria's civil society sector continues to operate within a broadly functional legal framework, several areas require policy attention:

- Strengthening judicial and administrative remedies for CSOs
- Improving consistency in state-level regulatory practices
- Promoting harmonization of CSO regulatory frameworks across states
- Protecting operational space for civil society advocacy and participation

These reforms will be essential for ensuring that the legal recognition of civil society translates into meaningful operational freedom and accountability protections across Nigeria.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a critical role in Nigeria's democratic governance, human rights protection, and socio-economic development. Across the country, CSOs contribute to public policy dialogue, monitor government performance, deliver essential services, mobilize communities, and advocate for inclusive development and social justice.

Nigeria has one of the largest and most dynamic civil society sectors in Africa. Thousands of nonprofit organizations operate at national, state, and community levels, addressing issues such as public health, governance, education, poverty alleviation, humanitarian response, environmental protection, gender equality, and human rights promotion. Through these activities, CSOs serve as an essential bridge between citizens and government institutions.

Despite their important contributions, the environment within which CSOs operate is shaped by a complex and evolving regulatory ecosystem. The ability of civil society actors to organize, mobilize resources, advocate for reforms, and engage citizens depends significantly on the legal and administrative frameworks governing their operations.

At the national level, the principal legal framework regulating nonprofit organizations in Nigeria is the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020, particularly Part F, which governs the registration and regulation of Incorporated Trustees. Under this framework, the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) is responsible for registering nonprofit organizations and overseeing compliance requirements for CSOs operating as incorporated entities.¹

In addition to CAMA, a number of other regulatory instruments and institutional frameworks influence civil society operations. These include:

- Corporate Affairs Commission regulations and administrative procedures
- Financial regulations governing nonprofit organizations, including anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing compliance requirements
- Tax regulations and reporting obligations
- Sector-specific regulations affecting organizations working in areas such as humanitarian response, public health, and education

Beyond federal regulation, civil society organizations also interact extensively with state-level institutions, which often impose additional administrative procedures, registration requirements, or operational restrictions. In some states, CSOs must register with state ministries, agencies, or regulatory bodies before implementing projects or engaging communities.

The regulatory environment for civil society is therefore shaped by a multi-layered governance framework involving federal, state, and local authorities. This complex ecosystem can either support or constrain civic engagement depending on how laws, policies, and administrative practices are implemented.

Recognizing the importance of monitoring civic space conditions across Nigeria, Global Rights Nigeria, in collaboration with civil society stakeholders, developed a State Ranking Mapping Assessment of the CSO Regulatory Environment. This initiative provides an evidence-based mechanism for assessing the extent to which states support or restrict the operational environment for civil society organizations.

The current report presents the findings of the 2025 State Ranking Mapping Assessment, building on the earlier Baseline Assessment and subsequent mapping updates conducted in previous years. The study evaluates the enabling environment for CSOs across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) using a structured assessment protocol based on internationally recognized standards on civic freedoms.

By systematically tracking state-level conditions affecting civil society operations, the assessment contributes to a deeper understanding of civic space dynamics in Nigeria and provides a valuable tool for policy dialogue, reform advocacy, and evidence-based decision-making

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the 2025 State Ranking Mapping Assessment is to provide an updated and comprehensive analysis of the regulatory and operational environment for civil society organizations across Nigeria.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. **Update the State Ranking of the CSO Regulatory Environment for 2025**

Building on earlier baseline and mapping assessments, the study updates the comparative ranking of states based on their legal and institutional frameworks affecting civil society operations.

2. **Assess the Responsiveness of State Governments to Civic Space Concerns**

The assessment examines whether states have taken steps to improve the enabling environment for CSOs through reforms, supportive policies, or administrative practices.

3. **Identify Enabling and Restrictive Regulatory Practices**

The study analyzes state-level laws, policies, and practices to identify both positive reforms and regulatory barriers affecting civil society organizations.

4. **Provide Evidence for Advocacy and Policy Reform**

The findings are intended to support evidence-based advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening civic space and improving the legal and policy environment for civil society organizations in Nigeria.

In addition, the 2025 assessment incorporates emerging dimensions of civic space, including digital civic engagement and protections for human rights defenders, reflecting the evolving landscape of civil society activity.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The 2025 State Ranking Mapping Assessment covers all 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The study evaluates multiple dimensions of the civil society operating environment, including:

- Legal environment governing the formation and recognition of civil society organizations
- Administrative procedures affecting CSO registration and operations
- Financial and regulatory requirements affecting nonprofit activities
- Operational freedoms, including freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly
- Protection mechanisms for civil society actors and human rights defenders
- Digital civic space protections

The assessment also integrates cross-cutting considerations related to gender equality and disability inclusion, recognizing that women-led organizations and disability-led organizations often face additional structural barriers in civic participation.

By examining these dimensions, the study provides a comprehensive picture of the factors shaping civil society operations across Nigeria's diverse political and regulatory landscape

1.4 Importance of State-Level Assessment

Nigeria operates under a federal system of government, in which authority is shared between the federal government and subnational governments across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

While the federal government establishes many of the core legal frameworks governing civil society organizations, state governments play a significant role in shaping the operational environment for CSOs through:

- Administrative regulations
- Licensing and project approval processes
- Security policies affecting civic activities
- Engagement with civil society actors
- Implementation of public policies affecting civic participation

In practice, the operational experiences of civil society organizations can vary widely depending on the state in which they operate. Some states maintain relatively supportive environments that encourage civic participation and collaboration with civil society. Others impose administrative burdens or operate within political contexts that restrict civic engagement.

For this reason, state-level monitoring of civic space is essential. A national-level assessment alone would not adequately capture the variations that exist across Nigeria's federal system.

The State Ranking Mapping Assessment therefore provides a comparative framework for analyzing subnational civic space dynamics, enabling stakeholders to identify both positive models and areas where reforms are needed.

SECTION 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Definition of Civic Space

Civic space refers to the set of conditions that allow individuals and organizations to freely participate in the political, economic, and social life of their societies.

International human rights law identifies three fundamental freedoms that form the foundation of civic space:

Freedom of Association

Freedom of association refers to the right of individuals and groups to form, join, and operate organizations for lawful purposes without undue interference from the state. This freedom enables citizens to organize collectively in pursuit of shared interests and public causes.

For civil society organizations, freedom of association includes the right to:

- establish organizations
- operate independently
- mobilize resources
- engage communities
- advocate for public policy reforms.

Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression guarantees the right of individuals and organizations to express opinions, share information, and advocate for policy change without fear of censorship or retaliation.

For CSOs, this freedom is essential for:

- advocacy and policy engagement
- public awareness campaigns

- research and public reporting
- digital advocacy and online communication.

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

Freedom of peaceful assembly protects the right of individuals and organizations to gather publicly to express views, demonstrate, or advocate for change.

Peaceful assemblies are a vital mechanism through which civil society actors engage in democratic participation, hold authorities accountable, and mobilize citizens around public issues.

Together, these three freedoms form the core pillars of an open civic space.

2.2 Elements of an Enabling CSO Environment

An enabling environment for civil society organizations extends beyond the formal existence of laws permitting CSO activities. It encompasses the broader legal, administrative, political, and social conditions that influence the ability of civil society actors to operate effectively.

Key elements of an enabling environment include:

1. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Clear and fair legal frameworks governing the formation and operation of civil society organizations are essential for ensuring legal certainty and protecting the rights of civic actors. Such frameworks should facilitate, rather than restrict, the ability of citizens to organize and engage in public life.

2. Administrative Procedures

Efficient and transparent administrative procedures for CSO registration and compliance help ensure that organizations can operate without unnecessary bureaucratic barriers.

Excessive administrative requirements can discourage civic engagement and limit the growth of civil society.

3. Financial Access and Restrictions

Civil society organizations require access to financial resources in order to carry out their activities. An enabling environment allows CSOs to mobilize resources from diverse sources, including donations, grants, and partnerships.

Restrictive financial regulations or burdensome reporting requirements can significantly affect the sustainability of civil society organizations.

4. Political Environment

The broader political climate influences the degree to which civil society actors can engage in advocacy, public dialogue, and policy reform efforts.

A supportive political environment encourages collaboration between governments and civil society organizations.

5. Safety and Security

Civil society actors must be able to operate without fear of intimidation, harassment, or violence. Protection mechanisms for human rights defenders and civic activists are therefore an important element of a healthy civic space.

6. Government Engagement

Constructive engagement between governments and civil society organizations can enhance policy effectiveness, improve accountability, and strengthen democratic governance.

Institutional mechanisms that facilitate dialogue between state actors and civil society contribute to a more inclusive governance process.

7. Public Perception and Legitimacy

Public trust in civil society organizations influences their ability to mobilize communities and advocate for reforms. Transparent operations and strong accountability mechanisms help enhance the legitimacy of CSOs in the public sphere.

2.3 Gender and Inclusion Framework

An inclusive civic space must ensure that all segments of society can participate equally in civil society activities.

Women-led organizations, youth groups, and disability-led organizations often face structural barriers that limit their participation in civic processes.

The assessment therefore intentionally ensured participation by these organizations with experience in key inclusion dimensions, including:

- barriers affecting women-led organizations
- accessibility challenges for persons with disabilities
- intersectional vulnerabilities affecting marginalized communities

Ensuring inclusive participation in civil society strengthens democratic governance and promotes more equitable development outcomes.

2.4 International and Regional Standards

The conceptual framework for this assessment draws on internationally recognized standards protecting civic freedoms and civil society participation.

Key normative frameworks include:

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

The African Charter guarantees fundamental freedoms including freedom of association, expression, and assembly, which form the basis for civic participation across African states.²

African Commission Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly

The **African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa** provide detailed standards for protecting civic space and ensuring that regulatory frameworks do not unduly restrict civil society activities.

United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1998, the **Declaration on Human Rights Defenders** affirms the right of individuals and organizations to promote and protect human rights without intimidation or retaliation.³

International Civic Freedom Standards

Global civil society monitoring frameworks developed by organizations such as the **International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)** provide widely recognized benchmarks for assessing the enabling environment for civil society organizations.

These international standards inform the analytical framework used in this assessment.

SECTION 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of Assessment Approach

The 2025 State Ranking Mapping Assessment of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Regulatory Environment in Nigeria adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess the operational environment for civil society organizations across the country.

The methodology builds upon the framework developed during the **Baseline Assessment of the CSO Regulatory Environment in Nigeria** and subsequent mapping exercises conducted in previous years. The assessment protocol was refined to improve indicator sensitivity and to incorporate emerging dimensions of civic space, including digital civic engagement, protections for human rights defenders, and inclusivity considerations affecting women-led and disability-led organizations.

The assessment relied on multiple sources of evidence to ensure triangulation and reliability, including:

- Desk review of legal and policy frameworks
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with civil society stakeholders
- Review of administrative practices affecting CSO operations
- Analysis of civic space indicators using a structured scoring framework
- Comparative analysis across states using a standardized ranking methodology

This multi-layered approach enabled the study to capture both formal regulatory provisions and practical experiences of civil society actors across different states.

3.2 Assessment Coverage

The assessment covered **all 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)**.

The study examined the regulatory and operational environment affecting CSOs across several core dimensions, including:

1. Legal Personality and Registration Procedures
2. Enabling Environment for CSO Activities
3. Sanctions and Remedies Available to CSOs
4. Regulatory Framework for Public Assemblies
5. Protection Mechanisms for Civil Society Actors
6. Digital Civic Space and Online Advocacy

Each dimension was assessed using specific indicators derived from international standards on civic freedoms and adapted to Nigeria's legal and governance context.

3.3 Development of the Assessment Protocol

The assessment protocol was designed to measure the extent to which state-level regulatory environments support or restrict civil society operations.

The protocol was informed by:

- The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa
- The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders
- Comparative frameworks developed by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)
- Existing research on civic space measurement and CSO regulatory environments

The protocol established a set of criteria and indicators used to evaluate each state's regulatory environment.

Each indicator was scored on a standardized numerical scale, allowing for comparison across states and across different dimensions of civic space.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 Desk Review

A comprehensive desk review was conducted to examine legal and regulatory frameworks affecting civil society operations across Nigeria.

The review covered:

- Federal legislation governing nonprofit organizations, including the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020
- Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) regulatory guidelines
- State-level policies affecting civil society operations
- Financial regulations affecting nonprofit organizations
- Security and administrative policies affecting civic activities
- Relevant court decisions and policy directives

Secondary data sources included:

- Existing civil society monitoring reports
- Policy analyses and academic literature
- Data available through the Global Rights CSO Regulatory Environment Dashboard

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

To complement the desk review, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with civil society stakeholders across the country. These discussions provided valuable insights into how

regulatory frameworks are implemented in practice and how they affect the day-to-day operations of civil society organizations.

Participants included representatives from:

- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Faith-based organizations (FBOs)
- Government institutions interacting with civil society

The FGDs served several purposes:

- validating the assessment protocol
- identifying emerging challenges affecting civic space
- documenting practical experiences of civil society actors
- capturing regional variations in regulatory practices.

3.5 Demographic Profile of FGD Participants

A total of **372 participants** took part in the Focus Group Discussions conducted across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

Gender Representation

Of the total participants:

- 220 participants (59%) were male
- 152 participants (41%) were female

This distribution reflects a reasonably balanced gender representation among civil society stakeholders participating in the assessment.

Participation of Persons with Disabilities

The FGDs included 32 participants who identified as persons with disabilities (PWDs), highlighting efforts to ensure that disability perspectives were incorporated into the assessment of civic space conditions.

Inclusion of disability-led organizations and advocates is particularly important given the unique regulatory and accessibility barriers faced by disability rights organizations in many contexts.

Age Distribution

Participants were also categorized based on age groups to capture intergenerational perspectives on civic engagement.

The distribution was as follows:

- 95 participants (26%) were aged 18–36
- 277 participants (74%) were aged 36 and above

This composition reflects strong participation from experienced civil society leaders and practitioners while also incorporating perspectives from younger civic actors.

Organizational Representation

The FGDs included participants from a diverse range of institutional backgrounds:

Table 2: Organizational Representation

Organisation Type	Number of Participants
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	241
Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)	60
Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs)	11
Supervisory MDAs (eg: Ministries of Youth, Women affairs, Economic Planning, Budget)	60

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The strong participation of NGOs and community-based organizations reflects the central role these entities play in Nigeria’s civil society landscape.

Participation from government representatives also provided valuable insights into how state institutions interpret and implement regulatory frameworks affecting CSO operations.

3.6 Indicator Scoring and State Ranking

Each state was evaluated using a structured scoring system based on the assessment protocol.

Indicators were scored on a **five-point scale**, reflecting the degree to which a state’s regulatory framework supports or restricts civil society operations.

The scoring scale ranged from:

- 5 – Strongly enabling regulatory environment
- 4 – Generally supportive with minor limitations
- 3 – Moderate restrictions
- 2 – Significant restrictions
- 1 – Highly restrictive environment

Scores assigned to individual indicators were aggregated under each assessment criterion to generate state-level composite scores.

These composite scores were then used to produce comparative rankings across all states and the Federal Capital Territory.

3.7 Data Validation and Quality Assurance

To ensure the reliability and credibility of the findings, several quality assurance measures were adopted:

1. **Triangulation of Data Sources**

Information gathered through desk research was cross-checked against insights from FGDs and other available sources.

2. Expert Review

Draft findings were reviewed by civil society experts and practitioners familiar with state-level regulatory environments.

3. Comparative Benchmarking

The 2025 findings were compared with earlier assessments conducted in previous years to identify trends and changes in civic space conditions.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

While the study provides a comprehensive assessment of the regulatory environment for civil society organizations across Nigeria, certain limitations should be noted.

First, the assessment relies partly on stakeholder perceptions captured through Focus Group Discussions. Although these insights are valuable, they may reflect localized experiences that vary across different communities within the same state.

Second, regulatory practices may change over time due to evolving policy decisions or administrative directives. As such, the findings represent conditions observed during the assessment period.

Despite these limitations, the combination of desk research, stakeholder consultations, and structured indicator analysis provides a robust foundation for understanding the current state of civic space across Nigeria.

SECTION 4: NATIONAL FINDINGS

4.1 Overview of the 2025 National Civic Space Landscape

The 2025 State Ranking of the Civil Society Regulatory Environment reveals a highly differentiated subnational civic space landscape across Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). While several states demonstrate robust enabling practices and strengthened protections, others continue to exhibit restrictive regulatory tendencies, administrative burdens, and uneven protection frameworks.

The overall findings suggest:

- A cluster of highly enabling states concentrated in parts of the North East and North Central zones.
- Significant variability within zones, especially in the South West and North West.
- A concentration of restrictive environments in parts of the South South zone.
- Persistent national weaknesses in Sanctions & Remedies and Notification/Regime frameworks.
- Growing disparities in Digital Rights Protection and Electronic Freedoms.

The national results underscore the importance of sustained subnational monitoring in a federal system where state-level practices significantly shape operational realities for civil society.

4.2 Overall Ranking Performance

Top Performing States (2025)

The highest-ranked states in 2025 are:

1. **Taraba**
2. **Bauchi**
3. **Katsina**
4. **Rivers**

5. **Kogi**
6. **Ondo**
7. **Jigawa**
8. **Oyo**
9. **Abia**
10. **Sokoto**

These states demonstrate relatively strong performance across multiple criteria, particularly in:

- Protection
- Legal Personality
- Digital Rights
- Legal Recognition (in several cases)

The presence of Rivers among the top cluster highlights that strong performance is not geographically limited but contingent on specific policy and administrative environments.

Lowest Performing States (2025)

The bottom-ranked states are:

- **Cross River**
- **Bayelsa**
- **Edo**
- **Zamfara**
- **Anambra**
- **Lagos**
- **Osun**
- **Kaduna**

- **Adamawa**
- **Enugu**

These states show structural weaknesses across several domains, often including:

- Weak Legal Recognition frameworks
- Administrative and regulatory burdens
- Constrained Sanctions & Remedies pathways
- Lower Digital Rights protection

Notably, Lagos—despite being Nigeria’s largest CSO hub—ranks in the lower tier, underscoring that high CSO presence does not necessarily equate to enabling regulatory conditions.

4.3 Geopolitical Zone Performance

Clear regional patterns emerge:

North East

Highest zone average nationally. Strong performance in Protection and Legal Personality.

North Central

Second highest average. Generally stable enabling environments with fewer extreme outliers.

North West

Mixed performance. Strong leaders (Katsina, Jigawa) contrast with lower-tier states (Zamfara, Kaduna).

South West

Moderate overall. High internal variance between Ondo/Oyo and Lagos/Osun.

South East

Mid-tier performance with divergence between Abia and Anambra.

South South

Lowest zone average. Contains both a high-performing outlier (Rivers) and several restrictive environments (Cross River, Bayelsa, Edo).

These patterns suggest that **zone-specific reform strategies** may be more effective than uniform national approaches.

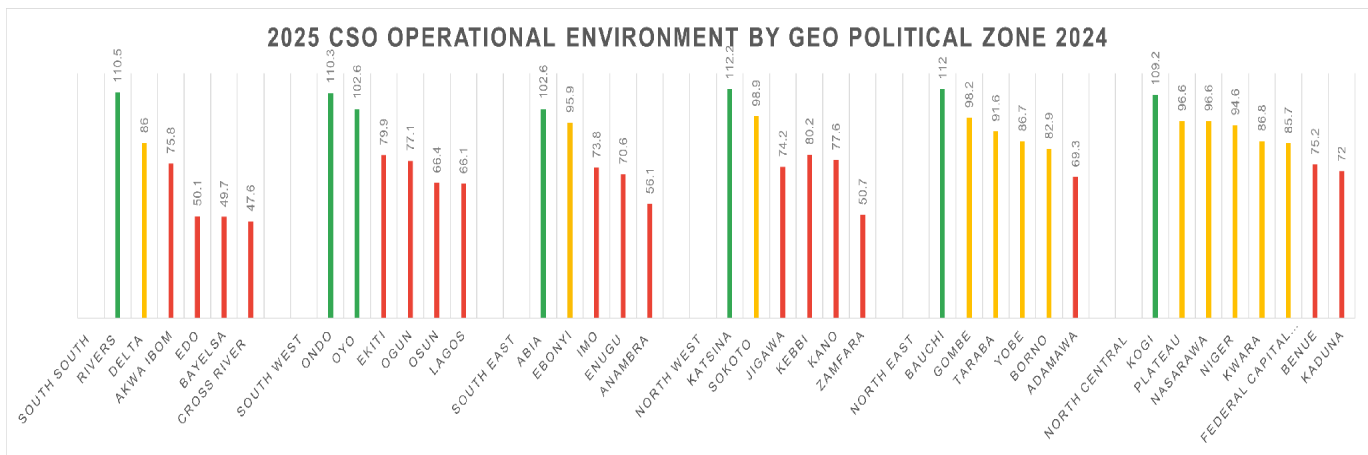


Figure 4: 2025 CSO Operational Environment by Geopolitical Zone

4.4 2023–2025 Overall Ranking of the Nigerian Civil Society Operational Environment

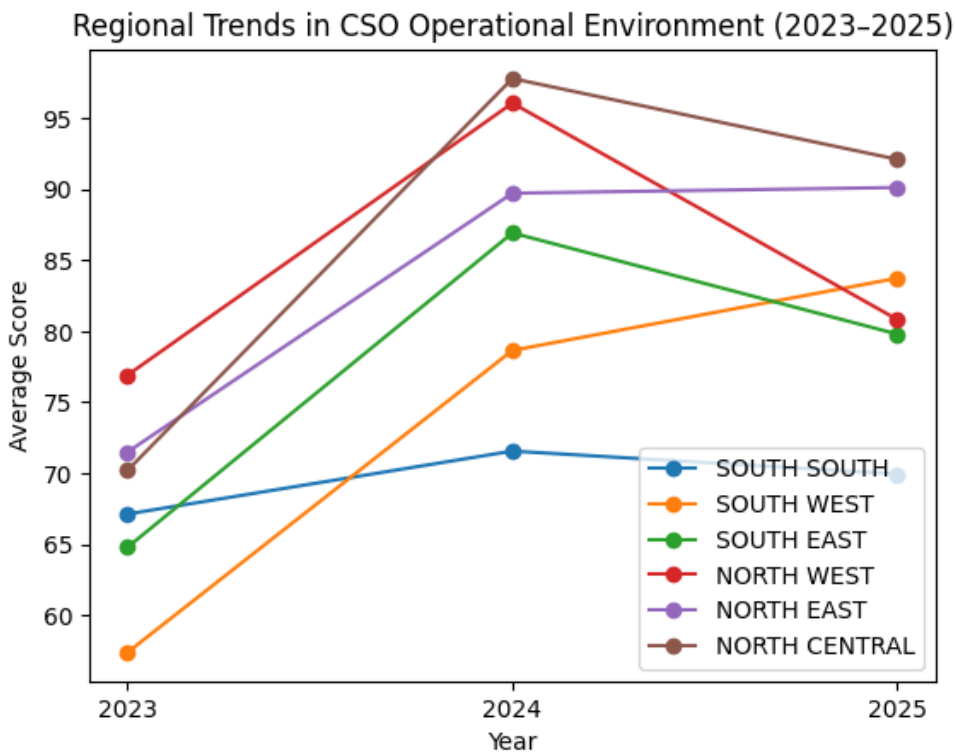


Figure 5: Regional Trends in CSO Operational Environment (2023–2025)

Regional Trends

The three-year trend analysis (2023–2025) reveals a dynamic and uneven trajectory in the operational environment for civil society organizations (CSOs) across Nigeria’s geopolitical zones. While many states demonstrated improvements between 2023 and 2024, the 2025 data shows a mixed pattern of consolidation, stagnation, and decline.

Across the country, 2024 appears to represent a peak year for several regions, with noticeable improvements in perceived enabling conditions for CSO operations. However, in 2025 some zones experienced slight reversals, suggesting that gains in civic space remain fragile and uneven.

North Central

The North Central zone shows the most consistent improvement across the three years, rising steadily from an average score of approximately 70.2 in 2023 to 97.4 in 2024, and stabilizing at 92.1 in 2025. States such as **Kogi, Plateau, Niger, and Nasarawa** sustained relatively strong performance throughout the period. This suggests gradual strengthening of regulatory openness and improved engagement between state authorities and civil society actors in the zone.

North East

The North East region also demonstrates relatively stable performance, improving significantly between 2023 and 2024, before moderating slightly in 2025. Strong scores from Bauchi, Gombe, and Yobe contributed to the region's high regional average. Despite the region's security challenges, the results suggest continued space for CSO engagement in humanitarian response, development programming, and community resilience initiatives.

North West

The North West region experienced strong improvement in 2024 but a noticeable decline in 2025. The regional average rose sharply between 2023 and 2024, largely driven by high scores recorded in Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina, before declining in 2025. The sharp drop in Zamfara, alongside moderate declines in Kaduna and Kano, contributed to the regional downturn. These fluctuations highlight the sensitivity of civic space conditions to changes in political or security dynamics.

South East

The South East zone experienced significant improvement in 2024 but a modest decline in 2025, though overall scores remain higher than in 2023. The strong performance of Abia and Ebonyi, alongside improved scores in Imo, drove the 2024 surge. However, reductions in scores for Enugu and Imo in 2025 moderated the region's overall trajectory.

South West

The South West recorded the most dramatic upward trend between 2023 and 2024, increasing from the lowest regional average in 2023 to a significantly improved position in 2024 and 2025. Notable improvements were observed in Ondo, Oyo, and Ogun, while Lagos and Ekiti

maintained moderate upward trajectories. The sharp increase in Ondo's score in 2025 significantly lifted the regional average.

South South

The South South region recorded relatively modest gains between 2023 and 2024 but declined slightly in 2025. While Rivers and Delta maintained relatively strong performance, declines in Cross River, Bayelsa, and Edo contributed to the overall reduction in the regional average. Akwa Ibom stands out as a state that recorded notable improvement by 2025.

Key National Observations

Several important national trends emerge from the data:

1. 2024 marked a high point in civic space conditions across most regions, suggesting that reforms, advocacy engagement, or improved state–CSO relations may have temporarily strengthened the operational environment.
2. 2025 reflects a period of consolidation rather than uniform progress, with some states maintaining improvements while others experienced reversals.
3. Regional disparities remain significant, indicating that the enabling environment for CSOs in Nigeria is still highly dependent on state-level governance dynamics.
4. The North Central and North East zones display the most consistent upward trajectory, while the North West and South South show greater volatility.
5. Individual state dynamics strongly influence regional performance, underscoring the importance of state-level policy reforms, administrative practices, and political leadership in shaping civic space conditions.

Interpretation Note

It is important to note that these scores are based on state-level assessments and stakeholder consultations, including inputs from civil society actors. As such, the results reflect perceptions and experiences of CSO operational conditions, which may vary across states and may be influenced by contextual factors such as political transitions, regulatory enforcement practices, and security conditions.

4.5 States with the Largest Improvements and Declines (2023–2025)

Largest Improvements and Declines in CSO Operational Environment (2023–2025)

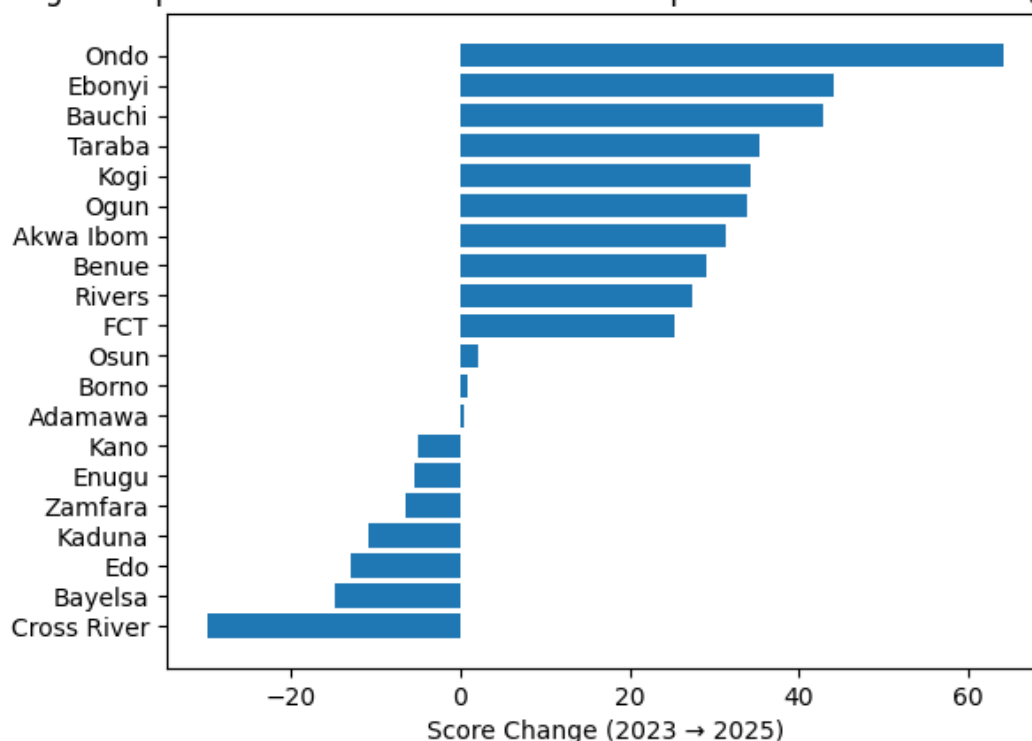


Figure 6: Largest Improvements and Declines (2023–2025)

An analysis of score changes between 2023 and 2025 reveals significant variation in how Nigeria's civic space evolved at the state level. While several states demonstrated notable improvements in the operational environment for civil society organizations (CSOs), others recorded substantial declines over the same period.

Most Significant Improvements

A number of states recorded substantial positive shifts, suggesting improvements in regulatory conditions, government engagement with civil society, or operational freedom for CSOs.

The most notable improvements were observed in:

- **Ondo** – showing the largest improvement, rising dramatically from **46 in 2023 to 110.3 in 2025**, indicating a major strengthening of the enabling environment for CSOs.

- **Ebonyi** – improving from **51.8 to 95.9**, reflecting significant gains in CSO operational conditions.
- **Bauchi** – increasing from **69.1 to 112**, one of the strongest upward trajectories nationally.
- **Taraba** – rising from **56.2 to 91.6**, suggesting improved state–civil society engagement.
- **Kogi** – improving steadily from **75 to 109.2**.
- **Ogun, Akwa Ibom, Benue, Rivers, and the FCT** also recorded meaningful improvements during the period.

These gains may reflect reforms in state administrative practices, improved policy engagement with CSOs, or stronger recognition of the role of civil society in governance and development.

Most Significant Declines

Conversely, several states experienced a deterioration in their civic space environment over the same period.

The largest declines were recorded in:

- **Cross River** – dropping sharply from **77.6 in 2023 to 47.6 in 2025**, representing the most significant decline nationally.
- **Bayelsa** – declining from **64.6 to 49.7**.
- **Edo** – falling from **63.1 to 50.1**.
- **Kaduna** – declining from **82.8 to 72**.
- **Zamfara** – dropping significantly after a high score in 2024.
- **Enugu and Kano** also recorded moderate declines during the period.

These downward trends may reflect changing regulatory dynamics, administrative challenges, or contextual factors affecting the operational freedom of civil society actors.

Overall Interpretation

The presence of both strong improvements and notable declines highlights the fluid and uneven nature of civic space conditions across Nigerian states. While some states are progressively strengthening the enabling environment for civil society, others continue to face challenges that may restrict civic participation and nonprofit operations.

These variations reinforce the importance of state-level reforms, continuous monitoring, and targeted advocacy efforts to promote a more consistent and enabling regulatory environment for civil society across Nigeria.

4.6 Trend Analysis of Key Indicators of CSO Operational Environment (2023–2025)

1. CSO Legal Recognition Across States

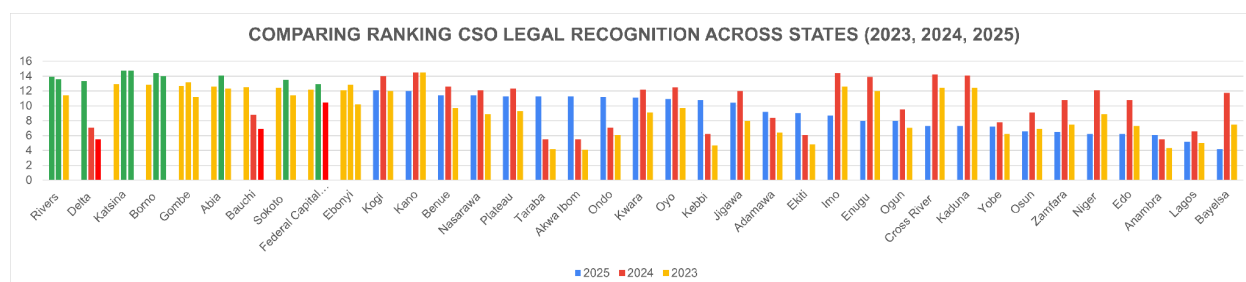


Figure 7: Comparing Ranking CSO Legal Recognition Across States (2023,2024, 2025)

Key Trend

The legal recognition of civil society organizations shows a moderate but uneven improvement across Nigerian states between 2023 and 2025. Overall scores increased in many states by 2025, indicating gradual strengthening of formal recognition mechanisms for CSOs, including registration procedures, administrative acknowledgement, and government acceptance of civil society participation.

Several states recorded significant improvement between 2023 and 2025, particularly:

- **Delta** (5.5 → 13.3)
- **Bauchi** (6.9 → 12.5)
- **Akwa Ibom** (4.1 → 11.3)
- **Taraba** (4.2 → 11.3)
- **Ondo** (6.1 → 11.2)

These improvements suggest expanding institutional acceptance of CSOs as legitimate actors in governance and development processes.

However, some states recorded declines between 2024 and 2025, notably:

- **Cross River**

- **Kaduna**
- **Bayelsa**
- **Imo**

These fluctuations suggest that legal recognition frameworks remain vulnerable to political or administrative changes at the state level.

Key Insight

Legal recognition conditions are improving nationally but remain inconsistent across states, indicating the need for greater harmonization of subnational CSO regulatory frameworks.

2. CSO Legal Personality (Registration and Formal Status)

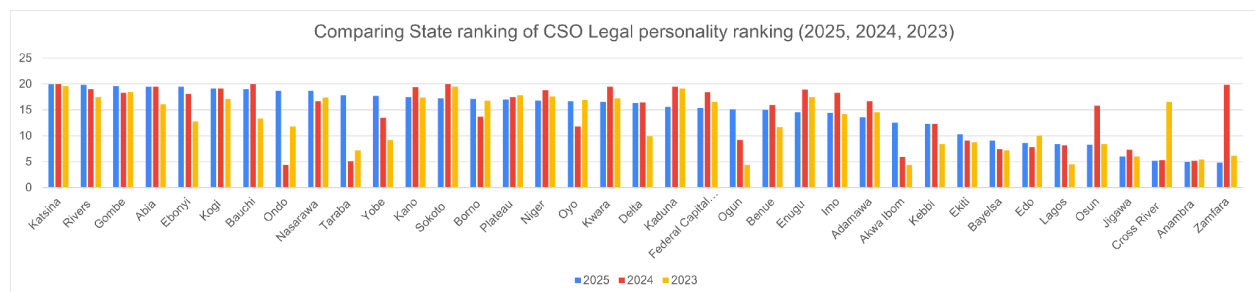


Figure 8: Comparing State ranking of CSO Legal Personality (2023-2025)

Key Trend

The legal personality indicator shows relatively strong performance across most states, suggesting that the formal ability of CSOs to obtain legal status remains broadly established in Nigeria.

Many states maintained consistently high scores, including:

- **Katsina**
- **Rivers**
- **Gombe**

- **Abia**
- **Kogi**

These states demonstrate relatively stable administrative processes enabling CSOs to acquire legal identity and operate formally.

However, significant volatility is visible in some states:

- **Ondo** shows a dramatic increase from **4.4 (2024)** to **18.7 (2025)**.
- **Taraba** also recorded strong improvement.
- **Zamfara** experienced a major decline between **2024 and 2025**.

This volatility suggests that administrative practices governing CSO registration may change rapidly depending on political leadership or bureaucratic reforms.

Key Insight

While legal personality for CSOs is generally accessible nationwide, administrative consistency and predictability remain challenges in several states.

3. Enabling Environment for CSO Purposes and Activities

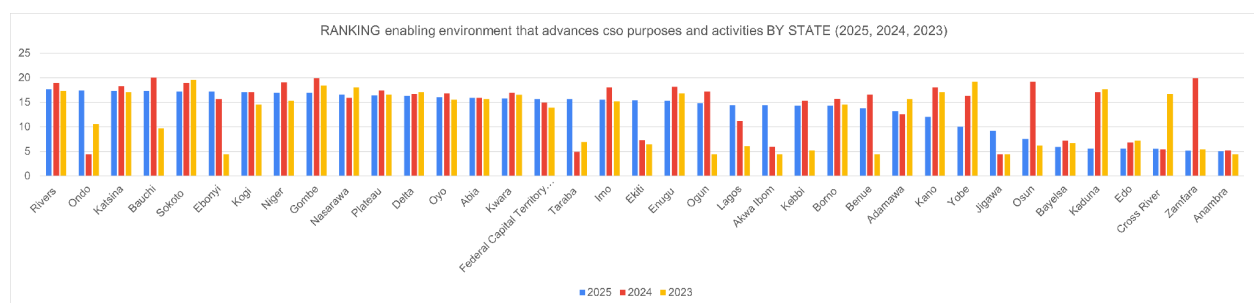


Figure 9: Ranking Enabling Environment that advances CSO Purposes and activities by state (2023-2025)

Key Trend

The indicator measuring whether state environments enable CSOs to pursue their objectives and activities shows generally strong performance nationally, with many states maintaining scores above 15 points.

Top performing states in 2025 include:

- **Rivers**
- **Ondo**
- **Katsina**
- **Bauchi**
- **Sokoto**
- **Ebonyi**

These states demonstrate relatively supportive environments for CSO programming, advocacy, and civic engagement activities.

Several states recorded notable improvements between 2023 and 2025:

- **Ebonyi**
- **Ondo**
- **Ekiti**
- **Akwa Ibom**
- **Ogun**

Conversely, declines were observed in:

- **Kaduna**
- **Cross River**
- **Zamfara**
- **Osun**

These states show more restrictive conditions for CSO operations in 2025 compared with earlier years.

Key Insight

The overall enabling environment for CSO activities remains moderately strong nationally, though political transitions and governance dynamics appear to influence conditions at the state level.

4. Sanctions and Remedies Available to CSOs

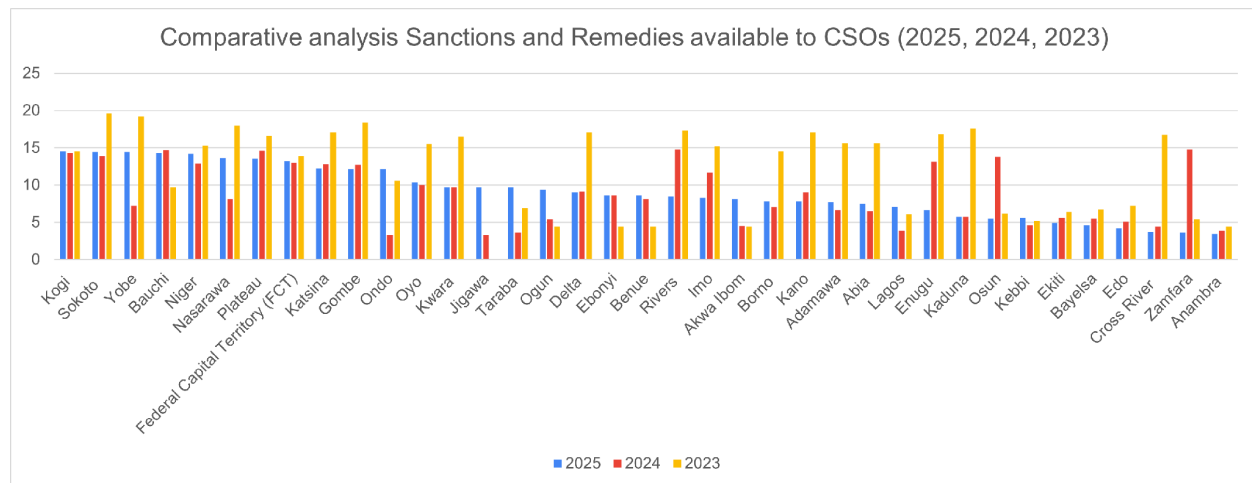


Figure 10: Comparative analysis Sanctions and Remedies Available (2023-2025)

Key Trend

The sanctions and remedies indicator presents the most uneven trend among the four categories. While some states improved access to judicial or administrative remedies for CSOs, several states recorded declines compared to 2023.

States demonstrating relatively strong remedial frameworks in 2025 include:

- **Kogi**
- **Sokoto**
- **Yobe**
- **Bauchi**
- **Niger**
- **Plateau**

These states appear to provide more accessible mechanisms for CSOs to challenge regulatory actions or administrative decisions.

However, several states experienced significant declines since 2023:

- **Cross River**
- **Kaduna**
- **Enugu**
- **Abia**
- **Kano**

This pattern suggests that procedural safeguards protecting CSOs against administrative sanctions remain weak or inconsistently applied in several states.

Key Insight

Compared with other indicators, legal protection and remedies remain one of the weakest areas of the CSO operational environment, highlighting the importance of strengthening judicial recourse, administrative fairness, and accountability mechanisms.

Cross-Indicator Observations (2023–2025)

Across the four indicators, several broader patterns emerge:

1. Institutional Recognition is Improving

Most states show progress in formal recognition and legal personality of CSOs, indicating growing acceptance of civil society as a governance partner.

2. Operational Conditions Remain Uneven

Although many states demonstrate supportive environments for CSO activities, substantial regional disparities remain, particularly in regulatory practice and enforcement.

3. Remedies and Accountability Remain Weak

The sanctions and remedies indicator remains the most inconsistent, suggesting that CSOs often lack reliable mechanisms to challenge restrictive government actions.

4. Policy Reform Opportunities

The results reinforce the importance of:

- Harmonizing state-level CSO regulatory frameworks
- Strengthening administrative transparency
- Expanding judicial remedies and protections for civic actors

SECTION 5: THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CSO REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT IN NIGERIA

5.1 Overview

This section presents a thematic analysis of the operational environment for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) based on the **2025 Protocol for Assessing the CSO Regulatory Environment**.

The analysis examines seven core dimensions that collectively determine the enabling or restrictive nature of civic space at the subnational level:

1. Legal Recognition
2. Legal Personality
3. Purposes and Activities
4. Sanctions and Remedies
5. Regulatory Regimes Governing Assemblies
6. Protection of Civic Actors and Assembly Participants
7. Digital Rights Protection and Electronic Freedoms

Each dimension reflects a critical aspect of the regulatory ecosystem that shapes how CSOs operate, advocate, and engage with the public and government institutions. Together, these indicators provide a comprehensive framework for assessing both formal legal provisions and the practical realities experienced by civil society actors.

The findings highlight significant variation across states. While some jurisdictions demonstrate relatively enabling regulatory environments with stronger protections for civic participation, others exhibit restrictive administrative practices, limited legal safeguards, or inconsistent enforcement mechanisms.

The thematic analysis therefore serves two key purposes. First, it identifies systemic strengths and weaknesses within the regulatory landscape governing CSO operations in Nigeria. Second, it provides an analytical foundation for the state ranking results and policy recommendations presented in subsequent sections of this report.

5.1 Legal Recognition

Legal recognition represents the foundational layer of the civic regulatory environment. It assesses whether states have formal laws or policy frameworks that acknowledge and regulate the existence and operations of civil society organizations.

The findings indicate considerable variation in the availability and clarity of legal frameworks governing CSOs at the state level. While a small number of states have adopted explicit policies or regulatory instruments that recognize civil society as a legitimate development partner, many jurisdictions rely on draft policies or lack clearly articulated frameworks altogether.

The presence—or absence—of such legal recognition significantly shapes the administrative environment within which CSOs operate. Where clear policies exist, CSOs tend to benefit from more predictable regulatory procedures. In contrast, states without formal frameworks often exhibit greater administrative discretion and uncertainty.

The analysis under this criterion also examines the efficiency of registration procedures and proportionality of regulatory restrictions, which together determine whether legal recognition translates into an enabling operational environment.

Indicator 1: Availability of Law or Policy for CSOs in the State

Beyond comparative scoring, this indicator also assesses the formal status of legal or policy instruments regulating or enabling CSO operations at the state level.

Across the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (37 jurisdictions total), the distribution of formal legal recognition frameworks is as follows:

Table 3: Distribution of Formal Legal Recognition Across the States

Legal Status Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
Law for Enabling CSO Operations	1	2.7%

Signed Policy	11	29.7%
Draft Policy	16	43.2%
No Known Legal Framework	9	24.3%
Total	37	100%

5.1.1 Percentage Distribution Analysis

1. Law for Enabling CSO Operations – 2.7%

Only **one state** has enacted a formal law specifically structured to enable CSO operations.

This indicates that full legislative codification of an enabling framework remains extremely rare in Nigeria's subnational governance landscape.

While policies are more common, binding statutory frameworks explicitly designed to enable civil society remain largely underdeveloped.

2. Signed Policy – 29.7%

Eleven states (29.7%) have adopted a signed and formal policy framework governing or engaging CSOs.

This represents a moderate level of formal recognition and suggests that nearly one-third of states have moved beyond informal practice toward institutionalized policy guidance.

However, the quality and enforcement consistency of these policies vary significantly.

3. Draft Policy – 43.2%

Sixteen states (43.2%) have draft policy instruments that have not yet been formally adopted.

This is the largest category nationally.

This finding is significant for three reasons:

- It indicates substantial reform momentum.
- It reveals stalled institutionalization processes.

- It highlights an opportunity for low-cost policy finalization in nearly half of the federation.

States with draft policies represent the most strategic reform opportunity cluster, as movement from draft to adoption could significantly improve national Legal Recognition scores.

4. No Known Legal Framework – 24.3%

Nine states (24.3%) have no identifiable law or formal policy framework specifically addressing CSO operations at the state level.

This means approximately one in four states operate without formal recognition instruments, relying instead on:

- Federal incorporation under CAMA
- Informal administrative practices
- Ad hoc engagement mechanisms

Such environments increase:

- Regulatory ambiguity
- Risk of arbitrary interpretation
- Administrative discretion without policy guardrails

States in this category are structurally vulnerable to inconsistent enforcement and civic space contraction.

Voices from the Field

“There is a legal framework that recognizes the existence and operation of civil society organizations, but implementation at the state level is often unclear.”

— Respondent, **Kano State**

“The Corporate Affairs Commission provides the legal basis for CSO registration, but the state government has no clear policies guiding engagement with CSOs.”

— Respondent, **Benue State**

5.1.2 Structural Implications

This distribution reveals a critical structural reality:

- ◆ Only 2.7% of states have enacted formal enabling legislation.
- ◆ 43.2% are in transition (draft stage).
- ◆ 24.3% lack any formal framework.

This indicates that Nigeria’s civic regulatory landscape at the subnational level remains largely policy-driven rather than law-driven.

It also suggests that the path to reform is achievable — particularly for the 16 states already possessing draft policies.

5.1.3 Reform Leverage Points

Priority 1: Convert Draft Policies into Signed Policies

Moving 16 states from draft to adoption would increase formal recognition coverage from 32.4% to 75.6%.

Priority 2: Encourage Legislative Codification

Expanding from 1 state with enabling legislation to multiple states would institutionalize civic protections beyond executive cycles.

Priority 3: Support Framework Development in the 9 States with No Legal Instrument

Targeted technical assistance could rapidly close recognition gaps.

5.1.4 Correlation with Overall Ranking

Preliminary comparison suggests:

- States with signed policies generally perform above the national median.

- States with no framework are disproportionately represented in the lower tier of the overall ranking.
- However, policy existence alone does not guarantee high performance — implementation quality remains decisive.

5.1.5 Conclusion – Indicator 1

The 2025 findings confirm that formal Legal Recognition remains uneven and under-institutionalized across Nigeria's states.

While nearly half of the federation has draft policy frameworks in progress, the limited number of fully enacted laws indicates that civic recognition remains vulnerable to administrative discretion and political shifts.

Legal Recognition therefore represents both:

- A structural vulnerability, and
- A strategic reform opportunity.

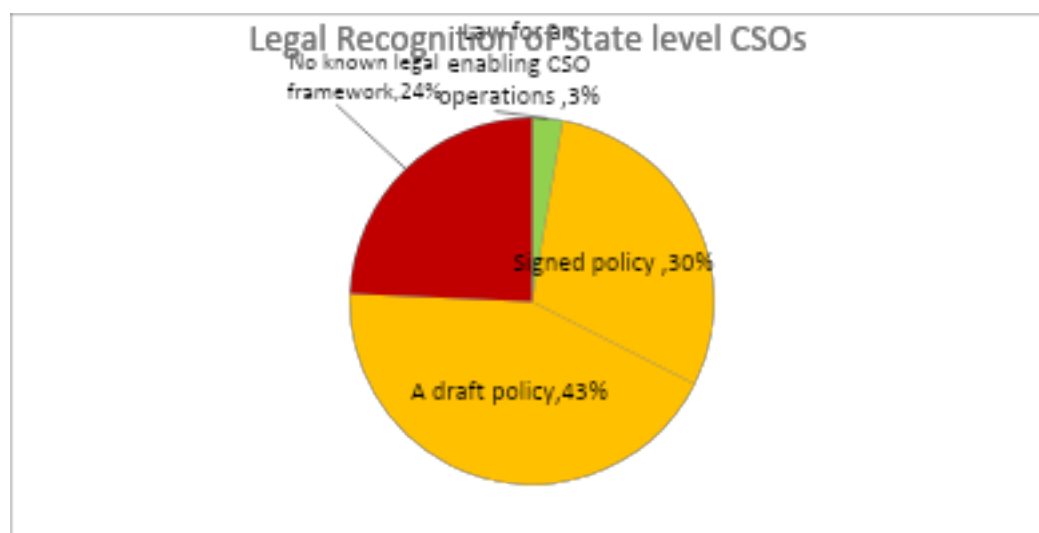


Figure 11: Legal Recognition of State Level CSOs

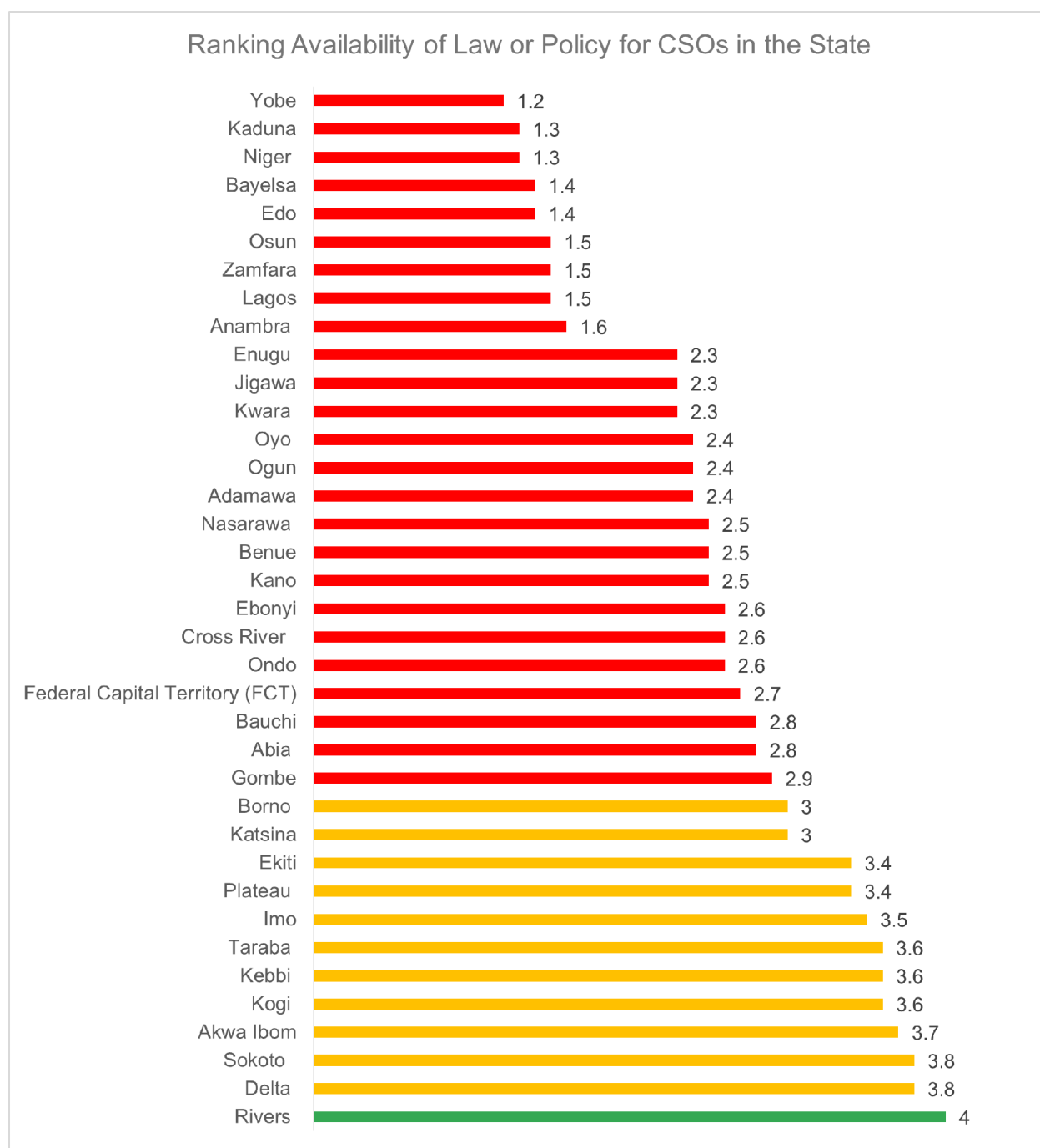


Figure 12: Ranking Availability of Law or Policy for CSOs

5.1 LEGAL RECOGNITION

Indicator 2: Ease of Registration

Ease of Registration assesses whether CSOs can register and obtain operational recognition without undue delay, arbitrariness, discrimination, or excessive administrative burden.

This indicator captures the practical reality of Legal Recognition — moving beyond formal law or policy existence to examine how registration functions in practice.

5.1.1 National Distribution of Registration Environment

Across the 37 jurisdictions assessed:

Table 4: National Distribution of Registration Environment

Registration Environment Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
No registration process at all	1	2.7%
No policy; process arbitrary and time-consuming	2	5.4%
Registration process opaque, arbitrary, untimely	17	45.9%
Process clear, timely, transparent, efficient, non-discriminatory	17	45.9%
Total	37	100%

5.1.2 Percentage Interpretation

1. No Registration Process – 2.7%

One state (2.7%) has no structured registration process at all.

This represents a severe administrative gap and leaves CSOs operating in regulatory uncertainty.

2. Arbitrary and Time-Consuming – 5.4%

Two states (5.4%) operate without formal policy clarity, resulting in discretionary, slow, and inconsistent processes.

Such environments create:

- Unpredictability
- Increased compliance costs
- Vulnerability to informal influence or discretion

3. Opaque and Untimely Processes – 45.9%

Seventeen states (45.9%) fall into this category.

This means nearly half of Nigeria's states have registration systems that are:

- Not fully transparent
- Subject to delay
- Potentially arbitrary in interpretation

This is a significant structural finding and indicates that while formal recognition may exist, procedural implementation remains inconsistent.

4. Clear, Transparent and Efficient – 45.9%

Seventeen states (45.9%) demonstrate clear, timely, non-discriminatory registration processes.

This represents strong performance for nearly half the federation and reflects meaningful administrative progress.

However, the near 50–50 split between efficient and opaque systems highlights national inconsistency.

5.1.3 State-Level Ranking – Ease of Registration

Highest Performing States (Score ≥ 4.8)

Table 5: Highest Performing States - Ease of Registration

Rank	State	Score
1	Borno	5.0
2	Rivers	4.9
3	Katsina	4.9
4	Abia	4.9
5	Bauchi	4.9
6	Gombe	4.9
7	Delta	4.8
8	Sokoto	4.8
9	Kano	4.8

Observations

- Borno records the highest possible score (5.0).
- High performers are geographically diverse.
- Rivers, Katsina, and Bauchi demonstrate alignment between formal recognition and administrative efficiency.
- Ease of Registration is a major contributor to overall ranking strength.

Upper-Mid Tier (4.0 – 4.7)

Includes:

- Kaduna (4.7)

- FCT (4.7)
- Ebonyi (4.7)
- Kwara (4.5)
- Benue (4.4)
- Nasarawa (4.4)
- Adamawa (4.4)

These states demonstrate relatively efficient processes but may face:

- Occasional delays
- Minor procedural bottlenecks
- Inconsistent transparency in practice

Mid-Tier (3.3 – 3.9)

Includes:

- Kogi
- Ekiti
- Ondo
- Osun
- Kebbi
- Oyo
- Niger
- Imo
- Edo
- Enugu

- Cross River
- Plateau
- Anambra
- Ogun
- Jigawa

These states operate functioning systems but with:

- Noticeable administrative inefficiencies
- Greater risk of discretion
- Reduced predictability

These states represent reform opportunity areas where procedural clarity could significantly improve operational ease.

Lowest Performing States: Ease of Registration

Table 6: Lowest Performing States: Ease of Registration

Rank	State	Score
35	Lagos	2.4
36	Bayelsa	1.3
37	Yobe	1.2

Critical Observations

1. Lagos ranks 35th, indicating significant administrative complexity relative to other states.

2. Bayelsa and Yobe demonstrate severe structural registration constraints.
3. Weak Ease of Registration strongly correlates with lower overall ranking.

5.1.4 Correlation with Overall Ranking

Strong Ease of Registration performance aligns closely with high overall ranking in:

- Rivers
- Katsina
- Bauchi
- Abia
- Borno

Conversely, low Ease of Registration scores correlate with bottom-tier overall ranking:

- Bayelsa
- Cross River
- Yobe

This suggests Ease of Registration is one of the most powerful drivers of overall civic environment performance.

5.1.5 Structural Implications

The near-even split between efficient (45.9%) and opaque (45.9%) registration environments highlights:

- Significant progress in nearly half of the federation
- Persistent administrative weaknesses in the other half
- Major opportunities for procedural reform

Where registration processes are clear, timely, transparent and non-discriminatory CSOs are significantly more likely to formalize operations, expand activities, engage government constructively and access funding

5.1.6 Reform Priorities

Priority Reform States (Score < 3.0)

- Bayelsa
- Yobe
- Lagos

Administrative Streamlining Needed (3.0 – 3.9)

Focus on:

- Digitization
- Clear timelines
- Standardized documentation
- Reduced discretion

Consolidation States (≥ 4.5)

Institutionalize:

- Digital portals
- Publicly accessible guidelines
- Appeal mechanisms

5.1.7 Concluding Assessment

Ease of Registration remains one of the clearest operational determinants of civic space in Nigeria.

While nearly half of states demonstrate transparent and efficient systems, the persistence of opaque and discretionary practices in the remaining half reveals a major administrative reform frontier.

Improving registration clarity represents one of the most actionable and measurable pathways to strengthening the Nigerian civil society operating environment

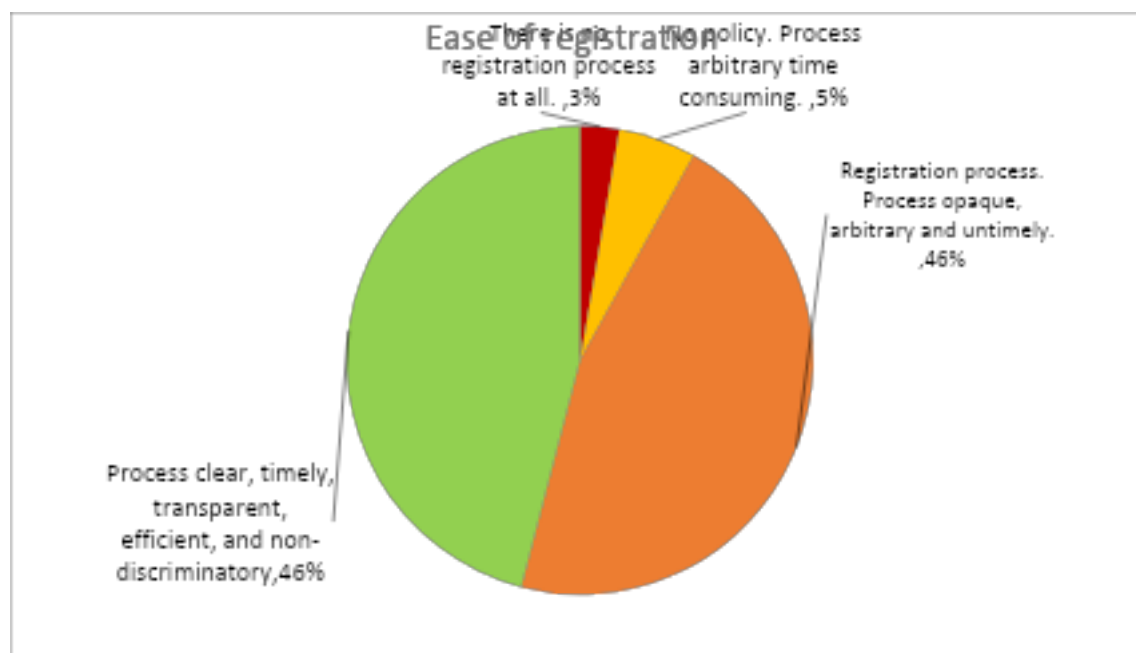


Figure 13: Ease of Registration

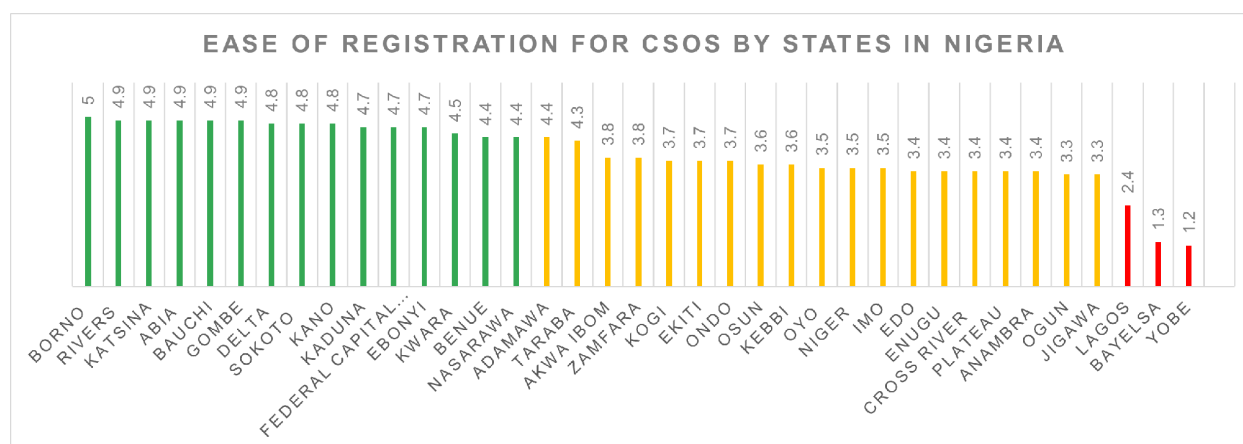


Figure 14: Ease of Registration for CSOs by States in Nigeria

5.1 LEGAL RECOGNITION

Indicator 3: Proportionality

Proportionality assesses whether restrictions placed on CSOs are necessary, reasonable, and proportionate to legitimate regulatory objectives. It measures the extent to which states avoid excessive, arbitrary, or punitive controls.

5.1.3 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Table 7: National Distribution - Proportionality of Restrictions on CSOs

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
No unnecessary or disproportionate restrictions***	19	51.4%
Imposes some restrictions	4	10.8%
Imposes several restrictions	3	8.1%
No legal framework to measure	11	29.7%
Total	37	100%

***As explained earlier in the methodology section – determined mainly by the perception of the CSOs / Government representatives participating in each state's FGD

Key Takeaways

- Just over half (51.4%) of states demonstrate proportionate regulatory practice.
- Nearly 30% lack sufficient legal clarity to properly assess proportionality.
- Approximately 19% impose some or multiple restrictive controls.

This indicates moderate national performance but with structural inconsistencies.

Voices from the Field:

“Most of the requirements imposed on CSOs are administrative rather than restrictive, but compliance obligations can still be burdensome for smaller organizations.”

— Respondent, **Kwara State**

State-Level Performance

Highest Performing States (Score 5.0–4.8)

Table 8: Highest Performing States (Proportionate regulatory practice)

State	Score
Katsina	5.0
Rivers	5.0
Oyo	5.0
Gombe	4.9
Abia	4.9
Ondo	4.9
Bauchi	4.8
Jigawa	4.8
Ebonyi	4.8
FCT	4.8
Borno	4.8
Kogi	4.8
Yobe	4.8

These states demonstrate minimal unnecessary restrictions and balanced enforcement frameworks.

Mid-Tier States (4.7–3.4)

Includes:

- Delta

- Kano
- Plateau
- Nasarawa
- Benue
- Kwara
- Akwa Ibom
- Sokoto
- Kebbi
- Taraba

These states generally avoid severe overreach but exhibit moderate enforcement inconsistencies.

Restrictive or High-Risk States (≤ 2.4)

Table 9: Restrictive or High-Risk States (Proportionate Regulatory Practice)

State	Score
Adamawa	2.4
Enugu	2.3
Ogun	2.3
Ekiti	1.9
Bayelsa	1.5
Imo	1.7
Osun	1.5
Niger	1.4

Edo	1.4
Lagos	1.3
Kaduna	1.3
Zamfara	1.2
Cross River	1.3
Anambra	1.1

These states demonstrate:

- Higher likelihood of disproportionate enforcement
- Weak safeguards against arbitrary restrictions
- Increased compliance burdens or discretionary controls

Notably, several bottom-tier overall ranking states also score lowest on proportionality, confirming strong correlation between enforcement balance and overall civic space performance.

Overall Assessment

Proportionality performs moderately well nationally, with over half of states demonstrating balanced regulatory practice. However:

- Nearly one-third lack adequate legal clarity.
- A significant minority impose excessive restrictions.

Strengthening proportional enforcement safeguards—especially in lower-tier states—remains essential for improving Nigeria’s civic environment.

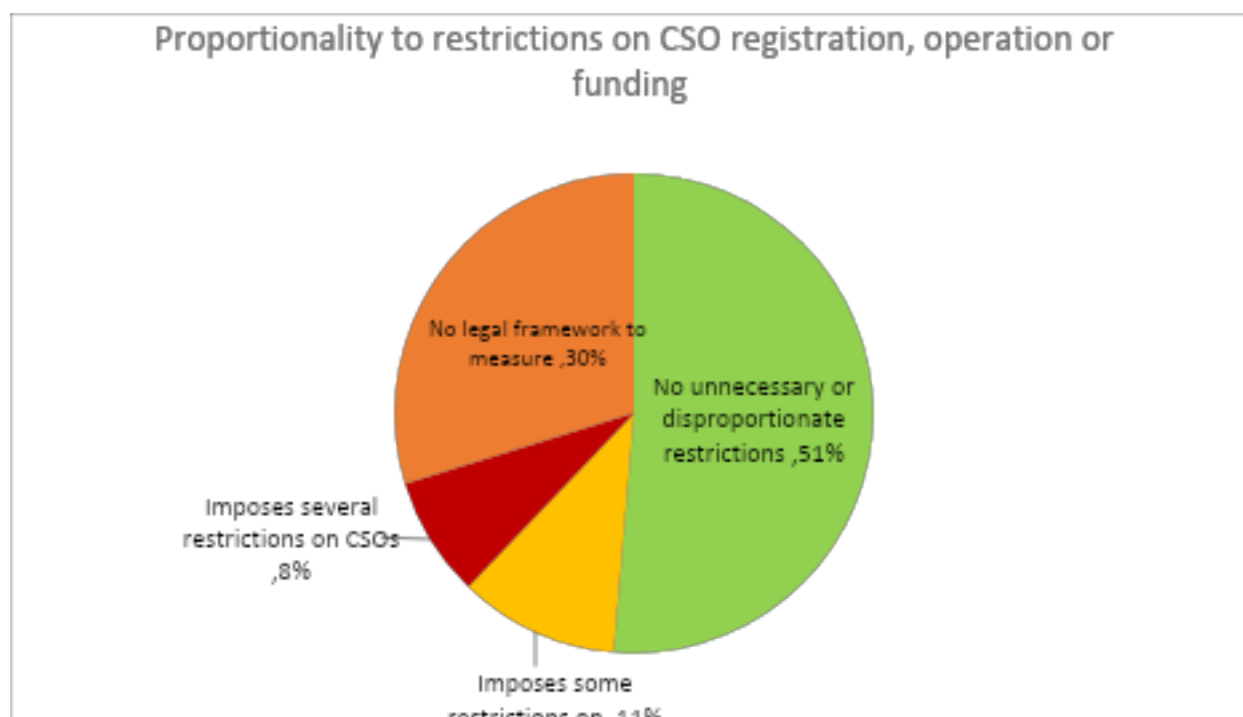


Figure 15: Proportionality to restrictions on CSO registration, operation or funding

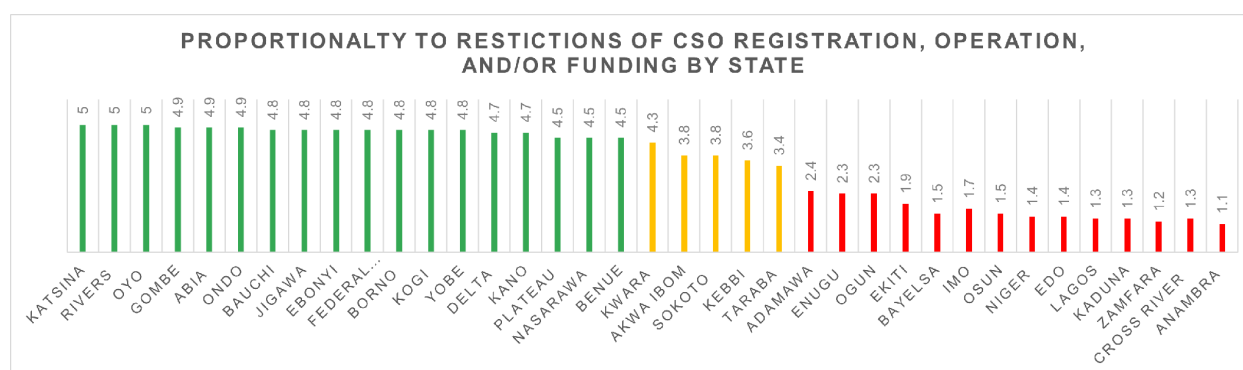


Figure 16: Proportionality to Restrictions of CSO Registration, Operation and/or Funding by State

5.1 LEGAL RECOGNITION

Overall Total State Ranking of CSO Legal Recognition (2025)

This section consolidates performance across the three Legal Recognition indicators:

1. Availability of law or policy
2. Ease of registration
3. Proportionality of restrictions

The total Legal Recognition scores range from 13.9 (Rivers) to 4.2 (Bayelsa), reflecting substantial subnational variation.

Top Performing States (Legal Recognition)

Table 10: Top Performing States (Legal Recognition)

State	Score
Rivers	13.9
Delta	13.3
Katsina	12.9
Borno	12.8
Gombe	12.7
Abia	12.6
Bauchi	12.5
Sokoto	12.4
FCT	12.2
Ebonyi	12.1
Kogi	12.1
Kano	12.0

Observations

- Rivers leads nationally, reflecting strong formal recognition, efficient registration processes, and proportionate enforcement.
- South South and Northern states dominate the upper tier.
- Several top overall ranking states also perform strongly in Legal Recognition, indicating structural alignment between formal frameworks and operational practice.

Mid-Tier States (Legal Recognition)

Table 11: Mid-Tier States (Legal Recognition)

Score Range	States
10.4 – 11.9	Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba, Akwa Ibom, Ondo, Kwara, Oyo, Kebbi, Jigawa

These states demonstrate moderately strong frameworks but may exhibit:

- Incomplete codification
- Procedural inefficiencies
- Inconsistent enforcement

Reform in these jurisdictions is likely to yield measurable improvements in overall civic environment performance.

Lower-Tier States (Legal Recognition)

Table 12: Lower Tier States (Legal Recognition)

State	Score
Adamawa	9.2
Ekiti	9.0

Imo	8.7
Enugu	8.0
Ogun	8.0
Cross River	7.3
Kaduna	7.3
Yobe	7.2
Osun	6.6
Zamfara	6.5
Niger	6.2
Edo	6.2
Anambra	6.1
Lagos	5.2
Bayelsa	4.2

Key Patterns

- Bayelsa records the lowest Legal Recognition score nationally.
- Lagos, despite its significant CSO presence, ranks near the bottom.
- Several South South and North West states appear in the lowest quartile.

Low Legal Recognition scores correlate strongly with:

- Weak overall ranking performance
- Higher administrative uncertainty
- Greater risk of arbitrary enforcement

National Pattern Summary

The distribution of total Legal Recognition scores reveals three structural realities:

1. A relatively strong top cluster demonstrating institutionalized frameworks.
2. A broad middle cluster where recognition exists but requires strengthening.
3. A bottom cluster where structural reforms are urgently needed.

Importantly, strong Legal Recognition scores tend to reinforce high overall operational environment rankings, while weak recognition scores frequently coincide with restrictive civic environments.

Concluding Assessment – Legal Recognition

Legal Recognition remains uneven across Nigeria's states. While multiple states demonstrate consolidated and relatively enabling frameworks, approximately one-third of jurisdictions show structural weaknesses that undermine predictability and operational clarity for CSOs.

Reform priorities include:

- Finalizing draft policies
- Strengthening proportional enforcement
- Codifying transparent registration systems
- Institutionalizing non-discriminatory recognition mechanisms

Improving Legal Recognition is one of the most direct pathways to enhancing Nigeria's overall civil society operating environment.

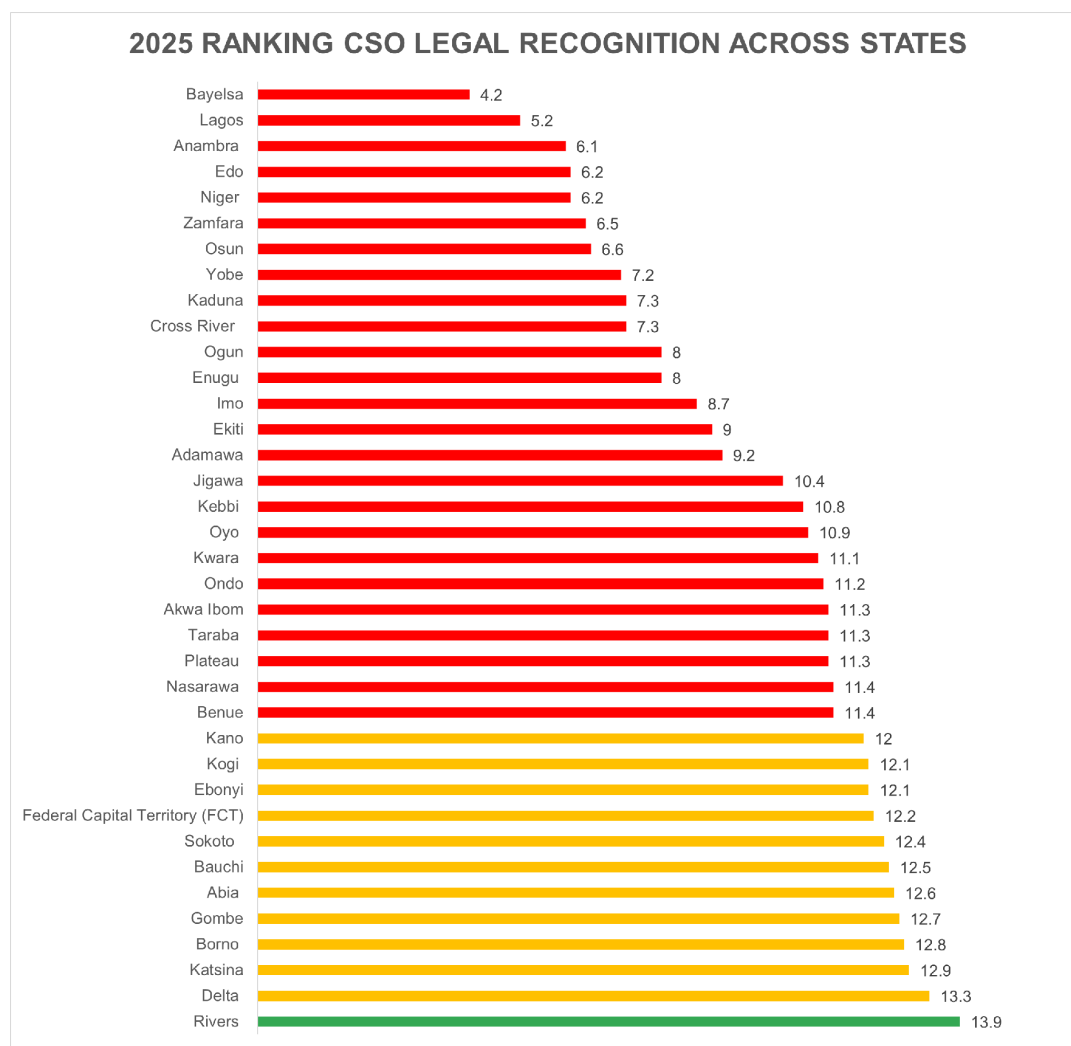


Figure 17: 2025 Ranking CSO Legal Recognition across states

5.2 Legal Personality

Closely linked to legal recognition is the question of **legal personality**, which determines whether CSOs are able to formally establish themselves, acquire rights, and carry out activities within a recognized legal framework.

The analysis under this criterion evaluates several aspects of the formation and registration process, including the ability to establish associations without prior authorization, the transparency of notification regimes, and the timeframe required to obtain legal status.

While many states permit the formation of associations, the findings suggest that the **administrative procedures governing registration vary significantly**. In several states, opaque processes or unpredictable timelines can create barriers for emerging civil society organizations.

Ensuring that CSOs can acquire legal personality efficiently and transparently is essential for enabling them to participate effectively in governance processes and development initiatives.

SECTION 5.2

LEGAL PERSONALITY

Indicator 1: CSO Formation at the State Level

This indicator assesses whether civil society organizations can be formed freely at the state level without prior authorization or arbitrary state interference.

It examines whether:

- No prior authorization is required,
- States demand authorization before formation,
- Formation is restricted or prohibited, or
- No clear framework exists, creating risk of arbitrariness.

5.2.1 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Table 13: National Distribution - CSO Formation

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
No prior authorization required	20	54.1%
State demands authorization before formation	9	24.3%

State proscribes formation	0	0%
No legal framework; arbitrary environment	8	21.6%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- A slight majority (54.1%) allow CSO formation without prior authorization.
- Nearly one-quarter (24.3%) require authorization before formation.
- 21.6% operate in legally unclear environments, increasing risk of arbitrary decisions.
- No state formally proscribes formation outright.

This indicates moderate national compliance with freedom of association principles, but significant subnational divergence persists.

5.2.2 High-Performing States (Score 4.8–5.0)

Table 14: High Performing States - CSO Formation

State	Score
Borno	5.0
Rivers	5.0
Katsina	5.0
Imo	4.9
Gombe	4.9
Delta	4.9
Oyo	4.9
Ondo	4.9

Yobe	4.8
Sokoto	4.8
Kogi	4.8
Kaduna	4.8
Ebonyi	4.8
Abia	4.8

Observations

- Northern states dominate the top bracket.
- Rivers maintains strong consistency across Legal Recognition and Legal Personality.
- Several states with moderate overall rankings still perform strongly on formation freedom (e.g., Yobe, Kaduna).

These states demonstrate minimal administrative barriers to formation and stronger alignment with international standards.

5.2.3 Mid-Tier States (3.5–4.7)

Includes:

- Bauchi
- Ogun
- Plateau
- Kano
- Nasarawa
- Taraba
- Enugu
- Kwara

- Benue
- Kebbi
- Niger
- FCT
- Akwa Ibom
- Adamawa
- Bayelsa

These states generally allow formation but may impose:

- Procedural conditions
- Informal authorization requirements
- Administrative ambiguities

Voices from the Field:

“People are generally free to form associations in the state, although informal pressure may arise when organizations engage in sensitive advocacy.”

— Respondent, Kaduna State

5.2.4 Restrictive or High-Risk States (≤ 1.8)

Table 15: Restrictive of High Risk States: CSO Formation

State	Score
Ekiti	1.8
Anambra	1.6
Osun	1.5

Jigawa	1.5
Edo	1.4
Lagos	1.3
Cross River	1.3
Zamfara	1.2

Key Observations

- These states impose significant authorization requirements or operate in unclear legal environments.
- Several of these states also appear in the lower tiers of the overall ranking.
- Lagos again ranks near the bottom, reinforcing concerns about administrative constraints.

5.2.5 Structural Implications

Formation freedom is foundational to civic space.

While a majority of states (54.1%) demonstrate strong compliance, the remaining 45.9% either:

- Require prior authorization, or
- Operate without clear legal safeguards.

States in these categories risk:

- Delayed CSO emergence
- Reduced grassroots mobilization
- Increased discretionary control

5.2.6 Correlation with Overall Ranking

High formation scores strongly align with higher overall ranking (e.g., Rivers, Katsina, Borno).

Low formation scores correlate with:

- Lower Legal Recognition scores
- Higher likelihood of restrictive environments
- Lower overall operational rankings (e.g., Bayelsa, Cross River, Zamfara)

5.2.7 Concluding Assessment

CSO Formation at the State Level performs moderately well nationally, with over half of states allowing formation without prior authorization. However, nearly half of the federation still exhibits either authorization requirements or legal ambiguity.

Reforms in the bottom-tier states should prioritize:

- Removing prior authorization requirements,
- Clarifying legal formation frameworks,
- Standardizing transparent formation procedures.

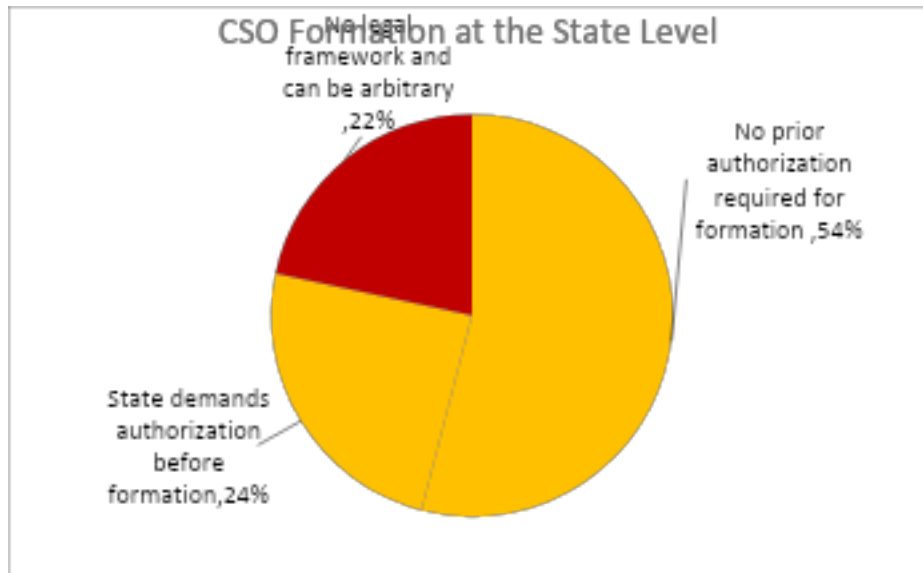


Figure 18: CSO Formation at the State Level

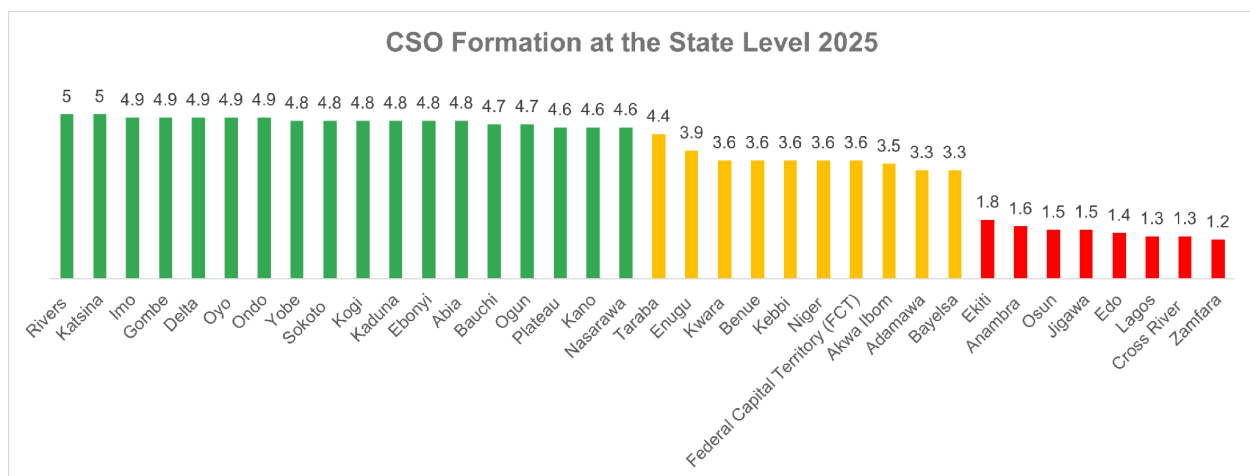


Figure 19: CSO Formation at the State level - ranking

5.2 LEGAL PERSONALITY

Indicator 2: Notification Regime

This indicator assesses whether the notification regime governing CSO formation and activities is:

- Simple and transparent,
- Free from unnecessary administrative burdens,
- Predictable and non-arbitrary.

A fair notification regime is essential to protect freedom of association and prevent informal authorization systems from emerging.

5.2.1 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
Simple, clear, transparent; no burdens	16	43.2%
Simple but imposes some unnecessary burdens	9	24.3%
Opaque, complicated, heavy burden	4	10.8%
Arbitrary	8	21.6%
Total	37	100%

Figure 20: National Distribution: Notification Regime

Key Findings

- 43.2% of states operate clear and transparent notification systems.
- 24.3% maintain workable systems but with unnecessary administrative burdens.
- 32.4% (opaque + arbitrary) present higher regulatory risk.

This suggests moderate national performance, but with significant enforcement inconsistencies.

5.2.2 High-Performing States (Score ≥ 4.7)

Table 16: High-Performing States - Notification Regime

State	Score
Abia	5.0
Katsina	5.0
Gombe	4.9
Borno	4.9
Rivers	4.9
Ondo	4.9
Kogi	4.8
Sokoto	4.8
Bauchi	4.8
Ebonyi	4.8
Nasarawa	4.8
Yobe	4.7
Delta	4.7
Niger	4.7

Observations

- Strong alignment between high overall ranking states and strong notification regimes.
- Northern states dominate the upper tier.
- These states generally treat notification as procedural rather than authorization-based.

5.2.3 Mid-Tier States (3.4–3.8)

Includes:

- Plateau
- Kaduna
- Oyo
- Kwara
- Benue
- Adamawa
- Kano
- FCT
- Kebbi
- Enugu

These states show operational functionality but:

- Impose moderate administrative burdens, or
- Exhibit inconsistent enforcement practices.

Reform focus should include streamlining timelines and reducing documentation complexity.

Voices from the Field:

“Organizations often notify authorities before major activities to avoid misunderstanding with security agencies.”

— Respondent, **Rivers State**

5.2.4 Restrictive or High-Risk States (≤ 2.3)

Table 17: Restrictive or High-Risk States - Notification Regime

State	Score
Akwa Ibom	2.3
Bayelsa	2.3
Ogun	2.2
Imo	2.0
Ekiti	1.8
Osun	1.5
Jigawa	1.5
Edo	1.4
Cross River	1.3
Lagos	1.3
Zamfara	1.2
Anambra	1.1

Key Observations

- Lagos ranks near the bottom, reflecting procedural complexity.
- Several South-South and South West states appear in the lowest tier.
- Arbitrary or opaque notification practices correlate strongly with lower overall civic environment scores.

5.2.5 Structural Implications

Although nearly half of states demonstrate clear notification regimes, approximately one-third operate opaque or arbitrary systems.

This creates risks of:

- De facto authorization requirements,
- Delayed civic mobilization,
- Administrative discretion without safeguards.

States with strong notification frameworks tend to score higher overall in Legal Personality and broader operational environment metrics.

5.2.6 Concluding Assessment

Nigeria's notification regime landscape remains uneven. While strong-performing states demonstrate that transparent systems are achievable, a significant minority continue to impose burdensome or arbitrary processes.

Improving clarity, predictability, and proportionality within notification systems represents a key reform priority, particularly in lower-tier states.

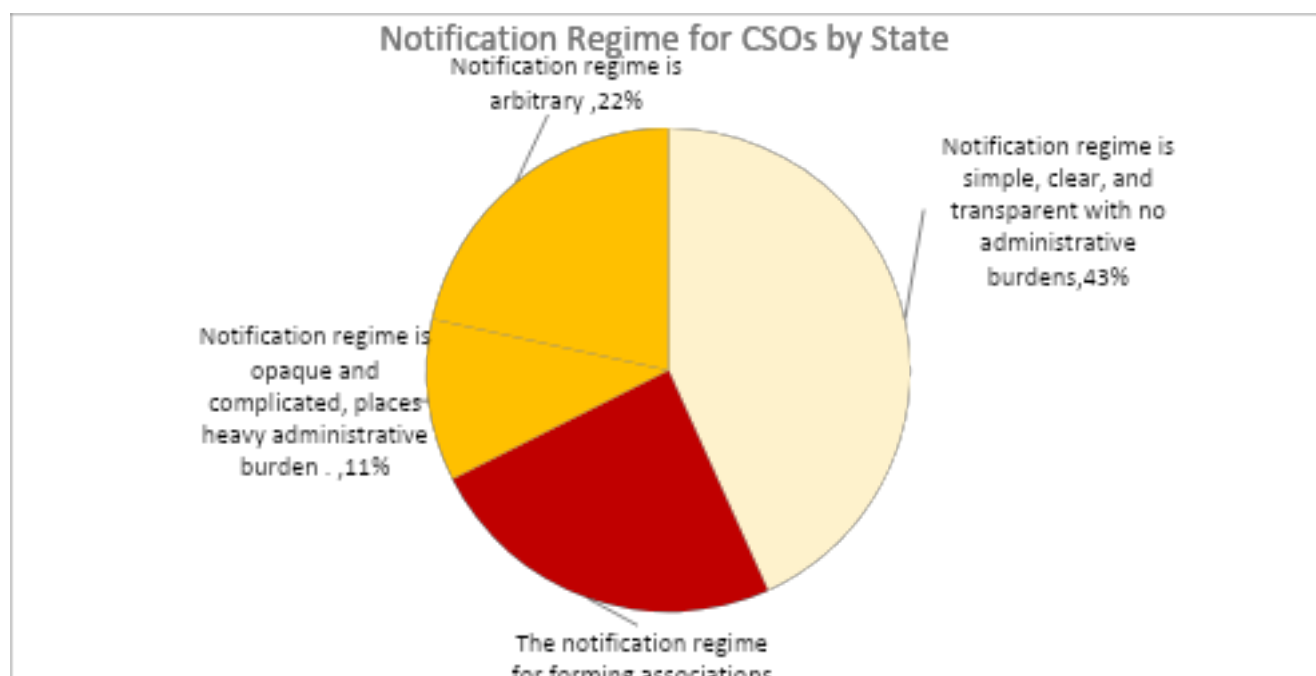


Figure 21: Notification Regime for CSOs by State

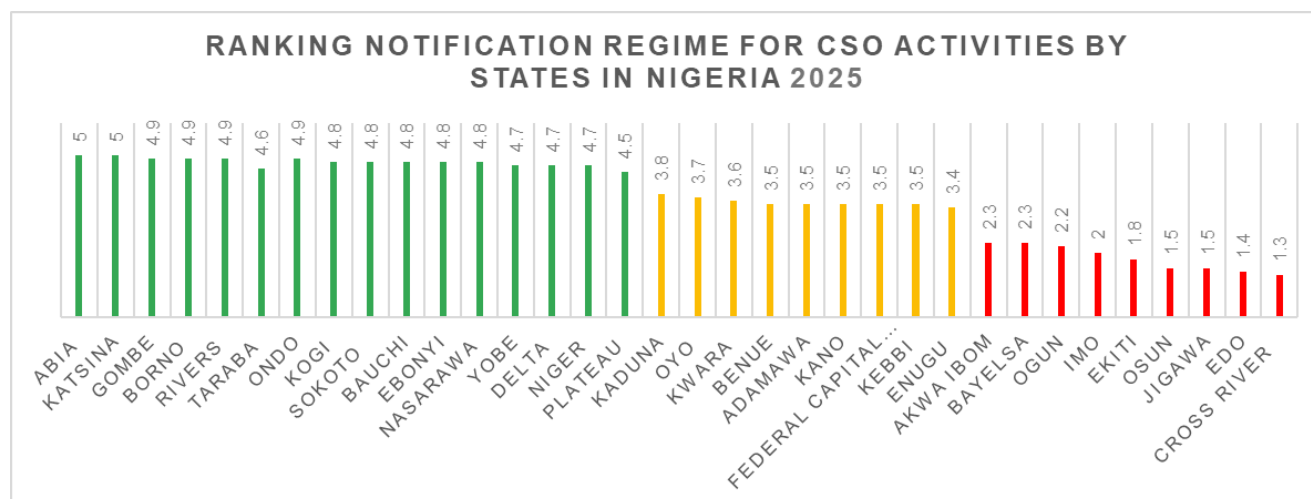


Figure 22: Ranking Notification Regime for CSOs by States

5.2 LEGAL PERSONALITY

Indicator 3: Time Frame for Registration

This indicator evaluates how long it takes for a CSO to complete registration at the state level and whether the timeframe is predictable, reasonable, and efficient.

5.2.3 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Table 18: Timeframe for Registration

Timeframe Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
2 weeks or less	16	43.2%
1–3 months	13	35.1%
3 months and above	3	8.1%
Unpredictable timeframe	5	13.5%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- 43.2% of states complete registration within two weeks or less.
- 35.1% take between one and three months.
- 21.6% (3+ months or unpredictable) present elevated procedural risk.

Overall, the majority of states (78.3%) complete registration within three months, but procedural predictability remains uneven.

Voices from the Field

“The registration process can take several weeks or months depending on the completeness of documentation submitted.”

— Respondent, **Niger State**

5.2.4 High-Performing States (Score ≥ 4.8)

Table 19: High-Performing States - Timeline for Registration

State	Score
Katsina	5.0
Ebonyi	5.0
Imo	5.0
Enugu	5.0
Rivers	4.9
Gombe	4.9
Abia	4.9
Bauchi	4.8
Kaduna	4.8
Ekiti	4.8
Nasarawa	4.8

Observations

- Several states complete registration rapidly and predictably.
- Strong time efficiency correlates positively with high Legal Personality scores.
- Katsina continues to demonstrate consistent strength across multiple indicators.

5.2.5 Mid-Tier States (3.4–4.7)

Includes:

- Kwara
- Kogi
- Kano
- Lagos
- Taraba
- Ondo
- Niger
- Osun
- Borno
- Ogun
- Adamawa
- FCT
- Plateau
- Benue
- Yobe
- Oyo
- Edo
- Akwa Ibom

These states demonstrate functional systems but may:

- Experience occasional administrative delays

- Lack strict procedural deadlines
- Have uneven implementation across departments

5.2.6 Restrictive or High-Risk States (≤ 2.6)

Table 20: Restrictive or High Risk States - Timeline for Registration

State	Score
Sokoto	2.8
Kebbi	2.6
Delta	2.4
Bayelsa	1.7
Jigawa	1.5
Anambra	1.2
Cross River	1.3
Zamfara	1.2

Observations

- Bayelsa, Cross River, and Zamfara appear again among the lowest tier.
- In these states, extended or unpredictable timeframes significantly increase administrative uncertainty.
- Delayed registration can discourage formalization and restrict civic participation.

5.2.7 Structural Implications

Timeliness is a key operational determinant of civic space.

While nearly half of states demonstrate efficient processes (≤ 2 weeks), approximately one-fifth operate slow or unpredictable systems.

Extended or uncertain timelines:

- Increase compliance costs,
- Delay program implementation,
- Create opportunities for discretionary control.

5.2.8 Concluding Assessment

The 2025 findings show moderate national performance on registration timelines, with strong efficiency in several states. However, slow and unpredictable processes persist in a minority of jurisdictions, often correlating with weaker overall operational environments.

Improving procedural timelines in lower-tier states would yield measurable improvements in Legal Personality performance.

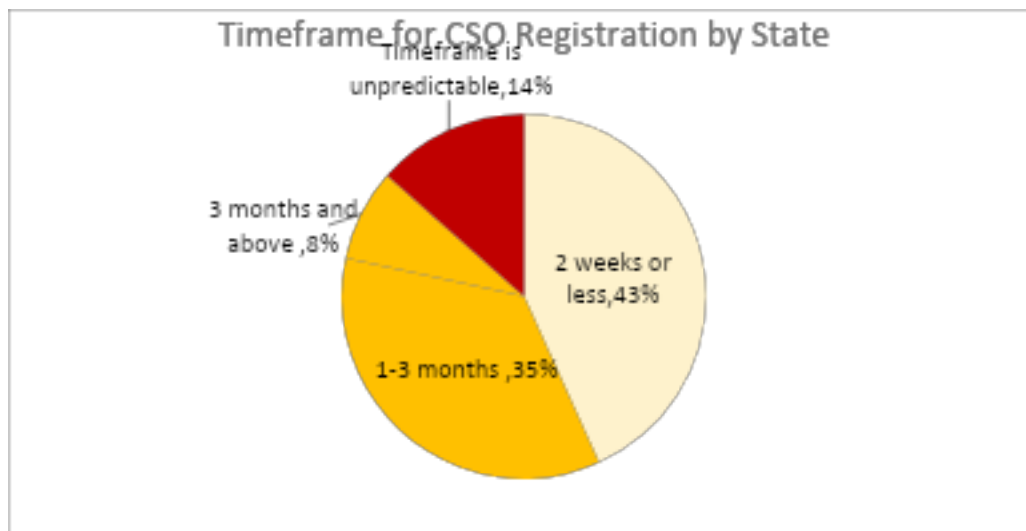


Figure 23: Timeframe for CSO Registration

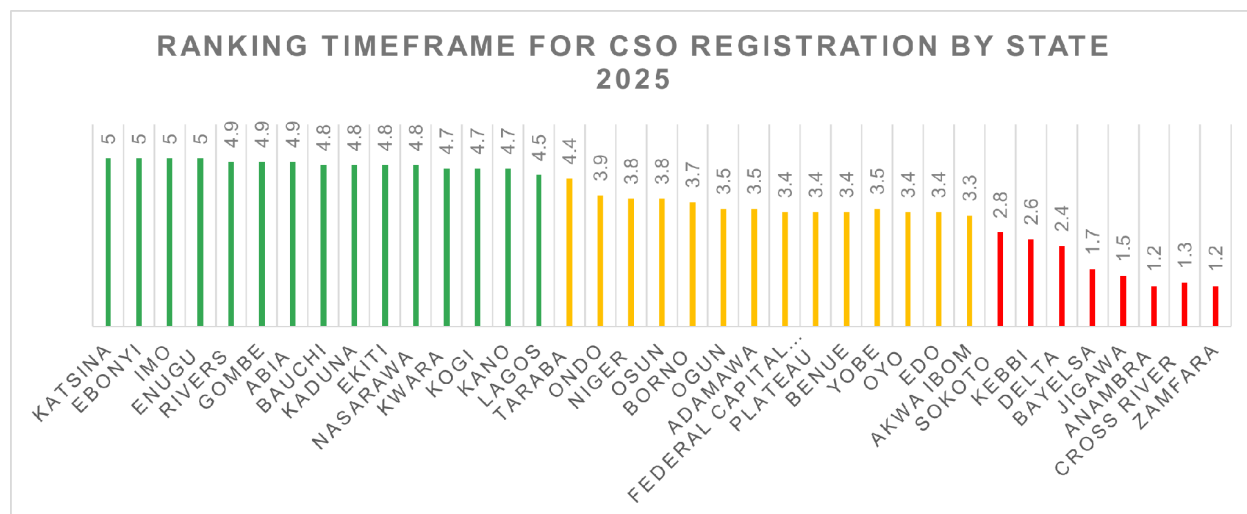


Figure 24: Ranking Timeframe for CSO Registration by State

5.2 LEGAL PERSONALITY

Indicator 4: Protection of Legal Personality

This indicator assesses whether state legal frameworks protect CSOs from arbitrary dissolution, suspension, license withdrawal, or discriminatory enforcement actions.

It evaluates:

- Transparency of decision-making,
- Availability of legal safeguards,
- Protection against arbitrary state interference.

5.2.4 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Table 21: National Distribution - Protection of CSOs Legal Personality

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
Legal framework provides protection	21	56.8%
No transparency in dissolution decisions	3	8.1%
Arbitrary and discriminatory dissolution practices	5	13.5%
No legal framework; arbitrary and non-transparent	8	21.6%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- 57% of states provide structured legal protection against arbitrary dissolution.
- 22% lack a clear legal framework and operate in non-transparent environments.
- 14% demonstrate risks of discriminatory or arbitrary enforcement.

While a majority provide protection, nearly 43% present elevated legal vulnerability.

5.2.5 High-Performing States (Score ≥ 4.7)

Table 22: High Performing States - Protection of CSOs Legal Personality

State	Score
Rivers	5.0
Ondo	5.0
Ebonyi	4.9

Gombe	4.9
Katsina	4.9
FCT	4.9
Abia	4.8
Sokoto	4.8
Kogi	4.8
Bauchi	4.7
Kwara	4.7
Niger	4.7
Kano	4.7
Yobe	4.7
Oyo	4.7
Ogun	4.7

Observations

- Rivers and Ondo lead with maximum scores.
- Strong performers generally align with higher overall Legal Personality and overall operational rankings.
- These states demonstrate clearer procedural safeguards and reduced risk of arbitrary dissolution.

5.2.6 Mid-Tier States (3.3–4.5)

Includes:

- Benue
- Nasarawa
- Plateau
- Taraba
- Delta
- Borno
- Akwa Ibom
- Adamawa

These states provide partial safeguards but may lack:

- Clear appeal processes,
- Transparent dissolution procedures,
- Codified non-discrimination clauses.

Voices from the Field

“Once registered, organizations are generally recognized as legal entities and allowed to operate across the state.”

— Respondent, **Oyo State**

5.2.7 Restrictive or High-Risk States (≤ 2.6)

Table 23: Restrictive or High-Risk States - Protection of CSOs Legal Personality

State	Score
Kebbi	2.6
Imo	2.5
Edo	2.4
Enugu	2.3
Kaduna	2.2
Ekiti	1.9
Bayelsa	1.8
Jigawa	1.5
Osun	1.5
Cross River	1.3
Lagos	1.3
Zamfara	1.2
Anambra	1.1

Observations

- Several states in the bottom quartile of the overall ranking also score lowest on protection.
- Lagos again ranks near the bottom, reinforcing regulatory vulnerability concerns.
- Cross River, Zamfara, and Anambra demonstrate high-risk dissolution environments.

Low scores here represent one of the most serious civic space risks, as arbitrary dissolution undermines organizational stability.

5.2.8 Structural Implications

Protection of Legal Personality is central to sustainable civic engagement.

While over half of states provide structured safeguards, nearly 43% operate with either weak transparency or no framework at all. In such environments, CSOs face elevated institutional risk.

Strong protection frameworks correlate strongly with high Legal Personality performance and overall civic environment strength.

5.2.9 Concluding Assessment

Nationally, protection mechanisms perform moderately well, but structural weaknesses remain concentrated in lower-tier states.

Priority reforms should include:

- Clear codification of dissolution standards,
- Transparent administrative decision-making,
- Guaranteed right to appeal,
- Explicit non-discrimination safeguards.

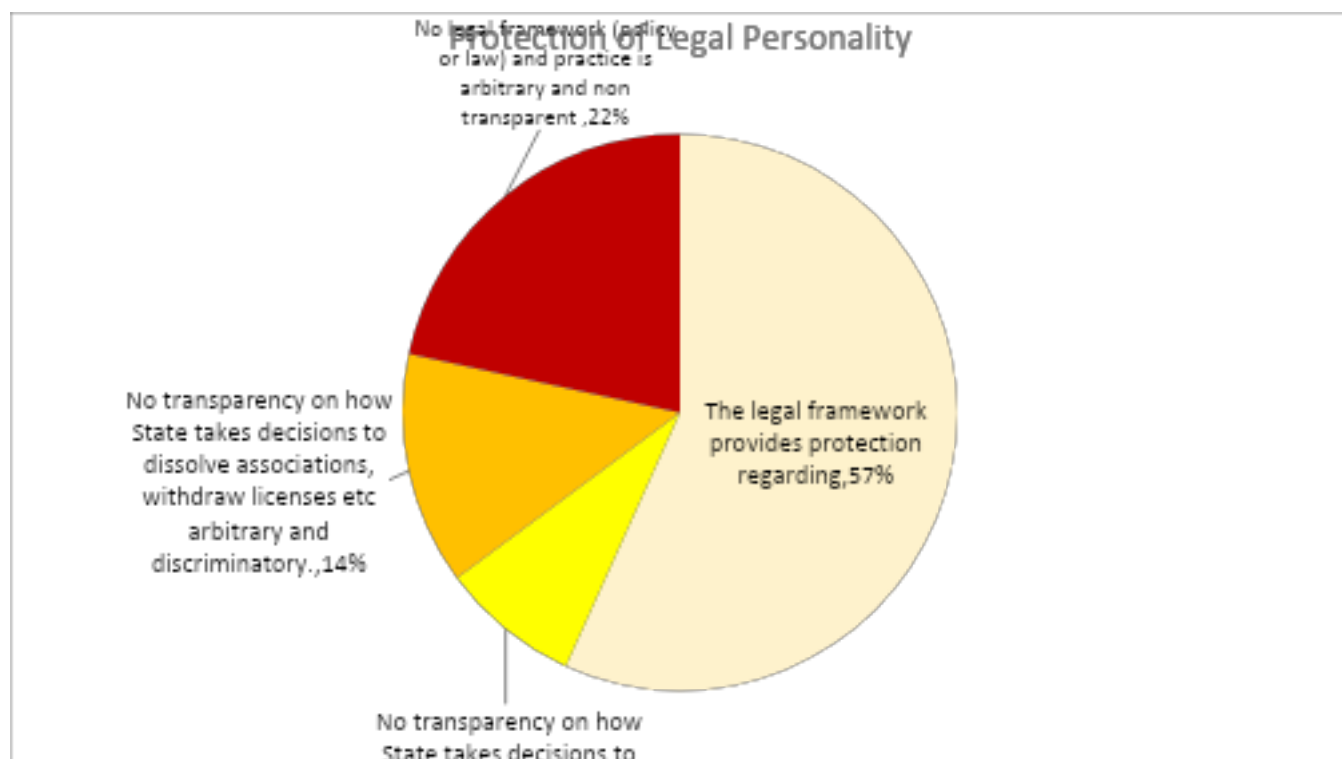


Figure 25: Protection of CSO Legal Personality



Figure 26: Ranking Protection of CSO Legal Personality

5.2 LEGAL PERSONALITY

Overall Total Ranking of CSO Legal Personality (2025)

The Legal Personality criterion consolidates performance across four indicators:

1. CSO Formation at State Level
2. Notification Regime
3. Time Frame for Registration
4. Protection of Legal Personality

Scores range from **19.9 (Katsina)** to **4.8 (Zamfara)**, revealing significant divergence in how states enable or constrain the legal existence and operational security of CSOs.

Top Performing States

Table 24: Top Performing States - Overall Legal Personality

State	Score
Katsina	19.9
Rivers	19.8
Gombe	19.6
Abia	19.5
Ebonyi	19.5
Kogi	19.1
Bauchi	19.0
Ondo	18.7
Nasarawa	18.7

Key Observations

- Katsina leads nationally, closely followed by Rivers.
- Strong performers are geographically diverse.
- These states demonstrate consistency across formation freedom, transparent notification, reasonable timelines, and protection against dissolution.
- High Legal Personality scores align strongly with high overall operational environment rankings.

Mid-Tier States (15.0–17.8)

Includes:

- Taraba
- Yobe
- Kano
- Sokoto
- Borno
- Plateau
- Niger
- Oyo
- Kwara
- Delta
- Kaduna
- FCT
- Ogun
- Benue

These states provide relatively functional legal personality frameworks but may exhibit:

- Procedural delays,
- Moderate administrative burdens,
- Partial safeguards against arbitrary action.

These jurisdictions represent consolidation candidates where incremental reforms could elevate performance.

Lower-Tier States (Below 14.0)

Table 25: Lower-Tier States - Overall Legal Personality

State	Score
Adamawa	13.6
Akwa Ibom	12.5
Kebbi	12.3
Ekiti	10.3
Bayelsa	9.1
Edo	8.6
Lagos	8.4
Osun	8.3
Jigawa	6.0
Cross River	5.2
Anambra	5.0
Zamfara	4.8

Key Patterns

- Zamfara ranks lowest nationally on Legal Personality.
- Cross River and Anambra also fall within the lowest cluster.
- Lagos ranks significantly below the national median despite its strong CSO presence.
- These states exhibit weaknesses across multiple sub-indicators, particularly in notification transparency and protection safeguards.

Low Legal Personality scores indicate elevated risk of:

- Administrative interference,
- Dissolution without clear procedural protection,
- Delayed or burdensome registration.

National Pattern Summary

The distribution reveals three structural clusters:

1. High Consolidation States (≥ 18.5) – Strong procedural safeguards and formation freedoms.
2. Functional but Uneven States (15–18.4) – Moderate performance with reform gaps.
3. Vulnerable States (< 14) – Weak legal safeguards and higher regulatory risk.

Importantly, strong Legal Personality performance correlates closely with overall state ranking strength, reinforcing its central role in enabling civic space.

Concluding Assessment – Legal Personality

Overall, Legal Personality performs moderately well nationally, with a strong top cluster demonstrating robust legal safeguards.

However, approximately one-third of states fall into a lower-tier category where formation, notification, timelines, or dissolution protections remain weak or inconsistent.

Strengthening legal safeguards in these lower-performing states would significantly improve Nigeria's overall civil society operating environment.

5.3 Purposes and Activities

Once established, CSOs must be able to pursue their objectives without undue interference. The **Purposes and Activities** criterion examines whether civil society actors are able to engage in advocacy, public debate, and service delivery within a supportive regulatory framework.

The analysis focuses on four key areas:

- Freedom of expression
- Recognition of the public benefit nature of CSO activities
- Operational autonomy
- Access to public information

The findings show that most states formally permit CSOs to engage in public benefit activities. However, the degree of operational autonomy and access to information varies considerably, with some jurisdictions maintaining administrative controls that limit the scope of civic engagement.

Access to public information, in particular, remains an area of structural weakness, with many states lacking comprehensive frameworks that facilitate transparency and civic oversight.

5.3 PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

Indicator 1: Freedom of Expression

This indicator assesses whether CSOs can freely express views, engage in advocacy, and participate in public discourse without fear of sanction, intimidation, or regulatory retaliation.

5.3.1 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Table 26: Freedom of Expression

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
CSOs freely express views and engage in advocacy	22	59.5%
Expression allowed but some inhibiting policies	6	16.2%
CSOs clamped down	0	0%
Absence of legal framework undermines expression	9	24.3%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- 59.5% of states demonstrate strong protection for CSO expression.
- 16.2% allow expression but maintain restrictive policy elements.
- 24.3% lack adequate legal safeguards, creating vulnerability.
- No state formally prohibits expression outright.

Nationally, freedom of expression performs relatively well but remains uneven.

5.3.2 High-Performing States (Score ≥ 4.8)

Table 27: High Performance States - Freedom of Expression

State	Score
Ondo	5.0
Gombe	4.9
Katsina	4.9
Rivers	4.9
Ebonyi	4.9
Oyo	4.9
Sokoto	4.8
Bauchi	4.8
Kwara	4.8
Abia	4.8
Borno	4.8
Kogi	4.8
FCT	4.8
Niger	4.8

Observations

- Freedom of expression is strongest in states already ranking high in Legal Recognition and Legal Personality.
- Strong performers are regionally diverse.

- These states generally allow advocacy, public commentary, and policy engagement without disproportionate interference.

5.3.3 Mid-Tier States (3.2–4.7)

Includes:

- Adamawa
- Nasarawa
- Enugu
- Yobe
- Delta
- Plateau
- Ogun
- Taraba
- Lagos
- Kebbi
- Akwa Ibom
- Benue
- Kano
- Imo

These states permit expression but may exhibit:

- Informal pressure,
- Administrative caution in advocacy-related matters,
- Regulatory ambiguity.

Voices from the Field:

“Associations can express their views and engage in advocacy, although organizations often avoid direct confrontation with authorities.”

— Respondent, **Enugu State**

5.3.4 Restrictive or High-Risk States (≤ 1.9)

Table 28: Restrictive or High-Risk States - Freedom of Expression

State	Score
Ekiti	1.9
Jigawa	1.5
Osun	1.5
Zamfara	1.5
Kaduna	1.4
Bayelsa	1.4
Edo	1.4
Cross River	1.2
Anambra	1.2

Observations

- These states lack sufficient legal protection or exhibit restrictive practice.
- Several appear consistently in lower tiers across other criteria.

- Weak freedom of expression significantly undermines broader civic engagement capacity.

5.3.5 Structural Implications

Freedom of expression is a foundational civic space indicator.

While a majority of states demonstrate strong performance, nearly one-quarter operate in environments where legal protection is weak or unclear. These vulnerabilities may not always result in overt clampdowns but create structural risk.

Strong freedom of expression correlates strongly with higher overall operational environment rankings.

5.3.6 Concluding Assessment

Nationally, freedom of expression performs comparatively well. However, subnational disparities remain pronounced, particularly in lower-tier states where legal safeguards are weak or inconsistently applied.

Strengthening explicit protections and limiting policy ambiguities in vulnerable states remains a priority reform area.

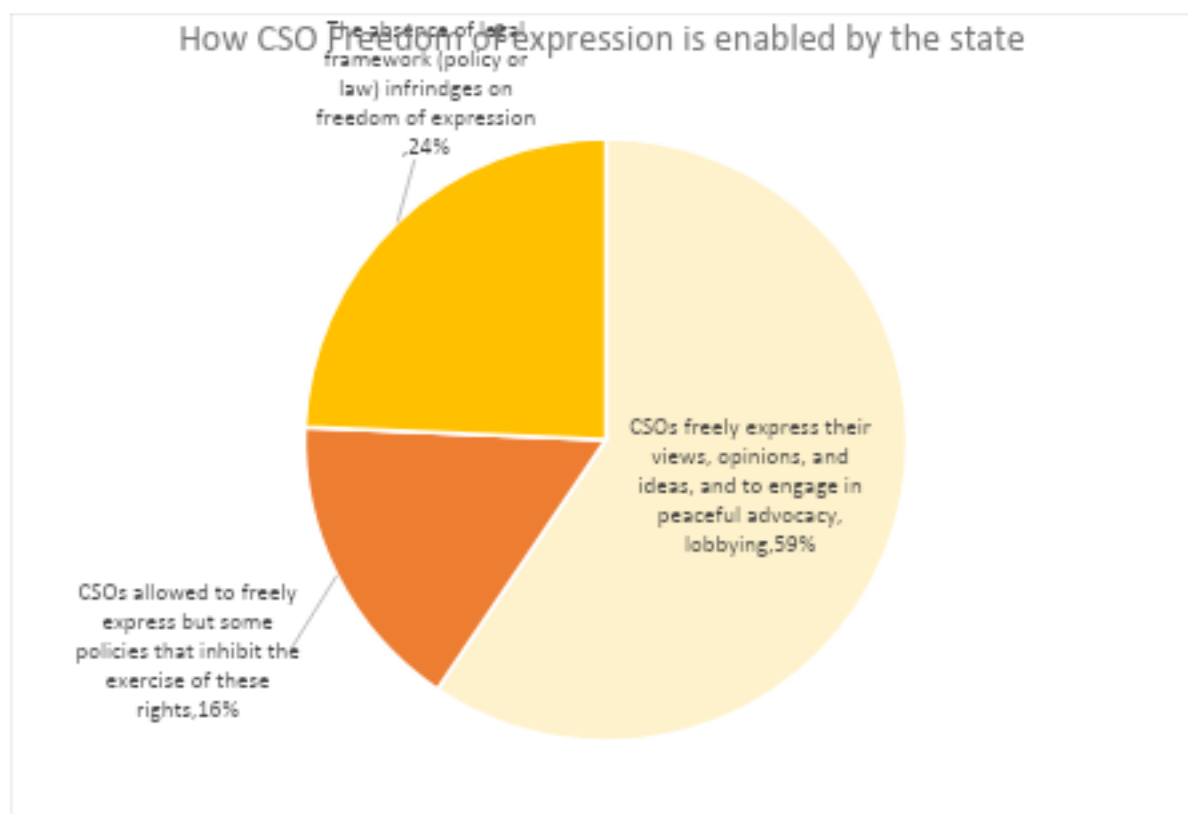


Figure 27: How CSO Freedom of Expression is enabled by the State

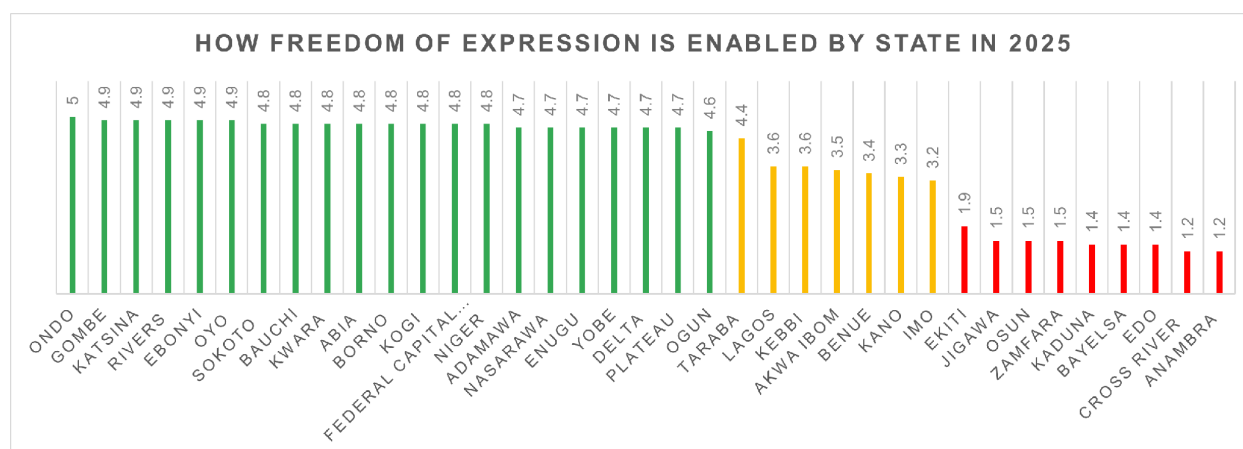


Figure 28: How Freedom of Expression is Enabled by State in 2025

5.3 PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

Indicator 2: Public Benefit

This indicator assesses whether states recognize the public benefit role of CSOs and permit them to carry out public good activities without undue interference or permission-based limitations.

5.3.2 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Category	Number States	of Percentage (%)
State recognizes public benefit and allows activities	15	40.5%
Recognizes public benefit but limits activities via permissions	13	35.1%
Does not recognize public benefit	0	0%
No legal framework; activities allowed in practice	9	24.3%
Total	37	100%

Figure 29: National Distribution - Public Benefit

Key Findings

- 40.5% of states clearly recognize and support CSOs' public benefit role.
- 35.1% recognize CSOs but impose permission-based limitations.
- 24.3% lack formal legal frameworks, relying on informal tolerance.
- No state formally denies the public benefit nature of CSOs.

While overt hostility is absent, structured support is not universal.

5.3.3 High-Performing States (Score ≥ 4.8)

Table 29: High-Performing States - Public Benefit

State	Score
Ondo	5.0
Rivers	5.0
Katsina	5.0
Bauchi	4.9
Abia	4.9
Imo	4.9
Gombe	4.8
Niger	4.8
Nasarawa	4.8
Ekiti	4.8
Kogi	4.8
Ebonyi	4.8
Sokoto	4.8

Observations

- Strong performers are consistent with high scores in Freedom of Expression.
- These states generally allow CSOs to undertake advocacy, development, and service-delivery roles without excessive prior approvals.
- Recognition tends to align with broader enabling civic environments.

5.3.4 Mid-Tier States (3.3–4.6)

Includes:

- Plateau
- Taraba
- Kwara
- Enugu
- Oyo
- Borno
- Lagos
- FCT
- Akwa Ibom
- Delta
- Benue
- Adamawa
- Kebbi
- Ogun
- Kano

These states recognize public benefit roles but often require:

- Prior permissions for activities,
- Administrative clearances for events,
- Informal approvals for advocacy engagement.

Such procedural limitations may not amount to outright restriction but create operational friction.

Voices from the Field

“Most civil society organizations in the state focus on community development, health programs, and education initiatives.”

— Respondent, **Akwa Ibom State**

5.3.5 Restrictive or Weak Recognition States (≤ 1.5)

Table 30: Restrictive or Weak Recognition States - Public Benefit

State	Score
Bayelsa	1.5
Osun	1.5
Edo	1.4
Cross River	1.4
Kaduna	1.4
Yobe	1.3
Zamfara	1.2
Jigawa	1.2
Anambra	1.1

Observations

- These states either lack formal recognition frameworks or impose strong informal limitations.
- Several consistently appear in lower-tier rankings across other criteria.

- Weak recognition of public benefit roles often correlates with weaker protection and notification systems.

5.3.6 Structural Implications

Public benefit recognition is central to civic legitimacy.

Although no state explicitly denies CSOs' public benefit role, nearly 60% of states either:

- Impose permission-based limitations, or
- Operate without formal frameworks.

This indicates that while civic legitimacy is broadly acknowledged, institutionalized support remains uneven.

5.3.7 Concluding Assessment

Nationally, public benefit recognition performs moderately well. However, permission-based controls and absence of formal frameworks in a significant minority of states limit full operational autonomy.

Strengthening formal recognition and removing unnecessary permission requirements would enhance civic contribution to governance and development outcomes.

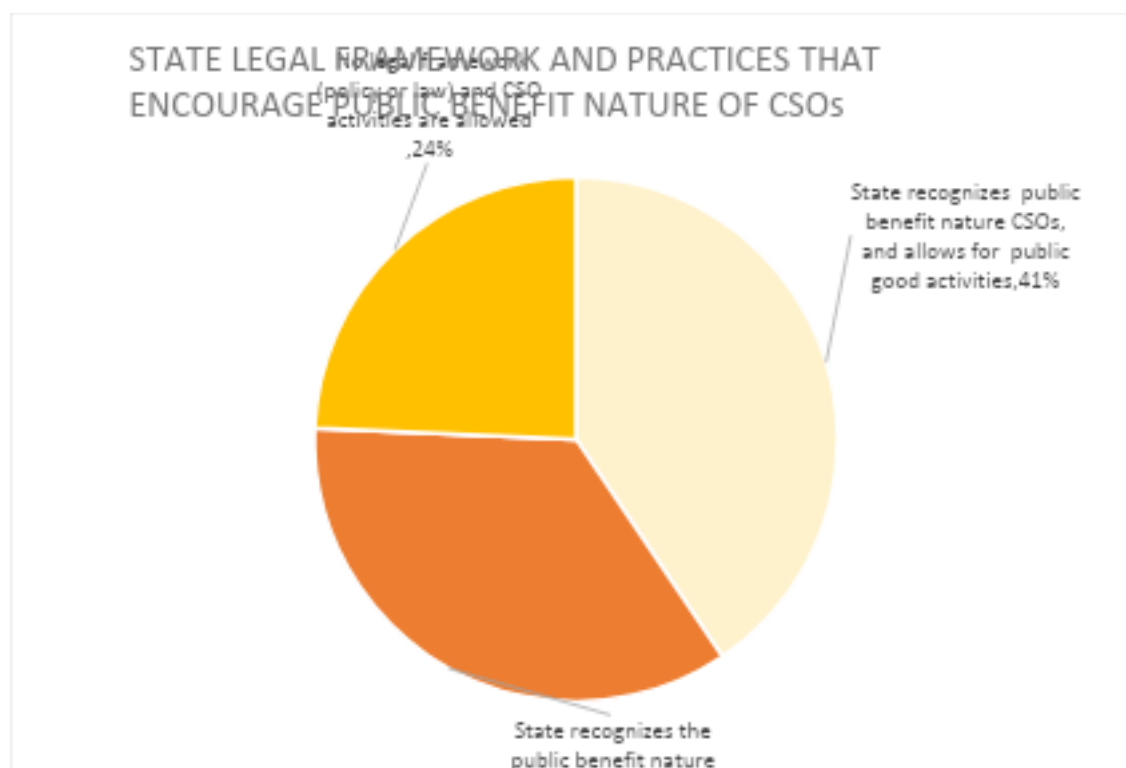


Figure 30: State Legal Framework and Practices that encourage Public Benefit Nature of CSOs

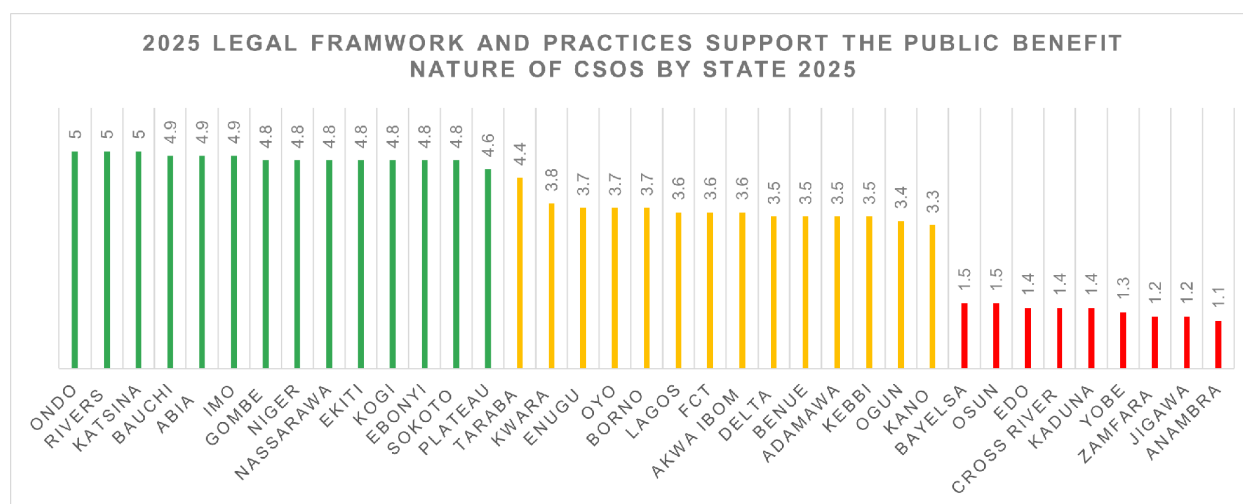


Figure 31: Ranking 2025 Legal Framework and Practices that encourage Public Benefit Nature of CSOs by State

5.3 PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

Indicator 3: Operational Autonomy

This indicator assesses whether CSOs can operate independently, manage their governance structures, determine activities, and make internal decisions without undue interference from state authorities.

5.3.3 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Table 31: National Distribution - Operational Autonomy

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
CSOs operate autonomously without undue interference	25	67.6%
No legal framework but practice allows autonomy	1	2.7%
Allowed autonomy but subject to excessive reporting burdens	1	2.7%
State explicitly bans autonomous operations	8	21.6%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- 70.3% of states (formal + informal practice) allow operational autonomy.
- 21.6% explicitly restrict or ban autonomous operations.
- A small minority impose excessive reporting burdens despite allowing internal governance.

Operational autonomy performs relatively strongly nationally, but restrictions remain concentrated in certain states.

5.3.4 High-Performing States (Score ≥ 4.8)

Table 32: High-Performing State - Operational Autonomy

State	Score
Oyo	5.0
Ondo	5.0
Katsina	5.0
Rivers	4.9
Abia	4.9
Ebonyi	4.9
Imo	4.9
Akwa Ibom	4.9
Ekiti	4.8
Lagos	4.8
Sokoto	4.8
Bauchi	4.8
Niger	4.8
Kwara	4.8
Kogi	4.8

Observations

- Strong autonomy correlates with higher overall operational rankings.
- Notably, Lagos performs strongly here despite weaker scores in Legal Recognition.
- States in this tier demonstrate minimal direct interference in governance and programmatic decisions.

5.3.5 Mid-Tier States (3.3–4.7)

Includes:

- Ogun
- Benue
- Enugu
- Delta
- Gombe
- Plateau
- Nasarawa
- Kebbi
- Taraba
- Jigawa
- Borno
- Kano
- FCT

These states allow autonomy but may impose:

- Reporting requirements,
- Informal oversight,

- Administrative approvals for certain activities.

Voices from the Field:

“CSOs can generally determine their programs independently without interference from government authorities.”

— Respondent, **Gombe State**

5.3.6 Restrictive or High-Risk States (≤ 2.5)

Table 33: Restrictive or High Risk States - Operational Autonomy

State	Score
Adamawa	2.5
Cross River	1.6
Bayelsa	1.5
Osun	1.5
Edo	1.4
Kaduna	1.4
Yobe	1.3
Anambra	1.2
Zamfara	1.2

Observations

- These states impose significant constraints on operational independence.
- Several consistently appear in lower tiers across multiple criteria.

- Explicit bans or interference represent one of the most serious civic space risks.

5.3.7 Structural Implications

Operational autonomy is central to meaningful civic participation.

While two-thirds of states demonstrate strong autonomy protections, a significant minority (21.6%) impose restrictions that directly undermine internal governance and independence.

Restrictions on autonomy often coincide with weak protection of legal personality and lower overall rankings.

5.3.8 Concluding Assessment

Operational autonomy performs relatively well nationally but remains uneven. Strong autonomy frameworks align with higher-performing civic environments, while explicit restrictions correspond with structurally weaker states.

Protecting internal governance independence should remain a core reform priority in lower-tier jurisdictions.

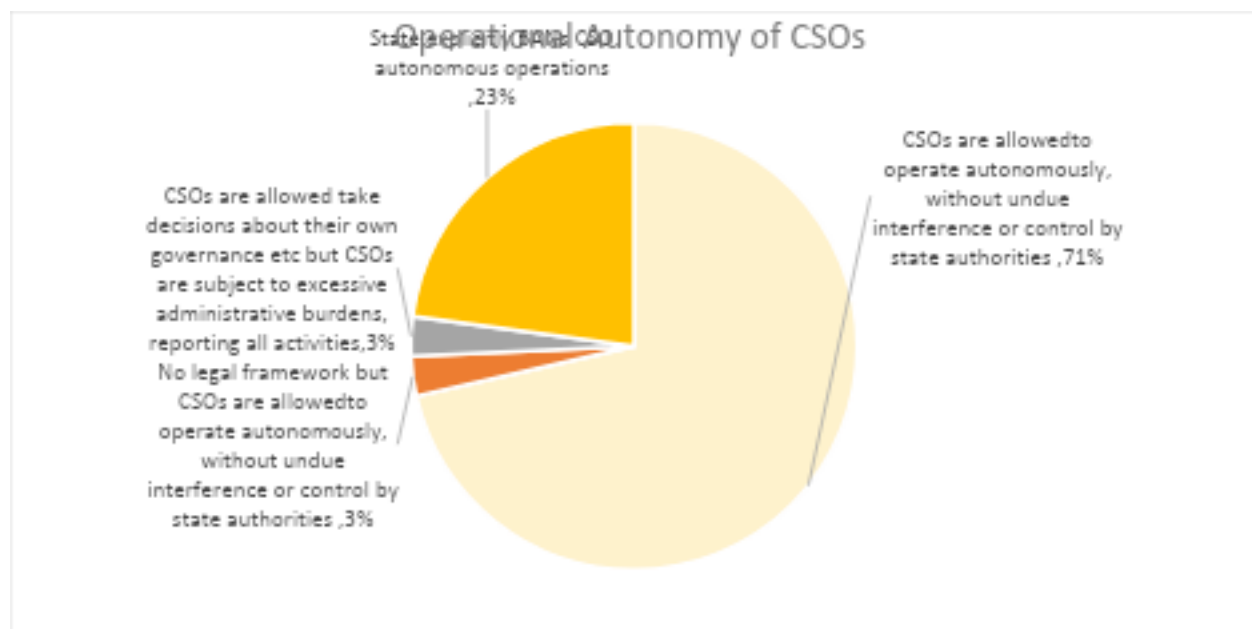


Figure 32: Operational Autonomy of CSOs

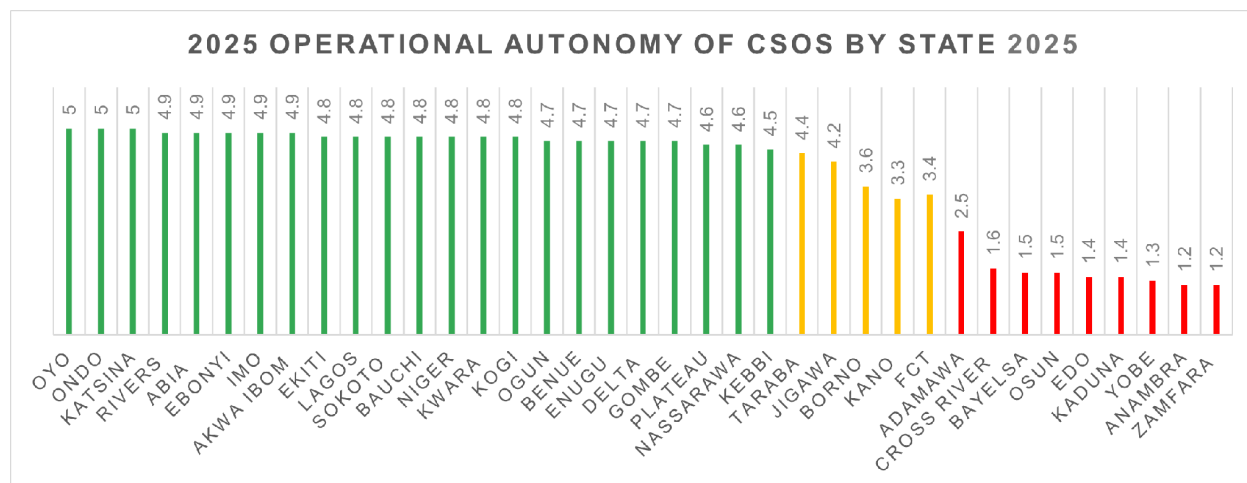


Figure 33: 2025 Operational Autonomy of CSOs by State - Ranking

5.3 PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

Indicator 4: Freedom of Information

This indicator assesses whether CSOs have access to public information necessary for advocacy, accountability, and public participation. It examines both the existence of Freedom of Information (FOI) laws and the effectiveness of information-sharing practices.

5.3.4 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Table 34: National Distribution - Freedom of Information

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
FOI law passed; access timely and effective	1	2.7%
FOI law passed but access inefficient	3	8.1%
No FOI law but information-sharing practice exists	26	70.3%
No FOI law and no practice	7	18.9%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- Only 2.7% of states have both a formal FOI law and effective access.
- 70.3% operate without formal FOI laws but maintain some practice of information sharing.
- Nearly one-fifth (18.9%) lack both formal frameworks and effective practice.

Nationally, Freedom of Information remains one of the weakest structured legal areas, relying heavily on informal administrative practice rather than codified rights.

5.3.5 Highest Performing States

Table 35: Highest Performing States - Freedom of Information

State	Score
Ekiti	3.9
FCT	3.8
Delta	3.4
Osun	3.0

Even the highest scores remain moderate, reflecting systemic limitations in formal FOI institutionalization.

5.3.6 Mid-Tier States (2.4–2.8)

Includes:

- Bauchi
- Sokoto
- Rivers
- Yobe

- Kogi
- Kebbi
- Niger
- Ebonyi
- Adamawa
- Plateau
- Imo
- Nasarawa
- Gombe
- Oyo
- Lagos
- Ondo
- Katsina
- Kwara
- Akwa Ibom
- Taraba
- Jigawa

These states allow some degree of information access but may face:

- Delays,
- Selective disclosure,
- Administrative discretion.

Voices from the Field:

“Access to public information remains limited because many government institutions are reluctant to release data requested by CSOs.”

— Respondent, **Plateau State**

5.3.7 Lowest Performing States (≤ 1.5)

Table 36: Lowest Performing States - Freedom of Information

State	Score
Bayelsa	1.5
Anambra	1.5
Edo	1.4
Kaduna	1.4
Abia	1.3
Cross River	1.3
Zamfara	1.2

Observations

- These states lack structured FOI frameworks and demonstrate weak or inconsistent information-sharing practices.
- Several appear consistently in lower-tier categories across multiple criteria.

5.3.8 Structural Implications

Freedom of Information remains structurally underdeveloped at the subnational level.

Although informal information-sharing practices exist in most states, the absence of strong legal codification weakens enforceability and predictability.

Limited information access undermines:

- Budget accountability,
- Evidence-based advocacy,
- Public participation in governance.

5.3.9 Concluding Assessment

Freedom of Information is comparatively weaker than other indicators under Purposes and Activities. While outright prohibition is rare, formal institutional safeguards are limited.

Strengthening state-level FOI frameworks and ensuring effective implementation would significantly enhance civic accountability and transparency.

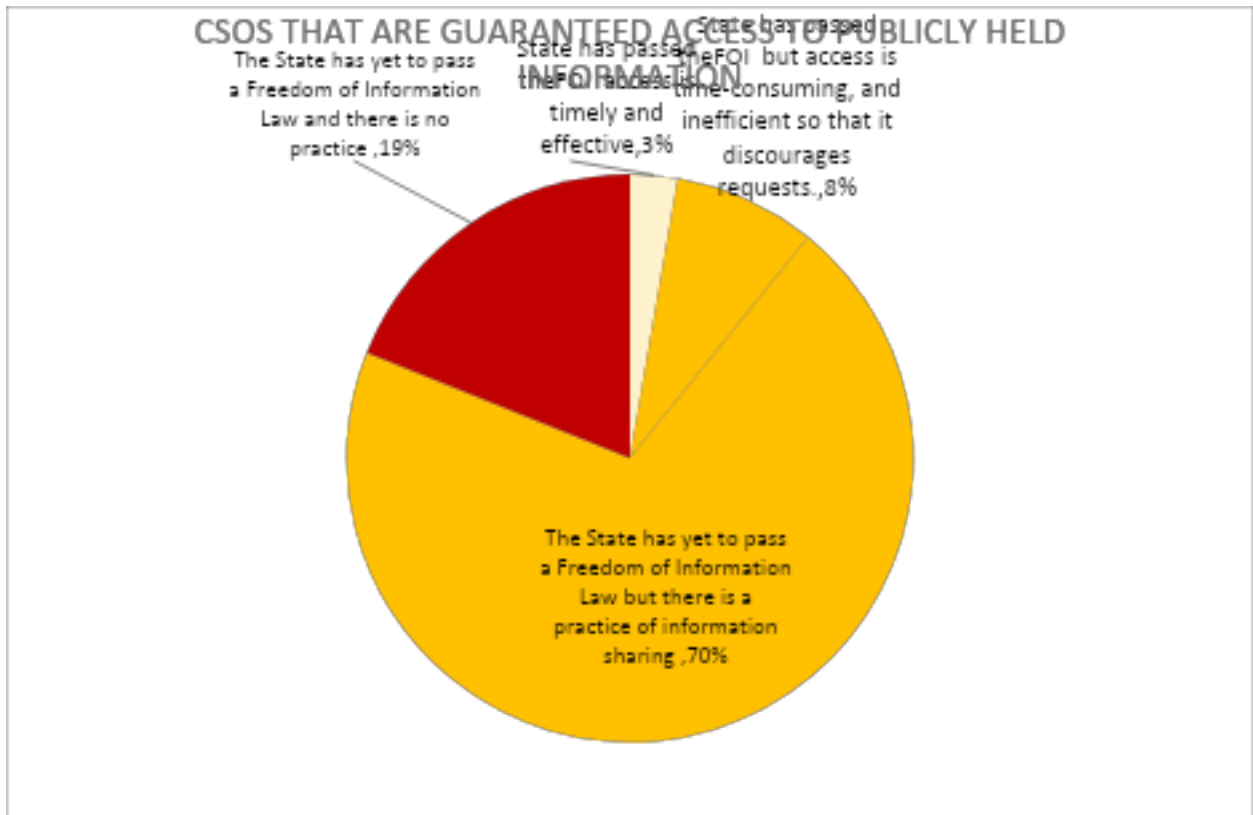


Figure 34: CSOs that are guaranteed Access to Publicly – Held Information

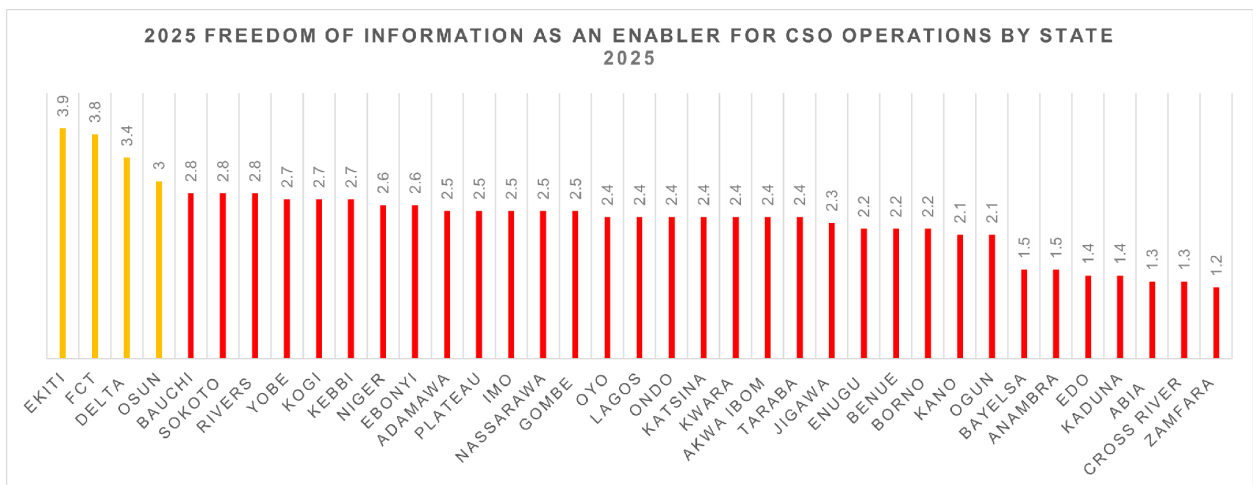


Figure 35: 2025 Freedom of Information as an Enabler for CSO Operations By State

5.3 PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

Overall 2025 State Ranking

This consolidated score reflects performance across four indicators:

1. Freedom of Expression
2. Public Benefit Recognition
3. Operational Autonomy
4. Freedom of Information

Scores range from **17.6 (Rivers)** to **5.0 (Anambra)**, demonstrating significant variation in how states enable CSOs to pursue their mandates.

Top Performing States

Table 37: Top Performing States: Overall 2025 State Ranking - Purposes and Activities

State	Score
Rivers	17.6
Ondo	17.4
Katsina	17.3
Bauchi	17.3
Sokoto	17.2
Ebonyi	17.2
Kogi	17.1
Niger	17.0
Gombe	16.9

Key Observations

- Rivers leads nationally, reflecting consistent strength across expression, autonomy, and public benefit recognition.
- Northern states perform strongly in this category.
- High-performing states demonstrate alignment between legal safeguards and operational freedom.

These states provide relatively strong space for advocacy, service delivery, and public engagement.

Mid-Tier States (13.0–16.8)

Includes:

- Nasarawa
- Plateau
- Delta
- Oyo
- Abia
- Kwara
- FCT
- Taraba
- Imo
- Ekiti
- Enugu
- Ogun
- Lagos

- Akwa Ibom
- Kebbi
- Borno
- Benue
- Adamawa

These states allow operational activity but may exhibit:

- Permission-based limitations,
- Moderate information access constraints,
- Uneven enforcement practices.

Reform in these states would likely focus on removing procedural burdens and strengthening information transparency.

Lower-Tier States (≤ 12.0)

Table 38: Lower-Tier States - Overall 2025 State Ranking - Purposes and Activities

State	Score
Kano	12.0
Yobe	10.0
Jigawa	9.2
Osun	7.5
Bayelsa	5.9
Kaduna	5.6
Edo	5.6
Cross River	5.5

Zamfara	5.1
Anambra	5.0

Key Patterns

- Anambra records the lowest score in this category.
- Cross River, Zamfara, Edo, and Kaduna consistently appear in lower-tier clusters.
- These states exhibit weaknesses across expression, autonomy, and/or information access.

Lower scores here indicate restricted civic participation capacity and weaker advocacy space.

National Pattern Summary

The distribution reveals three clusters:

1. High-Enablement States (≥ 16.5) – Strong civic participation environments.
2. Moderate-Enablement States (13–16.4) – Functional but administratively uneven.
3. Restricted Environments (< 12) – Limited operational freedom and transparency.

Strong performance in Purposes and Activities correlates closely with higher overall state rankings, confirming that operational freedom is a central determinant of civic space quality.

Concluding Assessment – Purposes and Activities

Nationally, most states permit CSOs to function and pursue public good objectives. However, subnational disparities remain pronounced, particularly in lower-tier states where expression, autonomy, and information access are constrained.

Strengthening transparency frameworks and reducing administrative limitations would significantly enhance the enabling environment in vulnerable states.

2025 RANKING enabling environment that advances cso purposes and activities BY STATE

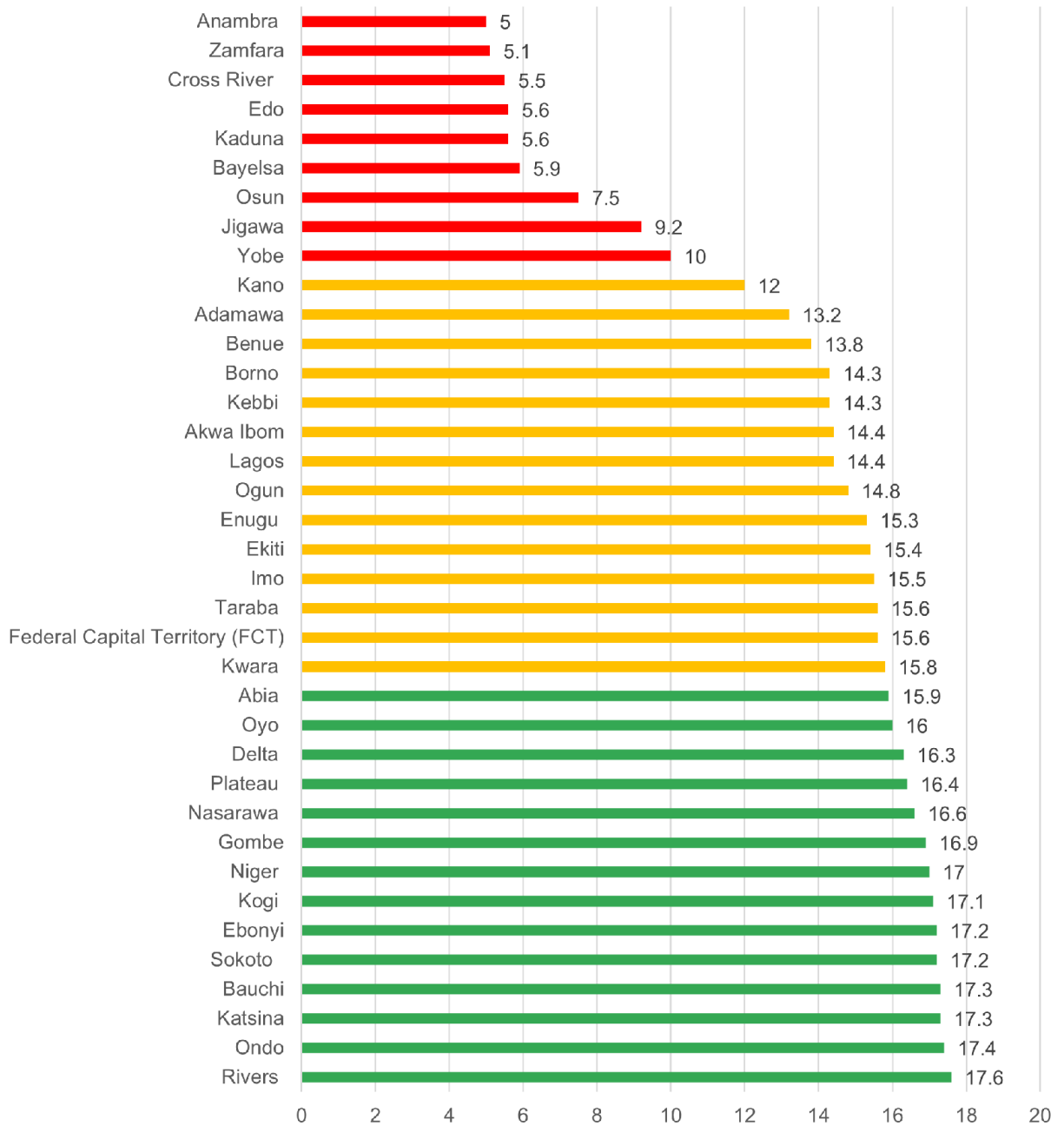


Figure 36: 2025 Ranking Enabling Environment that Advances CSO Purposes and Activities by State

5.4 Sanctions and Remedies

A well-functioning regulatory environment must balance accountability mechanisms with safeguards that prevent arbitrary enforcement. The **Sanctions and Remedies** criterion evaluates whether states impose proportionate sanctions for regulatory violations and whether CSOs have access to effective remedies when disputes arise.

This dimension examines:

- Proportionality of sanctions
- Availability of judicial review mechanisms
- Protection against retaliation or reprisals

The findings indicate that while many states maintain sanction frameworks, the availability of effective remedies remains uneven. In several jurisdictions, the absence of clear judicial review mechanisms or protections against retaliation increases the risk of administrative overreach.

Strengthening these safeguards is essential to ensuring that regulatory oversight does not inadvertently restrict legitimate civil society activities.

5.4 SANCTIONS AND REMEDIES

Indicator 1: Proportionality of Sanctions

This indicator assesses whether sanctions imposed on CSOs are proportionate to the nature and severity of alleged violations, and whether enforcement respects freedom of association and assembly.

5.4.1 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Table 39: National Distribution - Proportionality of Sanctions

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
Sanctions proportionate to offense	20	54.1%
No sanctions imposed	6	16.2%
Sanctions excessive and restrictive	6	16.2%
Sanctions arbitrary	5	13.5%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- 54.1% of states apply proportionate sanctions.
- 16.2% impose no sanctions (which may indicate regulatory weakness).
- 29.7% (excessive + arbitrary) present elevated enforcement risks.

Nationally, sanctions practice is moderately balanced but uneven.

5.4.2 High-Performing States (Score ≥ 4.8)

Table 40: High Performing States: Proportionality of Sanctions

State	Score
Katsina	4.9
Bauchi	4.8
Ondo	4.8
Gombe	4.8

Kwara	4.8
Kogi	4.8
Yobe	4.8
Sokoto	4.8
Niger	4.8
FCT	4.8

Observations

- Northern states dominate the upper tier.
- These states demonstrate structured enforcement with reduced risk of punitive overreach.
- Balanced sanctions correlate with stronger overall civic environments.

5.4.3 Mid-Tier States (3.1–4.7)

Includes:

- Delta
- Oyo
- Plateau
- Ogun
- Nasarawa
- Lagos
- Ebonyi
- Jigawa
- Benue

- Akwa Ibom
- Imo
- Borno
- Kaduna
- Kano
- Adamawa

These states apply sanctions but may:

- Lack consistent enforcement standards,
- Impose moderate administrative penalties,
- Exhibit occasional overreach.

Notably, Lagos performs relatively well in sanctions proportionality despite lower performance in Legal Recognition.

Voices from the Field:

“The nature of the CSO’s offence determines the nature of the sanctions imposed.”

— Respondent, **Bauchi State**

“The Social Development Decree does not clearly provide detailed provisions on sanctions against CSOs.”

— Respondent, **Osun State**

5.4.4 Restrictive or High-Risk States (≤ 2.8)

Table 41: Restrictive or High-Risk States: Proportionality of Sanctions

State	Score
Rivers	2.8
Osun	2.5
Kebbi	2.5
Abia	2.4
Taraba	2.4
Enugu	2.2
Bayelsa	1.5
Edo	1.4
Ekiti	1.4
Anambra	1.2
Cross River	1.2
Zamfara	1.2

Observations

- Rivers scores lower here despite strong performance in other criteria, indicating uneven enforcement dynamics.
- Cross River, Zamfara, and Anambra remain in the lowest cluster.
- Excessive or arbitrary sanctions significantly undermine operational stability.

5.4.5 Structural Implications

Proportionate sanctions are essential to maintaining regulatory legitimacy.

While a majority of states demonstrate balanced enforcement, nearly 30% present risks of excessive or arbitrary sanctions. Such practices:

- Create chilling effects on advocacy,
- Undermine organizational sustainability,
- Increase compliance uncertainty.

5.4.6 Concluding Assessment

Sanctions proportionality performs moderately well nationally but remains uneven. States with arbitrary or excessive sanction practices tend to align with lower overall operational rankings.

Reform priorities include:

- Codifying sanction standards,
- Ensuring judicial or administrative review,
- Limiting discretionary enforcement powers.

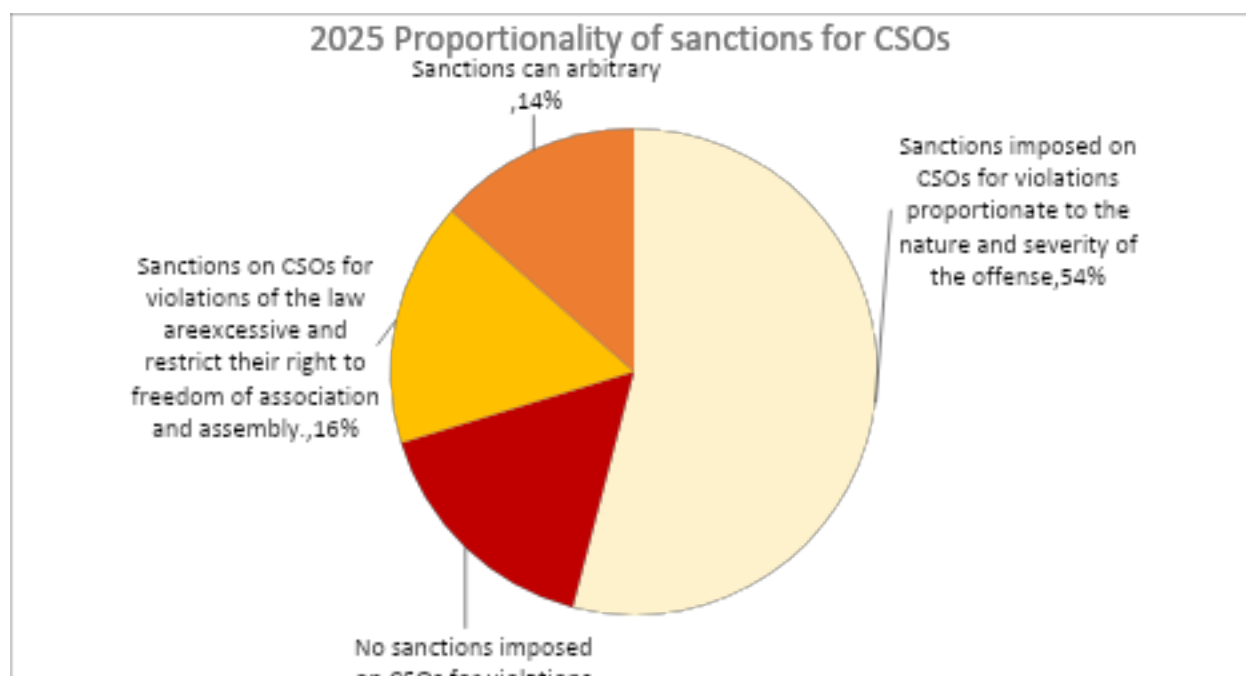


Figure 37: 2025 Proportionality of Sanctions

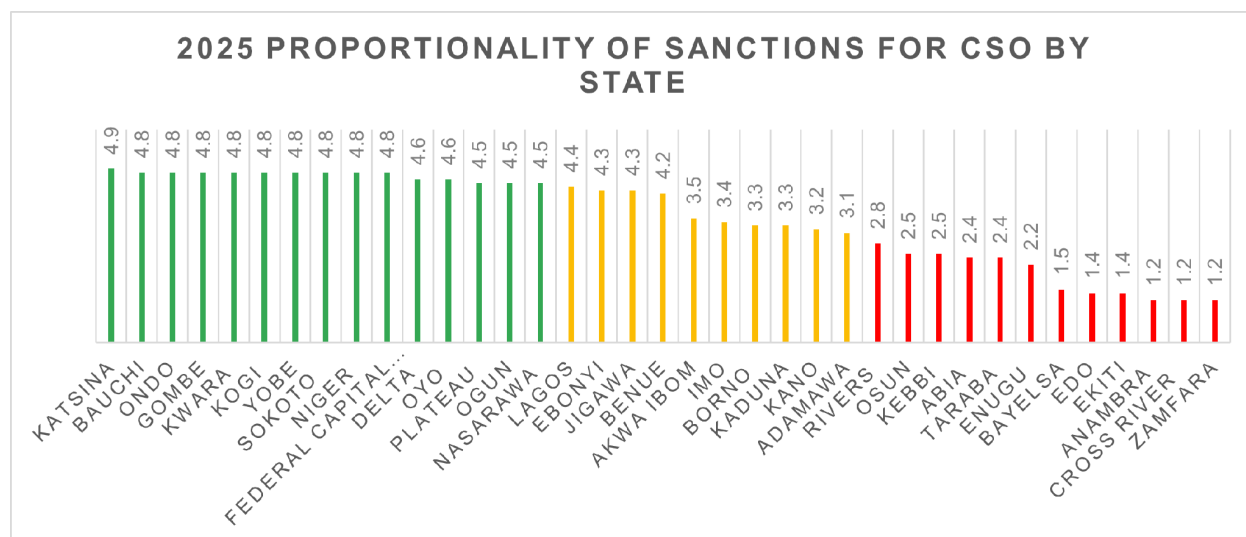


Figure 38: 2025 Proportionality of Sanctions for CSO by State - Ranking

5.4 SANCTIONS AND REMEDIES

Indicator 2: Judicial Review

This indicator assesses whether CSOs have access to an effective, independent, and impartial judicial mechanism to challenge sanctions, dissolution decisions, or administrative penalties.

Judicial review is a core safeguard against arbitrary enforcement.

5.4.2 National Distribution

Across 37 jurisdictions:

Table 42: National Distribution - Judicial Review

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
Effective, independent judicial review mechanism	11	29.7%
Judicial mechanism exists but vague or insufficient	3	8.1%
Legal framework silent on judicial review	13	35.1%
No designated judicial mechanism in practice	10	27.0%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- Only 29.7% of states provide clearly effective judicial review mechanisms.
- 35.1% are legally silent on review procedures.
- 27% lack practical judicial mechanisms to support CSOs.
- Over 62% of states therefore present significant structural weaknesses in remedy systems.

Judicial review emerges as one of the weaker areas nationally.

5.4.3 High-Performing States (Score ≥ 4.7)

Table 43: High-Performing States - Judicial Review

State	Score
Katsina	4.9
Kogi	4.9
Yobe	4.8
Sokoto	4.8
FCT	4.8
Niger	4.7
Bauchi	4.7
Gombe	4.7

Observations

- Strong judicial review frameworks are concentrated in northern states.
- These states provide clearer appeal mechanisms and procedural safeguards.
- High judicial review scores align with stronger sanctions proportionality.

5.4.4 Mid-Tier States (2.2–4.5)

Includes:

- Plateau
- Nasarawa
- Jigawa
- Ondo
- Oyo

- Taraba
- Rivers
- Imo
- Abia
- Kwara
- Ogun
- Akwa Ibom
- Borno
- Adamawa
- Enugu
- Benue
- Delta
- Ebonyi
- Kano

These states demonstrate partial or functional judicial mechanisms but may suffer from:

- Procedural delays,
- Vague statutory provisions,
- Weak enforcement of review outcomes.

Voices from the Field

“The legal framework is silent on the establishment of an independent judicial review mechanism.”

— Respondent, **Cross River State**

5.4.5 Lowest Performing States (≤ 1.7)

Table 44: Lowest Performing states - Judicial Review

State	Score
Ekiti	1.7
Bayelsa	1.6
Kebbi	1.6
Osun	1.5
Edo	1.4
Lagos	1.4
Cross River	1.3
Zamfara	1.2
Kaduna	1.2
Anambra	1.1

Observations

- These states lack clear or effective review mechanisms.
- Several consistently appear in lower-tier clusters across other criteria.
- Weak judicial review significantly increases risk of unchecked administrative action.

5.4.6 Structural Implications

Judicial review is one of the most critical safeguards in the regulatory environment.

The finding that more than 60% of states lack effective or clearly structured review mechanisms suggests that sanction proportionality alone is insufficient without remedy access.

States with weak review mechanisms present higher vulnerability to:

- Arbitrary dissolution,
- Politicized enforcement,
- Chilling effects on advocacy.

5.4.7 Concluding Assessment

Judicial Review remains structurally underdeveloped across many states. While a small cluster demonstrates strong remedy systems, the majority of jurisdictions either lack clarity or lack practical enforcement mechanisms.

Strengthening independent review processes is essential to consolidating rule-of-law protections for CSOs.

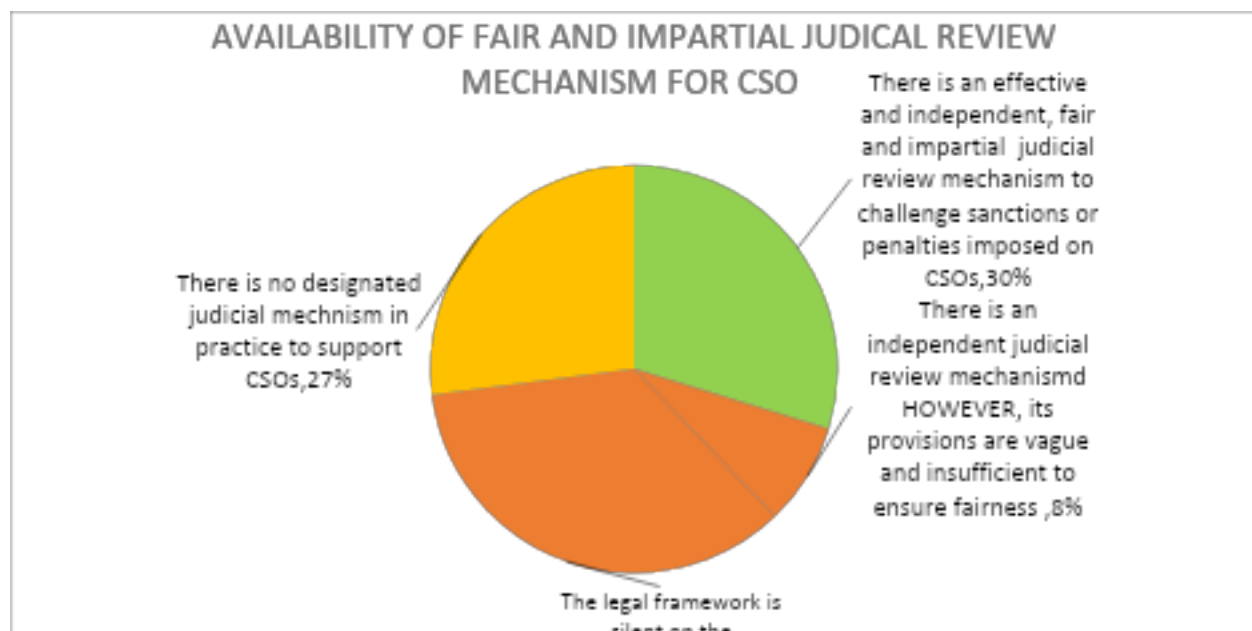


Figure 39: Availability of Fair and Impartial Judicial Review Mechanism for CSO

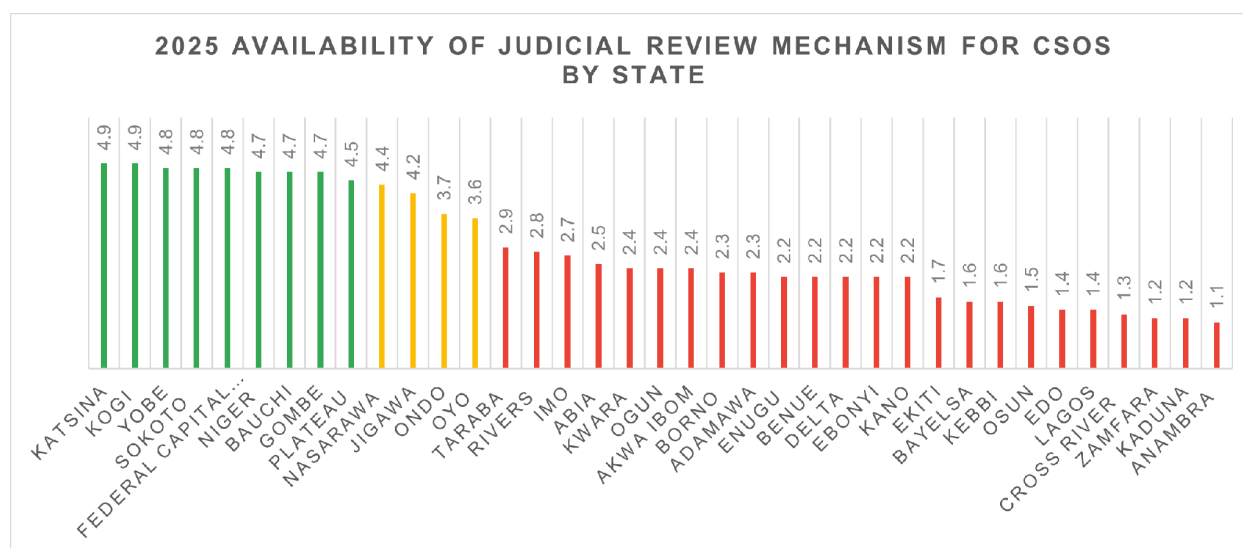


Figure 40: Availability of Judicial Review Mechanism for CSOs by State - Ranking

5.4 SANCTIONS AND REMEDIES

Indicator 3: Protection from Retaliation

This indicator assesses whether legal or policy frameworks protect CSOs and their members from retaliation, harassment, or reprisals arising from their activities, advocacy, or public engagement.

National Distribution

Across the 37 jurisdictions assessed:

Table 45: Protection from retaliation

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
State explicitly prohibits retaliation	8	21.6%
Protection exists but provisions are weak	2	5.4%
Legal framework silent on retaliation	16	43.2%
No legal framework protecting CSOs	11	29.7%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

Only 21.6% of states have clear legal protections against retaliation targeting CSOs or their members. A further 5.4% provide partial protections, though these are considered weak or insufficient.

However, 43.2% of states remain legally silent on retaliation against CSOs, while 29.7% have no identifiable legal or policy framework addressing such protections.

This indicates that in nearly three-quarters of states, CSOs lack explicit safeguards against reprisals linked to their advocacy or civic activities.

Highest Performing States

Table 46: Protection from retaliation

State	Score
Sokoto	4.8
Bauchi	4.8
Kogi	4.8
Yobe	4.8
Nasarawa	4.7
Niger	4.7
Plateau	4.5
Taraba	4.4

These states demonstrate stronger formal recognition of protections against reprisals. Most are located in the northern geopolitical zones, reflecting relatively clearer institutional safeguards within their legal frameworks.

Mid-Tier States

States such as FCT, Ondo, Rivers, Gombe, Abia, Ogun, Kwara, Kano, Katsina, Adamawa, Delta, Borno, Oyo, Enugu, Akwa Ibom, Imo, Benue, and Ebonyi fall within the middle tier.

In these states, protections are either partially recognized or implemented through administrative practice rather than explicit legal provisions. Consequently, CSO actors may still face uncertainty regarding protection from intimidation or retaliatory actions.

Voices from the Field

Stakeholder Perspective

“There are no provisions addressing retaliation or reprisals against CSOs or their members.”

— Respondent, **Jigawa State**

Lowest Performing States

Table 47: Lowest Performing States - Protection from Retaliation

State	Score
Ekiti	1.8
Bayelsa	1.5
Kebbi	1.5
Osun	1.5
Edo	1.4
Lagos	1.3
Cross River	1.2
Jigawa	1.2

Kaduna	1.2
Zamfara	1.2
Anambra	1.1

These states lack formal legal protections against retaliation and exhibit limited institutional safeguards for CSOs engaged in advocacy or civic oversight.

Key Implications

Protection from retaliation is a critical safeguard for maintaining an open civic space. Where such protections are absent or weak, CSOs may face increased risks when engaging in:

- policy advocacy,
- accountability initiatives,
- public interest litigation, and
- anti-corruption monitoring.

The findings suggest that strengthening legal provisions addressing reprisals against civil society actors should be a priority for improving the enabling environment across several states.

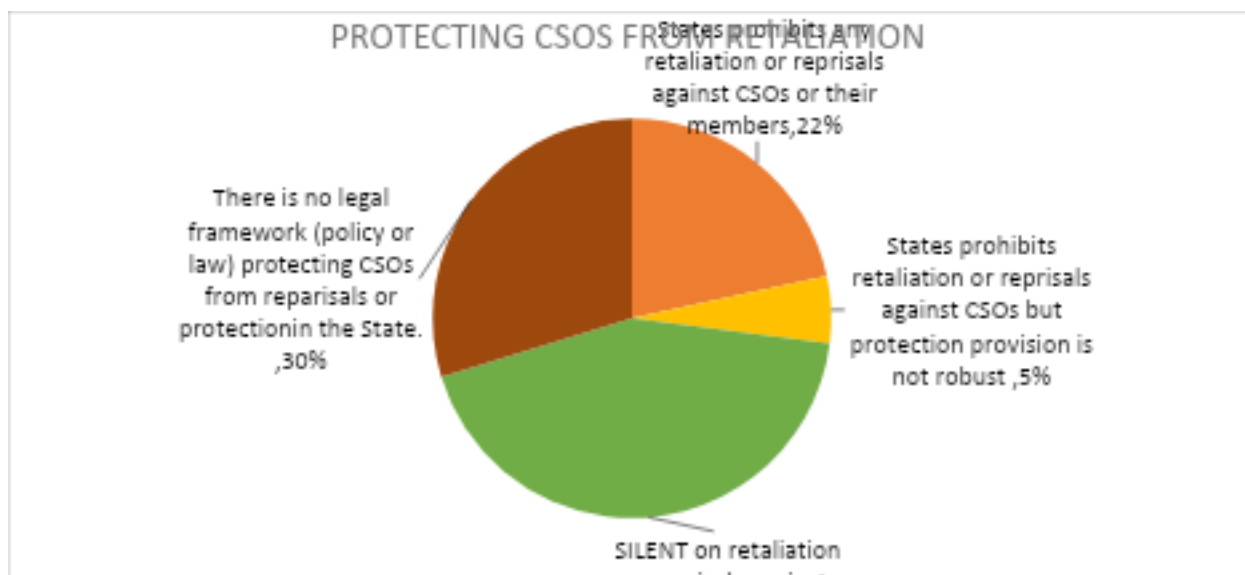


Figure 41: Protecting CSOs from retaliation

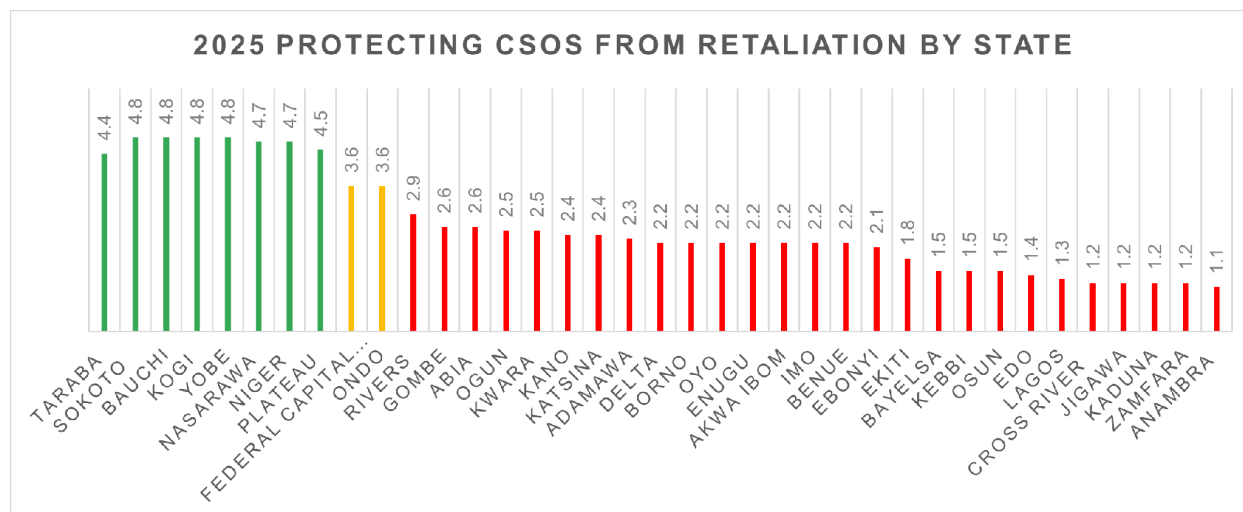


Figure 42: Protecting CSOs from Retaliation by State - Ranking

5.4 SANCTIONS AND REMEDIES

Overall 2025 State Ranking

The **Sanctions and Remedies** criterion evaluates whether states provide fair enforcement mechanisms and effective safeguards for CSOs. The ranking combines performance across three indicators:

1. Proportionality of Sanctions
2. Judicial Review
3. Protection from Retaliation

Scores range from **14.5 (Kogi)** to **3.4 (Anambra)**, highlighting substantial variation in the availability and effectiveness of safeguards protecting CSOs from disproportionate enforcement actions.

Top Performing States

Table 48: Overall 2025 Ranking - Sanctions and Remedies

State	Score
Kogi	14.5
Sokoto	14.4
Yobe	14.4
Bauchi	14.3
Niger	14.2
Nasarawa	13.6
Plateau	13.5
FCT	13.2

Key Observations

These states demonstrate relatively strong safeguards across the three indicators, including more balanced sanction regimes and clearer judicial review mechanisms. The concentration of higher scores in northern states mirrors patterns observed in other regulatory criteria within the study.

A common feature among these states is the presence of clearer sanction standards and some form of review mechanism, which helps reduce the risk of arbitrary penalties against CSOs.

Mid-Tier States (7.5–12.2)

This group includes:

- Katsina
- Gombe
- Ondo
- Oyo
- Kwara
- Jigawa

- Taraba
- Ogun
- Delta
- Ebonyi
- Benue
- Rivers
- Imo
- Akwa Ibom
- Borno
- Kano
- Adamawa
- Abia

These states generally maintain some regulatory safeguards but display inconsistencies in enforcement practices. In several cases:

- sanctions may be proportionate but judicial review mechanisms remain weak, or
- legal protections against retaliation are unclear or insufficient.

Such inconsistencies reduce the overall predictability of the regulatory environment.

Lower-Tier States

Table 49: Overall 2025 Ranking – Sanctions and Remedies

State	Score
Lagos	7.1
Enugu	6.6
Kaduna	5.7
Kebbi	5.6
Osun	5.5
Ekiti	4.9
Bayelsa	4.6
Edo	4.2

Cross River	3.7
Zamfara	3.6
Anambra	3.4

Observations

States in this cluster exhibit weaker institutional safeguards, particularly in the areas of judicial review and protection from retaliation. In several cases, the legal framework is either silent or lacks mechanisms to challenge sanctions imposed on CSOs.

The absence of effective remedies increases the risk of administrative overreach and may discourage civic engagement.

National Pattern

The **distribution reveals three broad clusters:**

- **High Safeguard States (≥13) – Stronger sanction proportionality and review systems.**
- **Moderate Safeguard States (7–12) – Functional but uneven enforcement frameworks.**
- **Low Safeguard States (<7) – Weak** remedy mechanisms and limited protections against retaliation.

Overall, the findings suggest that while many states maintain sanction frameworks, effective remedies and protection mechanisms remain unevenly institutionalized.

Concluding Assessment

Sanctions and Remedies represent a critical component of the civic space framework. Even where regulations governing CSO formation and activities are relatively permissive, weak safeguards against disproportionate sanctions can undermine operational stability.

Strengthening judicial review mechanisms, transparent enforcement standards, and protections against retaliation would significantly improve the regulatory environment for CSOs in several states.

2025 STATE RANKING: Sanctions and Remedies available to CSOs

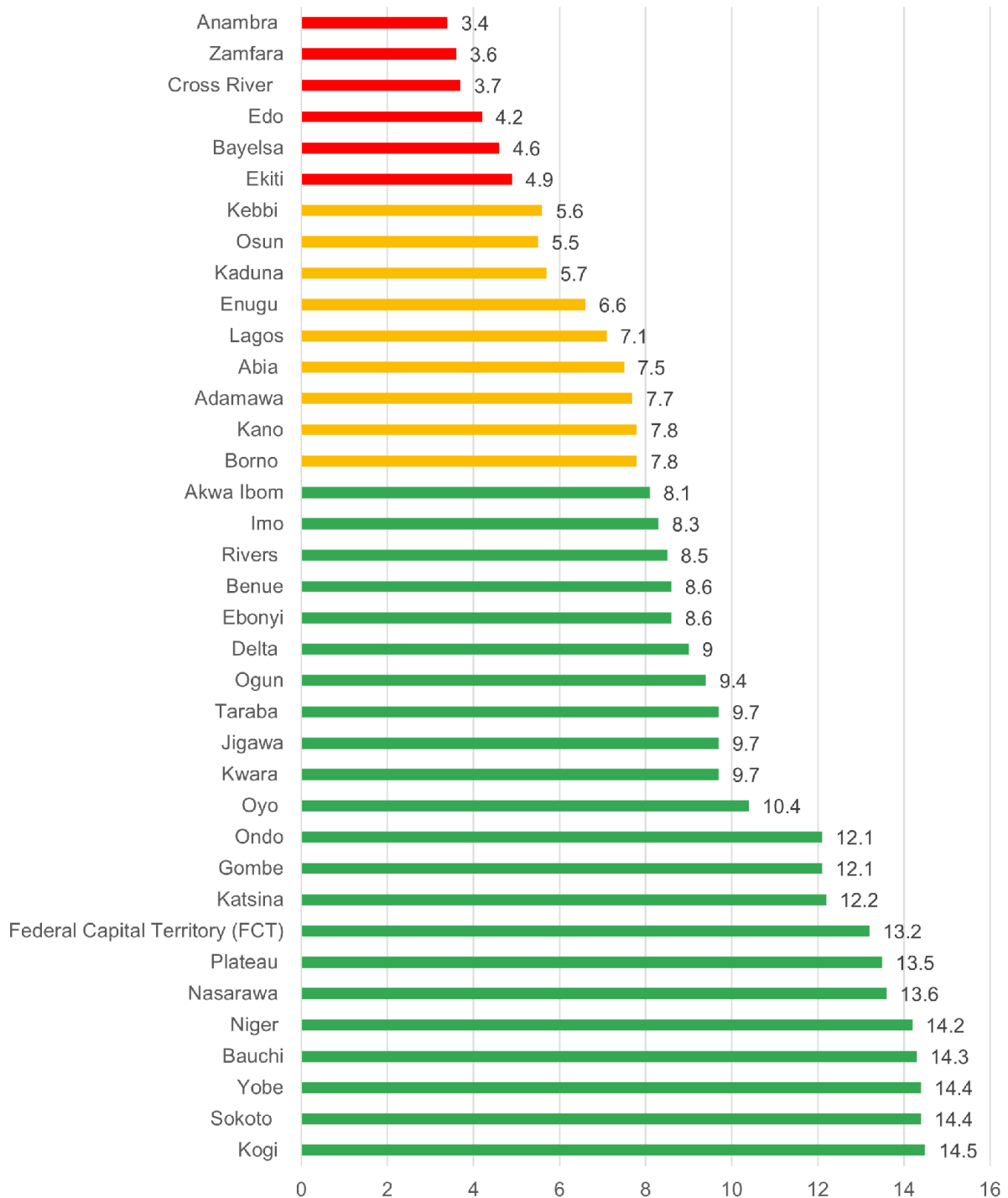


Figure 43: State Ranking - Sanctions and Remedies available to CSOs

5.5 Regimes Regulatory Regimes Governing Assemblies

Public assemblies remain a central tool through which civil society organizations mobilize citizens, advocate for policy reforms, and hold public institutions accountable. The **Regimes** criterion assesses whether the regulatory frameworks governing peaceful assemblies facilitate or restrict civic participation.

The analysis examines the structure and implementation of notification regimes, including advance notice requirements, reasonable notification timeframes, and safeguards against discriminatory application of assembly regulations.

The findings reveal that most states maintain advance notification systems rather than outright permission regimes. However, the clarity and consistency of these procedures vary significantly across jurisdictions, sometimes creating uncertainty for assembly organizers.

Improving transparency and standardizing notification procedures would help ensure that assembly regulations function as enabling mechanisms rather than restrictive tools.

5.5 REGIMES

Indicator 1: Advance Notice for Peaceful Assemblies

This indicator evaluates whether state regulatory frameworks require organizers of peaceful assemblies to provide advance notice to authorities. Advance notification regimes are generally intended to allow law enforcement agencies to plan for public safety and ensure the orderly conduct of assemblies. However, overly restrictive notification systems can create barriers to the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly.

National Distribution

Across the 37 jurisdictions assessed, most states maintain a moderate notification requirement, typically requiring prior notice to authorities without imposing excessively restrictive conditions.

The scores show a relatively narrow distribution, with the majority of states scoring **3**, indicating the existence of advance notice requirements that are functional but not necessarily optimized for facilitating civic participation.

A smaller number of states score **4**, suggesting clearer and more enabling notification frameworks.

Two states score **2**, indicating more restrictive or unclear notification practices.

Higher Performing States (Score = 4)

Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Kogi, Katsina, Niger, Kaduna, Abia, and Zamfara demonstrate relatively stronger performance under the *Notification Regime* indicator, reflecting clearer and more structured processes for notifying authorities of peaceful assemblies. In these states, civic actors are generally able to organize gatherings with greater predictability, as notification requirements are more defined and less prone to arbitrary interpretation.

These frameworks suggest a more balanced approach, where authorities are able to prepare for public order and safety without unduly restricting civic freedoms. While not fully optimal, they provide a moderately enabling environment for civil society engagement, with remaining gaps largely tied to inconsistencies in implementation and the need for closer alignment with rights-based standards.

Majority Cluster (Score = 3)

Most states fall within this middle category, including:

Ogun, Gombe, Akwa Ibom, Oyo, Rivers, Ebonyi, Lagos, Cross River, Sokoto, Bauchi, Delta, Kano, Bayelsa, Anambra, Imo, Benue, Edo, Enugu, Kwara, FCT, Borno, Nasarawa, Yobe, Plateau, Taraba, and Jigawa.

In these states, advance notice requirements exist but may involve:

- administrative discretion,
- varying notice periods, or
- inconsistent application.

While these systems generally allow assemblies to proceed, the lack of clear procedural safeguards may introduce uncertainty for CSO organizers.

Voices from the Field:

“Most of the time the government rejects the idea of peaceful protests in public spaces or government premises.”

— Respondent, **Bayelsa State**

Lower Performing States (Score =2)

State

- Adamawa
- Kebbi

These states exhibit more restrictive or less clearly defined notification frameworks. In such contexts, the notification regime may create barriers for civic mobilization or increase the potential for discretionary control over assemblies.

Key Implications

Advance notice regimes play a crucial role in shaping the civic space environment. While most states maintain some form of notification system, the predominance of mid-tier scores suggests that these frameworks are administratively functional but not fully optimized to facilitate civic participation.

Clearer procedural guidelines and safeguards against discretionary enforcement would help ensure that notification requirements do not become indirect restrictions on peaceful assembly.

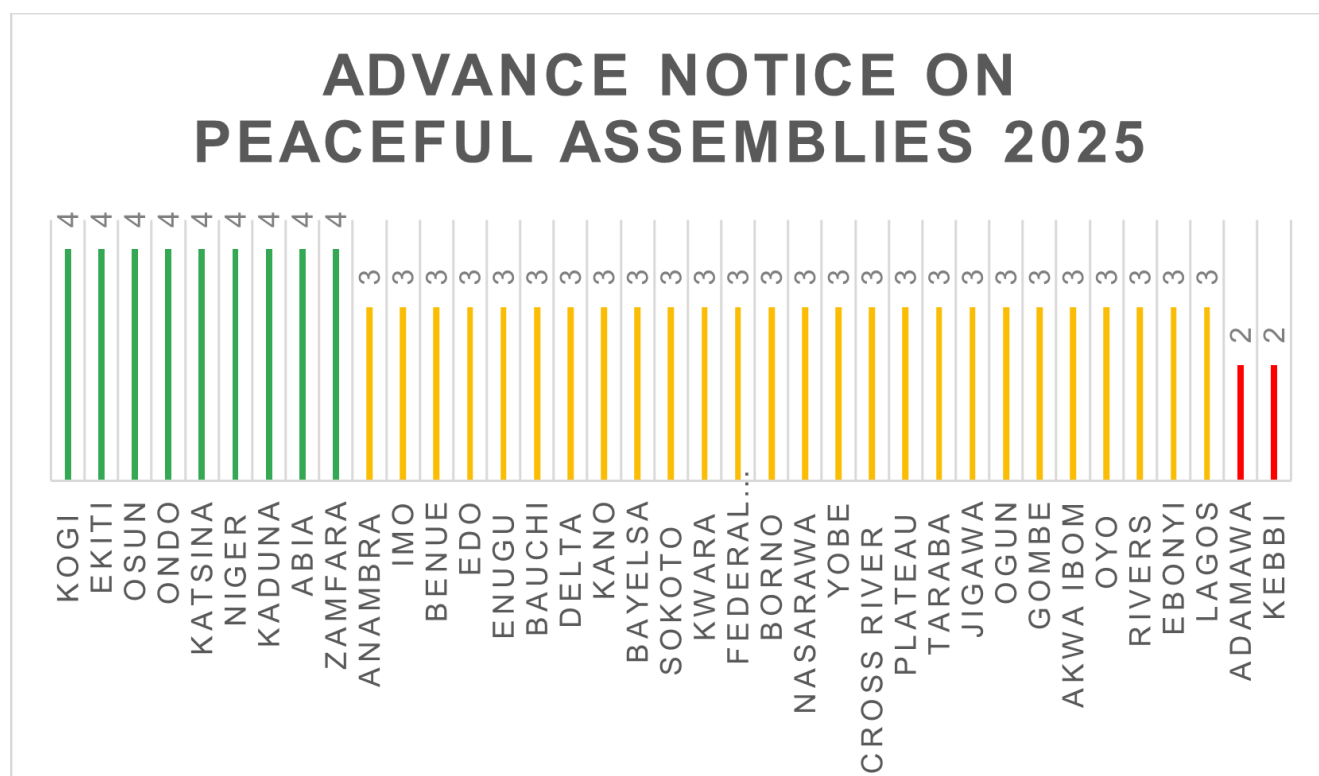


Figure 44: Advance Notice for Peaceful Assemblies

5.5 REGIMES

Indicator 2: Reasonable Timeframe for Advance Notice

This indicator assesses whether the notification regime sets a **reasonable timeframe** for organizers of peaceful assemblies to give notice, so that advance notice requirements do not become indirect restrictions on the right to freedom of assembly.

National Pattern

Scores range from **2 to 4**, with most states clustered at **3**, indicating that reasonable notice periods generally exist but are not consistently optimal or clearly protected by safeguards. A smaller number of states score **4**, reflecting stronger alignment with enabling standards. States scoring **2** represent more restrictive or less reasonable timeframes that may inhibit spontaneous or rapid civic mobilization.

Higher Performing States (Score = 4)

State	State
• Ekiti	• Ebonyi
• Osun	• Bauchi
• Ondo	• Anambra
• Kogi	• Benue
• Rivers	• Abia
• Katsina	• Zamfara

These states demonstrate more enabling notice timeframes that are more compatible with civic mobilization needs while still allowing authorities time to plan for public safety.

Majority Cluster (Score = 3)

This category includes:

Ogun, Gombe, Oyo, Niger, Sokoto, Kano, Bayelsa, Imo, Edo, Enugu, Kebbi, Kaduna, Kwara, FCT, Nasarawa, Yobe, Plateau, Taraba, and Jigawa.

In these states, notice periods appear generally workable, but may involve:

- inconsistent enforcement,
- ambiguous timelines, or
- insufficient safeguards against administrative discretion.

Voices from the Field:

“Assemblies are allowed, but approval processes can sometimes take longer than expected.”

— Respondent, **Delta State**

Lower Performing States (Score = 2)

State

- Akwa Ibom
- Lagos
- Adamawa
- Cross River
- Delta
- Borno

These states present more restrictive conditions, where notice requirements may be too short, too long, unclear, or inconsistently applied in ways that undermine timely civic action. Such frameworks can increase uncertainty and discourage assembly organizers.

Key Implications

A reasonable notification timeframe is essential for balancing public order planning with civic freedoms. The predominance of mid-tier scores indicates that many state regimes remain **functional but not fully enabling**, while the low-scoring states represent priority areas for reform to ensure notification requirements do not operate as de facto permission systems.

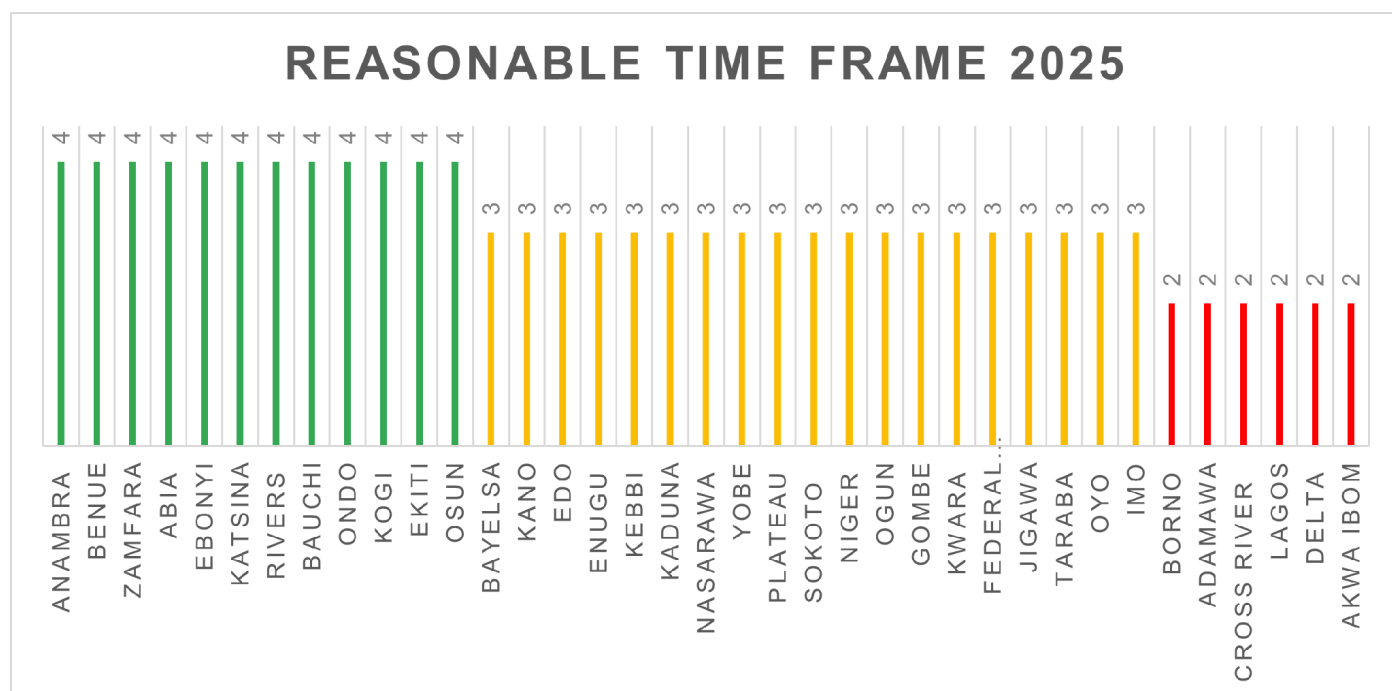


Figure 45: Reasonable Notification timeframe

5.5 REGIMES

Indicator 3: Non-Discrimination in Notification Regimes

This indicator examines whether notification regimes governing peaceful assemblies ensure that organizers are not discriminated against based on political opinions, affiliations, or viewpoints. Non-discriminatory implementation is essential to ensure that notification requirements do not become instruments for selectively restricting assemblies by certain groups.

National Pattern

Scores across the 37 jurisdictions range from **2 to 4**, indicating moderate variation in how non-discrimination safeguards are embedded within notification regimes.

A substantial number of states fall within the **mid-tier score of 3**, suggesting that while assemblies are generally permitted, explicit protections against discriminatory enforcement are limited or inconsistently applied.

States scoring **4** demonstrate clearer safeguards ensuring that notification regimes are applied uniformly regardless of political or ideological affiliation.

Higher Performing States (Score = 4)

State:

- Ekiti
- Gombe
- Osun
- Ondo
- Kogi
- Rivers
- Katsina
- Ebonyi
- Bauchi
- Anambra
- Abia

These states demonstrate stronger protections against discriminatory restrictions in assembly notification procedures. In these environments, notification requirements are more likely to be administered consistently across different civic groups.

Mid-Tier States (Score = 3)

This group includes:

Ogun, Oyo, Lagos, Niger, Sokoto, Kano, Benue, Enugu, Kaduna, Kwara, Borno, Nasarawa, Yobe, Plateau, Zamfara, Taraba, and Jigawa.

In these states, assemblies are generally permitted but safeguards against discriminatory application of notification rules are less clearly institutionalized. The lack of explicit provisions may allow administrative discretion to influence how notification requirements are applied.

Voices from the Field

“Although organizers are not openly discriminated against, some activities may be restricted depending on their political sensitivity.”

— Respondent, **Taraba State**

Lower Performing States (Score = 2)

State

- Akwa Ibom
- Adamawa
- Cross River
- Delta
- Bayelsa
- Imo
- Edo
- Kebbi
- FCT

These states exhibit weaker safeguards against discriminatory enforcement of notification regimes. The absence of explicit protections increases the risk that authorities may selectively apply notification rules depending on the political or social orientation of assembly organizers.

Key Implications

Ensuring non-discrimination in notification regimes is critical to protecting pluralism and equal civic participation. Where safeguards are weak or absent, notification procedures may effectively function as gatekeeping mechanisms that limit assemblies by certain groups.

Strengthening legal clarity and administrative safeguards would help ensure that notification regimes operate as facilitating mechanisms rather than restrictive tools in the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly.

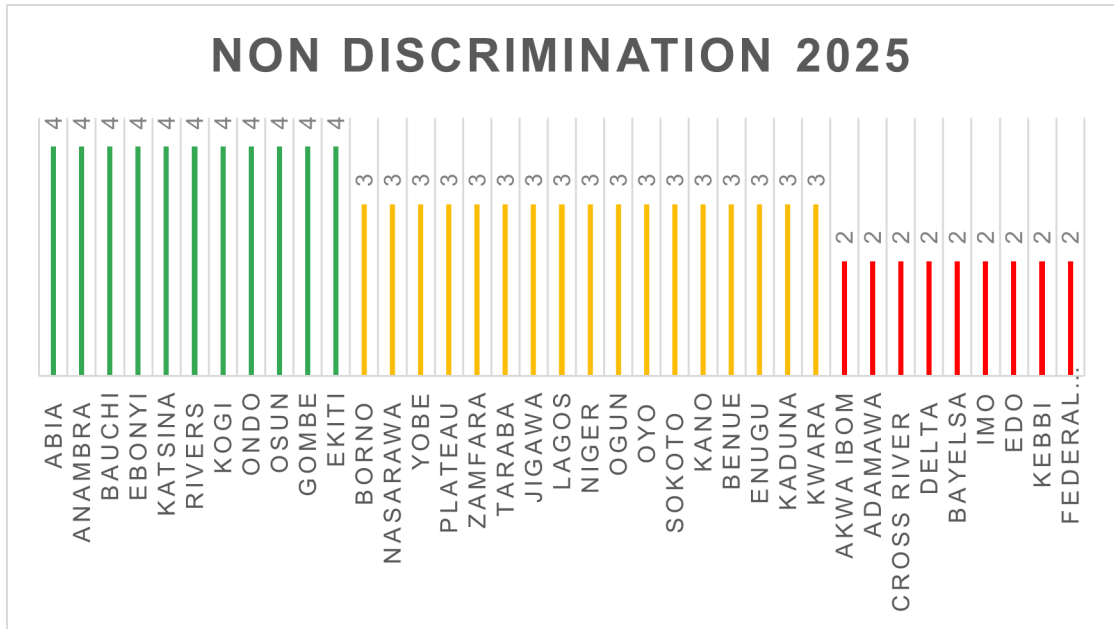


Figure 46: Non-discrimination in notification

5.6 Protection of Civic Actors and Assembly Participants

Beyond legal recognition and regulatory frameworks, the safety of individuals participating in civic activities is a critical determinant of an enabling environment for civil society.

The **Protection** criterion evaluates the extent to which states safeguard:

- assembly participants
- journalists and media workers
- human rights defenders
- civic actors accessing public spaces for assembly

While several states demonstrate relatively strong protections for assembly participants and journalists, the findings indicate that safeguards for human rights defenders remain uneven across the country.

Ensuring adequate protection for civic actors is essential to preventing intimidation, harassment, or reprisals that could undermine democratic participation.

5.6 PROTECTION

Indicator 1: Non-Discrimination in the Protection of Freedom of Assembly

This indicator assesses whether the legal and regulatory environment protects the right to peaceful assembly without discrimination based on race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or other identity factors. Non-discrimination safeguards are essential to ensure that civic actors and communities can exercise assembly rights on an equal basis.

National Pattern

Scores across the assessed jurisdictions range from **2 to 5**, indicating varying levels of protection. Most states cluster between **scores of 3 and 4**, suggesting that while the right to assembly is generally recognized, explicit safeguards against discriminatory restrictions are unevenly institutionalized.

A smaller group of states achieves the highest score of **5**, reflecting stronger legal or policy protections ensuring equal access to assembly rights.

Highest Performing States (Score = 5)

State

- Ondo
- Rivers
- Katsina
- Bauchi
- Kebbi
- Oyo
- Imo

These states demonstrate stronger guarantees that assemblies may be organized and conducted without discriminatory restrictions. Such frameworks provide a more inclusive environment for civic mobilization and public participation.

Moderate Performing States (Score = 4)

States in this category include:

Osun, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kwara, Akwa Ibom, Gombe, Ekiti, FCT, Nasarawa, Anambra, Kaduna, Abia, Ebonyi, Niger, Adamawa, Cross River, and Kogi.

In these jurisdictions, the principle of non-discrimination is generally recognized, but enforcement mechanisms or institutional safeguards may not be consistently applied.

Voices from the Field:

“Associations are generally able to express their views and conduct advocacy activities without discrimination.”

— Respondent, **Katsina State**

Mid-Tier States (Score = 3)

This group includes:

Bayelsa, Borno, Yobe, Plateau, Delta, Kano, Jigawa, Lagos, Ogun, and Taraba.

These states demonstrate limited institutionalization of non-discrimination safeguards. While assemblies are generally permitted, protections against unequal treatment of different civic groups are not strongly embedded in legal or administrative frameworks.

Lower Performing States (Score = 2)

State

- Benue
- Edo
- Enugu

These states show weaker protections against discriminatory restrictions in the exercise of assembly rights. The absence of strong safeguards increases the risk that certain civic actors may face unequal treatment when organizing assemblies.

Key Implications

Non-discrimination is a foundational principle for protecting civic freedoms. The predominance of mid-tier scores indicates that while most states allow assemblies to occur, **explicit protections ensuring equal treatment across groups remain uneven.**

Strengthening legal clarity and enforcement mechanisms would help ensure that all civil society actors can exercise the right to peaceful assembly without discrimination.

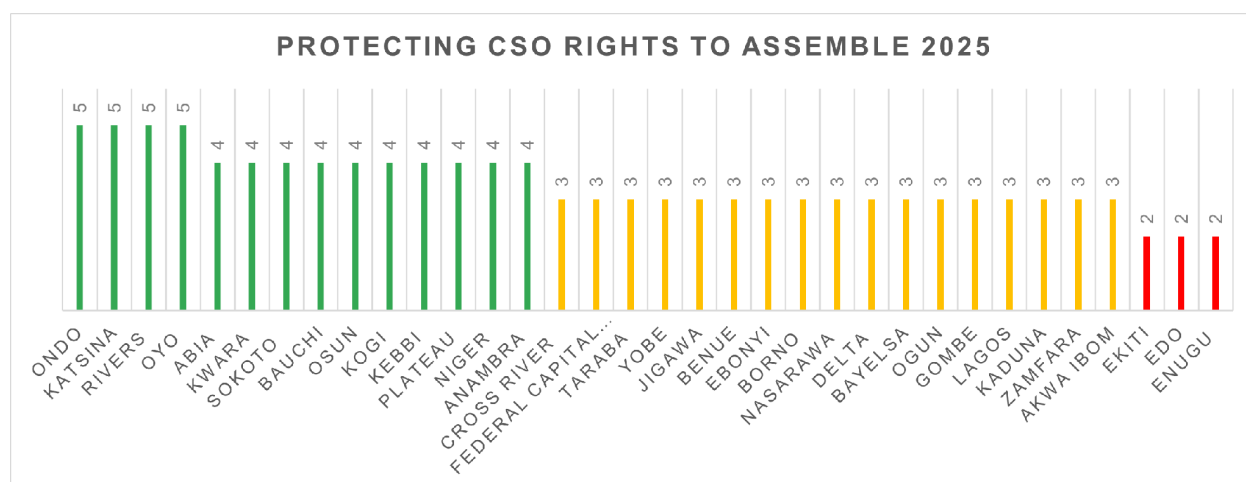


Figure 47: Protection from Discrimination in the protection of freedom of assembly

5.6 PROTECTION

Indicator 2: Protection of Assembly Participants

This indicator assesses whether the state protects participants in peaceful assemblies from **violence, intimidation, harassment, or interference by third parties**, including excessive or unlawful intervention by law enforcement authorities. Effective protection of assembly participants is a critical safeguard for maintaining civic space and ensuring that individuals can exercise their rights without fear of reprisal.

National Pattern

Scores across the 37 jurisdictions range from **2 to 5**, indicating moderate variation in the level of protection afforded to individuals participating in peaceful assemblies. Most states fall within the **mid-tier score of 3**, suggesting that while assemblies are generally permitted, the level of protection provided by state authorities is inconsistent or limited in practice.

A smaller group of states score **5**, reflecting stronger protection frameworks and more consistent efforts by authorities to safeguard participants from interference or violence.

Highest Performing States (Score = 5)

State

- Ondo

State

- Katsina
- Rivers
- Oyo

These states demonstrate stronger institutional commitments to protecting individuals participating in peaceful assemblies. Authorities in these jurisdictions are more likely to take proactive measures to ensure that assemblies proceed without intimidation or unlawful disruption.

Moderate Performing States (Score = 4)

States in this category include:

Abia, Kwara, Sokoto, Bauchi, Osun, Kogi, Kebbi, Plateau, Niger, and Anambra.

In these jurisdictions, protections exist but may depend on administrative practices rather than clearly articulated legal safeguards. While authorities may provide protection in many cases, enforcement may not be fully consistent.

Voices from the Field:

“CSOs can freely organize community activities without interference in most cases.”

— Respondent, **Ogun State**

Mid-Tier States (Score = 3)

This group includes:

Cross River, FCT, Taraba, Yobe, Jigawa, Benue, Ebonyi, Borno, Nasarawa, Delta, Bayelsa, Ogun, Gombe, Lagos, Kaduna, Zamfara, and Akwa Ibom.

In these states, the legal framework or enforcement practices provide only limited guarantees that assembly participants will be protected from interference or intimidation.

Lower Performing States (Score = 2)

State

- Ekiti
- Edo
- Enugu
- Kano
- Adamawa
- Imo

These states exhibit weaker protections for individuals participating in assemblies. In such contexts, civic actors may face greater risks of disruption, intimidation, or inadequate law enforcement protection during public gatherings.

Key Implications

Effective protection of assembly participants is essential for safeguarding democratic participation. The predominance of mid-tier scores suggests that while most states allow assemblies to occur, **the level of proactive protection provided by authorities remains uneven.**

Strengthening operational guidelines for law enforcement and clarifying state obligations to protect assembly participants would help improve the overall civic space environment.

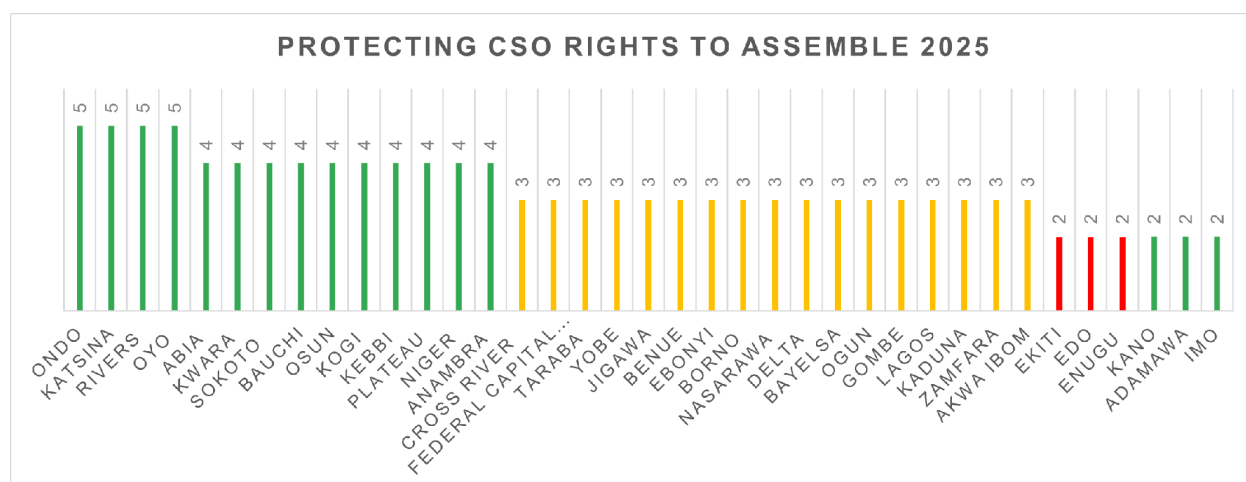


Figure 48: Protecting CSO Rights to Assemble - States Ranking

5.6 PROTECTION

Indicator 3: Protection of Journalists and Media Workers

This indicator evaluates whether journalists and media workers are able to cover peaceful assemblies without interference, intimidation, or harassment. Media protection is essential for transparency, public accountability, and the documentation of civic participation and potential human rights violations.

National Pattern

Scores across the 37 jurisdictions range from **1 to 5**, reflecting varying levels of protection for journalists covering public assemblies. Most states fall within the **mid-tier categories of 3 and 4**, indicating that media coverage of assemblies is generally permitted but may be subject to occasional restrictions or inconsistent enforcement.

A smaller group of states scores **5**, demonstrating stronger safeguards that allow journalists to operate freely when reporting on assemblies.

Highest Performing States (Score = 5)

State

- Bauchi

State

- Ondo
- Rivers
- Katsina
- Oyo

These states demonstrate stronger protections for media workers covering assemblies, suggesting a more supportive environment for press freedom and civic transparency.

Moderate Performing States (Score = 4)

States in this category include:

Osun, Sokoto, Ekiti, Delta, Kano, Yobe, Taraba, Kebbi, Abia, Kogi, and Anambra.

In these jurisdictions, journalists are generally able to report on assemblies, although formal safeguards may be limited or inconsistently enforced.

Voices from the Field:

“There have been incidents where journalists covering civic activities were arrested.”

— Respondent, **Kaduna State**

Mid-Tier States (Score = 3)

This group includes:

Kaduna, Nasarawa, Ebonyi, Lagos, Zamfara, Ogun, Gombe, Bayelsa, Plateau, Jigawa, Niger, and Borno.

In these states, media coverage is typically permitted, but protections against interference or intimidation are not strongly institutionalized.

Lower Performing States

Table 50: Lower Performing States – Protection of journalists and media workers

State	Score
Cross River	2
Adamawa	2
Benue	2
Enugu	2
Kwara	2
Akwa Ibom	2
FCT	2
Edo	2
Imo	1

These states exhibit weaker protections for journalists and media workers covering assemblies. In such environments, media practitioners may face higher risks of interference or intimidation when reporting on civic gatherings.

Key Implications

The ability of journalists to report freely on assemblies is a key component of democratic accountability. While most states allow some level of media coverage, the uneven distribution of stronger protections suggests that media freedom during assemblies remains inconsistently safeguarded across states.

Strengthening legal protections for journalists and ensuring accountability for interference would significantly improve transparency and protection within Nigeria's civic space.

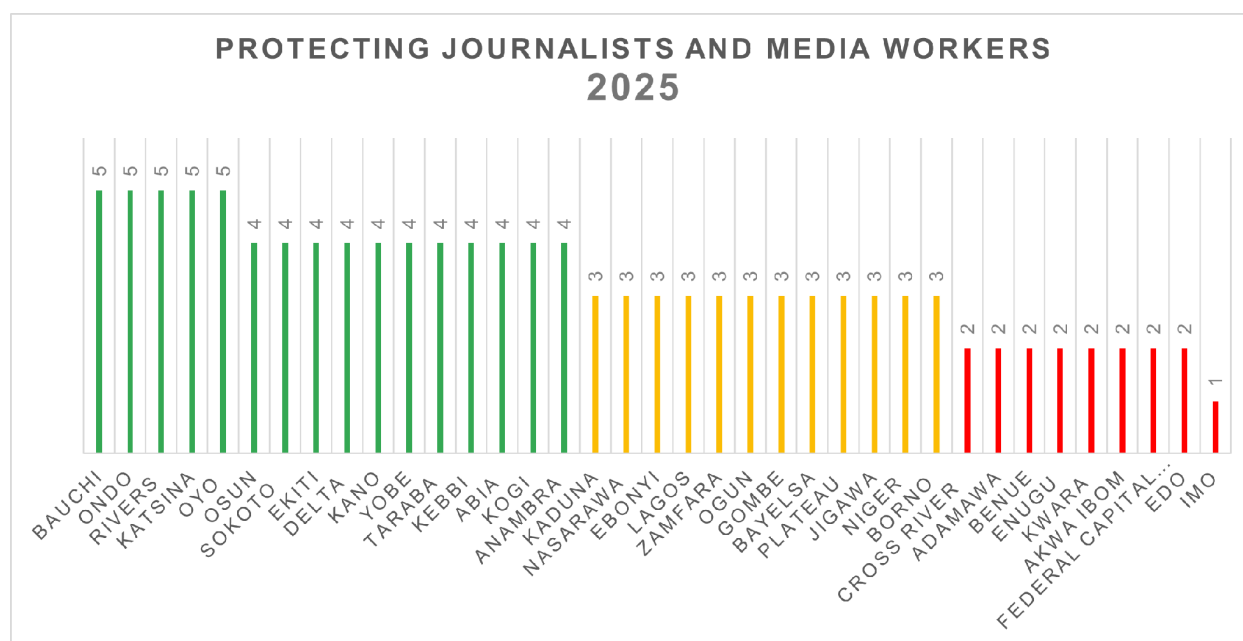


Figure 49: Protection of journalists and media workers – State Ranking

5.6 PROTECTION

Indicator 4: Protection of Human Rights Defenders

This indicator assesses whether states provide safeguards for human rights defenders (HRDs)—including civil society leaders, activists, and community advocates—who promote human rights, accountability, and social justice. Effective protection mechanisms are essential to prevent intimidation, harassment, or reprisals against individuals engaged in legitimate civic advocacy.

National Pattern

Scores across the 37 jurisdictions range from **1 to 5**, reflecting significant variation in the level of protection provided to human rights defenders. Most states fall within the **mid-tier score of 3 or 4**, suggesting that while human rights advocacy is generally tolerated, formal protections remain uneven or insufficiently institutionalized.

A smaller number of states achieve the highest score of **5**, indicating stronger safeguards for individuals engaged in rights-based advocacy.

Highest Performing States (Score = 5)

State

- Rivers
- Oyo

These states demonstrate stronger commitments to protecting human rights defenders, suggesting a more enabling environment for advocacy, public accountability, and civic engagement.

Moderate Performing States (Score = 4)

States in this category include:

Osun, Ondo, Bauchi, Zamfara, Ekiti, Kogi, Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Abia, and Yobe.

In these jurisdictions, legal or administrative frameworks provide some degree of protection for human rights defenders, although safeguards may rely on practice rather than clearly articulated legal provisions.

Mid-Tier States (Score = 3)

This group includes:

Ogun, Sokoto, Bayelsa, Kaduna, Borno, Plateau, Taraba, Jigawa, Niger, Ebonyi, Delta, and Anambra.

In these states, human rights defenders are generally able to operate, but protections against intimidation or retaliation remain limited or inconsistently enforced.

Voices from the Field:

“There are no known cases of authorities withdrawing CSO certificates because of advocacy work.”

— Respondent, **Abia State**

Lower Performing States

State	State
	• Adamawa
• Lagos	• Gombe
• Akwa Ibom	• Nasarawa
• Kwara	
• Benue	

These states demonstrate weaker protections for human rights defenders, indicating greater vulnerability for individuals engaged in civic advocacy.

Lowest Performing States

State
• Cross River
• Enugu
• Edo
• Imo
• FCT

These jurisdictions exhibit the weakest protection frameworks for human rights defenders. The absence of effective safeguards increases the risk of intimidation, harassment, or other forms of retaliation against civic actors.

Key Implications

Protection of human rights defenders is a core component of a healthy civic space. While most states demonstrate some tolerance for rights-based advocacy, the relatively small number of high-scoring states suggests that **comprehensive protection mechanisms remain limited across the country.**

Strengthening institutional safeguards, improving law enforcement accountability, and explicitly recognizing the role of human rights defenders would enhance protection for civil society actors nationwide.

D. Protection of Human Rights Defenders:

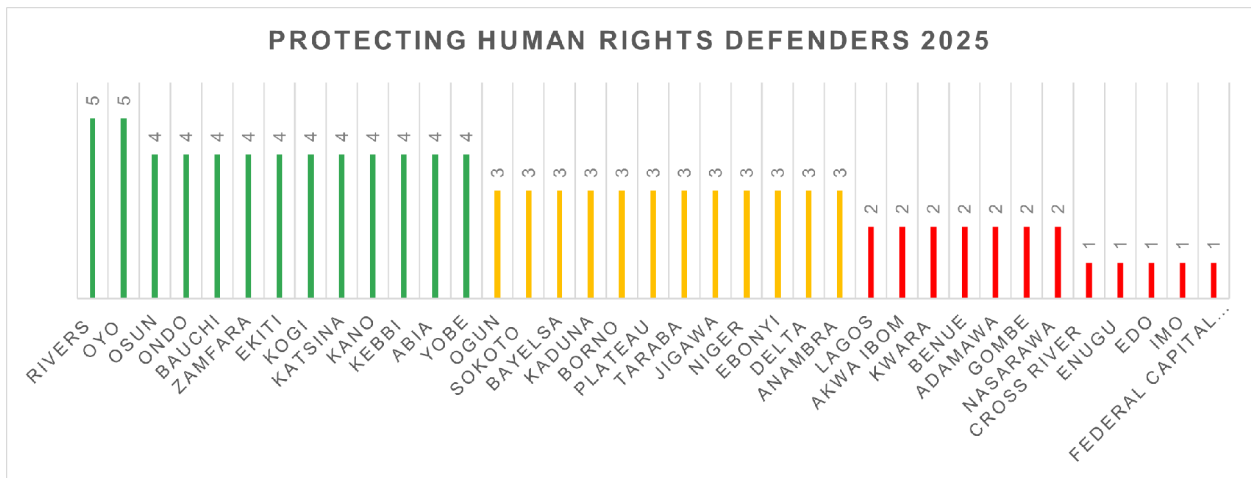


Figure 50: Protecting Human Rights Defenders State Ranking

5.6 PROTECTION

Indicator 5: Right to Access Public Spaces for Peaceful Assembly

This indicator assesses whether the right to freedom of assembly includes **practical access to public spaces** such as parks, streets, and other civic venues where peaceful assemblies may be held. An enabling environment requires that these spaces remain accessible and available for civic participation without unreasonable restrictions.

National Pattern

Scores across the 37 jurisdictions range from **1 to 5**, indicating substantial variation in the degree to which states ensure access to public spaces for peaceful assemblies.

Most states fall within the **mid-tier score of 3**, suggesting that assemblies are generally permitted in public spaces but may be subject to administrative controls, security considerations, or discretionary restrictions by authorities.

A smaller number of states achieve the highest score of **5**, reflecting stronger guarantees that public spaces remain accessible for civic mobilization.

Highest Performing States (Score = 5)

State

- Oyo
- Osun
- Rivers
- Abia
- Bauchi
- Ondo

These states demonstrate stronger commitments to ensuring that public spaces remain available for peaceful assemblies. In these jurisdictions, civic actors are more likely to be able to organize public gatherings without excessive barriers or restrictions.

Moderate Performing States (Score = 4)

States in this category include:

Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Kebbi, Yobe, Kogi, and Ebonyi.

These states generally allow access to public spaces but may impose administrative procedures or security considerations that influence how assemblies are organized.

Mid-Tier States (Score = 3)

This group includes:

Plateau, Taraba, Ogun, Gombe, Kaduna, Borno, Nasarawa, Enugu, Lagos, Kwara, Kano, Ekiti, Cross River, Jigawa, and Anambra.

In these jurisdictions, public spaces are technically available for assemblies, but the use of such spaces may depend on administrative approvals or other procedural requirements.

Voices from the Field

“Community meetings and outreach activities are generally allowed in public spaces.”

— Respondent, **Oyo State**

Lower Performing States (Score = 2)

State

- FCT
- Benue
- Akwa Ibom
- Zamfara
- Edo
- Delta
- Adamawa
- Bayelsa

These states exhibit more restrictive practices regarding the use of public spaces for assemblies. Access may be subject to tighter controls or discretionary decisions by authorities.

Lowest Performing State (Score = 1)

State:

- Imo

Imo records the lowest score in this indicator, suggesting significant limitations in access to public spaces for peaceful assemblies. Such restrictions can significantly constrain civic participation and public advocacy.

Key Implications

Access to public spaces is a fundamental component of the right to peaceful assembly. While many states permit assemblies in principle, the predominance of mid-tier scores indicates that **procedural and administrative barriers remain common**.

Improving legal clarity and reducing discretionary controls over the use of public spaces would strengthen the ability of civil society actors to mobilize and participate in democratic processes.

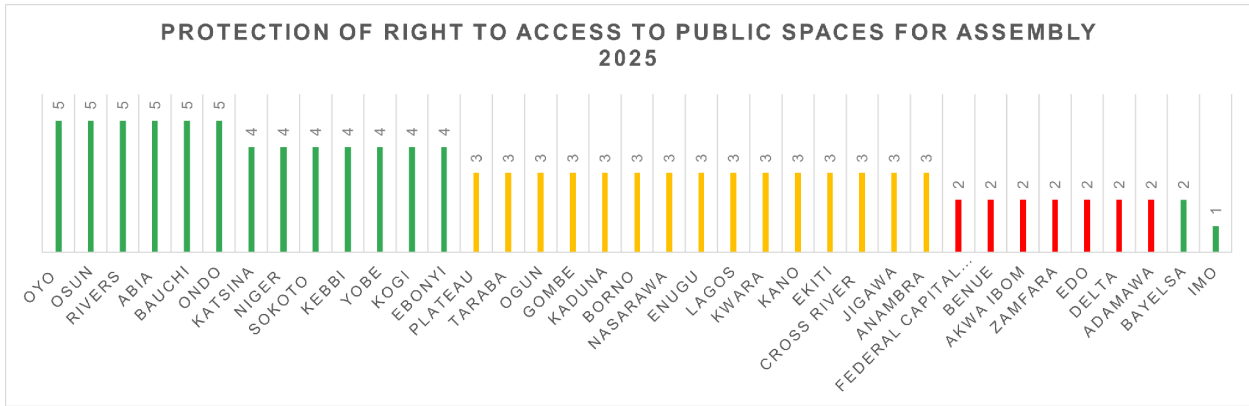


Figure 51: Protection of Rights to Access Public Spaces for Assembly

5.6 PROTECTION

Overall 2025 State Ranking – Protection of CSOs and Civic Actors

The **Protection** criterion evaluates the extent to which states provide safeguards for civic actors and participants in public assemblies. The overall ranking reflects performance across five indicators:

- 1. Non-Discrimination in the Exercise of Freedom of Assembly
- 2. Protection of Assembly Participants
- 3. Protection of Journalists and Media Workers
- 4. Protection of Human Rights Defenders
- 5. Right to Access Public Spaces for Peaceful Assembly

Scores range from **25 (Rivers and Oyo)** to **9 (Edo)**, highlighting significant variation in how states safeguard civic participation and protect individuals engaged in public advocacy.

Top Performing States

Table 51: Overall 2025 State Ranking - Protection of CSOs and Civic Actors

State	Score
Rivers	25
Oyo	25
Ondo	24
Bauchi	23
Katsina	23

These states demonstrate stronger institutional protections for civic actors and assembly participants. They consistently perform well across several indicators, including protection of assembly participants, protection of journalists, and access to public spaces.

Such environments provide comparatively safer conditions for civic engagement and public advocacy.

Upper Mid-Tier States (Score 20–21)

States in this category include:

Kebbi, Osun, Abia, and Kogi.

These states maintain relatively strong protection frameworks but may show minor gaps in specific indicators such as protection for journalists or access to public spaces.

Mid-Tier States (Score 15–19)

This group includes:

Sokoto, Niger, Yobe, Anambra, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Plateau, Kaduna, Kano, Zamfara, Taraba, Jigawa, Gombe, Delta, Kwara, Ogun, Borno, and Nasarawa.

In these states, civic actors generally operate with moderate levels of protection, although safeguards may depend heavily on administrative practice rather than strong legal guarantees.

Lower Mid-Tier States (Score 13–14)

States in this category include:

Lagos, Bayelsa, Cross River, and Akwa Ibom.

These states exhibit weaker protection frameworks across several indicators, including safeguards for journalists, human rights defenders, or access to public assembly spaces.

Lowest Performing States

Table 52: Lowest Performing States - Protection of CSOs and Civic Actors

State	Score
Adamawa	12
FCT	12
Benue	11
Enugu	10

Imo	10
Edo	9

These states record the weakest protection frameworks for civic actors within the assessment. Lower scores reflect limited safeguards for assembly participants, journalists, and human rights defenders, as well as restrictions or uncertainty regarding access to public assembly spaces.

National Pattern

The distribution reveals three broad clusters:

- **High Protection States (≥ 22)** – Strong safeguards for civic actors and assembly participants.
- **Moderate Protection States (15–21)** – Functional but uneven protection frameworks.
- **Low Protection States (< 14)** – Weak or inconsistent protection mechanisms.

While many states demonstrate moderate protections, relatively few provide comprehensive safeguards across all indicators.

Concluding Assessment

Protection mechanisms remain a critical determinant of the overall civic space environment. Even where legal frameworks permit civil society activity, insufficient protection for assembly participants, journalists, and human rights defenders can undermine the practical exercise of civic freedoms.

Strengthening law enforcement accountability, improving safeguards for media workers and activists, and ensuring access to public spaces would significantly enhance the protection environment for civil society actors across Nigeria.

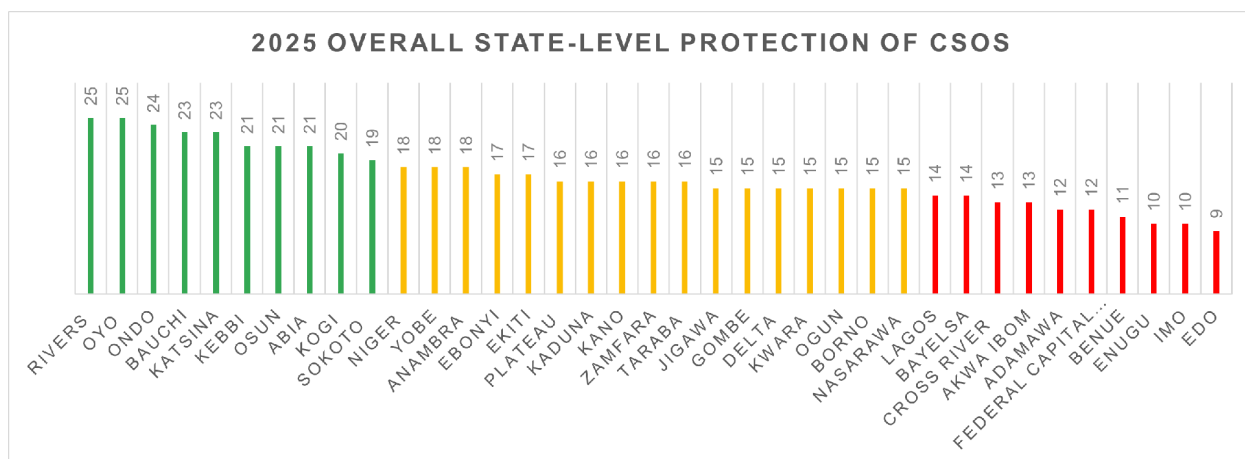


Figure 52: Overall State-level Protection of CSOs

5.7 Digital Rights Protection and Electronic Freedoms

In recent years, digital platforms have become increasingly central to civic engagement, enabling civil society organizations to mobilize communities, advocate for policy change, and disseminate information rapidly.

Recognizing this shift, the 2025 protocol introduces **Digital Rights Protection and Electronic Freedoms** as a distinct assessment criterion.

This dimension evaluates:

- freedom of expression in digital spaces
- the ability of CSOs to criticize government actions online
- the extent of state interference in digital operations

The findings reveal a mixed landscape. While several states provide relatively strong protections for digital advocacy, others lack clear legal frameworks governing digital civic engagement or exhibit patterns of interference in online activities.

As digital civic space continues to evolve, strengthening protections for online freedoms will be essential for sustaining inclusive public participation.

5.7 DIGITAL RIGHTS PROTECTION AND ELECTRONIC FREEDOMS

Indicator 1: Freedom of Expression in Digital Spaces

This indicator assesses whether civil society organizations (CSOs) are able to express views, conduct advocacy, and engage in public discourse online without undue restrictions. Digital platforms increasingly serve as key spaces for civic participation, policy advocacy, and public engagement. As such, protections for digital expression are an important component of an enabling civic environment.

National Distribution

Across the 37 jurisdictions assessed:

Table 53: National Distribution - Freedom of Expression in Digital Spaces

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
Legal framework fully supports digital advocacy	13	35.1%
Legal framework exists but rights often violated in practice	13	35.1%
Legal framework does not protect digital advocacy	0	0%
No legal framework supporting digital advocacy	11	29.7%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- 35.1% of states provide clear legal protections allowing CSOs to engage freely in digital advocacy and online expression.
- Another 35.1% have legal frameworks but experience practical challenges, including online censorship, surveillance, or internet restrictions.
- 29.7% of states lack any legal framework supporting CSO digital engagement.

These findings highlight a significant gap between legal provisions and actual digital civic freedoms in practice.

Highest Performing States

Table 54: Highest Performing States - Freedom of Expression in Digital Spaces

State	Score
Ondo	5
Katsina	5
Bauchi	5
Rivers	4.9
Abia	4.9
Oyo	4.9

These states demonstrate stronger protections for digital civic participation, allowing CSOs to engage in online advocacy with relatively fewer restrictions.

Upper Mid-Tier States (Score 4.4 – 4.8)

This group includes:

Niger, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Plateau, and Taraba.

These states generally support digital engagement by CSOs, though some regulatory or administrative limitations may still affect the practical exercise of online freedoms.

Mid-Tier States (Score 3.2 – 3.8)

States in this category include:

Ekiti, Imo, Kebbi, Gombe, Akwa Ibom, Sokoto, Ebonyi, Jigawa, Borno, Nasarawa, FCT, Adamawa, and Yobe.

In these jurisdictions, CSOs are able to operate online, but digital advocacy may face indirect constraints such as limited legal clarity, inconsistent enforcement, or institutional oversight.

Voices from the Field:

“Associations can freely express their views and opinions online and engage in digital advocacy.”

— Respondent, **Ondo State**

Lower Performing States

Table 55: Lowest performing states - Freedom of Expression in Digital Spaces

State	Score
Ogun	1.6
Edo	1.5
Anambra	1.5
Cross River	1.5
Osun	1.5
Bayelsa	1.3
Enugu	1.2
Zamfara	1.2
Delta	1.2
Kano	1.1
Benue	1.1

These states exhibit the weakest protections for digital civic engagement. The absence of clear legal frameworks or the presence of restrictive practices significantly limits the ability of CSOs to conduct advocacy and public engagement online.

Key Implications

Digital platforms are increasingly central to civic participation. Weak legal protections or inconsistent enforcement in digital spaces can restrict civil society's ability to mobilize, advocate, and communicate with the public.

The findings indicate that digital civic freedoms remain uneven across Nigeria, with several states lacking clear legal frameworks to support online advocacy.

Strengthening digital rights protections and ensuring that existing laws are implemented in ways that safeguard freedom of expression online will be essential for maintaining an open and inclusive civic space.

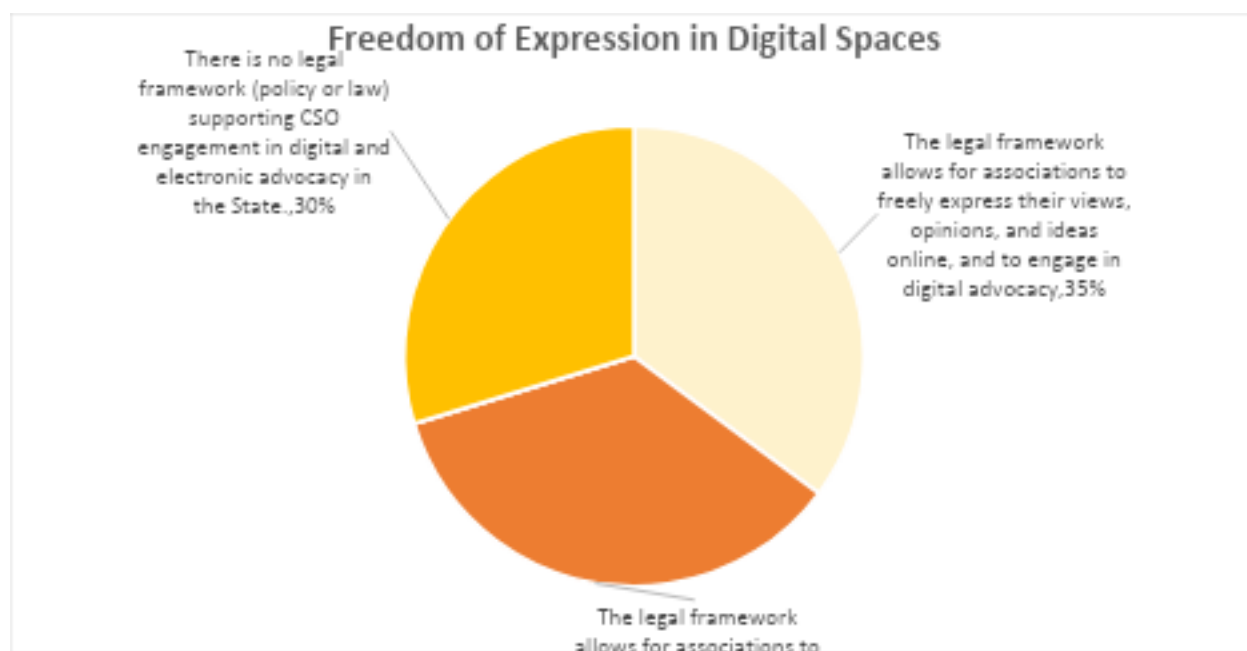


Figure 53: Freedom of Expression in Digital spaces

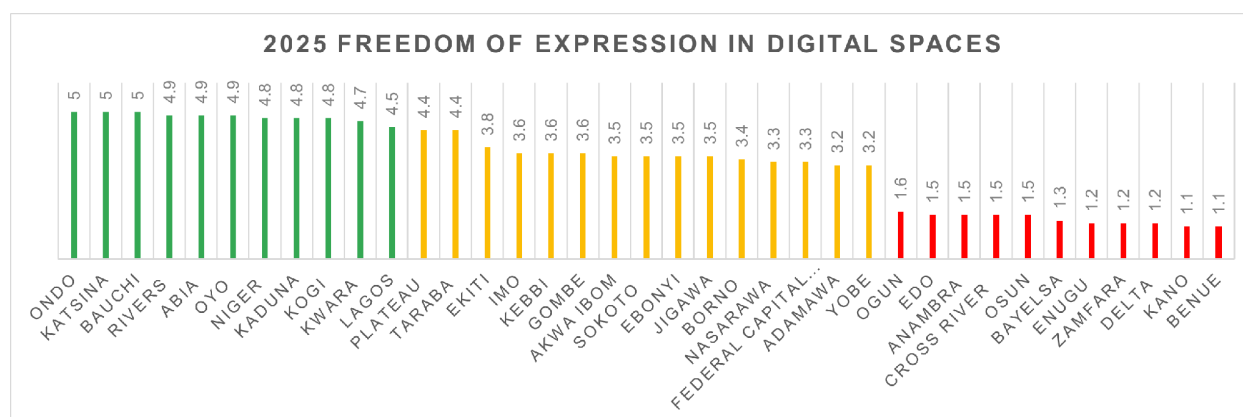


Figure 54: Freedom of expression in digital spaces - state ranking

5.7 DIGITAL RIGHTS PROTECTION AND ELECTRONIC FREEDOMS

Indicator 2: Protection of Digital Advocacy and Online Criticism of the State

This indicator assesses whether civil society organizations (CSOs) are able to criticize government policies, decisions, and actions in digital spaces without fear of censorship, intimidation, or retaliation. The ability to publicly scrutinize government performance online is a critical element of democratic accountability and an increasingly important component of civic engagement.

National Distribution

Across the 37 jurisdictions assessed:

Table 56: National Distribution - Protection of Digital Advocacy and Online Criticism of the state

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
Legal framework fully protects digital criticism of the state	11	29.7%
Rights generally protected and exercised with minimal restrictions	10	27.0%
Rights exist but practical restrictions undermine free expression	8	21.6%

Legal or informal restrictions limit online criticism of government	8	21.6%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- **56.7% of states** (21 states) demonstrate relatively enabling environments where CSOs can criticize government actions online with few formal restrictions.
- **21.6% of states** allow digital advocacy in principle but face practical challenges such as cyber harassment, online intimidation, or surveillance.
- Another **21.6% impose legal or informal constraints** that restrict CSO commentary on government performance in digital spaces.

These findings indicate that while digital advocacy is increasingly tolerated, **significant risks and structural barriers remain in several jurisdictions.**

Highest Performing States (score = 4.9)

State

- Ondo
- Katsina
- Bauchi
- Oyo
- Rivers

These states demonstrate the strongest protections for digital civic engagement and allow CSOs to criticize government policies online without significant restrictions.

Upper Mid-Tier States (Score 4.5 – 4.8)

This group includes:

Jigawa, Plateau, Nasarawa, Abia, and Kogi.

These states generally allow robust digital advocacy and public discourse on governance issues.

Mid-Tier States (Score 3.3 – 3.9)

States in this category include:

Ekiti, Niger, Gombe, Yobe, Delta, FCT, Ebonyi, Taraba, Lagos, and Kaduna.

In these jurisdictions, digital criticism of government actions is generally possible but may face indirect constraints such as administrative pressure, cyber intimidation, or inconsistent protections.

Voices from the Field:

“CSOs use social media to comment on government policies, but criticism sometimes attracts subtle pressure.”

— Respondent, **Lagos State**

Lower Performing States

Table 57: Lower performing states- Protection of Digital Advocacy and Online Criticism of the state

State	Score
Kebbi	3.0
Akwa Ibom	2.5
Imo	2.5
Sokoto	2.5
Kwara	2.5
Edo	2.5

Enugu	2.3
Adamawa	2.2
Cross River	2.2

These states exhibit weaker safeguards for online criticism of government policies, with greater risks of digital intimidation or informal restrictions.

Lowest Performing States

Table 58: Lowest performing states - Protection of Digital Advocacy and Online Criticism of the state

State	Score
Anambra	1.7
Ogun	1.7
Osun	1.5
Bayelsa	1.3
Zamfara	1.2
Borno	1.2
Kano	1.1
Benue	1.1

These jurisdictions demonstrate the most restrictive environments for digital advocacy. Legal limitations, intimidation, or weak protections significantly constrain the ability of CSOs to openly criticize government actions in digital spaces.

Key Implications

Digital platforms have become essential tools for civic participation and policy advocacy. Where legal protections are weak or enforcement practices undermine digital freedoms, civil society actors face increased risks when engaging in online accountability efforts.

Strengthening digital rights protections and ensuring safeguards against cyber intimidation and censorship will be critical to maintaining an open civic space in Nigeria’s rapidly evolving digital environment.

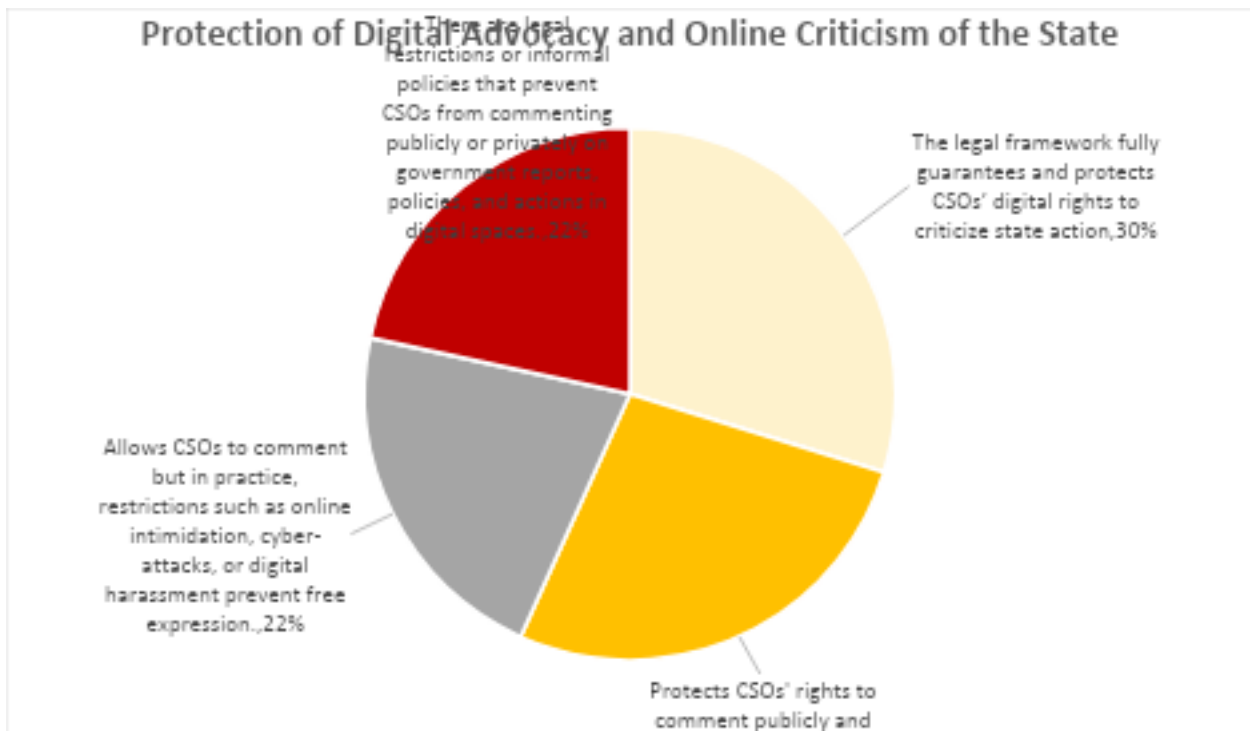


Figure 55: Protection of Digital Advocacy and Online Criticism of the state

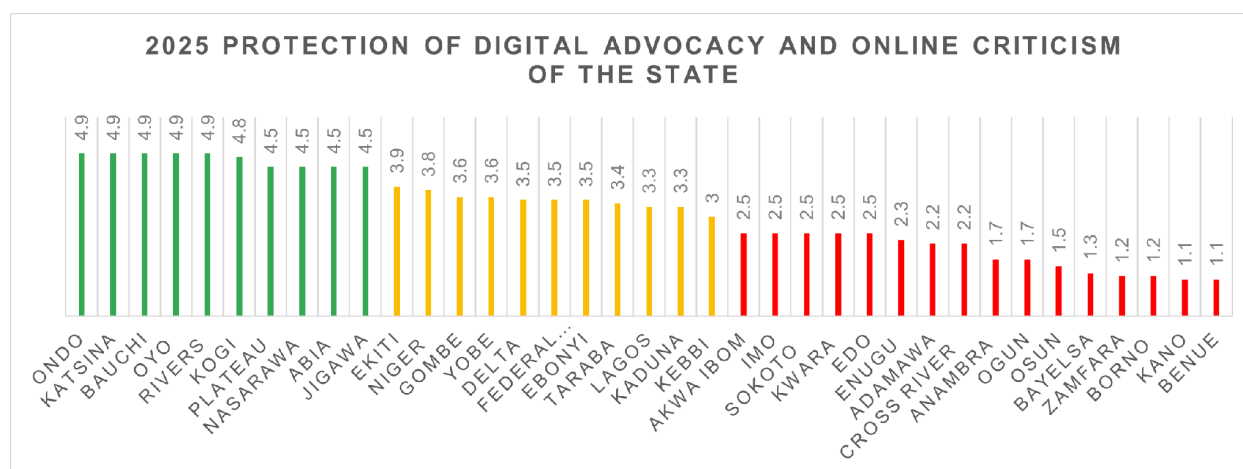


Figure 56: Protection of Digital Advocacy and Online Criticism of the state – state ranking

5.7 DIGITAL RIGHTS PROTECTION AND ELECTRONIC FREEDOMS

Indicator 3: State Interference in CSO Digital Operations

This indicator assesses whether the legal and regulatory environment protects the **digital operations of civil society organizations**, including their use of online platforms for communication, advocacy, and organizational management. It evaluates whether CSOs can operate digitally without undue interference such as censorship, surveillance, cyber intimidation, or internet disruptions.

National Distribution

Across the 37 jurisdictions assessed:

Table 59: National distribution – State Interference in CSO Digital Operations

Category	Number of States	Percentage (%)
Legal framework fully protects CSO digital operations	15	40.5%
Legal framework supportive but sporadic digital harassment occurs	10	27.0%
No explicit legal restriction but frequent digital intimidation or disruption	8	21.6%
Laws or directives directly restrict CSO digital activities	4	10.8%
Total	37	100%

Key Findings

- 40.5% of states demonstrate strong protection for CSO digital operations with minimal evidence of state interference.
- 27.0% of states have supportive frameworks but occasional disruptions or cyber-monitoring occur, creating some degree of uncertainty.
- 21.6% experience recurring forms of digital intimidation or indirect restrictions, even without explicit legal prohibitions.
- 10.8% maintain restrictive laws or directives that directly limit digital civic activities.

These findings indicate that while digital operations are largely permitted in many states, risks of digital interference remain present in a significant portion of jurisdictions.

Highest Performing States

Table 60: State Interference in CSO Digital Operations

State	Score
Katsina	5
Bauchi	5
Ondo	5
Rivers	4.9
Kogi	4.8
Oyo	4.8

These states demonstrate the strongest protection against digital interference, allowing CSOs to operate online with minimal restrictions or surveillance concerns.

Upper Mid-Tier States (Score 4.4 – 4.7)

This group includes:

Gombe, Abia, Plateau, Nasarawa, Edo, Delta, Anambra, and Taraba.

In these states, CSO digital engagement is generally protected, though occasional monitoring or regulatory pressure may occur.

Mid-Tier States (Score 3.3 – 3.9)

States in this category include:

Jigawa, Niger, Sokoto, Kaduna, Enugu, Yobe, Ekiti, Akwa Ibom, Ebonyi, Borno, and Benue.

These jurisdictions allow digital operations but may exhibit varying levels of administrative oversight, cyber-monitoring, or indirect pressure on online civic engagement.

Voices from the Field:

“There has not been any evidence of state interference in CSO digital operations.”

— Respondent, **Kogi State**

Lower Performing States

Table 61: Lower Performing states - State Interference in CSO Digital Operations

State	Score
Imo	2.8
Kebbi	2.6
Osun	2.5
FCT	2.5
Ogun	2.5
Kwara	2.4
Cross River	2.2
Adamawa	2.2

These states exhibit weaker protections against interference in CSO digital activities, suggesting greater vulnerability to regulatory pressure or administrative restrictions.

Lowest Performing States

Table 62: Lowest performing states - State Interference in CSO Digital Operations

State	Score
Zamfara	1.3
Bayelsa	1.3
Lagos	1.2
Kano	1.1

These jurisdictions show the most restrictive digital environments for CSOs, with evidence of stronger regulatory interference, digital monitoring, or restrictions affecting online civic engagement.

Key Implications

Digital platforms have become central to civil society advocacy, communication, and public accountability. Where digital operations face interference or restrictions, CSOs' ability to mobilize, inform the public, and engage with policy processes is significantly constrained.

Strengthening legal protections against digital surveillance, censorship, and cyber intimidation will be essential for safeguarding the evolving digital civic space in Nigeria.

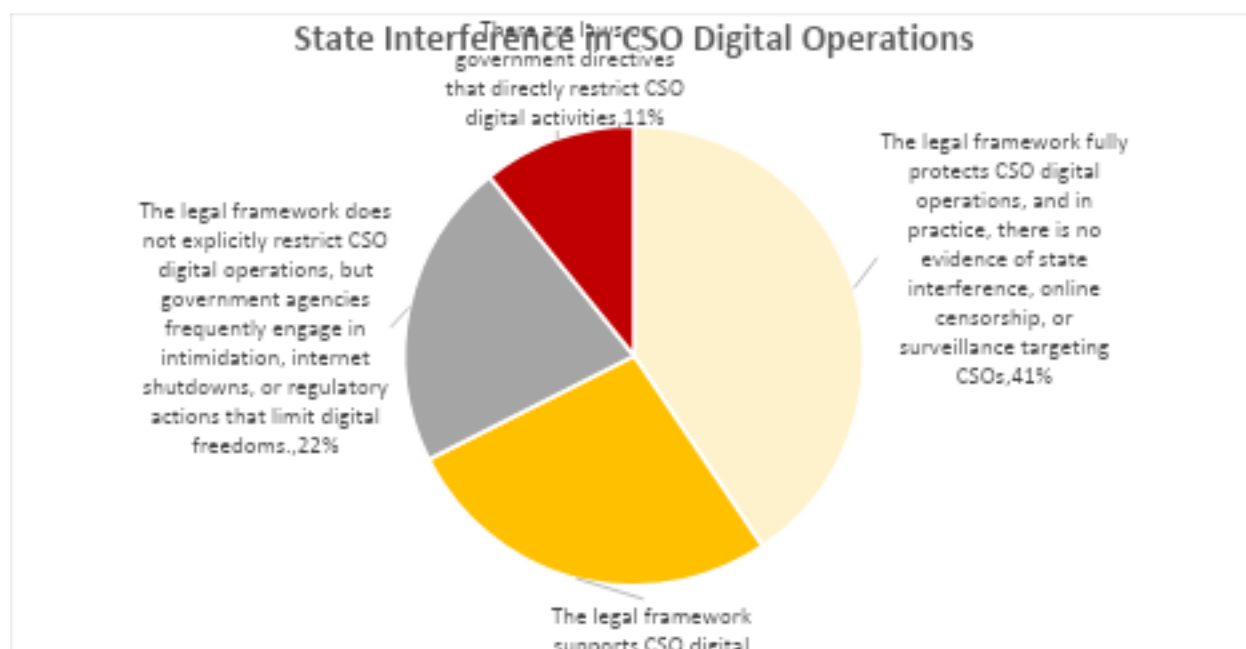


Figure 57: State Interference in CSO Digital Operations

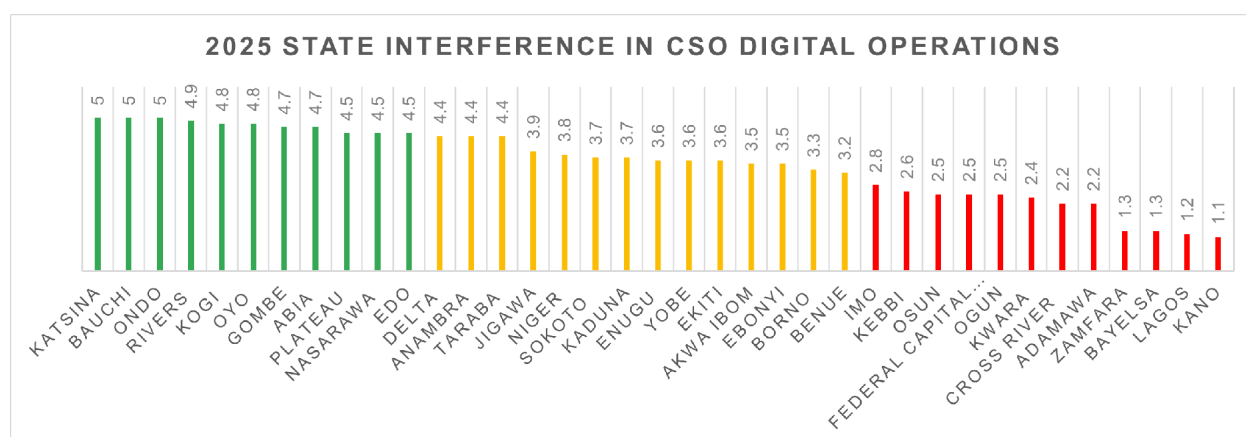


Figure 58: State Interference in CSO Digital Operations – State Ranking

5.7 DIGITAL RIGHTS PROTECTION AND ELECTRONIC FREEDOMS

Overall 2025 State Ranking – CSO Digital Operations

The **Digital Rights Protection and Electronic Freedoms** criterion evaluates the extent to which states protect civil society organizations' ability to operate, advocate, and communicate in digital spaces. The ranking reflects performance across three indicators:

1. Freedom of Expression in Digital Spaces
2. Protection of Digital Advocacy and Online Criticism of the State
3. State Interference in CSO Digital Operations

Scores range from **14.9 (Ondo, Bauchi, and Katsina)** to **3.3 (Kano)**, highlighting notable differences in the level of protection afforded to CSO digital engagement across Nigerian states.

Top Performing States

Table 63: Overall State Ranking - CSO Digital Operations

State	Score
Ondo	14.9
Bauchi	14.9
Katsina	14.9
Rivers	14.7
Oyo	14.6
Kogi	14.4
Abia	14.1

These states demonstrate the strongest protection frameworks for CSO digital operations. Civil society actors in these jurisdictions are generally able to engage in online advocacy, public discourse, and digital mobilization with minimal interference or censorship.

Upper Mid-Tier States (Score 11.8 – 13.4)

States in this category include:

Plateau, Niger, Nasarawa, Taraba, Jigawa, Gombe, and Kaduna.

These states generally maintain supportive environments for digital civic engagement, though occasional monitoring, regulatory oversight, or sporadic digital disruptions may occur.

Mid-Tier States (Score 9.0 – 11.7)

This group includes:

Ekiti, Ebonyi, Yobe, Sokoto, Kwara, Akwa Ibom, FCT, Kebbi, Delta, and Lagos.

In these states, CSOs are able to operate digitally but may encounter administrative challenges or inconsistencies in the protection of digital advocacy rights.

Lower Mid-Tier States (Score 7.0 – 8.9)

States in this category include:

Imo, Edo, Borno, Adamawa, Anambra, and Enugu.

Digital civic engagement remains possible but may be affected by limited legal protections, regulatory uncertainty, or occasional interference.

Lowest Performing States

Table 64: Lowest Performing States - CSO Digital Operations

State	Score
Cross River	5.9
Ogun	5.8
Osun	5.5
Benue	5.4
Bayelsa	3.9
Zamfara	3.7
Kano	3.3

These states exhibit the weakest environments for CSO digital operations. Legal protections are limited and the risk of digital interference, censorship, or intimidation is comparatively higher.

National Pattern

The distribution reveals three broad clusters:

- High Digital Freedom States (≥ 14) – Strong legal and practical protections for CSO digital engagement.
- Moderate Digital Freedom States (9–13.9) – Functional but uneven protection of digital civic space.
- Restricted Digital Environments (< 9) – Weak protections and higher risks of digital interference.

While many states demonstrate moderate digital freedoms, relatively few provide comprehensive safeguards across all digital rights indicators.

Concluding Assessment

Digital spaces have become increasingly central to civil society advocacy, public accountability, and citizen participation. The findings show that although several states have supportive environments for digital civic engagement, significant disparities remain in the protection of online freedoms across Nigeria.

Strengthening digital rights protections, preventing unlawful surveillance, and ensuring that CSOs can freely engage in online advocacy will be essential for maintaining an open and resilient civic space.

5.8 Concluding Observations

Taken together, the thematic analysis reveals a complex and uneven regulatory landscape for civil society organizations across Nigeria's states.

While many jurisdictions demonstrate moderate levels of openness and regulatory support, relatively few states provide comprehensive protections across all seven protocol dimensions. Structural gaps remain in areas such as access to information, protection from retaliation, and digital rights protections.

These findings underscore the importance of continued reforms aimed at strengthening legal frameworks, improving administrative transparency, and safeguarding civic freedoms at the state level.

The next section of this report presents detailed state-by-state profiles, highlighting the specific strengths and challenges within each jurisdiction.

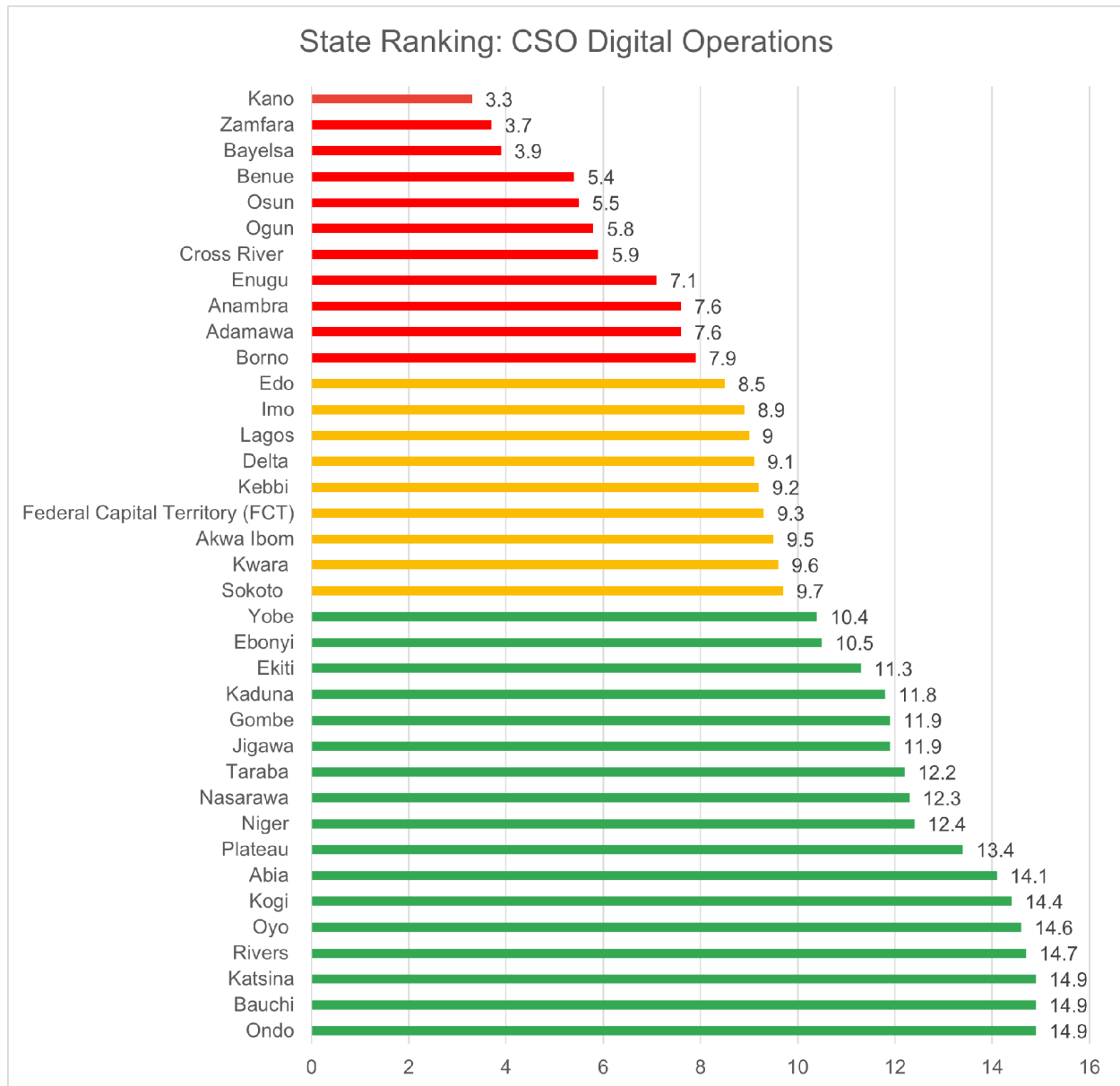


Figure 59: Overall State Ranking - CSO Digital Operations

SECTION 6: REGIONAL PROFILES

6.1 Overview

To facilitate clearer regional comparison and support targeted advocacy, the state-level results of the 2025 CSO regulatory environment assessment are presented by **geopolitical zones**. This approach allows policymakers, civil society networks, and development partners to identify both **regional strengths and systemic challenges** shaping the operational environment for civil society organizations across Nigeria.

The state rankings presented in this section reflect the aggregate performance across all assessment criteria, including:

- Legal recognition
- Purposes and activities of CSOs
- Sanctions and remedies
- Regulatory regimes governing public assemblies
- Protection of civic actors
- Digital rights protection

The results reveal significant variations in the enabling environment for civil society across Nigeria, underscoring the importance of subnational monitoring.

6.2 North East Zone

The North East zone emerged as one of the strongest performing regions in the 2025 assessment. Several states in the zone demonstrated relatively strong scores across multiple indicators, particularly in the areas of digital civic space protections, proportional sanctions, and regulatory clarity regarding civil society operations.

Top-performing states in the zone include:

- Bauchi
- Yobe
- Taraba

These states scored consistently across indicators relating to sanctions proportionality, judicial review mechanisms, and digital civic engagement, reflecting a relatively stable operational environment for civil society actors.

However, some states within the region continue to face challenges related to access to public information and protection of human rights defenders, indicating areas requiring policy reform.

6.3 North West Zone

The North West zone recorded strong performance across several indicators, particularly in the areas of digital civic space protections and sanctions proportionality.

Notable high-performing states include:

- Katsina
- Sokoto
- Kebbi

Katsina State emerged as one of the highest-ranked states nationally in several indicators, including sanctions proportionality and judicial review mechanisms.

Despite these positive results, respondents from the zone highlighted concerns regarding political sensitivities surrounding advocacy activities and the need for stronger protections for civic actors.

6.4 North Central Zone

The North Central region demonstrated mixed performance across states. Some states achieved strong scores in legal and regulatory protections, while others recorded moderate or lower results.

Notable performers include:

- Kogi
- Niger
- Plateau

These states scored well in areas such as digital rights protections, notification regimes for assemblies, and proportional sanctions frameworks.

However, stakeholders from the region noted ongoing challenges related to access to public information and administrative barriers affecting CSO operations.

6.5 South West Zone

The South West zone continues to host some of Nigeria's most active civil society ecosystems, particularly in states with vibrant urban civic spaces.

Strong-performing states include:

- Ondo
- Oyo

Ondo State emerged among the top-performing states nationally in digital civic space indicators, while Oyo State demonstrated strong protections for assembly rights and civil society participation.

However, Lagos State—despite its large civil society presence—recorded moderate scores across several indicators, particularly in areas relating to digital advocacy protections and protection from reprisals.

6.6 South East Zone

The South East zone recorded mixed results, with some states demonstrating moderate enabling environments while others recorded lower scores across key indicators.

Higher-performing states include:

- Abia
- Ebonyi

These states scored relatively well in areas such as legal recognition and protection of assembly participants.

However, respondents from several states in the region raised concerns regarding access to public information and the protection of human rights defenders, highlighting opportunities for improvement.

6.7 South South Zone

The South South zone exhibited considerable variation in performance across states.

Rivers State emerged as one of the strongest performing states nationally, scoring highly across multiple criteria including:

- Protection of assembly participants
- Digital civic space
- Legal recognition indicators

However, other states within the zone recorded lower scores in areas such as protection of human rights defenders and regulatory clarity regarding civic space protections.

SECTION 7: DASHBOARD ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Dashboard Performance Review

The **CSO Regulatory Environment Dashboard**, developed as part of this assessment initiative, serves as a tool for tracking the enabling environment for civil society organizations across Nigeria's states.

The dashboard provides an accessible platform for:

- Monitoring state-level civic space trends
- Identifying regulatory improvements or regressions
- Supporting advocacy and policy dialogue

Strengths of the Dashboard

The dashboard offers several advantages:

- Visual representation of state rankings
- Comparative analysis across states
- Accessible information for civil society actors and policymakers

The platform enhances transparency by allowing stakeholders to quickly identify which states provide more enabling environments for civil society organizations.

Identified Data Gaps

Despite these strengths, several limitations were identified:

- Limited real-time data updates
- Incomplete integration of qualitative stakeholder perspectives
- Lack of longitudinal trend tracking across multiple years

Addressing these gaps will enhance the effectiveness of the dashboard as a policy monitoring tool.

7.2 Recommendations for Dashboard Improvement

To strengthen the utility of the dashboard, the following improvements are recommended:

1. Real-Time Data Update Mechanism

Develop systems to allow periodic updating of state scores based on new data inputs from civil society stakeholders.

2. Integration of Early Warning Indicators

Introduce indicators that detect **emerging threats to civic space**, including:

- Restrictions on digital advocacy
- Arbitrary administrative sanctions
- harassment of civil society actors

3. Longitudinal Trend Analysis

Enhance the dashboard to allow **multi-year comparisons** showing how civic space conditions evolve over time.

4. Citizen Reporting Mechanisms

Enable civil society actors to submit **verified updates or alerts** regarding civic space developments within their states.

SECTION 8: RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Recommendations for the Federal Government

1. Strengthen the implementation of national laws protecting civic freedoms, including the Freedom of Information framework.
2. Promote harmonization of state-level civil society regulatory frameworks.
3. Establish national standards for protection of human rights defenders and civic actors.
4. Support digital rights protections that safeguard online advocacy and civic engagement.

8.2 Recommendations for State Governments

State governments should:

- Develop clear policies governing engagement with civil society organizations
- Strengthen access to public information mechanisms
- Establish transparent procedures for notification of assemblies
- Ensure that sanctions imposed on civil society organizations remain proportionate and consistent with constitutional rights

8.3 Recommendations for Regulatory Agencies

Relevant regulatory institutions should:

- Improve transparency in regulatory procedures affecting CSOs
- Develop standardized guidelines for civil society engagement with government institutions
- Strengthen complaint and appeal mechanisms available to civil society actors.

8.4 Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations

Civil society actors should:

- Strengthen coordination through national and regional civil society networks
- Promote evidence-based advocacy using data generated through the dashboard
- Invest in digital tools to expand civic participation and community engagement.

8.5 Recommendations for Donors and Development Partners

Development partners should:

- Support initiatives aimed at strengthening civic space monitoring systems
- Invest in programs that enhance capacity of grassroots civil society organizations
- Promote collaborative dialogue between governments and civil society actors.

SECTION 9: CONCLUSION

The findings of the 2025 assessment reaffirm the critical role of civil society organizations in advancing democratic governance, accountability, and sustainable development in Nigeria.

While the overall civic space environment remains relatively active, the assessment reveals significant variations in regulatory conditions across states. Some states demonstrate relatively supportive environments for civil society engagement, while others continue to face challenges related to administrative barriers, limited access to public information, and insufficient protection for civic actors.

These findings highlight the need for continued monitoring of the civic space environment and sustained dialogue between governments, civil society organizations, and development partners.

Strengthening Nigeria's civil society ecosystem will require coordinated reforms at both federal and state levels, including improvements in regulatory transparency, legal protections for civic actors, and safeguards for digital civic engagement.

By implementing these reforms, Nigeria can further strengthen the role of civil society in promoting inclusive governance, protecting fundamental freedoms, and supporting national development.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Assessment Protocol

Protocol for Assessment of the operational environment of CSOs in each of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria

Here is a draft set of criteria that could be used to assess the operational environment of CSOs in each of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, based on the guidelines of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa:

1. **Legal Framework:** The legal framework governing CSOs in each state should be assessed to ensure that it is consistent with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other international human rights instruments, and that it provides for the protection of the rights to freedom of association and assembly.
2. **Registration Process:** The process for registering CSOs should be assessed to ensure that it is transparent, efficient, and non-discriminatory. It should also be assessed to ensure that it does not impose unnecessary restrictions or burdens on CSOs.
3. **Operational Restrictions:** The operational restrictions placed on CSOs by state authorities should be assessed to ensure that they are necessary, proportionate, and do not unduly restrict the rights to freedom of association and assembly. Any restrictions should be based on clear and specific criteria and subject to judicial review.
4. **Funding:** The availability and accessibility of funding for CSOs should be assessed to ensure that CSOs are able to operate effectively and independently. The assessment should include an evaluation of the legal and regulatory framework governing funding for CSOs, as well as an assessment of the practical barriers that CSOs may face in accessing funding.

5. **Protection of CSOs:** The extent to which CSOs are protected from violence, intimidation, harassment, and other forms of reprisals should be assessed. The assessment should include an evaluation of the legal and regulatory framework for protecting CSOs, as well as an assessment of the practical measures in place to ensure the safety and security of CSO members.
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The effectiveness of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the operational environment for CSOs should be assessed. The assessment should include an evaluation of the institutional capacity of government agencies responsible for monitoring and evaluating the operational environment, as well as an assessment of the involvement of CSOs in the monitoring and evaluation process.
7. **Engagement with CSOs:** The extent to which state authorities engage with CSOs should be assessed. The assessment should include an evaluation of the legal and regulatory framework for engaging with CSOs, as well as an assessment of the practical measures in place to ensure meaningful and effective engagement.

These criteria could be further refined and customized based on the specific context and needs of each state in Nigeria.

RANKING

Level 1 – Developing

Level 2 - Moderately developed

Level 3 - Well developed

Level 4 - Exemplary

1. LEGAL RECOGNITION:

Legal provisions which recognize the right to freedom of association

A. Is there a law or policy for the registration and operation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in your State.

1. There is some talk on the requirement for registration and operation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the State but at the early stages. There is no draft document available.
2. There is a draft policy for registration and operation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the State but is only a draft.
3. There is a government signed policy for registration and operation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the State and the state is considering passing a law to support this.
4. There is a law in place for the registration and operation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the State.
5. There is no formal requirement for registration of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the State. CSOs operate freely.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

B. Ease of registration

1. There is no registration process at all. Any organization can be denied association with other organizations in the State or partnership with any state ministry department or agency on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, political opinion, or any other grounds.
2. The registration process exists but is opaque and arbitrary. It is not clear what CSOs are expected to register. It is not clear what ministry department or agency hosts registration in my State. It takes many months to complete a registration and an organization can be denied based on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, political opinion, or any other grounds.
3. The registration process exists, location for registration of a CSO in the state is common knowledge. However, no policy nominating the specific registration MDA is found making the decision arbitrary. It takes many months to complete a registration and reasons for denial are not often clear.
4. The registration process is clear and publicly published in a policy and or law. The time line for registration is communicated and executed. Decisions on registration are not made on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, political opinion, or any other grounds. The registration process is transparent, efficient, and non-discriminatory, with clear and specific criteria that are publicly available, easily accessible, and not subject to arbitrary interpretation.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

C. Proportionality:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. The legal framework imposes several restrictions on CSO registration, operation, and/or funding of CSOs. Requirements to submit funding sources are excessive and duplicated at different levels. CSOs are intentionally excluded from certain public engagements and events. Most of the restrictions are not clear and understood. The restrictions at the state level appear arbitrary and change frequently.
3. The legal framework imposes some restrictions on CSO registration, operation, and/or funding of CSOs. It is widely believed that these restrictions are necessary for the development of the sector and CSO networks encourage members to comply.
4. The legal framework does not impose any unnecessary or disproportionate restrictions on the registration, operation, or funding of CSOs, and any restrictions are based on clear and specific criteria that are necessary and proportionate to the legitimate aim being pursued.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

2. LEGAL PERSONALITY

- A. **Formation:** The legal framework allows for the formation of associations by individuals or groups of individuals, without prior authorization from the state authorities.

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. In your state the government clamps down on the formation of associations by individuals or groups of individuals.
3. In your state the government demands that the state must be informed before any association by individuals or groups of individuals, is formed.
4. The legal framework allows for the formation of associations by individuals or groups of individuals, without prior authorization from the state authorities.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

B. Notification Regime:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. The State requires that notice for the registration is opaque and complicated. There are requirements for several documents which are believed to be unnecessary and other heavy administrative burdens .
3. The notification regime for forming associations is simple, clear, and transparent but DOES NOT impose some unnecessary or disproportionate administrative burdens on CSOs.
4. The notification regime for forming associations is simple, clear, and transparent, and does not impose unnecessary or disproportionate administrative burdens on CSOs.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

C. Time Frame for Registration: How long does the CSO registration process take?

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. 3 months and above
3. 1-3 months
4. 2 weeks or less

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

D. Protection of Legal Personality:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. The legal framework does not provide for the protection of the legal personality of associations. State decision to dissolve associations, withdraw licenses, protect CSOs is known to be arbitrary and discriminatory. Actions by state authorities are known to threaten CSO legal status or ability to operate.

3. The legal framework provides for the protection of the legal personality of CSOs. There is a lack of transparency on how the State takes decisions to dissolve associations, withdraw licenses, protect CSOs are known to be arbitrary and discriminatory. Actions by state authorities are known to threaten CSO legal status or ability to operate.
4. The legal framework provides for the protection of the legal personality of associations, including protection against any arbitrary or discriminatory actions by state authorities that may threaten their legal status or ability to operate.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

3. PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

A. Freedom of Expression:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. The legal framework DOES NOT allow for associations to freely express their views, opinions, and ideas, and to engage in peaceful advocacy, lobbying, and other activities aimed at promoting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.
3. The legal framework allows for associations to freely express their views, opinions, and ideas, and to engage in peaceful advocacy, lobbying, and other activities. BUT in practice violates the rights by enforcing policies that inhibit the exercise of these rights

4. The legal framework allows for associations to freely express their views, opinions, and ideas, and to engage in peaceful advocacy, lobbying, and other activities aimed at promoting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

B. Public Benefit:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. The legal framework DOES NOT recognize and support the public benefit nature of CSOs. It does not encourage any activities led by CSOs in the State.
3. The legal framework recognizes the public benefit nature of many CSOs, and allows for associations to undertake activities that contribute to the public good, such as providing social services, promoting education, or protecting the environment. BUT activities are limited by requests for permissions or authorizations at different levels.
4. The legal framework recognizes and supports the public benefit nature of many CSOs, and allows for associations to undertake activities that contribute to the public good, such as providing social services, promoting education, or protecting the environment.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

C. Operational Autonomy:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. The legal framework explicitly BANS CSO autonomous operations without undue interference or control by state authorities or other external actors. CSOs in the State cannot make decisions about their own governance, activities, and priorities.
3. The legal framework allows for associations to take decisions about their own governance, activities, and priorities. However, CSOs are subject to excessive administrative burdens, reporting all activities and decisions at all levels and frequently for validation, authorization to state authorities or other external actors.
4. The legal framework allows for associations to operate autonomously, without undue interference or control by state authorities or other external actors, and to make decisions about their own governance, activities, and priorities.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

D. Freedom of Information:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. The legal framework does not guarantee the right of CSOs to access information held by public authorities. The State has yet to pass a Freedom of Information Law
3. The legal framework guarantees the right of CSOs to access information held by public authorities, and the State has passed its equivalent of an information Law

which provides for mechanisms to obtain information. HOWEVER, requests for information are time-consuming, inefficient and are perceived to discourage requests.

4. The legal framework guarantees the right of CSOs to access information held by public authorities, and provides for mechanisms to ensure the timely and effective provision of such information.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

4. SANCTIONS AND REMEDIES

A. Proportionality of Sanctions:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. There are NO provisions for sanctions imposed on CSOs for violations of the law
3. The legal framework ensures that any sanctions imposed on CSOs for violations of the law are proportionate to the nature and severity of the offense. BUT these sanctions are believed to be excessive and have been known to unduly restrict their right to freedom of association and assembly.
4. The legal framework ensures that any sanctions imposed on CSOs for violations of the law are proportionate to the nature and severity of the offense, and do not unduly restrict their right to freedom of association and assembly.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

B. Judicial Review:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. The legal framework is silent on the establishment of an independent judicial review mechanism to challenge any sanctions or penalties imposed on CSOs.
3. The legal framework provides for an independent judicial review mechanism to challenge any sanctions or penalties imposed on CSOs, and HOWEVER, its provisions are vague and insufficient to ensure CSOs have access to fair and impartial legal proceedings.
4. The legal framework provides for an effective and independent judicial review mechanism to challenge any sanctions or penalties imposed on CSOs, and ensures that they have access to fair and impartial legal proceedings.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to improving to the stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

C. Protection from Retaliation:

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO registration in the State.
2. The legal framework is SILENT on retaliation or reprisals against CSOs or their members for exercising their rights to freedom of association and assembly
3. The legal framework prohibits any retaliation or reprisals against CSOs or their members for exercising their rights to freedom of association and assembly, HOWEVER, this is NOT robust enough to ensure that they have access to effective remedies and protections against such actions..
4. The legal framework prohibits any retaliation or reprisals against CSOs or their members for exercising their rights to freedom of association and assembly, and ensures that they have access to effective remedies and protections against such actions.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case of your response, 10 is close to the next development stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

5. REGIMES

A. **Advance Notice:** The notification regime requires advance notice to be given by organizers of peaceful assemblies, to ensure that law enforcement agencies can adequately plan and prepare for the assembly.

1. All NGOs have been banned from assembly in the state
2. Only government registered NGOs or government nominated organizations can peacefully assemble.

3. NGOs can assemble but the need to have a letter authorizing them to peacefully assemble.
4. There are no inhibitions to peaceful assembly or organized protest in the state.

B. **Reasonable Timeframe:** The notification regime provides for a reasonable timeframe within which organizers must provide notice, to ensure that the right to freedom of assembly is not unduly restricted.

1. All NGOs have been banned from assembly in the state
2. The timeframe to provide notice is often unreasonable and too long to have the desired impact on ongoing socio-political issues.
3. The notification regime allows for a very short time frame, even the night before
4. There are no inhibitions to peaceful assembly or organized protest in the state.

C. **Non-Discrimination:** The notification regime ensures that organizers of assemblies are not discriminated against based on their political opinions or affiliations.

1. All NGOs have been banned from assembly in the State.
2. Some CSOs are stopped from assembly based on their political opinions or affiliations.
3. The notification regime ensures that organizers of assemblies are not discriminated against based on their political opinions or affiliations.
4. There are no inhibitions to peaceful assembly or organized protest in the state.

Tell us why you chose this option

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

6. PROTECTION

To what extent is this happening in your state?

A. Non-Discrimination: The right to freedom of assembly is protected without discrimination based on race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or any other grounds.

Select the scale of your response (1-5, 1, lowest and 5 highest)

Tell us why you chose this option

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

B. Protection of Assembly Participants: The state protects peaceful assembly participants from violence, intimidation, or other forms of interference by third parties, including the police.

Select the scale of your response (1-5, 1, lowest and 5 highest)

Tell us why you chose this option

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

C. Protection of Journalists and Media Workers: Journalists and media workers covering peaceful assemblies are allowed to do so without interference, intimidation, or harassment.

Select the scale of your response (1-5, 1, lowest and 5 highest)

Tell us why you chose this option

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

D. Protection of Human Rights Defenders: Human rights defenders who organize, participate in, or observe peaceful assemblies must be protected from harassment, arbitrary arrest, or other forms of retaliation.

Select the scale of your response (1-5, 1, lowest and 5 highest)

Tell us why you chose this option

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

E. Right to Access: The right to freedom of assembly includes the right to access public spaces for peaceful assembly. The state ensures that these spaces are accessible and available for peaceful assembly.

Select the scale of your response (1-5, 1, lowest and 5 highest)

Tell us why you chose this option

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

7. Digital Rights Protection and Electronic Freedoms

A. Freedom of Expression in Digital Spaces

1. There is no legal framework (policy or law) supporting CSO engagement in digital and electronic advocacy in the State.
2. The legal framework DOES NOT allow for associations to freely express their views, opinions, and ideas online, nor does it protect their digital engagement in advocacy, lobbying, and human rights promotion.

3. The legal framework allows for associations to freely express their views, opinions, and ideas online, and to engage in digital advocacy, lobbying, and other activities. BUT in practice, these rights are violated through online censorship, digital surveillance, and internet restrictions.
4. The legal framework allows for associations to freely express their views, opinions, and ideas online, and to engage in digital advocacy, lobbying, and other activities aimed at promoting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms without restriction.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case, 10 is close to improving to the ideal stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

B. Protection of Digital Advocacy and Online Criticism of the State

1. There are legal restrictions or informal policies that prevent CSOs from commenting publicly or privately on government reports, policies, and actions in digital spaces.
2. The legal framework allows CSOs to comment publicly and privately on government reports, but in practice, restrictions such as online intimidation, cyber-attacks, or digital harassment prevent free expression.
3. The legal framework protects CSOs' rights to comment publicly and privately on government reports, and in practice, CSOs can engage in online discourse with minimal restrictions.
4. The legal framework fully guarantees and protects CSOs' digital rights to criticize state action, provide input on government policies, and engage in online advocacy without fear of reprisal.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case, 10 is close to improving to the ideal stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

C. State Interference in CSO Digital Operations

1. There are laws or government directives that directly restrict CSO digital activities, including online campaigns, social media advocacy, and digital fundraising.
2. The legal framework does not explicitly restrict CSO digital operations, but government agencies frequently engage in intimidation, internet shutdowns, or regulatory actions that limit digital freedoms.
3. The legal framework supports CSO digital operations, but sporadic cases of harassment, internet disruptions, or cyber-monitoring create an atmosphere of digital insecurity.
4. The legal framework fully protects CSO digital operations, and in practice, there is no evidence of state interference, online censorship, or surveillance targeting CSOs.

Tell us why you chose this option

Select the scale of your response (1 is worst case, 10 is close to improving to the ideal stage)

Attach relevant documents to support your assertion

Annex 2: Indicator Scoring Framework

Explanation of the **scoring methodology** used to **evaluate each indicator**, including weighting and aggregation methods used to produce state rankings.

Table 65: Indicator Scoring Framework

FOCUS	QUESTIONS	Lowest scores	Lowest scale	Lowest possible	Highest scores	Highest scale	Highest possible	Level 1 - Developing	Level 2 - Moderately Developed	Level 3 Exemplary
LEGAL RECOGNITION	operation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in your	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	B. Ease of registration	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	C. Proportionality	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	SCORES ON LEGAL RECOGNITION	3	0.3	3.3	12	2.7	14.7	3.3	9	14.7
LEGAL PERSONALITY	A. Formation	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	B. Notification/Regime	1	0.1	1.1	3	0.9	3.9	1.1	1.95	3.9
	C. Time Frame for Registration	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	D. Protection of Legal Personality	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	SCORES ON LEGAL PERSONALITY	4	0.4	4.4	15	3.6	18.6	4.4	10.95	18.6
PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES	A. Freedom of Expression	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	B. Public Benefit	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	C. Operational Autonomy	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	D. Freedom of Assembly	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	SCORES ON PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES	4	0.4	4.4	16	3.6	19.6	4.4	12	19.6
SANCTIONS AND REMEDIES	A. Proportionality of Sanctions	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	B. Judicial Review	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	C. Protection from Retaliation	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	SCORES ON SANCTIONS AND REMEDIES	3	0.3	3.3	12	2.7	14.7	3.3	9	14.7
REGIMES	A. Advance Notice	1	0	1	4	0	4	1	2.5	4
	B. Reasonable Timeframe	1	0	1	4	0	4	1	2.5	4
	C. Non-Discrimination (Political affiliations)	1	0	1	4	0	4	1	2.5	4
	D. Non-Discrimination (race, religion, ethnic group)	1	0	1	4	0	4	1	2.5	4
	E. Protection of Assembly Participants	1	0	1	4	0	4	1	2.5	4
	F. Protection of Journalists and Media Workers	1	0	1	4	0	4	1	2.5	4
	G. Protection of Human Rights Defenders	1	0	1	4	0	4	1	2.5	4
	H. Right to Access	1	0	1	4	0	4	1	2.5	4
	SCORES ON REGIMES	8	0	8	32	0	32	8	20	32
DIGITAL RIGHTS	A. Freedom of Expression in Digital Spaces	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	B. State Interference in CSO Digital Operations	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	C. State Interference in CSO Digital Operations	1	0.1	1.1	4	0.9	4.9	1.1	3	4.9
	SCORES ON REGIMES	3	0.3	3.3	12	2.7	14.7	3.3	9	14.7
TOTAL		22	1.4	23.4	87	12.6	99.6	28	57	115

Annex 3: List of Participating Organizations

This annex presents the civil society organizations, community groups, faith-based organizations, and government representatives that participated in the **Sub-National Civil Society Regulatory Environment Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** conducted across Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

Note: Organization names are reproduced substantially as provided by participants during the Focus Group Discussions. Abbreviations have been retained where full official names were not available at the point of data collection.

ABIA

1. Dr Margaret Teen Foundation — NGO
2. Community & Youth Development — NGO
3. ICPDS — NGO
4. Benedict Better Life — NGO
5. Hopespring Development Initiative — CBO
6. JELDI — NGO
7. Victims of Need Social Home — CBO
8. GRACODEV — NGO
9. ICASULP — NGO
10. Ministry of Budget & Planning — Government Representative
11. IDEAL Nigeria — Government Representative

ADAMAWA

1. NANGO — NGO

2. ADSCDC — Government Representative
 3. MATA39 360 — CBO
 4. Taimako Initiative — CBO
 5. RRR&S — Government Representative
 6. CAWWW — FBO
 7. NWASD — Government Representative
 8. CATAI — CBO
 9. PARE — NGO
-

AKWA IBOM

1. MWASW — Government Representative
 2. Ministry of Youth Development — Government Representative
 3. Global Relief Initiative — NGO
 4. Steps Foundation — NGO
 5. Girls Power Initiative — CBO
 6. Psychomodel Health & Wellness Initiative — NGO
 7. Policy Alert — NGO
 8. Community Partners for Development — NGO
 9. JONAPWD — NGO
 10. CIF — NGO
-

ANAMBRA

1. Rochez Foundation — NGO
 2. Be Glad Care & Support Foundation — NGO
 3. Ministry of Budget & Economic Planning — Government Representative
 4. Davina Care Foundation — NGO
 5. Catch Them Young Community Initiative — NGO
 6. Care Trust Development Initiative — NGO
 7. Creative Minds Care for Youth & Community Development — NGO
 8. JONAPWD Anambra — NGO
-

BAUCHI

1. BERI — CBO
 2. FASHIMATA — CBO
 3. RHISA — CBO
 4. WDIDI — CBO
 5. YRI — NGO
 6. SAC-F — NGO
 7. NEHI — NGO
 8. BASNETC — NGO
 9. CHATI — NGO
-

BAYELSA

1. State Ministry of Women Affairs — Government Representative
 2. Albinism Association of Nigeria — NGO
 3. Ministry of Education (Gender Desk) — Government Representative
 4. Herability Empowerment Initiative — NGO
 5. Ministry of Commerce and Development — Government Representative
 6. Health & Care for the Vulnerable Initiative — CBO
 7. Community Development Initiative — CBO
 8. Prissy Community Development Initiative — CBO
 9. Benny's Development Initiative — CBO
 10. Family Welfare Foundation — NGO
-

BENUE

1. First Step Action — NGO
2. BEWHOWEI — NGO
3. NEFNAI — NGO
4. Ramberg Child Survival Initiative — NGO
5. BSBEPIC — NGO
6. GHI — NGO
7. JODED-F — NGO
8. CCRHSD — NGO
9. Onah Adeyi International Disability Centre — CBO

10. Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All — CBO

11. Mother of Faith Foundation — NGO

BORNO

1. INEAD — NGO

2. IGHE — NGO

3. REBHI — NGO

4. WCRI — NGO

5. Better Aid Foundation — NGO

6. SID — NGO

7. Interaction — CBO

8. RADi — NGO

CROSS RIVER

1. AWWDI CRS — NGO

2. African Dignity Foundation — NGO

3. CHEDRES — NGO

4. Conscience Alive — NGO

5. Greencode — NGO

6. State Planning Commission — Government Representative

7. We the People — NGO

8. Onyx Foundation — NGO

DELTA

1. Jennifer Okotie Development Initiatives — NGO
 2. Global Peace Development — NGO
 3. Better Standard Living Development Initiative — NGO
 4. Victoria Jarikre Foundation — CBO
 5. Nefeok Development Initiative — NGO
 6. Thrive — CBO
 7. Ministry of Women Affairs — Government Representative
 8. Women in CAN — FBO
 9. Rural Women & Youth Restoration and Development — CBO
 10. Development Initiative for Community Impact — NGO
-

EBONYI

1. SMLAS — NGO
2. House of Assembly — Government Representative
3. Ministry of Budget & Planning — Government Representative
4. Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development — Government Representative
5. People Guide News — NGO
6. EBOCSO Network / CIRDDOC Nigeria — NGO
7. FOMWAN — FBO
8. HIFWYD — NGO
9. Whole Life Revival Assembly — FBO

10. DIG Foundation — CBO

EDO

1. Education for All Levels Organisation — CBO
 2. Sustainable Health Family & Maternal Support Initiative — CBO
 3. Artosome Development & Networking Organisation — NGO
 4. Federal Farmers Association — CBO
 5. JONAPWD — NGO
 6. Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development — Government Representative
 7. Educational Counselling & Literacy Organisation — NGO
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EKITI

1. RHOFSD — NGO
 2. JONAPWD — NGO
 3. UFMDF — NGO
 4. Covenant Chapel — FBO
 5. Leadership Newspaper — CBO
 6. GodHeart Foundation — NGO
 7. FELAD — NGO
 8. Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development — Government Representative
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ENUGU

1. EIFAY Africa — NGO
 2. Development Edge — NGO
 3. Women and Girl Child Initiative — NGO
 4. Women Information Network (WINET) — NGO
 5. Nnenna Anozie Foundation — NGO
 6. Fit Care Foundation — NGO
 7. Agents of Community & Development — NGO
 8. Parent-Child Intervention Centre — NGO
 9. Ministry of Budget & Planning — Government Representative
 10. Ministry of Children, Gender & Social Development — Government Representative
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FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT)

1. Bwari Area Council — Government Representative
 2. Ruban Youths — NGO
 3. 21st Century Community Empowerment Initiative — NGO
 4. Global Green Enterprise Initiative — NGO
 5. Citizen Participation Advancement Initiative — NGO
 6. AMAC — Government Representative
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GOMBE

1. Disability Commission — Government Representative
 2. Nilder Care Foundation — NGO
 3. Ministry of Youth and Sports — Government Representative
 4. GONET — CBO
 5. MSSN — NGO
 6. Youth O'Clock — NGO
 7. FCDI — NGO
 8. MSSF — NGO
 9. AC4D — NGO
-

JIGAWA

1. Budget Office — Government Representative
2. FUBCI Initiative — NGO
3. JONAPWD — CBO
4. Ministry of Imp — NGO
5. Ministry of Commerce — Government Representative
6. Social Justice Initiative — NGO
7. Gadawur Development Initiative — NGO
8. HARGEI — NGO
9. Non-Indigenous — NGO
10. Civil Society Coalition on Security & Peace — NGO

KADUNA

1. Jekada Widows & Youth Education Foundation — NGO
 2. YOWE — NGO
 3. CISHAN — NGO
 4. Gebroadsheet Media — NGO
 5. Ministry of Youth Development — Government Representative
 6. JONAPWD — NGO
 7. MHSSID — Government Representative
 8. KDSDAB — NGO
 9. MYD — Government Representative
 10. ICAN — NGO
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KANO

1. Masses First International Organisation — CBO
2. Society for Child Support and Economy — CBO
3. Women Gender Development — NGO
4. Cardinal Development Aid Support Initiative — NGO
5. Stand for Peace Initiative — NGO
6. Ministry of Youth & Sport Development — Government Representative
7. CORIN – County Rights Initiative of Nigeria — NGO
8. LIWEED — NGO

9. Ministry for Rural & Community Development — Government Representative
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KATSINA

1. WRAPA — CBO
 2. HHF — CBO
 3. OLPLWD — CBO
 4. KAPDO — CBO
 5. KACODEN — CBO
 6. NCWS — CBO
 7. Ministry of Youth and Social Development — Government Representative
 8. MOA — Government Representative
 9. KKYF — CBO
 10. SWODEN — CBO
 11. QDWCAI — CBO
 12. CCSOs — CBO
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KEBBI

1. Ministry of Commerce — Government Representative
2. KIIWCD — NGO
3. GESG Youth Development Initiative — NGO
4. KYCI — CBO
5. SOHEDU — NGO

6. WRAPA — NGO
 7. BGCE Nigeria — NGO
 8. NACTAL — NGO
 9. Ministry of Women Affairs — Government Representative
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KOGI

1. NAWOJ — NGO
 2. CENFARLD — NGO
 3. INGRA — NGO
 4. Albarka — FBO
 5. JONAPWD — NGO
 6. PIBCID — NGO
 7. MOHAB Foundation — NGO
 8. CONYOUTH — NGO
 9. Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development — Government Representative
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KWARA

1. KAF Care Foundation — NGO
2. Horizon of Peace and Development Initiative — NGO
3. Green Climate Africa — NGO
4. Volunteer Trios Foundation — NGO
5. Staff Toris Foundation — NGO

6. CODWA — NGO
 7. Fulfilling Dreams Foundation — NGO
 8. GDMAC — NGO
 9. Pipeline — NGO
 10. Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs — Government Representative
 11. Community Peace Practitioners Association — CBO
 12. Ministry of Social Development — Government Representative
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LAGOS

1. Centre for Community Rights & Advocacy — NGO
 2. Women Advocate — NGO
 3. SID-Africa — NGO
 4. WLIT Community Development — NGO
 5. Glowing Slints Development Initiative — NGO
 6. NeuSmile Atire Foundation — NGO
 7. HESDAN — NGO
 8. Ashara Community Development Association — CBO
 9. Women, Law & Development Centre — NGO
 10. WLDCN — NGO
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NASARAWA

1. GEFFI — NGO
 2. YLN — NGO
 3. CECDI — NGO
 4. EEG — NGO
 5. YMCA Mada Hills — NGO
 6. NASITDEA — Government Representative
 7. NIC — NGO
 8. Heifer International — NGO
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NIGER

1. Africa Initiative for Humanitarian Development — NGO
 2. National Orientation Agency (NOA) — Government Representative
 3. Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs & Disaster Management — Government Representative
 4. Esteemed Hub Foundation — NGO
 5. Quality Life for Persons with Special Needs — NGO
 6. Community Empowerment & Support Initiative (CESI) — NGO
 7. Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) — NGO
 8. Voice of the Electorate — NGO
 9. Maternal & Child Care Initiative — CBO
 10. Network for Peace & Inclusive Development — CBO
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OGUN

1. Ministry of Women Affairs — Government Representative
 2. Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) — NGO
 3. Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) — NGO
 4. Youth's Future Savers Initiative — NGO
 5. Nigeria Union of Journalists — NGO
 6. Advocacy for Women with Disability — NGO
 7. Coalition of NGOs in Ogun State — NGO
 8. Justice Development & Peace Commission (JDPC) — NGO
 9. Centre for Community & Human Development — CBO
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ONDO

1. Kids & Teens Resource Centre — NGO
2. Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development — Government Representative
3. EMCAF — NGO
4. GEGCSF — NGO
5. PPEC — NGO
6. WADI — NGO
7. CECODEF — NGO
8. LAPDO — NGO
9. P4P Ondo — NGO
10. Life and Peace Development Organisation (LAPDO) — NGO

OSUN

1. Osun Civil Societies Coalition — NGO
 2. Ministry of Economic Planning, Budget & Development — Government Representative
 3. Office of the Governor — Government Representative
 4. Centre for Life Enhancement & Community Development — NGO
 5. Broad Focus for Community Development — NGO
 6. Ministry of Women Affairs — Government Representative
 7. Transportation Development — NGO
 8. JONAPWD — NGO
 9. Begonia Flora — NGO
 10. MOWLEK — NGO
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OYO

1. Youth Empowerment Foundation — NGO
2. MAYEIN — NGO
3. Redeemer's Aids Initiative for People & Communities — FBO
4. Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Inclusion — Government Representative
5. We Teach Innovation Hub — NGO
6. Rolan Foundation — NGO
7. Ready Writer House of Restoration Foundation — NGO
8. Bramble Network — NGO

9. Twenty-One Fire Child Foundation — NGO
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PLATEAU

1. JONAPWD — CBO
 2. WPS.N — NGO
 3. YIAVHA — NGO
 4. CAJR — NGO
 5. Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) — NGO
 6. RAHF — CBO
 7. Ministry of Women Affairs — Government Representative
 8. Voice Connect Development Initiative — NGO
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RIVERS

1. The Green Child International Organisation — NGO
2. Centre for Development Support Initiative — NGO
3. Niger Delta Foundation for Community Development — NGO
4. Adverse Technology Initiative — NGO
5. Ukari Community Development — CBO
6. Goodboy Community Initiative for Empowering Rural Women — CBO
7. Advancing Development in Africa for Africa — NGO
8. Visible Charity Global Foundation — NGO
9. New Age Foundation — NGO

SOKOTO

1. Aminci Centre for Social Advocacy & Development Initiative — NGO
 2. CADI Sokoto — NGO
 3. JONAPWD — CBO
 4. HGI — NGO
 5. NCHANGEI — NGO
 6. MCDI — CBO
 7. CSAI — NGO
 8. Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN) — FBO
 9. Ministry of Budget & Economic Planning — Government Representative
 10. PYDI — NGO
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TARABA

1. THAGIDI — NGO
2. Ministry of Women Affairs — Government Representative
3. FOMWAN — FBO
4. Kasuwan Mata — NGO
5. MSSN — FBO
6. Angee Life Worth Foundation — NGO
7. OLYDS — NGO
8. WAYOMTI Charity Foundation — NGO
9. TYTI — NGO

YOBE

1. J.W.I — NGO
 2. Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) — FBO
 3. State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) — Government Representative
 4. M.S.O — FBO
 5. LCPC — NGO
 6. YSPACB — Government Representative
 7. MYSSCD — Government Representative
 8. CPWEI — NGO
 9. MHAIC — Government Representative
 10. JONAPWD — CBO
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ZAMFARA

1. Community Development Department — Government Representative
2. Empowering Women & Gender Education Organisation — CBO
3. Custom Court — Government Representative
4. Association of Traders with Disability — NGO
5. Association of Religious Leaders — FBO
6. Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development — Government Representative
7. Ministry of Youth — Government Representative
8. Nagaria Change Initiative — CBO
9. CEDC — NGO

- 10. MCIT — Government Representative
- 11. Ministry of Budget & Planning — Government Representative
- 12. Coalition of NGOs — NGO
- 13. IDIP — NGO

Annex 4: Demographic Breakdown of FGD Participants

Table 66: FGDs Demographic Breakdown

Sub-National CSOs Regulation FGD											
		Gender		PWD		Age		Organisation type			
	State	Male	Female	Yes	No	18-36	36 -above	NGO	CBOs	FBOs	Govt rep
1	ABIA	5	6	0	11	1	10	7	2	0	2
2	OSUN	6	4	0	10	0	10	7	0	0	3
3	ONDO	3	7	0	10	2	8	9	0	0	1
4	OYO	1	9	0	10	5	5	9	0	0	1
5	OGUN	6	3	1	8	2	7	7	1	0	1
6	EKITI	5	5	1	9	5	5	6	2	1	1
7	BAUCHI	6	4	3	7	4	6	6	4	0	0
8	ADAMAWA	5	4	1	8	5	4	2	3	1	3
9	GOMBE	6	4	1	9	3	7	7	1	0	2

10	AKWA IBOM	6	4	1	9	5	5	7	1	0	2
11	KOGI	7	3	3	7	4	6	8	0	1	1
12	RIVERS	6	3	0	9	5	4	7	2	0	0
13	EBONYI	4	6	0	10	2	8	4	1	2	3
14	KATSINA	8	4	1	11	2	10	0	10	0	2
15	LAGOS	4	6	0	10	2	8	9	1	0	0
16	NIGER	7	3	2	8	4	6	6	2	0	2
17	CROSS RIVER	6	4	1	9	1	9	9	0	0	1
18	SOKOTO	8	3	1	10	4	7	7	2	1	1
19	DELTA	5	5	1	9	2	8	5	3	1	1
20	BAYELSA	4	6	3	7	3	7	3	4	0	3
21	ANAMBRA	5	5	1	9	3	7	9	0	0	1
22	IMO	7	3	0	10	2	8	2	5	1	2
23	BENUE	5	8	0	13	0	13	11	2	0	0
24	EDO	6	4	1	9	4	6	5	3	1	1
25	ENUGU	5	5	1	9	4	6	8	0	0	2

26	KEBBI	8	2	0	10	3	7	7	1	0	2
27	KADUNA	8	2	3	7	1	9	7	0	0	3
28	PLATEAU	6	2	2	6	2	6	5	2	0	1
29	BORNO	7	3	1	9	3	7	9	1	0	0
30	NASSARAWA	5	3	0	8	2	6	7	0	0	1
31	KWARA	8	4	0	12	2	10	10	1	0	1
32	JIGAWA	9	1	2	8	1	9	7	1	0	2
33	YOBE	8	2	0	10	3	7	7	1	0	2
34	ZAMFARA	9	4	1	12	0	13	4	2	1	6
35	FCT	5	4	0	9	1	8	5	0	0	4
36	KANO	7	2	0	9	1	8	5	2	0	2
37	TARABA	4	5	0	9	2	7	8	0	1	0
	TOTAL	220	152	32	340	95	277	241	60	11	60

	TOTAL NO OF PEOPLE ENGAGED	372									
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This report sheds light on the challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for improving the civil society operational environment in Nigeria. Drawing on research and data sourced primarily from civil society networks across all 36 states and the FCT, it maps how state-level regulatory conditions shape civic action, accountability, and participation.

