

Strengthening Civil Society (SCS) research on behalf of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Baseline Report

Date: 19th April 2023

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Submitted by Itad



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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is implementing its '**Policy Framework for Strengthening Civil Society**' (SCS), which funds consortia of civil society organisations (CSOs) and women's funds in the global South – referred to as 'Leading from the South' (LFS) funds – for their efforts in advocacy.

Itad has been commissioned to provide an assessment of the international component of the SCS policy framework and its implementation across funding instruments, SCS-supported consortia and LFS funds.

This report is the result of baseline research conducted under the first phase of the three-year study. The baseline phase has recorded conditions from which change and progress can be assessed during the mid-term review (MTR).

Methodology

The baseline phase has been implemented in three key stages – inception, research and analysis, and synthesis. We have conducted primary data collection across a large sample of 20 partnerships (out of a total of 32), in the form of online interviews with 99 key informants, two online surveys, and secondary data desk reviews of internal and external sources. The data was coded along the research questions (RQs) and indicators. The research triangulated the perspectives of MFA, players at different levels of the strategic partnerships and external specialists in specific international advocacy arenas. Additionally, we developed a dedicated analytical tool to assess international advocacy capacity.

Findings

Situation analysis: CSOs face an uphill battle in terms of their legitimacy and security. Across the specific contexts per theme under the SCS policy framework, civic space has been shrinking, and the impacts of COVID-19 have further restricted civic freedoms. However, there are notable new opportunities and spaces for civil society advocacy, e.g. the Commission on the Status of Women's (CSW's) introduction of themes such as climate change and digital innovation.

Theories of Change (ToCs) of the policy instruments: as all ToCs used under the SCS policy framework strive to capture all major levels of activity within SCS, there are no specific ToCs or ToC pathways on international advocacy or capacity building within SCS. This would be important to articulate, given the different levers for change at the international level. Among the ToCs for the policy instruments, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) ToC displays the strongest relevance in the field of international advocacy.

Alignment of implementation design: the international advocacy components of the strategic partnership programmes refer to a wide range of regional and global norms and policies, reflecting the diversity of consortia memberships. These are used mainly as CSO reference points for national level advocacy. Only a few partnerships were actively engaged in international advocacy in early 2022, with national and subnational-level advocacy and capacity strengthening being the focus in most consortia.

International advocacy capacity: the research team assessed international advocacy against a bespoke model that included four dimensions: advocacy strategy development; undertaking collective action; technical and tactical knowledge; access to international advocacy arenas. We have found evidence for high-quality international advocacy strategies among the partnerships, including promising efforts to include voices from grass roots levels up. CSOs from the global North have better access to and more engagement in international decision-making spaces than their Southern peers in the consortia.

Southern leadership and legitimacy: Southern leadership has been a defining feature in planning for international advocacy among many consortia and LFS funds and appears to be an important ingredient for effective advocacy at this level. However, as of 2022 most advocacy is happening in-country, and consortium members in the global North tend to predominate in international advocacy activities. Previous

collaboration at international arenas appears to be a key condition for effective Southern leadership in this field.

Alignment and cooperation with other actors: SCS partnerships have built on previous experience at international arenas and with MFA for mutually beneficial cooperation in international advocacy, especially at some of the global arenas examined in our research. However, we found no evidence for collaboration between SCS partnerships in international advocacy at this phase of SCS implementation.

Gender, inclusion and intersectionality: all sampled programme proposals address intersecting dimensions of inequality and discrimination against groups that are structurally excluded, with gender inequality being addressed across all consortia.

There are promising examples of meaningful involvement of women, youth and other groups of interest during the design phase of partnership programmes. Some consortium programmes are focused resolutely on women's rights and gender equality (WRGE) themes. The overall structure and processes of the SCS policy framework, and the predominance of the English language in SCS documentation and events, limit opportunities for participation by ultimate intended beneficiaries.

Conflict sensitivity and integrity: where relevant, most consortia employ a three-step approach to conflict sensitivity, which includes conflict analysis, informed design and implementation, and monitoring and adaptation. Gender considerations are a key part of conflict-sensitive approaches. In relation to sexual exploitation and harassment (SEAH) and integrity, the majority of surveyed consortium members have policies in place to ensure compliance and accountability, with principles of 'Do No Harm' and safeguarding underpinning the design of advocacy components.

Inclusion of lessons learned: the partnerships have used lessons and opportunities from previous partnership programmes, both internally (regarding ways of working) and externally, when engaging in advocacy arenas. Key changes that have emerged from such learning include more systematic efforts to facilitate Southern leadership and engage in longer-term international advocacy.

Conclusions

During the baseline phase, most partnerships in the international component focused on strengthening capacities at national and subnational levels. That is a valid strategy. As of mid-2022 only a few have started implementing international advocacy, due to their programme logic but also due to the structure and processes within the SCS policy framework. In terms of designing the global and regional advocacy components, the research team found that there is a strong focus on gender and social exclusion, with all strategic partnership programmes addressing intersecting dimensions of inequality and discrimination in their proposals. While there are good examples of meaningful involvement of different voices in the design phase, more could be done to ensure alignment and cooperation with other players in selected spaces going into implementation. Evidence for effective Southern leadership can be found mainly in partnerships with lead organisations based in the global South. Lessons learned from the previous policy framework implementation could be drawn upon to help facilitate further Southern leadership.

Recommendations

To support advocacy capacity strengthening:

- MFA and its SCS partners are encouraged to jointly develop a shared understanding of *international* advocacy capacity, which should aim for mutual capacity strengthening including South–South and South–North learning. The four-dimensional model used in this report could act as a helpful starting point.
- For consortia and MFA, peer-to-peer knowledge and experience exchange should be established in all directions – including partners based in the global North and MFA learning from Southern advocates – to harness and share the wide range of international advocacy knowledge and experience across SCS.

- Further SCS research (e.g. case study research) should take a closer look at how MFA and CSOs can work together in international advocacy arenas and at defining scenarios for MFA's role in supporting partnerships in their paths towards the objectives of the SCS framework e.g. passive / active roles, and when to draw on these.
- Partnerships should continue engaging in participatory planning and inclusive monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) as a hands-on means to strengthen partners' capacities.

Southern leadership can be strengthened:

- MFA should promote experience exchange on Southern leadership in international advocacy.
- Partnerships' international advocacy strategy should involve an international-to-local implementation strategy to ensure that the outcomes of the international advocacy activities can be utilised in regional and local context and that the benefits are reached to the target population.
- Where the aim is to strengthen Southern leadership in international advocacy, MFA should consider extending future policy frameworks for more than five years so that newer partnerships have sufficient time to develop genuine Southern leadership.
- Consortia are encouraged to keep – or develop – mechanisms to disburse funding flexibly for international advocacy activities by contracting partners in the global South.

Recommendation on inclusion and WRGE mainstreaming:

- To ensure that traditionally excluded groups can participate in planning, MFA should adjust time frames for submitting proposals and reports and provide learning and guidance materials in several United Nations (UN) languages with simultaneous translation.

1 Introduction

This section briefly describes the purpose of our baseline study, key methodological aspects and the challenges and limitations we have encountered. Fuller details on our approach and methodology are available in a separate inception report (IR) for the baseline phase. Data collection and analysis tools – including a purpose-built instrument to analyse international advocacy – are included in Annex 7. Section 2 provides a short overview of the Strengthening Civil Society (SCS) policy framework. Section 3 begins with an analysis of the context for international advocacy in relevant policy spaces (Sections 3.1 and 3.2) and subsequently presents our findings on the baseline indicators agreed on for our research. Section 4 focuses on findings on international advocacy capacity among consortium partners (SCS indicator 5), while Section 5 addresses research questions (RQs) 2–14, which can be linked to the relevance criterion. Tentative conclusions and recommendations are presented in Section 6. Recommendations on the subsequent phases of this research are listed in Annex 5 on takeaways and next steps for third party monitoring (TPM)/data quality assessment (DQA) and the mid-term review (MTR).

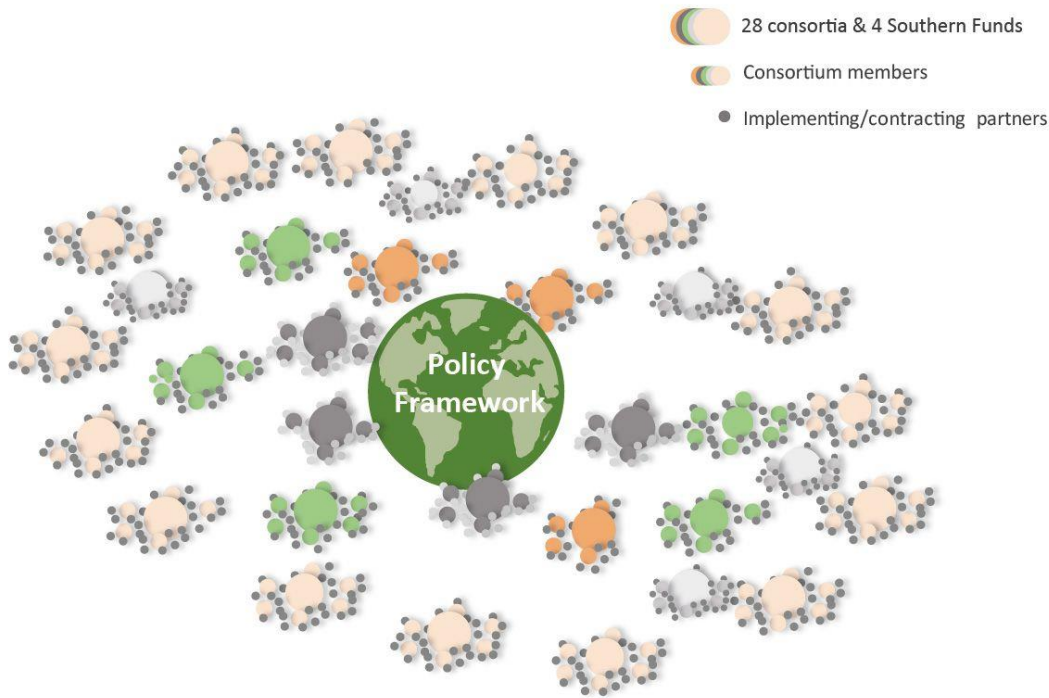
1.1 Background and objectives of the baseline study

This is the first phase of the three-year study accompanying the implementation of the international component of the SCS policy framework implemented by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) with a large universe of civil society organisations (CSOs) around the world. The baseline phase has recorded conditions from which change and progress can be assessed during the MTR.

MFA has developed and implemented its ‘Policy Framework for Strengthening Civil Society’. Under the SCS framework, funding has been available between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2025 to consortia of CSOs and to women’s funds in the global South – referred to as ‘Leading from the South’ (LFS) funds – for their efforts to develop civil society capacity for advocacy while jointly seeking changes in the international and national policy arenas, private sector regulations and societal structures towards fair, inclusive and sustainable development, using a rights-based approach.

The subject of our research is MFA’s work with a large set of organisations pursuing a wide array of goals in highly complex contexts, as described in Section 2.1. The SCS policy framework is implemented by MFA in 42 partnerships, including 38 CSO consortia around the world and four feminist funds based in the global South. Thirty-two of these partnerships include international advocacy. Figure 1 symbolically illustrates this universe of 32 groupings of CSOs. Coloured circles refer to consortium members and grey dots refer to their contracting partners or grantees (in the case of LFS funds). In reality, these galaxies of partnerships are even more diverse; some encompass hundreds of organisations. The partnerships cover a wide variety of themes – MFA has identified 10 categories of themes, ranging from climate change to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Figure 1: The SCS international universe (simplified)



Itad has been commissioned to provide monitoring and evaluation (M&E) services between January 2022 and July 2024. The overall assignment aims to provide an assessment of the international component of the SCS policy framework and its implementation across funding instruments, SCS-supported consortia and LFS funds. In parallel with Itad’s assignment, MFA has commissioned similar research on SCS implementation in specific countries (Burkina Faso, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Uganda and South Sudan). MFA also intends to commission endline evaluations and a separate synthesis assignment, for which planning is under way but which is out of the scope of Itad’s contract. Itad (i) has carried out baseline research in 2022. Subsequently we will undertake (ii) DQA and TPM of the consortia’s and LFS funds’ monitoring systems by mid-2023 and (iii) an MTR up to mid-2024 on a sample of consortia and LFS funds.

This is the first time MFA has commissioned independent research that accompanies the implementation of the overall policy framework. **The baseline phase has focused not only on baseline research** but also on clarifying MFA’s expectations from the research, the opportunities and challenges presented by the existing SCS monitoring framework and its indicators, and the ensuing priorities for our baseline and subsequent research.

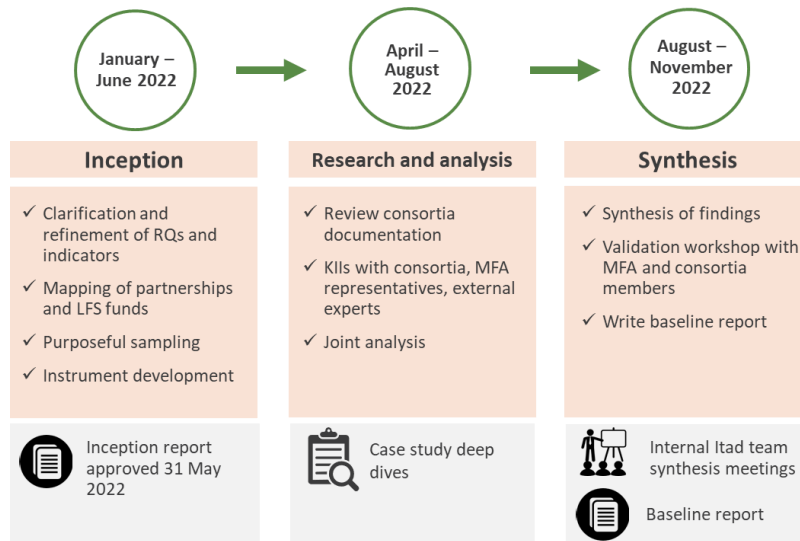
1.2 Methodology and approach for the baseline phase

This research covers the baseline phase of our research assignment, i.e. the description of the starting situation for SCS policy framework implementation. During this phase the Itad team has also focused on developing a fuller understanding of the subject, the questions and themes of central interest to MFA, MFA’s indicators, the data available, and the opportunities for primary data collection within available resources.

1.2.1 Main steps of the baseline research

The key steps of the baseline phase are summarised in Figure 2 and in Annex 3, which complements and updates the information contained in our detailed inception report.

Figure 2: Overview of baseline phases



MFA has supported the inception phase and the implementation of our baseline research with an online workshop presenting the policy framework and its instruments, a meeting with the four external research teams working on SCS at MFA in The Hague to discuss methods and approaches, and continuous dialogue in fortnightly meetings with Itad core team members. Initial conclusions and recommendations were discussed in a validation workshop with MFA and partner representatives. A draft version of this report was submitted for feedback from the evaluation panel and our MFA client.

1.2.2 Triangulation of methods and sources

Our research has triangulated research methods and data sources to obtain a rounded picture of the baseline situation. **Primary data was collected** in 74 online interviews with 99 key informants, representing different perspectives (see below), and in two online surveys. The first online survey captured primary data from a total of 152 consortium members (‘1st tier partners’) across the SCS international component; the second online survey collected data from 95 contractual partners (‘2nd tier partners’) involved in – or planning to get involved in – SCS international advocacy.

Secondary data used in our baseline research included all 32 partnership proposals – often comprising hundreds of pages – and additional sources such as programme websites. These were used to establish an initial map of all partnerships in our research. In addition, the evaluation team reviewed baseline reports developed by the 20 partnerships sampled for our research, MFA documentation on SCS, and external sources on international advocacy in selected advocacy arenas. The baseline reports were also used to map out which SCS indicators consortia are reporting against and their baseline values (see Table 8 and Table 9 in Annex 5).

Using qualitative analysis, primary data from the interviews and survey was summarised and coded against the RQs and indicators. The quantitative data from our survey was analysed to produce descriptive statistics for our consortia sample. For our case study research on international advocacy capacity within selected consortia, we developed a dedicated analytical tool and scorecard (see Annex 6).

While most of the data used was closely tied to SCS, there are important nuances that have contributed to our **triangulation of perspectives**. We worked with sources from four different levels within the consortia – partnership lead/coordinating organisation, consortium members, contractual/implementing partners, and a partner of a contractual partner (‘3rd tier’ in MFA terminology). Our key informant interviews (KIIs) have revealed differences in perspectives at these different levels. Even between lead and other members of the same consortium, different views were found, allowing a first level of triangulation. Within MFA we interviewed programme staff managing SCS partnerships and also interviewed diplomats in The Hague, New York and Addis Ababa.

Furthermore, most baseline reports in our sample of 20 partnerships had been written by consulting firms, i.e. independent third parties. We carried out interviews with nineteen external informants (i.e. non-SCS-related) active global and regional advocacy specialists on women’s rights and gender equality (WRGE), SRHR, women, peace and security (WPS) and climate change, obtaining independent perspectives on selected advocacy arenas. Finally, our research team includes experts on international advocacy arenas, whose perspectives we have brought in to our analytical processes. Our MTR will make more extensive use of external data sources, when perspectives not connected to SCS will be important in order to assess the plausibility of SCS’s contribution to intended and observed changes.

In terms of **methods triangulation**, we used strategy review and – in our case studies – elements of process evaluation to address the RQs asked in the baseline phase. The two case studies focused on international advocacy capacity (a longitudinal case study (LCS), to continue in 2023 and 2024) and consortium governance (a one-off case study in 2022) respectively.

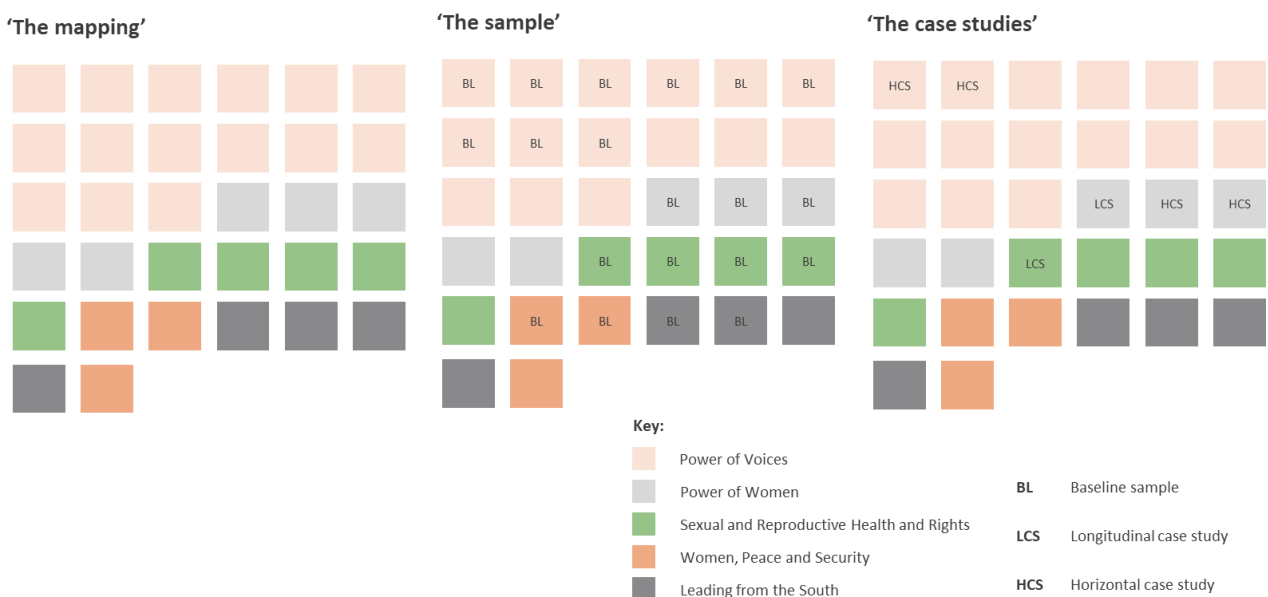
1.2.3 Sampling and case selection

At MFA’s request, the research team worked with a sizeable sample – 20 out of 32 partnerships – for the baseline research phase. Work with the large baseline sample has allowed us to appreciate the diversity of the strategic partnerships and the complexity of the policy framework. It has also revealed that, in some partnerships, international advocacy plays a minor role, especially with partnerships that focus on reinforcing national-level and more local-level advocacy across several countries.

As detailed in Annex 9, a set of inclusion criteria agreed with MFA was used to select, in a five-step process, a purposeful sample of 20 partnerships (18 consortia and two LFS funds) for baseline research. As agreed with MFA, the resulting sample has a thematic focus on WRGE, SRHR and climate issues. It covers all five policy instruments in the SCS international component.

Six purposefully selected consortia participated in our case studies. The longitudinal case study focused on WRGE and SRHR programmes, and the horizontal case study included WRGE and climate themes, in accordance with the thematic interest voiced by MFA.

Figure 3: Coverage of consortia during baseline phase



To avoid diluting the focus of our research, the research team agreed with MFA to select a limited number of international advocacy arenas. The selection was based on the following criteria: (i) focus on WRGE, SRHR and climate advocacy arenas; (ii) planned or existing activities in the arena by partnerships in our sample; (iii) global and regional arenas. In dialogue with MFA, we settled on four global arenas – the Commission on the

Status of Women (CSW), the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the Conference of State Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, and the Secretary-General's (SG's) Report on WPS to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) – and one vast regional arena: the African Union (AU), with its various bodies.

The choice of advocacy arenas may need adjusting in the MTR phase to identify those places where compelling data and insights can be generated. For example, the baseline phase has found that SCS activity in CPD was limited and SRHR partners have advocated for SRHR at CSW and at the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee in Geneva. This would warrant replacing the CPD arena with the CEDAW Committee.

1.3 Discussion of potential bias

All qualitative research is subject to the threat of bias, which can be introduced at any stage of the process. In this section we discuss three of the key types of bias that our work could have been exposed to, the mitigations that we have put in place, and the extent to which – on balance – we feel these pertain to our research.

Selection bias: this bias, if present, would mean that the sample used for our research was not representative of the full universe of consortium partners. One way to mitigate against selection bias is to randomise selection. Because our selection used inclusion criteria to ensure coverage against attributes that were seen as important to study during the baseline phase, this was not possible. In an effort to mitigate against selection bias, we reviewed our sample against the full population to assess its overall representativeness against key criteria (geography, thematic area, etc.). On balance, we feel this bias is likely to have had a low level of impact on our findings, since the sample is fairly large in relation to the population, and since every member of the full population is included in the research in some form (mapping and survey).

Interviewer/evaluator bias: this bias, if present, would mean that the data collected and analysed from interviews and/or surveys was influenced by the team member(s) working on it. Mitigations against this bias within our research include: working with highly experienced qualitative researchers, who are aware of the threat of this bias and the impact on our work; using semi-structured interview guides to support transparency and consistency in the interview questions used; using open questions as a starting point in interviews, and following up with more specific probes to prevent the interviewer leading the interviewee. Our survey was subject to a number of review rounds to support a neutral stance in question framing. During data analysis workshops, we assigned roles to team members to ask challenging questions to protect against confirmation bias. The team followed systematic analysis protocols to make sure all data was included in analysis. Multiple researchers were involved in analysis on each RQ, to allow for triangulation within the team and mitigate against confirmation bias. On balance, we feel this bias is likely to have had a low level of impact on our findings, given the experience of the team and the safeguards put in place.

Respondent bias: this bias, if present, would mean that the data collected and analysed was subject to distortion because of the position of the person answering our survey or interview question. In the case of our work, the likely bias would be for respondents to present a more positive picture of their own work than they might otherwise do, because they are aware that our findings will be presented to an important funder of their organisation. To mitigate against this potential source of bias, team members were trained on building a rapport with interviewees to set a safe and open space for candid responses, and questions were posed in a neutral, open way to invite more forthright answers. Responses were triangulated with information from different data sources, e.g. written reports, interview data, external data sources. Our team was comprised of highly experienced researchers who are skilled at navigating this potential bias and 'reading between the lines'. On balance, we feel this bias is likely to have had a low-to-medium impact on our findings, given the experience of the team and the safeguards put in place.

1.4 Challenges and limitations

Our research has faced challenges related to (i) the complexity of the SCS framework, (ii) the use of MFA’s indicators in international advocacy work, and (iii) trade-offs between breadth and depth of research.

We have addressed these challenges chiefly by adjusting our initial research design and our instruments in close consultation with MFA.

Challenge 1: Complexity of the SCS policy framework

The SCS policy framework straddles a wide range of themes and pursues complex goals in the fluid field of global and regional advocacy. A significant part of the baseline phase had to be dedicated to making sense of the subject of this research within a narrow time frame, including taking time to understand MFA needs. Consequently, some data collection had to start before formal inception report approval, i.e. in a less staggered manner than originally intended. As a result, we were limited in our options for crafting and refining research and analysis instruments based on intermediate findings from the different strands of our baseline research. We plan to address this challenge by starting the inception phase for the MTR in mid-2023 and collaborating with MFA to agree timelines and parameters for feedback loops in subsequent phases.

Challenge 2: The MFA indicators used for SCS monitoring have proven difficult to aggregate, compare and contrast across the partnerships

The SCS monitoring system attempts to strike a balance between MFA’s information needs and its commitment to aid transparency¹ on the one hand and the strategic partners’ (SPs’) autonomy on the other hand. MFA has created three sets of indicators for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL): the SCS basket indicators, WRGE indicators, and SRHR indicators. These indicators are designed for quantitative measurement and are accompanied by reporting guidelines for submission to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). While the indicators are predominantly quantitative in nature (see Annex 8 for a list of the indicators used), MFA has encouraged its partners to include additional descriptive information as well.

The key challenge for us as evaluators with these indicators is the diversity in interpretation across the consortia. Definitions of key terms such as ‘law’ or ‘policy’ are open to interpretation by partners in their reporting. This then creates issues in how we assess the overall picture across the portfolio. For example, would new multilateral treaties qualify as ‘law’ and formal, multilateral declarations as ‘policies’? And where would other agreements fall under these definitions, such as United Nations (UN) resolutions, judgements in international courts, or reports of human rights treaty bodies?

Diverse interpretations of key concepts such as ‘advocacy capacity’ have made it difficult to interpret and aggregate baseline values and results reported by MFA’s partners. MFA indicator guidelines (up to 52 pages per group of indicators) focus on measurement processes. The partnerships have developed their own programme and LFS fund-specific indicators – often independently from the MFA indicators. As a result of missing and divergent definitions, it is difficult to aggregate and compare partner reporting against SCS basket indicators.

In an effort to mitigate against this challenge, we have drawn on the information reported by partners – which is open to some interpretation, given the gap in defining key terms – and have built on this with information from external reports and interviews to nuance the picture.

Later in the report we suggest that developing definitions for key terms/indicators could support comparability across partner reports and increase confidence in the assessments made by partners.

¹ All organisations receiving funding above €250,000 are expected to publish an IATI dataset covering at least the activities funded by MFA, as explained in the SCS IATI indicator guidelines published by MFA.

Challenge 3: Trade-off between breadth and depth of analysis

The significant sample size, covering two-thirds of the strategic partnerships in SCS international, has presented the team with a trade-off between depth and breadth of analysis.

The breadth of the sample introduced a practical challenge around an increased volume of data to analyse. Given fixed resource envelopes for the work, this meant, on average, less time spent with each piece of data. It is possible to see from this volume/time trade-off that this creates a challenge for the depth of analysis from any given document/report/interview transcript. With less time spent on analysis there is, unfortunately, a corresponding reduction in the richness of findings and conclusions.

The team consulted intensively with the MFA regarding this challenge, in an effort to reduce the breadth of the research domain. A result of these conversations was that MFA accepted some level of reduced depth in order to accommodate the desire to work with the sample that has been selected.

This challenge can be addressed to some extent by focusing on a smaller, more purposeful sample in the MTR, and also by prioritising RQs so that more depth can be achieved.

2 The policy framework, its instruments and programmes

This section summarises key features of the international component of the SCS policy framework (SCS international), the five SCS policy instruments in our research and the partnerships that implement the policy framework around the world.

2.1 The Strengthening Civil Society policy framework

The SCS policy framework embodies a complex grant-making and cooperation system.

It aims to reinforce civil society efforts for policy development and implementation in thematic fields prioritised by MFA, with particular attention to WRGE as well as broader, intersectional inclusions. To implement SCS, MFA uses a set of policy instruments designed to channel funding and other forms of MFA support to international civil society consortia and feminist funds. The international component of SCS ('SCS international') works with consortia and funds whose activities include – but are not necessarily limited to – international advocacy and related capacity strengthening.

2.2 Policy instruments and partnerships in the international component

SCS international encompasses five policy instruments, which are different from each other in terms of thematic focus and modes of implementation.

MFA has presented each policy instrument in a c.20-page note which describes the underlying rationale, objectives and principles as well as application criteria and selection processes. Except for the LFS instrument (limited to Southern women's funds only), application for funding was open to CSOs in the Netherlands and in the global South. Among other criteria, the applicants must have formed their international consortia of CSOs, including CSOs in the global South, working to achieve structural poverty reduction and inclusive development.

2.2.1 Modes and themes

Under four SCS international instruments, support from MFA funds joint programmes of civil society consortia and provides diplomatic and technical support to them. Conversely, LFS funds four feminist funds in the global South; LFS is mainly about strategic grant-making and sub-granting to strengthen women's rights movements in the global South, with a focus on low- to middle-income countries prioritised by MFA.

The Power of Voices (PoV) policy instrument, open to consortia consisting of organisations in the global South and in the Netherlands, covers a wide range of themes. The remainder, grouped under the umbrella 'Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 fund', focus on WRGE and SRHR issues. The PoV and the Power of Women (PoW) policy instruments are designed to support international advocacy and related capacity strengthening only; the SRHR, WPS and LFS instruments can fund service provision as well.

More specifically, the main characteristics of the five instruments are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of policy instruments

Policy instrument	Power of Voices (PoV)	Power of Women (PoW)	SRHR partnerships	Women, Peace and Security (WPS)	Leading from the South (LFS)
Main characteristics	Aims to strengthen civil society advocacy at local, national and international levels to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 15 partnerships focus on seven themes: climate mitigation and adaptation; trade and making value chains more sustainable; food security, sustainable water management and/or water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH); WRGE; freedom of speech or freedom of religion and belief; equal rights for LGBTIQ; security and rule of law.	Aims to strengthen the advocacy capacity of women's rights organisations. To qualify for PoW funding, consortia must consist of women's rights organisations and focus on at least two out of three objectives: (i) prevention and elimination of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and girls; (ii) strengthening women's leadership and women's participation in open and political decision making; (iii) strengthening women's economic empowerment (WEE) and improving the economic climate for women. The international component includes five PoW partnerships.	Aims to strengthen advocacy capacity for the universal fulfilment of SRHR. A criterion for eligibility is that the partner is working to achieve SDG 3, SDG 5 and at least one of the Dutch SRHR policy priorities: greater freedom of choice for young people about their sexuality; improved access to contraceptives and medicines; better quality healthcare for sexual and reproductive health, including safe abortions; more respect for the sexual and reproductive rights of groups who are currently denied these rights. The international component includes five SRHR partnerships. Activities may include service delivery to support advocacy in the interest of young people and marginalised groups.	Aims to strengthen civil society advocacy, with a focus on further implementing UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and related UNSCR resolutions. ² Eligibility is tied to a focus on SDG 5 and Dutch WPS objectives, which are: enhanced protection of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict environments; decrease in harmful gender norms that obstruct sustainable peace; creating equal leverage in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery. WPS partnerships may also include service delivery components. The international component includes three WPS partnerships.	Aims to strengthen the role of women's rights organisations, movements and networks at regional, national or grass roots level by feminist grant-making. The LFS funds component have been selected because of their: (a) basis in a Southern country; (b) feminist mandate; (c) experience and capacity to strengthen women's organisations and connect them regionally or globally; (d) demonstration of legitimacy and balanced regional distribution of partner organisations and target groups; (e) proven reliability in terms of continuity, support among target groups and donor organisations, and sufficient management capacity.

² National Action Plan 1325-IV Women, Peace and Security: <https://www.government.nl/documents/publications/2020/12/17/national-action-plan-1325-iv-women-peace-and-security>

2.2.2 SCS partnerships

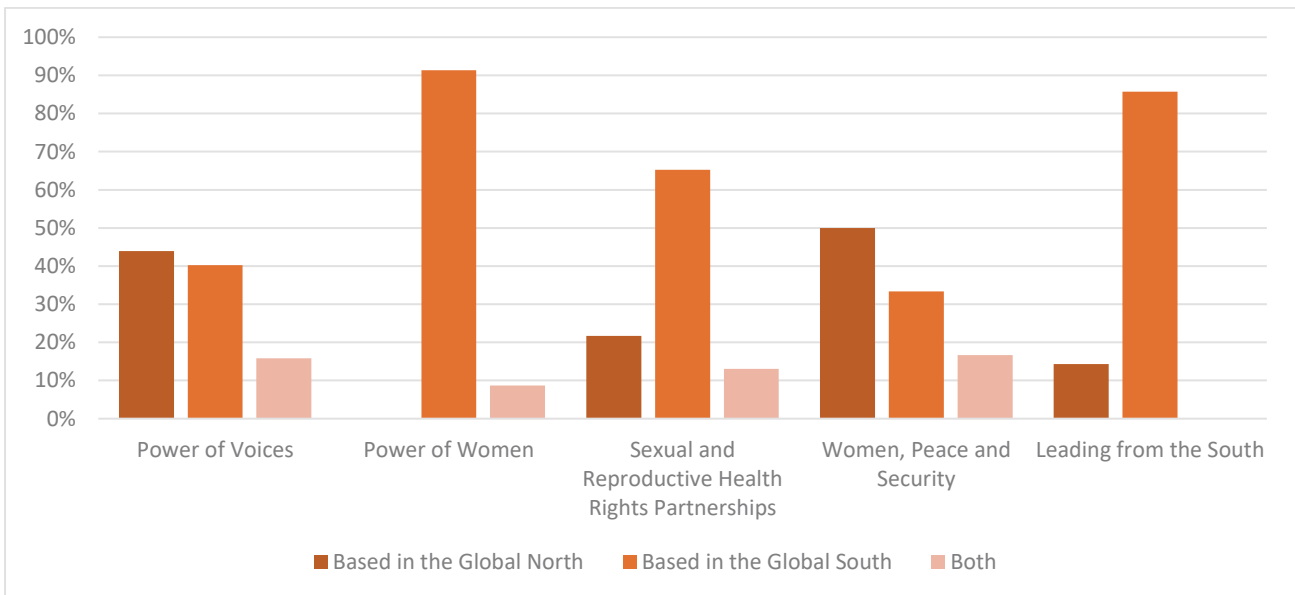
The SCS international component comprises 5 policy instruments, 28 consortia and 4 LFS funds working around the world. There are 82 consortium members in the PoV instrument, 24 in PoW, 27 in SRHR and 11 in WPS.³ The 28 consortia encompass a complicated universe of 138 consortium members ('1st tier partners' in MFA's terminology), each of which works with further contractual partners ('2nd tier partners', also referred to as contracting/contractual or implementing partners) and allies, some consortia reaching out to hundreds of CSOs. Some 166 contractual partners across SCS international are engaged in international advocacy,⁴ some of whom work with their own CSO partners ('3rd tier partners') who contribute to the SCS partnership programme.

The LFS funds are slightly different in that they fund a wide, non-predetermined range of civil society groups, often also engaged in advocacy at various levels. As illustrated in Figure 1, SCS is a vast universe.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of consortium members based in the global North or South per policy instrument as reported by survey respondents.

For a more detailed overview of the consortia in the baseline, Itad has developed a searchable database which has been submitted as a separate Microsoft Excel file.

Figure 4: Consortium members in global North or South per policy instrument



³ It is important to note that some consortium partners are members of more than one consortium, or are implementing partners in a different consortium.

⁴ The latter is an estimate based on our survey with consortium partners and our mapping of all consortia. The estimate does not include any organisations that receive or will receive funding from any of the four LFS funds (apart from cases in which an organisation involved in the partnerships would also receive support from a consortium and is part of a fund).

3 Situation analysis

RQ1: What is the current situation in the global/relevant regional civic spaces and with respect to the SCS indicators selected?

This section focuses on answering RQ1 by detailing the overall context for international civil society and then the specific contexts per theme as determined by the focus of the policy instruments and baseline research. It then looks at summary aggregated results for the international advocacy-related findings linked to SCS basket indicators and selected WRGE and SRHR indicators.

3.1 Overall context for international civil society advocacy

In 2023 the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize to joint Belarusian human rights advocate Ales Bialiatski, the Ukrainian human rights organisation Centre for Civil Liberties and the Russian human rights organisation Memorial for their promotion of the right to criticise power and protest fundamental rights of citizens. The prize was in recognition of defending human rights and civil liberties when the actors are facing historically challenging circumstances. In this section we discuss how we define 'civic space', the state of civic space globally, tactics used to shrink the space, and the state of the space in women's rights and environmental activism.

Civic space is the foundation of an open and democratic society. When civic space is open, citizens are able to organise, participate and communicate without hindrance. They will be able to claim their right to influence the political and social structure around them. 'Civic space' here is defined by freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of expression. There are many factors that influence civil society's success. These can include levels of funding, availability and quality of channels for dialogue with governments, and strength of public trust in CSOs.

International civic space is necessary to design international instruments to put pressure on individual countries. A recent positive example is Rise in the United States of America (USA) advocating for 'International cooperation for access to justice, remedies and assistance for survivors of sexual violence'. With Sierra Leone leading the bill, it ensures that rape survivors have access to protections in their country, including the ability to report without financial cost, access to informative sexual violence kit procedures, access to continued schooling, and the ability to terminate legal ties with the assailant. All of these will be reported under a UN SG Report to call attention to countries' progress on this resolution.⁵

Unfortunately, civic space has been shrinking at national and international levels, making these types of resolutions more difficult. The UN Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Assembly and Association has highlighted the increasing threats and restrictions to civic freedoms. The CIVICUS State of Civil Society report (2021) reports that civic space is shrinking every year.⁶ Now only 11.4% of the world's population live in countries with an 'open' or 'narrowed' civic space rating, a significant decline from the 17.6% who did so in 2019. Increasingly we have seen right-wing populists seize power. Over the past 10 years, an increasing number of governments have adopted new laws and practices that limit the ability of civil society and individuals to organise, participate and communicate freely without discrimination. Those advocating for human rights and for climate and environmental justice are particular targets of civic space violations. HRD Memorial documented that 358 human rights defenders were murdered in 35 countries in 2021. Despite Indigenous people comprising only 6% of the world's population, they make up almost one-third of all human rights defenders killed.

Governments and corporations have used judicial harassment, extreme violence and vilification against human rights and climate defenders. Tactics used include surveillance and the use of anti-terrorism charges by governments to criminalise the activities of human rights defenders. For instance, on the eve of the 27th

⁵ <https://www.risenow.us/campaigns/universal-survivors-bill-of-rights>

⁶ <https://ourdataourselves.tacticaltech.org/posts/shrinking-civil-space-a-digital-perspective/>

Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Egypt, there were reports that Egyptian CSOs were being prevented from attending as they had a separate process for application to attend as an observer.⁷ The Transnational Institute (2017) documents ten possible ways of constraining CSOs, including for example onerous registration and reporting obligations, constraints on receiving funding, delegitimising or criminalising rights defenders, and the takeover of civil society spaces by business and government groups. These trends overlap and can be experienced simultaneously. For example, organisations may face increased barriers to funding while facing attacks of their overhead spending through lawsuits and increased scrutiny of their activities.

With regard to civic space and women's rights, UN Special Rapporteur Clément Voule recognises that these spaces are narrowing, faced with increasing inequalities and rising religious fundamentalisms.⁸ Women's rights defenders are facing grave threats to their work, lives and sometimes families. Powerful governments pursuing ultraconservative international policies have effectively weakened WRGE and SRHR-oriented CSOs' capacity in terms of their access to resources; for example, 'Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance' (PLGHA), colloquially known as the USA's 'Global Gag Rule', has curtailed civil society access to United States (US) global health assistance for public information, counselling and referrals for abortion, and advocating or lobbying for the liberalisation of abortion laws. During the writing of this report, the death of Mahsa Amini in Iran sparked unrest after she was arrested by the morality police and died under custody. There has been a flurry of protests all over the country. The government⁹ has used multiple ways to crack down on protests, including arresting over 7000 people and killing over 200 protestors. Access to the Internet was restricted for over a month.

The rise of a global climate movement has been accompanied by a crackdown on civic space for climate activists globally. UN Special Rapporteur Voule¹⁰ has witnessed and warned against the use of the climate crisis as an opportunity to further close civic space through attacks online and offline, bans and restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly and protests, and restriction on participation in important climate negotiations. For example,¹¹ in Cambodia three environmental defenders have been given sentences of 18–20 months in prison for planning a protest against the filling of a lake in the capital. In Finland, over 100 activists were arrested for participating in a protest asking the government to take urgent action on climate change.

Similarly, COVID-19 has had a dire impact on civic freedoms. The pandemic has exposed several effects a global crisis can have on the democratic system and rule of law. In Indonesia, for example, protests against mining activities were dispersed on the grounds that such dispersal was necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but the mining activities were, reportedly, allowed to continue without restriction.

The above-quoted CIVICUS report¹² shows that detention of protestors and restrictive laws to remove dissent are more prevalent, as governments use the temporary health crisis to restrict civic freedoms. In Botswana, instead of adopting measures to ensure that people had proper information about access to information, the government introduced legislation to restrict the right of freedom of expression. The Emergency Powers Act in Botswana introduced heavy punishment for those who published information 'with intention to deceive' the public about COVID-19 or any measure taken by the government to address the pandemic.

Similarly, governments are using disinformation legislation to criminalise speech. In the Philippines a new emergency law, the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, included provisions to penalise spreading of 'false

⁷ https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/aug/24/egyptian-ngos-complain-of-being-shut-out-of-cop27-climate-summit?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

⁸ <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2F75%2F184&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

⁹ <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/interviews/6108-iran-mahsa-amini-s-case-was-a-spark-in-a-flammable-situation>

¹⁰ <https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/rights-to-freedom-of-peaceful-assembly-and-association-are-essential-to-advancing-climate-justice-says-un-expert/>

¹¹ <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/reports-publications/5433-as-the-climate-crisis-intensifies-so-does-the-crackdown-on-environmental-activism-finds-new-report>

¹² <https://civicus.org/state-of-civil-society-report-2021/>

information’ on social media. Similar laws were passed in Bosnia & Herzegovina, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Serbia and Thailand.

In this difficult context, progress towards intended outcomes in international advocacy may be extremely slow and may be marked by reversals. Some SCS indicators which may be highly relevant at national and subnational levels are of limited use in the current context for international advocacy. In particular, SCS indicators 1, 2, 3 and 4, with their focus on changes in international norms and in international policymaking spaces, can be misleading, as the effects generated (or hampered) by the adverse political context and context changes often stamp out the (potential) effects of even well-constructed advocacy efforts. In such a context, maintaining the status quo can be seen as an advocacy win.

3.2 Specific context per theme and types of SCS activities

Our research on SCS international advocacy focuses on themes determined by the focus of the policy instruments, the structure of our baseline sample and the global and regional advocacy arenas selected for our research. The following paragraphs summarise the context in these arenas: CSW, CPD, the Conference of the Parties (COP) under the UNFCCC process, the UN SG’s reports on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (SG Report on UNSCR 1325), and AU, with its arenas for regional advocacy.

3.2.1 International WRGE advocacy at the Commission on the Status of Women

Despite a global backlash on WRGE, CSW offers new opportunities and spaces for civil society advocacy by the introduction of themes such as climate change and digital innovation, working in progressive cross-regional alliances and across movements in intersectional ways.

A major proportion of international advocacy envisaged or implemented by SCS international targets CSW, a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), based at the UN in New York. Established in 1946, it is the UN’s principal global body responsible for policy on gender equality and the advancement of women. During its annual two-week sessions, held in New York every April, it assesses progress against the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the central global policy statement on gender equality, and Beijing+5, the update to the policy in 2000.¹³

Each annual CSW has a central theme which guides the discussion, in addition to the work to monitor progress against the Beijing policy documents and the recommendations from the previous year. These are drawn from the multi-year programmes of work, which set the top-level agenda for sessions over a four-year period. The current multi-year programme covers 2021–2024 and includes the following themes, as well as ‘evergreen topics’ which civil society will revisit each year, such as the inclusion of WRGE movements in CSW processes and the financing of WRGE movements:

- 2021: Women’s participation and decision making in public life; elimination of violence against women and girls
- 2022: Gender equality and climate change
- 2023: Innovation, technological change and education in the digital age
- 2024: Accelerating gender equality by addressing poverty, strengthening institutions and providing financing.

In recent years the values enshrined in international normative instruments on WRGE, such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, have been threatened by powerful forces such as populist governments in the Americas and anti-feminist religious movements, making public civil society advocacy on WRGE riskier both nationally and internationally. At UN level the Russian Federation, the Holy See and some Gulf states have long been opponents on WRGE themes; in recent years, populist governments in Hungary and Poland

¹³ Many consortia targeting CSW also conduct advocacy with the CEDAW Committee in Geneva, which reviews progress in national implementation of CEDAW.

have weakened European Union (EU) positions. Within civil society, US evangelical Christian lobbyists form strong coordinated opposition against progress on WRGE and, especially, SRHR. Multilateral institutions and governments defending WRGE have had to adjust their strategies and tactics to overcome the growing divide between feminist and anti-feminist positions.

Classical avenues for civil society advocacy at CSW include: (i) the organisation of or participation in non-governmental organisation (NGO) side events – either officially endorsed and located inside the UN building, or elsewhere in New York while the CSW session is running; (ii) observation of CSW (for CSOs with ECOSOC accreditation); (iii) lobbying the diplomats who sit around the negotiating table. The current CSW programme offers new opportunities, in that its non-WRGE-focused themes open up fresh spaces for feminist advocacy, rather than revisiting ground where opponents have entrenched positions, the language is established and change can be difficult to influence.

Among the negotiating parties, progressive cross-regional alliances that bridge North–South divides on specific topics within WRGE have brought together like-minded countries across the continents, making it possible to progress – or at least to block a regression – on specific issues. In the same vein, civil society movements have started working across themes within the broader WRGE space, for example disability rights organisations teaming up with pro-choice movements to combine forces and reach beyond established constituencies. SCS international includes some promising examples for such alliances.

Our mapping of partnerships in the SCS international component found that about one-third of all partnerships were involved in, or were planning, advocacy at CSW, often in combination with advocacy with the CEDAW Committee in Geneva. SCS partners describe **a wide range of (planned) advocacy activities**. At the top end of the spectrum we have found highly intensive multi-level strategies that combine, for example, direct, tightly organised cooperation with the MFA delegation to CSW with side events at the civil society forum; and traditionally the MFA delegation includes a NGO delegate from Dutch civil society. Less intensive engagement can take different forms; for example, one partnership lead reported being contacted occasionally by MFA for informal, ad hoc advice on topics for the CSW negotiations. The consortium partner in charge of international advocacy in a different partnership planned to focus its international advocacy at CSW and similar global WRGE events on distributing communication materials with good practice examples from partner countries in the global South.

3.2.2 International SRHR advocacy at the Commission on Population and Development

Increasing resistance from regressive forces at CPD requires a coordinated, strategic response from progressive governments and civil society. Cross-regional and intersectional alliances help to build a unified position from which to defend or advance SRHR.

Like CSW, CPD is a functional commission of the UN (ECOSOC), based in New York. Established in 1946, it is the UN's principal global body responsible for policy on issues related to population. During its annual two-week sessions, held in New York every April, it monitors implementation of the programme of action agreed at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

Every five years the session is dedicated to a full review and appraisal of the programme of action from the previous International Conference. In the intervening years, following the same model as CSW, the annual CPD session has an overarching theme on which to focus discussion and develop recommendations. CSOs and governments defending SRHR typically emphasise the human and SRHR aspects most relevant to the annual theme. For example, since 2023's theme will be education, comprehensive sexuality education will likely be a priority.

Since the last review and appraisal session in 2019, the themes have been as follows:

- 2020: Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development

- 2021: Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development¹⁴
- 2022: Population and sustained and inclusive economic growth
- 2023: Population, education and sustainable development.

As with CSW, there are three main pathways for civil society advocacy at CPD: (i) the organisation of or participation in NGO side events – either officially endorsed and located inside the UN building, or elsewhere in New York while the CSW session is running; (ii) observation of CPD (for CSOs with ECOSOC accreditation); (iii) lobbying the diplomats who sit around the negotiating table.

CPD is affected by the same powerful forces that have made civil society advocacy more challenging at CSW in recent years. Governments motivated by conservative religious ideology, such as the Holy See and some Gulf states, are strong opponents of progressive and feminist approaches to SRHR. Governments and civil society seeking to advance SRHR at CPD have to be increasingly strategic about the topics they address and the language they use to present their positions. There is also a sense that the choice of theme for annual sessions is becoming more technical, with organisers seeking to minimise tension by avoiding more politicised topics. This again reduces space for SRHR lobbying and advocacy.

In consequence, both governments and civil society have to develop more unified positions in order to defend established norms and language and to negotiate further advances in SRHR policy. A cross-regional alliance of progressive governments meets to prepare for CPD each year, ensuring a strategic and targeted approach to negotiation from like-minded states in both the global South and North. For both civil society and governments, it is becoming increasingly important to find topics where alliances can be built across movements – finding priorities in common for the women’s rights and sex worker movements, for example.

Three consortia in the SCS international component (one funded under the PoV policy instrument and two under SRHR) include a reference to CPD or ICPD advocacy in their programme proposals. However, the proposals include very limited information on actual activities with the Commission and at ICPD. One partnership representative explained that in their case only a few contractual partners (2nd and 3rd tier level in MFA terminology) were following CPD activities – i.e. the focus is on observing developments rather than engaging in active advocacy at CPD or at its margins. MFA diplomats also report limited activity in CPD, with Dutch and SCS SRHR international advocacy happening mainly at CSW, the CEDAW Committee, the Global Health Assembly and regional venues.

3.2.3 International advocacy on WPS via the UN SG report on UNSCR 1325 implementation

Unlike other global advocacy arenas such as CSW, the WPS arena offers limited scope for public advocacy. Lobbying is the key instrument for civil society in this arena.

Within the UN system, matters of international peace and security are discussed exclusively at UNSC. Any advocacy targeted on the topic of WPS in UN spaces therefore has to take place at UNSC. There are no additional declarations, conventions or commissions that focus on WPS. The main space for advocacy is the annual Open Debate, held in October on the anniversary of UNSCR 1325 (2000). The agenda for this event is informed by the SG’s annual report on WPS and other matters that the host state prioritises.

Space for civil society to engage during the Open Debate is limited; only one civil society representative, called a ‘briefer’ and selected by the NGO Working Group (NGOWG) on WPS, can brief UNSC at a time on a country-specific or thematic discussion. Beyond this, organisations can only participate if invited to do so, either by their government or by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). This can take the form of contributing to reports or statements which feed into debates, or of participating in side events similar to those at CPD and CSW. A positive development is that the number of female briefers to UNSCR has increased over the years, with the percentage of women

¹⁴ The full session did not take place in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so the theme was repeated in 2021.

speaking to the Council increasing from 5% in the 1990s to 44% in 2021.¹⁵ However, external experts commented that there is a level of fatigue within advocates towards these traditional avenues as they are seen as an ineffective model and an exclusive setting. Additionally, these spaces are technocratic and traditionally security-focused, which reduces the space for more intersectional approaches and discussions on what security and what type of women are included within the WPS agenda.

Other avenues include national advocacy channels, where member states can choose to consult civil society on the content of their national statements. This avenue for participation therefore varies significantly depending on governments' attitude to civil society. UN Women prepares annual reports on WPS and conflict-related sexual violence. Civil society in conflict-affected countries can contribute shadow reports on the status of implementation of WPS resolutions. Civil society representatives also sit on the UN Women steering committee which reviews the report. However, it was highlighted by external experts that the distinctions between international and national within the WPS space are not so clear-cut. Due to the focus on National Action Plans and the influence these have on the international debates – and vice versa – any international advocacy strategy needs to consider the national context and the drivers of WPS.

Governments and civil society seeking to advance a progressive WPS agenda face some resistance from the same member states that block WRGE and SRHR advances at CSW and CPD, such as the Russian Federation. Progressive actors therefore adopt similar tactics to those discussed above – forming alliances with like-minded governments to prepare in advance of the annual Open Debate and to ensure space for civil society to shape their position. CSOs and networks also collaborate to organise WPS side events linked to the theme of open debates. These tactics appear to have met with some success, with recent examples of progressive or feminist language being adopted into UNSC resolutions¹⁶ and of blocking resolutions with regressive language.¹⁷ External experts commented that CSO networks – such as the NGOWG, the global network of women peacekeepers and the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) – are key for influencing these debates, although they cautioned that their importance reinforces the idea that all the important work happens in New York and negates the work that has happened, and is happening, in countries in the global South.

Only one SCS partnership mentions UNSC as a targeted advocacy arena, referring only to a UNSCR 1325 anniversary event. As described above, the range of activities open to SCS partners is limited to lobbying in New York or with main players at the Security Council. While MFA diplomats could quote compelling examples of successful lobby in previous SCS phases, findings from KIIs with partners suggest that their work focuses resolutely on strengthening national advocacy – and national advocacy capacity – in their Southern partners' countries on the development and implementation of National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. No specific international advocacy activities could be identified apart from distribution of communication materials on good practice at events.

3.2.4 International advocacy on climate change at the Conference of the Parties

The COP process offers spaces for public campaigning and lower-profile lobbying. Host countries can restrict civil society access to COP.

The UN Climate Change Conference is held annually at varying locations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1994, ratified by 197 countries). It is a formal meeting of the UNFCCC parties to assess progress in dealing with climate change and to establish legally binding obligations for countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, as enshrined in the Paris Agreement (adopted in 2015 under UNFCCC).

Major topics for debate for 2022–2024 include:

¹⁵ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2022/10/women-at-the-un-security-council-a-sea-change-in-numbers>

¹⁶ UNSC resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2467 and 2493.

¹⁷ A 2021 resolution proposed by the Russian Federation.

- **Mitigation:** efforts to reduce or prevent emissions of greenhouse gases. This can be new technologies or renewable energies, or making older equipment more energy efficient.
- **Adaptation:** countries and communities need to develop adaptation solutions and implement action in response to the impact of climate change that is already happening.
- **Finance:** the ability to meet the goal to finance USD 100 billion (US dollars) to provide and mobilise for climate.
- **Loss and damage:** consequences of climate change that go beyond what people can adapt to, or when options exist but a community lacks the necessary resources to use them.
- **Global stocktake:** taking stock of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, aimed at assessing the world's collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the agreement.
- **Inclusion of marginalised voices:** marginalised voices can include Indigenous people, the youth of the world, women, persons with disability (PWDs) and others.

Every COP works together to reach an agreement on how to tackle climate change. In 2022 COP27 was held in November in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. As in other multilateral policy conferences, negotiators spend their time reviewing draft texts to ensure their positions are reflected correctly, attending informal gatherings with other countries for discussion or feeding information back to their own country delegations. Accredited CSOs can apply for access to COP through UNFCCC and are occasionally invited to speak. Observer participation is not a right; there have been many examples of informal meetings which closed their doors to outside observation.

Two PoV partnership consortia and one PoW consortium mention COP among their targeted international advocacy arenas. The partnerships engage in a wide range of activities linked to the UNFCCC process, such as organising and participating in preparatory activities (including, for example, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Climate Week ahead of COP27) and side events, providing platforms for local communities – including hard-to-reach groups, such as Indigenous communities – to contribute their voices, and developing coalitions. Many activities focus on strengthening climate advocates and advocacy capacities at country and subnational levels, including by defending environmental defenders, which may or may not contribute to international advocacy.

3.2.5 African Union

Lobbying is the main instrument for civil society advocacy with the AU system.

AU is a complex system of advocacy arenas with multiple possible spaces to engage in. A predominant type of regional advocacy at AU level is lobbying – as opposed to high-profile public campaigning – with the institutions in Addis Ababa and regional economic communities, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Rather than focusing on a specific body or certain regular events organised by AU, civil society representatives feed in information and advocacy messages whenever opportunities to influence relevant agendas and debates arise. Relationship building (requiring a physical presence in Addis Ababa or near the arena targeted) and legitimacy that comes from a strong research background and technical expertise play major roles in accessing these arenas.

Targeted AU bodies on WRGE, SRHR and WPS include the **African Union Commission**, with its specific sectoral or thematic committees, such as the Committee for Prevention of Torture in Africa, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child – which draws its mandate from articles 32–46 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child – and the **Office of the Chairperson**, which includes, inter alia, a **Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security** mandated to engage with CSOs. The **Women, Gender and Youth Directorate** aims to ensure the implementation of AU's Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). **AIDS Watch Africa (AWA)**, a statutory AU entity with

its ‘Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB and Eliminate Malaria in Africa by 2030’, provides an avenue for SRHR advocacy. The AU **Department for Civil Society Engagement** is a space for CSOs funded chiefly by African donors, which precludes many of the consortium members in our study sample but not necessarily their implementing partners.

WPS is a topic that has been described as pervasive in AU debates, while engagement on SRHR is difficult beyond topics around which there is relative consensus such as early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

12 partnerships across the full SCS international component include AU as a venue for their regional advocacy, often along with African economic communities such as ECOWAS and SADC. Lobbying appears to be the most common strategy, both for African-led partnerships and for Northern-led consortia. Public campaigning opportunities are rare.

CSO lobbying with AU has frequently taken the form of expert input at the AU structures outlined above. This option is not reserved to regional CSOs – in one example, an advocate from a consortium member in the global North was invited to present at an AU technical conference. The Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) leads a network of CSOs and holds biannual pre-summit consultative meetings ahead of the AU Summit meetings to engage AU member states on African women’s rights and to produce recommendations to plug into the AU summit.

External specialists on international women’s rights advocacy consider AU to be a difficult place for general WRGE advocacy, as national policies vary considerably – not only across the continent but also at subregional levels. However, there are valid entry points for work on WPS, especially via the above-mentioned special envoy. In addition, topics that are outlawed in some AU member states, such as LGBTIQ+ rights, have been addressed under less controversial umbrellas, e.g. AIDS prevention and response.

3.3 Baseline measurement per SCS (and linked) indicator

This section looks at summary aggregated results for the international advocacy-related findings linked to basket indicators SCS2–8 and selected WRGE and SRHR indicators, as detailed in our IR. It must be noted that each strategic partnership has developed its own indicators and has selected a small set of MFA-related indicators that they report on – each partnership in its own way. As a result, findings from the partnerships’ baseline reports are difficult to aggregate and compare.

The results presented below are drawn from our surveys at two different levels of the consortia, literature review, KIIs with stakeholders representing different perspectives (MFA, consortia and LFS funds, and external advocacy specialists), and the review of 20 baseline reports (most by third parties) in our sample. The findings were then validated in a team-wide analysis workshop. A subsequent validation meeting with MFA and SCS partners focused on our conclusions and initial recommendations linked to SCS5–8.

We have chosen to include the numerical baseline values reported by partnerships in our baseline sample to illustrate the current use of the SCS indicators. Often partnerships have reported a starting value of 0, which is acceptable in a programme-centred perspective which monitors activities, outputs and outcomes directly linked to the programme.

It is important to recall that the findings presented below focus on the baseline, i.e. the starting situation for the current SCS programmes. At a later stage, during the MTR, our research will examine progress made, which will require more extensive use of external perspectives to verify the partners’ results and contribution claims.

3.3.1 SCS025: # of international agreements blocked, adopted or improved for sustainable and inclusive development as a result of CSO engagement

Focus and scope of indicator: This indicator aims to identify the various international normative instruments and global and regional advocacy arenas that the consortia target.

Summary of findings: All consortia and funds report some level of (planned) involvement in international advocacy on global and regional norms and policies, with CEDAW and related advocacy arenas (CSW in New York and the CEDAW Committee in Geneva) mentioned most frequently.

Contrary to the partnerships' and funds' work at national levels, blocking, adopting or improving existing global norms is rarely among their objectives. But SCS international advocacy can contribute to a fuller implementation of these norms or prevent efforts to interpret them in a restrictive manner.

Five baseline reports in our sample of 20 partnerships report numerical values against this indicator: 0 (four cases) and 1 (one case). Qualitative descriptions yield more information on the policies targeted.

The consortia and funds refer to a wide range of international normative instruments and institutions, with a focus on WRGE due to the strategic orientation of SCS international.

Across survey responses, UN institutions and the policies created in those contexts were listed as primary targets at the global level, along with other agencies such as international financial institutions (IFIs), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). CEDAW and the related Beijing Platform for Action were the most quoted references across SCS international. The 152 consortium members and funds responding to our survey quoted the CEDAW Committee 42 times and CSW 29 times as their advocacy arena. International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190 (elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace) was mentioned 18 times; the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights was mentioned 17 times. UNFCCC, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on Biodiversity were quoted 14 times each.

The strong focus on WRGE can be explained by the overall orientation of the MFA policy framework, with four out of the five funding instruments focusing on WRGE (PoW, WPS and LFS) and SRHR. Climate change is a key theme within the PoW instrument, which explains the frequent mention of UNFCCC.

Regarding regional instruments, top norms targeted by consortium members include the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (26 mentions) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) (20 mentions). AU has been quoted most frequently as a regional advocacy target, followed by the EU, subregional communities such as the East African Community (EAC) (14 mentions), ECOWAS (13 mentions), SADC (10 mentions) and regional development banks (e.g. the African Development Bank (AfDB)). The predominance of AU and its regional communities can be explained by the prominent place of African countries among MFA's focus countries.

In SCS international advocacy, a priority has been to advocate for the full implementation of international norms by state parties at national levels, rather than changing international norms.

As evidenced by the partnerships' frequent mention of specific international norms (see also RQ3), they understand international norms to be reference points for their work. The focus of their work in relation to international norms is most often to advocate for the full implementation of these norms by state parties. The bodies that monitor the implementation of international norms may issue statements and resolutions that might weaken previous commitments. In that case, blocking the adoption of such resolutions can be an advocacy objective, as evidenced in our example on WPS in Section 3.2.

3.3.2 SCS031: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or creating space to engage at international level

Focus and scope of indicator: This indicator aims to capture the strategies the partnerships use to create space for CSO demands at global and regional levels.

- ‘Agenda setting’ is defined as CSOs influencing the topics tabled in international decision-making arenas, e.g. by engaging with political actors involved in preparing the agendas (lobbying) and by publishing and/or submitting a position paper/shadow report/testimonials/research to feed into discussions.
- ‘Influencing the debate’ is defined as CSO demands and positions being voiced in international decision-making arenas by participants in those debates.
- ‘Creating space to engage at international level’ is defined as facilitating engagement among CSOs and with international decision makers, e.g. by hosting side events and by training CSOs in international advocacy techniques.

Summary of findings: The strategic partnerships adapt their influencing strategies to their priorities and contexts, ranging from low-key lobbying to public campaigning. Combining dimensions of advocacy capacity across diverse partnerships has yielded promising advocacy strategies and activities. Resources are necessary to respond flexibly to changing opportunities and constraints in international arenas. KILs with Dutch diplomats and external specialists suggest that some CSOs involved in SCS are considered to be influential in international arenas, especially CSW.

Three consortia report numerical values on this indicator in their baseline reports, each reporting a value of 0, i.e. they do not capture past or current levels of advocacy activity in the targeted arenas. Qualitative descriptions refer to policy influencing, lobbying and advocacy actions at the outset. One partnership baseline reports 36 such actions but does not specify which sit at the international level; the other consortium’s baseline reports 23 points of influence/creating space; these, however, also cover initiatives at various levels (including national and subnational).

Strategic partnerships use diverse sets of strategies in their international advocacy.

The negotiators at multilateral policy spaces are state parties, i.e. representatives of governments and multilateral institutions. CSOs with ECOSOC observer status may attend multilateral conferences but are not directly involved in the negotiations. CSOs can contribute to agenda setting, for example if they are part of national processes for reporting to international treaty bodies such as CEDAW and the Human Rights Council in Geneva. CSOs can be part of reporting processes set up by the national governments or they can develop and submit alternative (shadow) reports. But ultimately the agendas are set, and the decisions are made, by state parties in multilateral institutions.

Partnerships use a diverse range of strategies to attempt to influence agenda setting, debates and their outcomes. These range from light-touch to multi-pronged approaches. For instance, on the light-touch end of the spectrum, one consortium focuses its international advocacy on the dissemination of good practice examples about the national-level implementation of international law, but without engaging directly with international negotiators. On the other end of the spectrum, some consortia combine (i) intensive public campaigning – e.g. by organising large movements with multiple side events to international negotiations – with (ii) less visible, continuous lobbying with national and multilateral negotiators.

Strategic partnerships are enabling CSOs to bring together diverse sets of skills and knowledge in joint strategies to create space for CSO demands at international level.

The strategic partnerships enable consortium members to combine different dimensions of international advocacy capacity (see also Section 4 on advocacy capacity) to develop and implement effective multi-pronged strategies. For example, as evidenced in KILs with international advocacy specialists within and beyond the consortia, effective agenda setting is one of the preconditions for influencing debates at international arenas. This requires timely and well organised lobbying, i.e. approaches that require direct contact with decision makers. Consortia with members who have a long track record in international advocacy have built on that experience and their members’ credibility and contacts in international forums to start engaging, for instance with AU on SRHR-related policies. Our interviews with Dutch diplomats and external specialists of advocacy arenas have confirmed that some CSOs that are part of SCS consortia are considered to be influential in some of the international arenas selected for our study, especially CSW.

Diverse partnerships that span several regions can also help overcome issues linked to physical and cultural distance from international advocacy arenas:

‘Having a liaison office [at one global policymaking space] makes a huge difference [...] It’s much more difficult for organisations not present here to get a foothold. It’s all relationship-based, so it’s important to show up.’

‘Organisations like [anonymised] have offices in Addis, or on the African continent, and can therefore engage more intensively. [Anonymised organisation] They have an office in Addis to engage with the African Union.’

The partnerships support this through funding, leveraging members’ international networks, and delivering capacity strengthening activities (on capacity strengthening, see Section 4). This corresponds with our survey with contractual (2nd tier) partners, which has revealed that a majority (72%) of responding CSOs either strongly agree or agree that their funding partner has facilitated, or is planning to facilitate, their access to international advocacy arenas (see also findings against indicator SCS4 in Section 3.3.3).

Opportunistic advocacy is important, and space and resources are required for this.

A core theme emerging from KIs was the need and benefit to undertake ‘opportunistic’ advocacy, i.e. adapting key advocacy messages and entry points to changing contexts in a timely manner. This requires regular monitoring of international advocacy arenas – and of national debates in countries with a strong influence on those arenas – to assess when advocacy tactics need to be adjusted and how, and – importantly – it also requires having the resources to respond effectively.

3.3.3 SCS4: # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs for, by or with their membership/constituency at international level

Focus and scope of indicator: This indicator seeks to understand the representative nature of consortia’s advocacy activities across a wide range of policy spaces. Although the research team understands that ‘constituency’ can be more broadly defined, ‘membership/constituency’ is defined as the consortium members’ contracting/implementing partners, with a focus on those in the global South (not the home constituencies of Northern partners). During the MTR phase, we will work with the MFA to understand how we may be able to sample a broader constituency to respond to requests to provide analysis at that level.

Summary of findings: Although most consortia are yet to undertake international advocacy work, there is strong evidence for joint planning within the partnerships that has enabled implementing partners to potentially contribute to a wide range of advocacy activities. The nature of participation of Southern members falls into two main areas – collective action and access to international decision-making spaces. Across these strategies, key barriers to ensuring/increasing contracting partners’ representation in international policy spaces have been: funding concerns; COVID-19; geography.

The numerical values reported by the consortia in our baseline sample using SCS4 are 0, i.e. either they have not started carrying out their advocacy activities yet or they do not capture current levels of advocacy activity in the targeted arenas.¹⁸ The consortium partners across the international component

¹⁸ In view of the fact that some consortia encompass hundreds of 2nd tier and 3rd tier CSOs that are spread across several countries and involved in activities outside of the partnership programme, capturing their constituencies’ levels of international advocacy at the starting date of the programme would require a massive investment – which would be of limited value, as the level of advocacy activity is not an accurate predictor of its effectiveness.

who have participated in our survey report that overall, 166 contractual partners were involved in international advocacy as of mid-2022.¹⁹

Most consortia are yet to undertake international advocacy work.

Only five consortia within the research sample are currently reporting against SCS4. Nevertheless, engagement of contractual and other CSO partners was referenced throughout KIIs and baseline reports, referencing international advocacy planning activities that have been taking place. Our implementing (2nd tier) partner survey revealed that contractual partners were contributing, or planning to contribute, to a wide range of advocacy activities, the most common examples including networking with other CSOs active in the advocacy arena (83%), participating in side events (69%), and informal meetings (lobbying) with decision makers at the advocacy arenas (65%).

Consortium members (including Southern CSOs) facilitate Southern civil society access to international decision-making spaces.

Partnership consortia have facilitated, or plan to facilitate, contractual partners' participation in international forums. Where specific relevant activities have already been planned or implemented, the nature of participation of Southern members falls into two main areas – collective action and access to international decision-making spaces. The former is characterised by specific instances of joint advocacy and by broader networking and movement building. Interviewees have emphasised the value of cross-border solidarity and that collective action at international level is providing alternative pathways for national or community-based organisations (CBOs) to engage in advocacy in a context of shrinking civic spaces in their own countries. Common tactics are raising the profiles of Southern organisations (e.g. by foregrounding their voices in communications) or facilitating their participation in international forums. For example, members of consortia in our horizontal case study have observer status at AU and/or ECOSOC status with the UN, providing entry points for partners:

'We acknowledge our unique position and are seeking to [...] open up more spaces for women to do advocacy at the international level.'

Funding concerns, COVID-19 and geography are seen as chronic barriers to implementing partners' representation in international policy spaces.

Some partnerships felt they had sufficient resources for what they were attempting to achieve. Others cited funding concerns obstructing the scope and depth of advocacy by and with contracting partners.

'Most funding goes to INGOs [international non-governmental organisations] which are not women-led; [in some instances] money doesn't ultimately reach women's groups.'

One organisation also felt that administrative and funding requirements including, among other aspects, restrictions regarding the geographical scope of the partnerships, were a barrier to implementing partners being able to obtain funds.

It was also recognised that specific challenges arose regarding the international component, such as having to organise travel and visas. These challenges were compounded during the COVID-19 lockdown, which made joint working more difficult, particularly as this related to engaging and platforming underprivileged persons in the global South. However, one partner also cited that a positive side effect from the COVID-19 lockdown was the promotion of remote discussion and participation, which made it easier to platform diverse voices – or at least, those with sufficient digital literacy and Internet access.

¹⁹ Some consortium members answered the survey more than once as they are involved in more than one consortium.

3.3.4 SCS6: # of CSOs included in strategic partner programmes

Focus and scope of indicator: This indicator focuses on the inclusion of Southern partners in international lobby and advocacy activities and measures the levels and ways in which this is done or planned.

Summary of findings: Across partnerships (including LFS funds), movement building is a key strategy for effective advocacy for, with and by Southern CSOs, as it is seen to enable CSOs to connect with allies, facilitate Southern civil society access to international decision-making spaces, and foster Southern leadership. Active governance arrangements seek to improve equity among partners.

Two consortia report metrics against SCS6: one reports a baseline of 0 and 4 for women-led CSOs and for other CSOs respectively, while the other reports a baseline value of 0 and does not specify the category of CSOs. This does not mean that only one partnership includes women-led CSOs. On the contrary, our mapping has found that most consortia include women-led CSOs – but many have chosen not to differentiate between women-led, youth-led, women and youth-led and other organisations in their baseline report.

Consortia members employ a range of strategies to conduct out international advocacy by, with and for their contracting partners. Movement building is a valued advocacy strategy enabling CSOs to connect with allies in similar, new or different policy spaces and foster Southern leadership.

Movement building (i.e. the growing and sustaining of social movements over time to try to bring about transformative change) is seen as a core strategy for consortia and funds to engage implementing partners and encourage them to undertake international advocacy. Broadly speaking, contractual partner involvement is enabled in three forms:

- **Advocacy for:** strategies the partnerships use to represent positions on behalf of (i.e. ‘for’) contractual partners
- **Advocacy by:** strategies the partnerships use to support contractual partners to carry out international advocacy themselves (e.g. through presence at events, submission of papers, etc.)
- **Advocacy with:** strategies the partnerships use to plan and deliver joint advocacy in tandem with their implementing partners (e.g. co-developing position and/or policy papers, co-planning international advocacy strategies, etc.).

Specifically, movement building is seen as a key aspect in supporting the ability of implementing partners to represent themselves and their constituencies and engage additional expertise and experience for international advocacy while also enabling greater visibility. In addition, movement building can strengthen connections across stakeholder organisations and persons, including across geographies, and can encourage knowledge sharing and greater complementarity in advocacy. There was also an explicit recognition that movement building can help to facilitate Southern leadership, thereby supporting advocacy by implementing partners. This was further validated by the implementing partner survey revealing that the most common strategy that funding partners were using or planning to use in international advocacy was ‘Facilitating contacts with other CSOs active in the advocacy arena to share information and/or development of joint work’, followed by the facilitation of implementing partners’ participation in side events. Some indicative quotes include:

‘We are about movement strengthening and diverse voices coming together to produce results.’

‘We see our role as amplifying the voice of those excluded along three pathways: money; making change; movements.’

'We are creating a framework that gives them [contracting partners] access to funding and enable[s] them to operate in [a] way that allows them to strengthen their own organisations and communications, to support movement building. In [the] long run we hope they will access funding without intermediaries.'

Many examples of networking and movement building among Southern partners have been at national level. But several consortia quote compelling examples of joint international work. For example, members of one consortium in our horizontal case study have pointed to the specific value added of the regional level as an alternative for CSOs to engage in advocacy in a context of shrinking civic space within countries:

'Regional advocacy [...] is a very important layer to better articulate positions to policymakers in a neutral and non-sensitive way.²⁰ Advocacy at national level can be confrontational. Taking it outside of the immediate context is safer; we can speak out better without immediate repercussions. By sharing in a bigger group, individual contributions don't need to be identifiable [...] There's a particular value in the intermediate level between the national and global for distillation and sharpening messages [and] building connection with potential interlocutors.'

Active governance arrangements seek to improve equity among partners, with a view that greater participation increases effectiveness.

Across the consortia, governance arrangements have been established to strengthen the participation of consortium partners and enhance collaboration with their contractual/implementing partners as well as other organisations, supporting advocacy *with* implementing partners. There is a strong view that greater participation increases effectiveness. We have found a broad spectrum of internal governance arrangements for the consortia's international advocacy (Section 5.3 provides further findings on Southern leadership and legitimacy). Some governance structures which aim to promote equity within consortia include: (i) inclusive steering committees with revolving leadership; (ii) co-development of strategies and operational plans; (iii) constituency group advisory boards; (iv) feedback through surveys; (v) regular consultation and reflection on partnerships.

Some of the consortia that are formally 'Northern-led', because of the location of their lead, have structured their governance system to ensure strong participation of Southern CSOs in decision making on international advocacy. For example, the advocacy working group (AWG) that oversees international advocacy in one international consortium includes three national organisations in the global South; the first meeting of the AWG took place in an African country. Other consortia assign responsibility for global advocacy planning and implementation to Northern members and regional advocacy to Southern organisations. Within one of these consortia, for instance, a Southern organisation leads on regional advocacy overall, with potential to delegate responsibility for advocacy on specific themes to other Southern organisations who will lead thematic working groups.

3.3.5 SCS7: # of CSOs that have enhanced representation of constituencies

Focus and scope of indicator: This indicator looks at strategies that consortia use to represent their implementing partners and their constituencies in the global South in international advocacy. Indicator SCS7 also touches upon consortia's legitimacy towards rights holders, as discussed in Section 5.3. Although the research team understands that 'constituency' can be more broadly defined, given resource constraints, 'membership/constituency' is defined as the consortium members' contracting/implementing partners, with the focus on those in the global South (not the home

²⁰ Meaning that they can be more direct at a regional level in terms of addressing sensitive issues; while working at the national level they have to be more sensitive.

constituencies of Northern partners). During the MTR phase, we will work with the MFA to understand how we may be able to sample a broader constituency to respond to requests to provide analysis at that level.

Summary of findings: Although most consortium members felt the voices of their contracting partners were considered, nearly one-third did not. Where their voices were considered, their level of participation sat between consultation and partnership, with activities varying across this scale within each consortium member. Horizontal case study interviews with Southern contracting partners have confirmed this finding, showing that some contracting partners were not aware of the consortium's international advocacy strategy.

The numerical baseline value reported on this across the sampled partnerships was 0. A value of 0 does not necessarily mean that constituencies are not represented; the partnerships may have chosen that value for greater ease of reporting. Of the six partnerships reporting against this indicator, four did not specify the types of CSOs being targeted. For the remaining two partnerships, one targets women-led CSOs and the other targets women-led, youth-led and other CSOs.

Interviews with external parties repeatedly highlighted the importance of engaging with local constituencies to support work at the international level.

The importance of building public awareness and support at grass roots level was raised in a number of interviews with external sources. One interviewee spoke about the importance of 'reigniting the democratic process' at the national level as a strategy to respond to a perceived sense of apathy towards advocacy at international forums. Others made similar points around making governments accountable to their citizens for agreeing reasonable terms to international treaties and addressing drivers to structural injustice:

'In my circles, we've been talking recently about the importance of going back to the mass roots to put pressure on governments at a national level.'

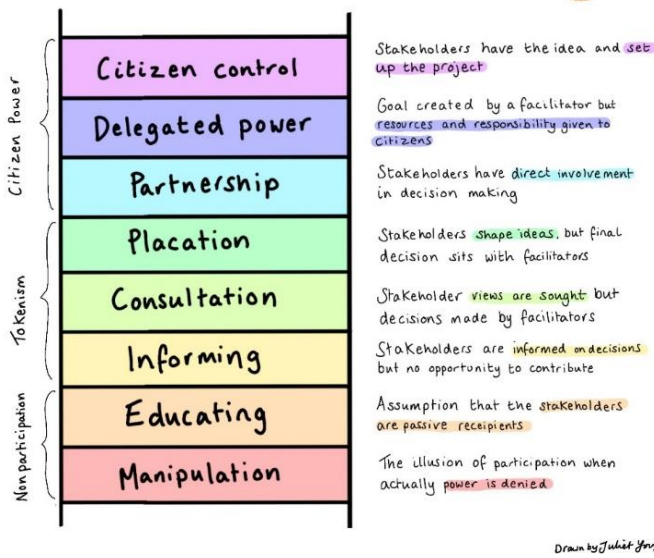
'Advocates need to engage with the public. Building public opinion is important. Crucial.'

The majority of consortium members report including the voices of their partners in international advocacy, although 33% claimed that this was not the case.

Overall, around 67% of the consortium partners surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the voice of their contracting/implementing partners was incorporated into the design of their international advocacy programmes. This message did not come out as strongly when referring to the idea of the global South being adequately incorporated into international advocacy activities, with around 54% of respondents of consortium partners either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

Figure 5: Ladder of participation

Ladder of Participation (Arnstein, 1969)



As noted in connection with indicators SCS4 and SCS6, consortium governance structures are designed to be inclusive and to facilitate consensus among partners. We have used the ladder of participation (see Figure 5) as an analytical tool to frame the types of engagement that the consortia undertake with their contractual partners.

The majority of respondent actions currently sit between levels of consultation and partnership. Activities within each consortium member can vary across this scale.

For instance, Southern members of one consortium reported having contributed to a ‘genuinely collaborative’ design effort from concept note stage onwards. In one consortium, the lead requested members to complete a survey about their existing activities and aspirations and to select their preferred

international forums for engagement from a mapping prepared by the lead. That served as a basis for consensus building among consortium members around three international spaces in which to work collaboratively each year. The level of consultation may also be distributed unevenly within a consortium, as evidenced in our horizontal case study: KIIs revealed that some Southern contracting partners were unaware of the partnership’s international advocacy strategy, as their work focused on national and subnational levels.

Issues of geographical location and speed of response were noted as challenges in enabling Southern-based organisations to lead on certain aspects of international advocacy, especially in global arenas.

As pointed out in our findings against indicator SCS031 (Section 3.3.2) above, proximity is an important asset in lobbying international institutions and multilateral negotiations at certain advocacy arenas. For Northern-led consortia that bring together several country programmes, it has been cited that the Southern partners focus on national and sometimes regional advocacy and the international partners take a major role in global advocacy:

‘Sometimes we [consortium members] see opportunities at the international level but it doesn’t always come from the countries or local partners aren’t consulted, so it’s a balance about bridging the gap between national and international and who takes the leadership on advocacy efforts – it feels that it still comes from the international partner.’

‘Always want to go faster than you can – for good advocacy you need to be opportunistic, which means you need to move fast and can’t always have consultative processes within this.’

It is worth noting that in a couple of the partnerships in our baseline, an ‘urgent action fund’ was made available for consortium members and their contractual partners to respond to developments needing a quick response. The baseline reports also reveal that consortia are seeking to further engage and integrate voices from their contractual partners into consortium decision making, such as the inclusion of young people in programme decisions and the creation of safe online and physical spaces to enhance CSO collaboration.

3.3.6 SCS8: # of CSOs using gender and social inclusion in international lobby and advocacy (L&A), with specific attention to youth

Baseline findings on Indicator SC008 align with and cross over with RQ10 ('To what extent is gender effectively mainstreamed in the global and regional lobbying and advocacy components?'). Therefore, these findings should be read in conjunction with Section 5.5 to gain the fuller picture of which WRGE strategies are being applied to international L&A.

Focus and scope of indicator: This indicator focuses on strategies the consortia and LFS funds use to apply a WRGE and social inclusion lens in international L&A, with specific attention to youth – specifically, whether the consortium partners disaggregate monitoring data by gender, use any specific indicators on WRGE, have a budget which includes any specific lines for WRGE-related activities and have dedicated staff working on issues relating to WRGE.

Summary of findings: WRGE plays a key role in terms of both end goal objectives and implementation processes, with consortia using a range of methods – such as gender analysis, gender budgeting and gender-focused monitoring – to inform the design of their advocacy activities. Across the consortia there is an overall sense that working with women and youth and on WRGE issues is a process in motion, and that they are not where they want to be but are actively laying down plans. Within this, the consortia are faced with several challenges, from operational – such as connectivity issues and travel restrictions – to working across partners with different agendas and capacity.

Of the baseline reports in our sample, six partnerships reported against this indicator. Three partnerships reported a baseline of 0 and one partnership did not specify a baseline value. As pointed out above, a baseline value of 0 does not necessarily mean an absence of gender and social inclusion approaches. Of the two partnerships that reported actual values, one partnership reported a baseline of 64% of CSOs and the other a baseline of 426 women-led CSOs reached. However, the data does not differentiate between national/subnational and international advocacy.

Gender and social exclusion are key considerations in the design of the programmes.

Overall, gender and social exclusion issues have been a key priority for the partners in the design of their programmes. This is evident in several ways. For example, 86% of consortium partners reported that they were gender-disaggregating their data, with nearly 90% of those having gender-specific indicators. All PoW, SRHR and WPS consortia in our baseline sample disaggregate by gender, as well as five out of eight PoV consortia. 86% reported having dedicated budget lines for women and gender-related activities. This is supported by 81% of consortium members reporting that they had dedicated staff working on issues relating to WRGE. Other examples of activities cited to support gender and social inclusion to be part of international L&A were the inclusion of partners as national coordinators and identifying gender and social inclusion learning agenda questions.

Understanding the profile of partners and key contextual gender and social inclusion issues is the current focus across consortium leads.

Gender analysis, consultation, mapping, etc. were cited across numerous consortium partners as a current focus of their work. This was to ensure that they have an understanding and tools to work on gender-related issues, for example to analyse and understand power dynamics. Part of the reaching out to partners was also related to 'catching up' due to COVID-19 and the related travel restrictions. Furthermore, gaining greater understanding of WRGE issues enabled them to operationalise the principles of participation, for example to see what engagement would look like in practice and ensure that the consortium was not spread too thinly.

Numerous challenges were highlighted in engaging gender and social inclusion as part of international advocacy. These challenges were not exclusive to the topic itself but were more on engaging with Southern-based CSOs.

Although not exclusive to incorporating gender within international L&A work, **a number of challenges** were flagged; these ranged from operational issues – such as language barriers, security risks, connectivity issues, time-consuming visa applications and other travel restrictions – to governance arrangements, such as finding ways to work with partners with different capacity levels, power dynamics in agenda setting, and the limited and shrinking advocacy spaces available. In our validation workshop, consortium partners pointed out that language was a major limiting factor, for example in MFA guidance and linking and learning events, which are available only in English.

3.4 Baseline measurement of specific WRGE indicators

Overall, the consortia in our sample that use the selected WRGE indicators focus on changes at national and sometimes subnational levels.

A difficulty in applying the WRGE indicators has been the fact that only a few consortia have reported against WRGE indicators in the baseline phase. Even partnerships that focus on WRGE report against the related SCS basket indicators instead, which do not distinguish between specific advocacy topics within the wider WRGE theme. Respecting that choice made by the consortia, our analysis is based on data reported by the few consortia and LFS funds within the sample who have used WRGE indicators. The specific values reported in their baseline reports are listed in Annex 5.

WRGE indicators linked to SCS2 (international normative change)

The consortia that apply the WRGE indicators linked to SCS2 (international normative change) use them to measure progress at *national* level in the ratification and implementation of corresponding global and regional normative instruments.

WRGE indicators linked to SCS2

As specified in MFA's guidance document on WRGE indicators, the four indicators are closely linked to basket indicator SCS2. Existing international treaties are references for national and international advocacy. Consortia involved in international advocacy attempt to influence policy arenas that discuss the implementation of those treaties, as well as declarations and strategies that support their implementation. Consortia that have reported on this indicator aim to promote the adoption or improvement of *national* laws, policies and social norms in the spirit of those international norms, and to block (mainly) developments at national levels that would prevent the translation of international normative instruments into national policy and practice. Consequently, data collected on these indicators is of limited interest for research that focuses on advocacy in international arenas and its effects at global and regional policy levels.

WRGE 1.1: # of laws, policies and strategies blocked, adopted or improved to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private life

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women provides the backbone for international advocacy work in this space. This, alongside SDG 5, provides a touchpoint for consortia advocacy at the national level, in supporting countries to align with international agreements and standards.

At the regional level, the Maputo Protocol, adopted by the African Union in 2003, commits governments within the region to action on women's rights. It specifically addresses VAWG, requiring 'state parties to

prohibit all forms of violence against women and to adopt all necessary measures to ensure the prevention, punishment and eradication of all forms of violence against women.’²¹

Two further international agreements shape work in this area:

- **The Convention of Belem do Para:** this was agreed by the Organisation of American States (OAS) in 1994 and has raised the profile of the importance of working on VAWG in the region.
- **The Istanbul Convention:** this was agreed by the Council of Europe in 2011, and focuses on preventing and addressing VAWG. It can be seen as the most progressive treaty on this issue, since it covers economic violence and the *threat* of violence, as well as defining VAWG as a form of discrimination.

The biggest win in this space in recent years was the passing of the Universal Survivors Bill of Rights, a UNGA 2022 resolution that provides access to justice and protection for survivors of sexual violence.

Contrary to the partnerships’ and funds’ work at national levels, blocking, adopting or improving existing global norms is rarely among their objectives. The focus of their work in relation to international norms is most often to advocate for the full implementation of these norms by state parties.

Only two consortia in our sample provide any type of reporting against this indicator. One provides a description of their goals in this area, and the other provides a baseline value of ‘0’.

WRGE 2.1: # of laws, policies and strategies blocked, adopted or improved to promote women’s voice, agency, leadership, and representative participation in decision-making processes in public, private and civic sphere

The CEDAW is the leading international treaty that guides international advocacy in this space. The latest country to ratify the CEDAW was South Sudan in 2015, making the total number of states who are party to the convention 189.

As well as its relevance to VAWG, the Maputo Protocol (2005) provides a framing for advocacy on women’s voice and leadership, with its terms on women’s roles in political processes. Article IX of the charter protects the right to participation in the political and decision-making process.

The African Union’s African Youth Charter and Strategy on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (2018-2028) provide further reference points for advocacy work in the region on issues around women’s voice and agency.

WRGE 3.1: # of laws, policies and strategies blocked, adopted or improved to promote women’s economic rights, empowerment and entrepreneurship

One of the largest international agreements relevant to WEE is the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women’s Economic Empowerment. It was endorsed in 2017 by 188 WTO members and observers in 2017 and includes terms related to gender-responsive trade and development policies; gender-based analysis of trade policy and monitoring; and working together in the WTO to remove barriers for WEE.²²

Since then, bilateral trade agreements have increasingly include gender-specific provisions. A notable arrangement made in 2020 between Canada, Chile and New Zealand was the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement (GTAGA), which aims to promote women’s participation in trade. Since its inception, Mexico, Columbia and Peru has joined the Arrangement. The focus so far has been on increasing the number of women entrepreneurs in trade.²³

SDG 5 also has an important role to play, with its commitment to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all.

²¹ <https://www.womankind.org.uk/international-agreements-on-womens-rights-a-framework-for-action/>

²² https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/womenandtrade_e/buenos_aires_declaration_e.htm

²³ <https://www.iisd.org/articles/deep-dive/global-trade-and-gender-arrangement>

A 2022 Briefing Paper released by the ODI suggests that the gains in WEE are precarious, given the slippage seen in progress in areas such as labour force engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. It posits that many WEE strategies fail to address the root causes of economic gender inequalities, and calls for investment in a systems-level approach.²⁴

WRGE 4.1: # of laws, policies and strategies blocked, adopted or improved to promote women’s meaningful and equal participation and leadership in conflict prevention, peace- and state-building and protect women’s and girls’ rights in crisis and (post-)conflict situations.

WRGE indicators linked to SCS3 (creating space for international advocacy)

The consortia and Southern funds that apply the WRGE indicators linked to SCS3 use these indicators to measure progress at national levels only.

WRGE indicators linked to SCS3

As specified in MFA guidance document on WRGE indicators, the four indicators are closely linked to basket indicator SCS3. These include: WRGE 1.2: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions on violence against women and girls, through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or movement building; WRGE 2.2: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions on women’s voice, agency, leadership and representative participation in decision-making processes in public, private and civic sphere – through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or movement building; WRGE 3.2: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions on women’s economic rights, empowerment and entrepreneurship – through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or movement building; WRGE 4.2: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions on promote women’s meaningful and equal participation and leadership in conflict prevention and peace- and state-building and protecting women’s and girls’ rights in crisis and (post-)conflict situations – through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or movement building.

Baseline reports describing future measurement against those indicators show that expected changes will be measured at national and subnational levels – not at the international level. For two consortia, the focus will be on changes in media coverage of violence against women and girls and of women’s voice, agency and representative participation in decision-making processes. As with the WRGE indicators linked to SCS3, this data is of very limited interest for research on advocacy in international arenas.

3.5 Baseline measure of specific SRHR indicators

Similar to the situation with WRGE indicators, the consortia in our sample that use SRHR indicators focus on national levels.

The partnerships in our baseline that use SRHR indicators advocate for more systematic application of international normative instruments at national levels. Although there are opportunities for international advocacy on SRHR, the two consortia in the baseline sample that use indicator SRHR H focus on national

SRHR indicators used in our research

SRHR H: # of changes in (inter)national laws, policies, norms and practices leading to decrease of barriers to SRHR and HIV/AIDS services, and SRHR J: # of CSOs and advocacy networks with increased advocacy capacities

levels.

²⁴ https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/ODI_Briefing_note_Womens_economic_empowerment_supporting_transformative_change.pdf

Levels of application of indicator J vary, with only one out of three consortia in our baseline sample using SRHR J focusing on international advocacy capacity.

SRHR J is linked to basket indicator SCS5. Three SRHR consortia in our baseline sample use this indicator, however, one consortium measures progress in organisational development only (as opposed to international advocacy capacity). Only one consortium focuses on measuring changes in *international* advocacy capacity.

3.6 Reflection on indicators

It could be a helpful exercise to review indicators on the basis of levels of influence on the SCS Theory of Change. For example, SCS indicators 1-2 seem to sit at the 'medium term impact' level, and would therefore be seen to be outside of partners' sphere of influence. There are likely to be a multiplicity of factors that would influence change at this level, beyond the scope of control and influence of partners. Clarifying this expectation would create a shared understanding between partners and the ministry on CSOs' role in influencing change at this level. It would also provide clarity on the rationale for partners reporting against these indicators i.e. for their own performance management or for informational purposes to provide an overview of the picture of the background for their work. Finally, it would set expectations around the frequency of expected change; again, SCS indicators 1 and 2 are unlikely to see frequent movement, given they sit at the level of change in policy and law.

4 Assessment of international advocacy capacity

This section refers to the current situation at the international level, with a focus on basket indicator **SCS5: Number of CSOs with increased L&A capacities**. It summarises findings on international advocacy capacity among consortium members and implementing partners.

The findings are based chiefly on (i) surveys with partnership members and their contractual/implementing partners,²⁵ (ii) KIIs with SCS stakeholders at various levels and external advocacy specialists, (iii) baseline reports submitted by the partnerships, and (iv) an assessment of the quality of the consortium proposals. As part of this research, Itad created a purpose-built analytical tool to assess international advocacy capacity (see Annex 7), which we have applied in the first phase of our longitudinal case study. Anonymised scorecards on six organisations in two consortia are presented in Annex 6.

Apart from comparing consortium members' (1st tier) advocacy capacity with that of contracting (2nd tier) partners, we also compared between global North-based and global South-based consortium members. The latter comparison has yielded no significant differences in advocacy capacity between North-based and South-based consortium members (1st tier partners). Qualitative KIIs suggested a wealth of experience in different contexts, as well as learning opportunities across the globe. Consequently, participants in our validation workshop recommended that more use be made of Southern expertise to inform advocacy training and to allow Northern partners – including MFA – to benefit from capacity building by Southern advocates.

Whilst it would have been interesting to be able to provide some analysis at a disaggregated level (youth-led, women-led, both or neither), none of the partnerships provide disaggregated baseline data against indicator SCS5 so it has not been possible to provide these figures here.

4.1 Introduction: Defining advocacy capacity

A clear definition of international advocacy capacity is necessary to assess the quality and results of capacity building efforts.

Evaluating **advocacy capacities** for organisations, Raynor, York and Sim (2009) have defined four critical aspects – leadership, adaptation, management and technical capacities. However, according to them the most essential relationship exists between leadership capacity and advocacy capacity, which sets the stage for management and provides for effective utilisation of technical skills and resources. A review guide developed by the Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program and Rhonda Schlangen on SRHR advocacy capacity in sub-Saharan Africa (2020) similarly distinguishes between four categories: (i) strategy & implementation (including, inter alia, adaptation and learning & evaluation); (ii) tactical skills (including, inter alia, networking & coalition building and use of evidence); (iii) commitment (including, inter alia, sector engagement and constituent connections); (iv) management & operations.²⁶

Our research on the **international advocacy** component focuses on multilateral global and regional policy spaces. These spaces are characterised by limited accessibility, highly technical debates requiring advanced knowledge of the subject matter and of the specific international law or policy instruments discussed, specific social norms, and a predominance of a small number of languages – e.g. English – at global venues. Considering these definitions and the discussions with key experts in international advocacy spaces, our method to assess civil society advocacy capacity in international policy spaces focuses on four core dimensions, defined in more detail in the presentation of our analytical tool in Annex 7 to this report. They include: (i) **strategy development**; (ii) **collective action**; (iii) **technical and tactical knowledge**; (iv) **access to**

²⁵ The survey responses are likely to reflect some positive bias because of the context of this research (commissioned by MFA, who fund SCS international). However, our survey with implementing partners and our interviews with specialists outside the consortia have enabled triangulation.

²⁶ Although the longer list of capacities produced by Elbers and Kamstra (2020) largely fits into these analytical frameworks, it is more difficult to apply in practice. This is because it conceptually mixes the abilities of organisations to carry out certain activities (e.g. the capacities to produce evidence, analyse the political arena, produce tailored messages and work collectively) with the effects of their activities (e.g. to inspire trust among and build rapport with power holders) and issues linked to governance structures and processes (to represent constituency interests).

and engagement in international decision-making spaces. The latter dimension also refers to access to resources, an important aspect of SCS. MFA's funding of international advocacy contributes to strengthening such advocacy and to developing advocacy capacity via learning by doing, in a context where organisations from the global South are less likely to have a range of funding available, as are CSOs focused on controversial or politicised topics.²⁷

4.2 Advocacy capacity of the consortium partners and LFS funds (1st tier partners)

Overall, the consortium partners and LFS funds in SCS international display varying levels of involvement in international advocacy, with consortium partners in the global North being slightly more involved than their peers in the global South. However, most consortia are still in the early stages of international advocacy and related capacity building. Our survey with members of all partnerships found that in 92% of the cases, the consortium partners identifying themselves as global North CSOs were involved in international advocacy activities as of early 2022. Slightly fewer (1st tier) consortium members based in the global South (86%) reported being involved in international advocacy. Despite the somewhat stronger involvement of Northern CSOs in global-level advocacy, Northern CSOs do not necessarily hold the stronger international advocacy capacities, as evidenced in our review of 20 partnership programme proposals and in KIs on 19 partnership programmes. As of early to mid-2022, most consortia report being in the planning or early phases of their international advocacy, with only six out of the 20 sample consortia currently involved in international advocacy. This is partly due to the fact that many consortia have prioritised national capacity strengthening and national advocacy over the international work, which would build on and complement national-level efforts. COVID-19-related restrictions were also quoted as a challenge in implementing international advocacy and related capacity strengthening activities.

The numerical values reported by the baseline reports in our sample on indicator SCS5 are as follows: seven consortia report a baseline value of 0 against indicator SCS5. Of these seven consortia, three focus solely on women-led organisations and one focuses on women-led, youth-led and other organisations. One consortium reports a value of 426 and one LFS fund 34, both exclusively on women-led organisations, but it is not clear whether the focus is on international or on national/more local advocacy.

4.2.1 Advocacy strategy development capacity

There is evidence of high-quality international advocacy strategies among consortium partners and LFS funds, including promising efforts to include voices from grass roots levels up.

All partnerships in our sample have at least some elements of international advocacy strategies in their proposals. The more detailed descriptions are generally of good quality, (i) articulating the desired changes, (ii) basing assumptions on evidence from various sources, (iii) using a gender and social inclusion lens, and (iv) reportedly involving persons whose interests are claimed to be represented. As pointed out earlier (Section 3.3 on SCS7), partnerships that have been jointly engaged in international arenas before SCS funding display good practice in ensuring that constituencies at grass roots level are heard.

There are only a few partnerships for which all of their members are engaged in international advocacy. In most consortia, specific members take the lead in international advocacy, with strategies being developed in consultation with partners. Most consortium members in our survey reported being involved in the design and implementation of international advocacy, Southern members' inclusion being more pronounced in the design phase than in the implementation phase of international advocacy.

4.2.2 Capacity for collective action

Joint activities and movement building have contributed to capacity for collective action within the partnerships.

²⁷ For some SRHR-focused organisations, MFA is one of the few major donors – or the only major donor – willing to fund their advocacy.

Evidence from the longitudinal case study showed collective action to be a fundamental principle for consortium partners in the way that their programmes are structured and in the way that they operate. Typically they advocate on topics where solidarity and cooperation are necessary to amplify voices and effect change. As a result, they have strong networks and extensive experience of organising collective action. Consortium partners, both in the global North and in the global South, are therefore well placed to develop and facilitate collective action.

4.2.3 Technical and tactical knowledge of international arenas

Interviews with external sources highlight the importance of being able to flow between different tactics.

External interviewees commented on the complexity, dexterity and expertise required to make change at the international level. They pointed to the need to be able to operate using insider and outsider channels to influence decision makers through multiple touchpoints, such as mobilising public protest, producing substantive reports, and creating bite-size, consumable multimedia outputs for a wider audience:

‘Organisations that are more effective use diverse approaches’.

Time pressures for making change can contribute to unintended consequences.

The timeline for change at the international level was mentioned frequently, as well as the long-standing impact of any changes that are made. Multiple interviewees pointed out the damage that could be done from making changes at the international level that did not properly consider unintended consequences, such as reprioritisation/focus towards a relatively minor issue compared with a more substantive one. This was raised in relation to the focus on the age of child marriage being considered in a silo from the wider experience of girls; the global fixation on positioning the age of consent has crowded out space for discussions on the structural drivers that support this. Another interviewee raised a similar concept in reference to the decision to create a Loss and Damage Fund at COP 27:

‘I’m not saying the Loss and Damage fund isn’t needed or isn’t powerful, but it overshadowed many other things that needed to be on the agenda at COP, including environmental degradation, which is far more nuanced.’

‘We’ve seen policy changes happen under a lot of pressure to demonstrate that they were responding to the SDGs, and I’ve seen this happen in a negative way. When an issue gets a certain spotlight, that ought to be an opportunity for fresh evidence collection, but instead of this, a lot of resources get channelled to the low-hanging fruit.’

On the whole, consortium partners and LFS funds display appropriate technical and tactical knowledge in international advocacy arenas, with slight differences between Northern and Southern members.

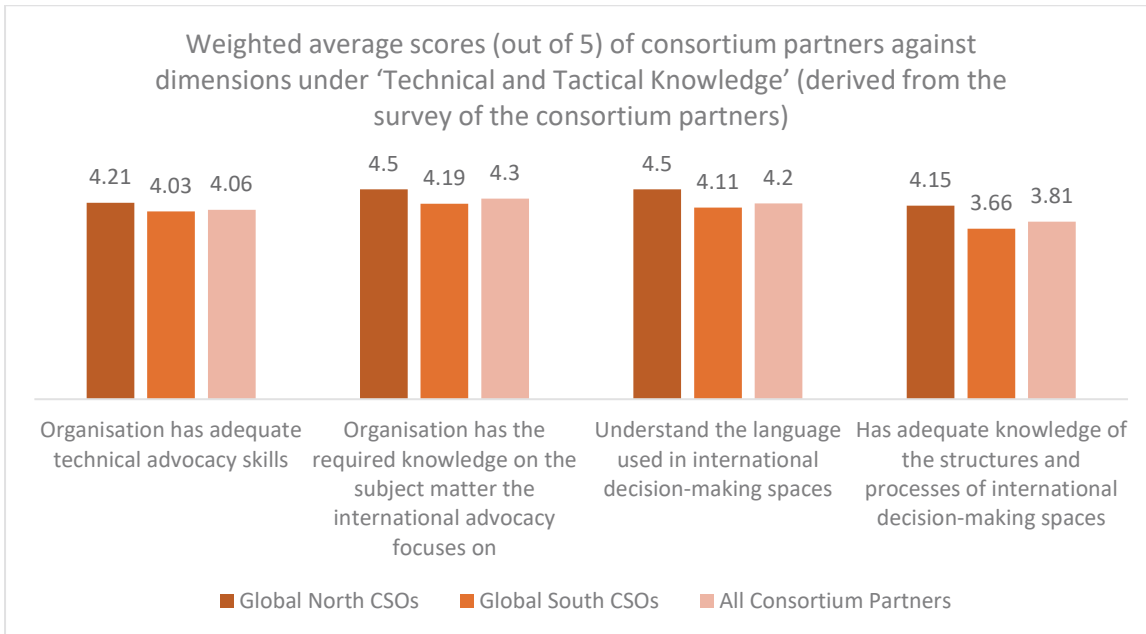
Overall, both survey and case study data found that the consortium partners hold strong technical and tactical knowledge of international advocacy. In the survey, most consortium members and LFS funds reported having adequate technical advocacy skills. Compared to consortium members located in the global South, Northern CSOs assessed their knowledge on the subject matter as slightly better, especially regarding structures and processes in international arenas. Longitudinal case study evidence, however, found that global North and global South organisations had similarly good knowledge of their subject matter. This data instead emphasised the difference it makes to have structural and procedural understanding of spaces and to be fluent in the jargon of each space.

Consortium members strengthen their technical and tactical advocacy capacities by working together; meetings can often provide a platform for building each other’s expertise. As found in our case studies,

governance structures with rotating chairs can support all consortium members to get a chance to learn by doing:

‘Coalition building at the international level is critical – in particular at the regional level in the global South. There are so few spaces to share experiences. Our power will always be at the collective level. The moment you come out of the collective, you lose so much power.’

Figure 6: Consortium partners’ self-assessment on dimensions of technical and tactical knowledge



4.2.4 Access to and engagement in international decision-making spaces

Global North CSOs tend to have better access to, and more engagement in, international decision-making spaces than their Southern peers in the partnerships. Resource constraints particularly affect organisations working on controversial topics.

In both survey and case study data, consortium partners in the global North were found to have better connectivity, access to information and physical access (e.g. visa and relevant formalities), which enhanced their opportunities for engagement in targeted international arenas. Global North CSOs also report significantly better personal contacts with diplomats and other delegates in international spaces. Maintaining a physical presence in advocacy spaces was emphasised strongly in interviews as being essential to effective international advocacy work. The issue of unequal access to spaces is, therefore, likely to have a significant impact on the level of global South influence:

‘Northern-based organisations have more money and passports to enter the US. African delegates very often don’t get visas. They lack information; Internet access can be a challenge.’

‘Southern-based organisations are more challenged to participate. [...] Visas are challenging, as is funding to travel and stay there. Financing part is important again – the role of donors to push for their participation and to facilitate it.’

Some consortium members in our surveys felt they had sufficient resources for what they were attempting to achieve in international advocacy. However, CSOs focused on more controversial topics, or representing more marginalised groups, reported having fewer funding options open to them and, consequently, fewer resources for international advocacy. Additionally, some consortia provided programme-specific examples of resourcing barriers, such as unequal allocation of funding for international advocacy within the consortium.

4.3 Advocacy capacity of the contracting partners (2nd tier partners)

This section draws chiefly from our primary data collection with contracting partners involved in international advocacy; the data was gathered via an online survey and a series of KIIs in the case studies.

4.3.1 Contracting partners in advocacy strategy development

As of early 2022, in most cases consortium members, not their contractual partners, are leading the international advocacy on behalf of the consortia.

According to our survey with contracting (2nd tier) partners, in 87% of the cases consortium members are leading, or planning to lead, international advocacy activities, with contracting partners leading in 13% of the cases. This can partly be explained by the fact that most implementation partners in our survey were national-level entities (48%) with a focus on national work, and 13% being subnational-level entities.

KIIs and contributions to the validation meeting with MFA and partnerships confirmed that many consortia had made the strategic choice to focus their work on strengthening national and subnational advocacy capacities. In that situation, international advocacy – a relatively expensive set of activities that take place far from the ultimate intended beneficiaries' home base – has received less attention in local capacity strengthening efforts.

Contracting partners who do not lead in international advocacy are involved to varying degrees in international advocacy strategy development and planning, depending on their experience and resources.

Consortium members reported in our survey that their international advocacy strategy development incorporated the voices and ideas of their Southern contracting partners (weighted average score: 4.12 out of 5). This was triangulated with and supported by our survey with contractual partners, who reported contributing to international advocacy strategy development (weighted average score: 3.50/5).

Evidence from the longitudinal case study, however, showed great variety between implementing partners' contributions to consortium-level advocacy strategy. The contracting partners with more involvement were either international entities (e.g. organisations based in the global South with a regional or global remit) or organisations with a long-standing working relationship with the relevant consortium partner.

4.3.2 Contracting partners undertaking collective action

Collective action is a defining feature and a strength in contracting partners' international advocacy.

Networking with other CSOs is the most commonly planned or used international advocacy activity quoted by contracting partners in our survey (83%). Many of the planned activities are event-specific, e.g. participation in side events (69%), informal meetings with decision makers at the advocacy arenas (65%) and organising side events to multilateral conferences (59%). Around 58% of the surveyed implementing partners are planning to work with others to draft policy papers, civil society reports (shadow reports) and other documentation to feed into and possibly influence international policymaking spaces. Around 52% intend to participate in international advocacy arenas as accredited observers.

All consortium partners interviewed in the longitudinal case study have described mechanisms for ensuring that constituencies they represent at grass roots level are heard. Implementing partners confirmed that consortium partners worked with them to amplify the voices of their own grass roots movements. This has emerged as a strength of their international advocacy work.

Within this, however, significant differences in contractual partner capacity were found in the case study. Implementing partners range from those with dedicated staff, funding and experience to carry international advocacy to organisations with little or no experience of work at international level. For the latter group, shadow reporting as part of collectives appears to have been the most accessible entry point into international work, as part of either CEDAW or other human rights monitoring at country level.

4.3.3 Contracting partners' technical and tactical knowledge

A majority of contracting partners involved in international advocacy hold technical and tactical expertise.

In our survey, around 43% of the contracting partners engaged in international advocacy agreed, and 16% strongly agreed, with the statement that their organisation had all the technical expertise for international advocacy (weighted average score: 3.49/5). In our survey, technical expertise referred both to in-house skills and knowledge and to access to external expertise. The majority also mentioned that the international advocacy strategy of their consortium could make full use of their respective organisation's strength (weighted average score 3.43/5). As with capacity for strategy, interviews revealed a huge variety in technical capacity. Newer organisations operating at national or local level were much less likely to have technical expertise at international level, and in some cases were still developing technical capacity for national-level work.

4.3.4 Contracting partners' access to international advocacy arenas

Access to international advocacy arenas is restricted due to external factors and lack of resources.

Arguably, access to international arenas is the weakest dimension in contracting partners' advocacy capacity. Barriers impeding their engagement at international advocacy arenas have included shrinking civic spaces, physical distances, and travel restrictions linked to COVID-19 and other issues. Further, somewhat more internal obstacles include (i) funding gaps (proposed vs MFA-approved budget), (ii) limitations on human resources and organisational bandwidth, especially for national organisations struggling to balance involvement in international advocacy with their roles in national implementation, and (iii) inequities inherent to SCS implementation, with its dynamics between Southern CSO partners and Northern CSO partners and/or MFA as the funder:

'To a large extent international and national advocacy are interrelated, but spending a third of my time contributing to international advocacy is too much, and takes away from my work as national coordinator [...] There is real value in contributing to international advocacy work, so we need to invest in staff who can sustainably contribute to that work, without taking away from our core national work.'

'We are a technical partner in this consortium. We have our role with powers and privileges, our voice is heard [but] sometimes the power dynamics influence the interaction. [The lead organisation] acts as the representatives of the funder [who] have power to ultimately influence the direction of work. [We are] not always confident that grantees say no and hold funders accountable.'

'The [policy] framework is traditional. [As the consortium lead we are] living in tension – we have capacity to manage, but also staff in-country directly doing implementation work [...] We need to staff up enough to meet donor requirements, without those becoming the driver [...] so we don't just meet donor demands without supporting social change.'

Some Southern organisations reported that Northern leads, despite their best efforts, may be 'blind' to certain inequities in North–South power dynamics. For example, in select instances these dynamics were an

unintended adverse consequence of efforts to allocate as great a proportion of funding as possible to programme implementation as opposed to institutional support to Southern organisations.

4.4 Strategies in building capacities of the implementing partners

Partnerships' strategies to build advocacy capacity among implementing partners address all four dimensions of international advocacy: strategy development, collective action, technical and tactical knowledge, and access to international arenas.

Several consortia, including those in the longitudinal case study, have described capacity strengthening as a priority for their constituents, stressing it should be centred around principles of trust that value local knowledge and priorities. Both formal and informal approaches are being used for capacity strengthening, with an overarching focus on women-led and, in many cases, youth-led CSOs. For example, some consortia indicated that capacity strengthening was taking place through organised trainings on various topics, whereas others indicated they saw routine peer-to-peer learning and more frequent get-togethers as ways to share expertise and build capacity of partners:

'We are building the capacity of local organisations and young activists, including working with local CSOs. Some are youth-led, some are not.'

'We are setting up a capacity development trajectory for young activists working on SRHR [...] We're using internal and external staff to train activists on advocacy and leadership, helping them to set up campaigns within their communities – sometimes at international level, depending on what they're working on.'

Regarding strategy development capacities – our first dimension of international advocacy capacity – consortium governance, joint planning processes and the availability of funding have facilitated learning by doing, as pointed out above (Sections 3.3 and 4.3) and as further discussed in connection with Southern leadership (Section 5.3).

To strengthen the capacity for collective action – our second dimension – the partnerships widely use movement building. As pointed out in our analysis of SCS4 findings (Section 3.3), movement building can enhance partners' ability to represent their constituencies and themselves in the targeted decision-making spaces and engage additional expertise for international advocacy. It can tighten connections across stakeholder organisations and persons and encourage knowledge sharing and complementarity in advocacy messaging:

'One of [the] important things about advocacy is realising we can't do it on our own. You need to organise people and organisations around you that can work with. It's about the personal leadership capacities of young people to ensure they're capable of speaking up, organising processes, their time investment, of engaging with other organisations constructively and taking a lead in that process.'

'We are seeking to establish more peer-to-peer learning amongst alliance partners, which hasn't been possible during the first year so far. However, often meetings alone can provide a platform for building each other's expertise and capacity. These meetings can raise the level of consciousness and awareness of the priorities as far as the global programmes are concerned. These also help to create alignment on the global issues.'

Most implementing partners have planned to build liaison with other CSOs working in the same advocacy arena. Correspondingly, most consortia in our sample are facilitating contacts of the implementation

partners with other CSOs working in those spaces. Emphases are on (i) enabling participation of implementing partners in side events (69%) and (ii) organising formal and informal meetings with officials in the targeted advocacy arenas (59%).

Training on international advocacy techniques (35%) and on international advocacy in the targeted arenas (27%) – linked with our third dimension of advocacy capacity – has been the most frequently quoted capacity strengthening strategy by consortium members responding to our survey. In case study evidence, contracting partners emphasised leadership capacity among the populations they represent. Typically they focused on developing confidence and offering tools to communicate people’s lived experience effectively. This was particularly important for representatives of groups who face stigma and discrimination, for example women and girls with disabilities, and sex workers.

In case study interviews, implementing partners found tailored support from consortium members particularly valuable, for example support to prepare for specific advocacy events or to create an advocacy tool such as a shadow report. This type of support is dependent on a good working relationship between consortium and implementing partners and on regular, high-quality communication between them.

Access to international arenas – the fourth dimension of our definition of international advocacy capacity – is a key issue for Southern contracting partners. The consortium members are aware of the challenges faced by their implementing partners in that regard and have developed strategies to enhance their capacities to facilitate partners’ access to these spaces. These are described in our findings on indicators SCS4 and SCS6 (Section 3.3) and in our discussion of Southern leadership (Section 5.3).

Capacity building is not top-down or one-directional but is reciprocal. Several consortium partners and contracting partners mentioned that capacity building in international advocacy is neither top-down from consortium partners to implementation partners nor one-directional from global North to global South organisations. While the consortium partners and those in the global North have slightly more experience in international advocacy, they mentioned getting inputs and evidence from Southern implementation partners. Northern consortium partners mentioned learning significantly from the national and regional advocacy activities of Southern implementation partners. Advocacy capacity building is thus more mutual and reciprocal between consortium partners and implementation partners across the world.

5 Relevance

This section addresses RQs 2–14 for the baseline phase.

5.1 Relevance to SCS and thematic ToCs of the policy instruments (RQ2)

RQ2: To what extent are the ToCs of the SCS policy framework and instruments relevant in the global and selected regional contexts?

All ToCs used under the SCS policy framework strive to capture all major levels of activity within SCS, which has required a level of abstraction. As a result, there are no specific ToCs or ToC pathways on international advocacy or on capacity building within SCS.

5.1.1 The SCS ToC – a theory of action to ignite a theory of influence

International lobbying and advocacy works differently to that at the national level, particularly around timelines, tactics, targets and spheres of influence. International agreements are not owned by a single actor, and therefore they require a different approach. However, the SCS ToC presents itself as an overarching framework which strives to capture all major levels of activity within SCS. This has led to a degree of abstraction and misses the different pathways of change needed at the international level – and how these interact with the national level – along which contribution hypotheses could be developed for testing during the MTR. Below, we detail our findings around the different aspects of the ToC:

- The five policy instruments are **funds** used to promote cross-cutting civic spaces to lead to the intermediate outcomes. The policy instruments have their own ToC, which includes their outputs and goals for outcomes and impact. MFA outputs are better described in the intermediary outcomes of providing funding, technical expertise, diplomacy and knowledge brokering to CSOs.
- One **intermediary outcome** focuses on the **activities of CSOs**. With adequate outputs, CSOs should provide evidence of political participation, mobilisation and activation. If CSOs have the capacity and legitimacy, it may lead to **higher-level outcomes**, including influencing norms and decision making. Here we would see the interim evidence of governments and private sectors engaging with CSOs on decision making.
- The other **intermediary outcome** focuses on **complementarity of efforts** – either by other CSOs or by MFA. MFA's role could be outlined more explicitly if separated from that of other CSOs to provide greater clarity on the role played. This would support analysis, during the MTR, of MFA's relative success in its support for consortium partners. Discussions with the Ministry have provided helpful insight into their thinking on what this role might look like. Firstly, it is likely to be context-dependent, i.e. the Ministry would not play the same role with each partner, and this could also shift over time, depending on partners' focus. Secondly, this role may be more or less active/passive, depending on partners' appetite for collaboration.
- If CSOs influence norms and decision making, we should see a **medium-term impact** of more inclusive laws, policies, norms and practices at the national level. Global and regional political arenas can help to provide tools to push for stronger implementation of international norms and stopping negotiators from watering down/ignoring international commitments at the national level.
- For added clarity, it could be helpful to split the SCS ToC into a theory of influence and a theory of action. The theory of influence would describe the hypothesis of how change occurs for CSOs. The theory of action would focus on what MFA and CSOs do to promote such change.

The ToC also operates under certain assumptions. The **explicit assumptions** included in the ToC can be found in Table 2. The table also details additional **implicit assumptions** that have been identified through this research. Both set of assumptions have been prioritised in importance for testing in the MTR, which will

then be further explored in the inception phase. The box below details the strategy for testing these assumptions.

Strategy for testing assumptions

Assumptions can be thought of as ‘unpicking the arrow’ that represents the relationship between one change and another in a ToC. Once the assumptions to be tested have been identified through the inception phase of the MTR, the research team will then identify which ones are contextual and which are causal. Depending on their categorisation, we will test them using a rubric and a set of questions, such as:

- **contextual assumptions:** what other influences, interventions or conditions might be needed to bring about each outcome, in addition to the intervention?
- **causal assumptions:** whose behaviour is expected to change? How? Why? And then what happens? If x changes, will y really happen? Why? What is it about the intervention that is expected to lead to the outcome? What are the resources provided by the intervention, and how are people expected to respond to these resources?

One key assumption underpinning the ToC is that CSOs perform four different political roles: education (internal and external), communication, representation and cooperation. This assumption was investigated in a recent research project, under the previous policy framework,²⁸ which found that while these roles are performed by CSOs in low and lower-middle income countries (LLMICs), the presence and intensity of these political roles varies between CSOs, depending on the organisation and the context in which it is operating. At the international level, relationships with INGOs and Northern-based donors can be key in shaping the political roles of Southern-based CSOs through the availability of financial and other support but also through the conditionality with which these are provided. Additionally, this research looked at a precondition for the assumptions underlying the Dialogue and Dissent (D&D) framework’s ToC, which is that CSOs should have autonomy and ownership in order to perform their political roles effectively. This is still a relevant precondition for the SCS framework. The research found that Northern donors and INGOs take the lead in defining the strategy of advocacy programmes, which directs power in the aid chain towards these actors:

*‘An illustration of these skewed power relations is the fact that CSOs in LLMICs need their Northern counterparts (INGOs) to generate international credibility. INGOs play an essential brokering role, connecting CSOs in LLMICs with international platforms and donors, which illustrates the observed distance between donors and Southern CSOs, with especially CBOs being the greatest distance from the donors’.*²⁹

The research from the Assumptions Programme also includes additional questions for donors and policymakers about the assumptions underlying the D&D framework which are also relevant for this policy framework, such as ‘does the aid chain enable CSOs to perform the various political roles according to the objectives of both donors and CSOs, and how can more dynamic support contribute to shaping these roles?’³⁰ These questions, and the findings mentioned above, will help guide research and lines of inquiry under the MTR phase.

²⁸ Yannicke Goris, Frank van Kesteren and K Magendane. (2020). Room to breathe: what works to support CSOs for inclusive development. <https://includeplatform.net/publications/room-to-breath-what-works-to-support-csos-for-inclusive-development/>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

Table 2: Implicit and explicit assumptions

Assumption	Explicit/Implicit	Proposed priority for MTR
Poverty, (gender) inequality and exclusion are caused by power asymmetries	Explicit	2
Development is a nonlinear political process aimed at changing power relations	Explicit	3
Changing power relations often needs and/or breeds friction and conflict	Explicit	3
Local ownership of development processes is crucial for inclusiveness, effectiveness and sustainability of development efforts	Explicit	1
CSOs play a crucial role in changing power relations	Explicit	1
CSOs perform four types of political role to change power relations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Educational (internal & external) o Communicative (linking state & society) o Representational (voice & resistance) o Cooperative (subsidiarity & coordination) 	Explicit	1
Different roles require different organisational forms (i.e. formal/informal), capacities and different forms of legitimacy	Explicit	1
When pressured, informed and/or persuaded by CSOs, states, companies and societal actors change their laws, policies and/or norms and practices to be more sustainable, equitable and inclusive	Explicit	2
Assumption/precondition: CSOs need civic space to perform political roles	Explicit	2
Precondition: CSOs need to be locally rooted, strong, legitimate and autonomous to perform political roles	Explicit	1
External aid by the Ministry and (mainly Northern) CSOs can strengthen CSOs in low-income, lower-middle-income and higher-middle-income countries in their political roles through mutual capacity strengthening and assistance in advocacy processes, including offering protection in hostile environments and lobbying for improved civic space	Explicit	1
CSOs are actors in their own right and not merely instrumental channels for aid delivery	Explicit	2

Promoting civil society's political roles needs a long-term, context-specific approach which incorporates mutual learning, trust and local ownership	Explicit	1
Precondition: the design of the aid chain does not interfere with the aspects mentioned in the previous point	Explicit	1
CSOs (continue to) address the shrinking civic spaces	Implicit	2
MFA support is likely to strengthen CSO international advocacy capacity	Implicit	1
Government, the private sector and societal groups are capable and willing to engage with CSOs in decision-making arenas	Implicit	3
Laws, regulations and practice enable CSOs to engage in advocacy	Implicit	3
CSOs are doing the right things to play an important transformative role in societal norms and decision making by government and the private sector	Implicit	1
MFA's role in supporting CSOs is clear and appropriate to the context	Implicit	1

5.1.2 Theories of Change of the five policy instruments in the international component

Power of Voices – a conceptual framework accommodating diverse pathways for change

PoV is based on the overarching SCS ToC, aiming to strengthen civil society advocacy for the SDGs. It encompasses a spectrum of themes (as outlined in Section 2.2). This diversity comes with a lack of specificity about pathways of change. Some themes, for example LGBTIQ+ rights, could easily be expanded upon to consider more specific approaches. MFA would need to have a specific strategy on how to protect existing civil society groups in-country and would need to support local activists to ensure their voices are heard at the international and regional stage. The lack of specificity regarding themes and levels of intervention makes it difficult to assess the MFA contribution to change (or non-change) at outcome levels.

Power of Women – strong on WRGE, limited orientation regarding strengthening advocacy capacity

PoW is grounded in the general SCS ToC. The policy instrument focuses on three objectives of WRGE: (i) prevention and elimination of SGBV against women and girls; (ii) strengthening women's leadership and women's participation in (political) decision making; (iii) strengthening WEE and improving the economic climate for women. These three objectives are large – each one could have its own ToC.

The ToC discusses the objectives with expertise and discusses how women's rights organisations play a major role in ensuring these goals are met. Strengthening women's rights organisations is mentioned with regard to preventing and eliminating SGBV and women's leadership but not WEE. More detail could be included on ways in which MFA can improve on women's rights capacities, including any specific international norms and arenas targeted. While the ToC does not specify that, in practice PoW is probably geared chiefly towards national policy changes while ensuring that the international policy arena pushes for implementation and accountability at national levels.

Many PoW consortium members and the LFS funds are well-established international women's rights organisations with high levels of capacity, large networks and their own expertise in creating legitimacy. More discussion is needed on how INGOs or large organisations will promote such capacity in contracting partner organisations, especially in the global South. A fuller PoW ToC would show more explicitly how MFA's work directly supports international WRGE advocacy then indirectly supports national organisations.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights – strong analysis on SRHR, but limited orientation on civil society strengthening

As outlined in Section 2.2, the SRHR ToC discusses four results areas in SRHR, many of which are politically contentious in several countries and regions, e.g. freedom of choice for young people about their sexuality and respect for SRHR of groups who are currently denied these rights. The SRHR ToC was written in October 2018 and updated for SCS in November 2019 with a few additional paragraphs. Civil society is mentioned as one of many key players; the ToC does not expand on how the players interact to support the larger objectives.

The ToC in this form does not adequately support civil society strengthening and SCS advocacy. A more SCS-specific SRHR ToC would discuss how MFA plans to support CSOs in advocating in a hostile space and also how they can elevate their voice to the international level. To strengthen civil society for these results, expanding on the intermediary outcomes of the ToC can provide traction.

A special feature of the SRHR policy instrument is that it includes a service delivery component. It is possible to focus on advocacy and service delivery as both have a political element; for example, service delivery is a key part of Results Area 2 (improve access to contraceptives) and Results Area 3 (better quality private and public health care for SRHR, including safe abortions). Ensuring accountability for a functioning SRHR system may be politically awkward in certain contexts, and politicians may not want to be seen as fuelling underage pregnancies or providing safe abortion access. MFA can provide technical expertise and brokering to find new messages to help push policies through for effective service delivery.

Women, Peace and Security – an SCS instrument tailored to international advocacy

The overall objectives of the WPS instrument are specified by three sub-objectives, aligned to UNSCR 1325 and the Netherlands National Action Plan NAP1325: (i) better protect women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situation from violence and violation of their rights; (ii) subvert harmful underlying gender norms and obstacles to sustainable peace; (iii) ensure that women have equal leverage in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, relief and recovery at all levels. The approaches are framed as outcome-level goals, related to the SCS framework: (i) facilitating capacity building and providing resources to support the empowerment and meaningful participation of women and men who strive towards gender-sensitive approaches to peace processes; (ii) understanding and positively influencing attitudes and beliefs that maintain and perpetuate the exclusion of women; (iii) influencing the development and implementation of laws and policies that weaken obstacles to women’s participation and protection.

The WPS ToC is relevant for SCS as it discusses capacity building of the partners involved, including CSOs. Approach 1 clearly addresses this topic, aiming to ensure that CSOs have the specific knowledge, skills and access to resources to overcome obstacles. Strengthening CSOs would influence the political atmosphere of peace processes and their capacity to advocate for inclusive peace. The WPS instrument has a clear policy objective at the international arena: to leverage UNSCR1325 and related resolutions to be used by CSOs to hold national governments accountable. Many of these pathways are well known in the WPS policy sphere. Therefore the WPS MFA instrument is relevant and coherent in building the strength of civil society around WPS advocacy. There are clear structures to ensure Southern participation at the international policy sphere.

As with SRHR, the WPS policy instrument includes a service delivery component, which is a politically relevant aspect of WPS advocacy. Stepping in where national policies fail to provide sufficient support and opportunities for empowerment of women affected by violent conflict is likely to draw attention to WPS issues and strengthen women’s voices.

‘Leading from the South’ – an innovative, flexible policy instrument hard to capture in a ToC

LFS focuses on the same three WRGE objectives as PoW. Unlike the other instruments, it is not geared to consortia implementing joint programmes but rather to women’s funds in the global South, making grants to a non-predefined set of women’s organisations and networks at various levels. As this is an innovative programme, the SCS ToC flowchart does not accurately represent the LFS ToC. Funds generate a larger distance between MFA and CSOs, and it may be difficult to make connections for diplomacy spaces.

The guidelines for distribution show CSOs at various capacities: 20% are grass roots organisations, 40% are medium organisations and 40% are large organisations. Medium and large organisations include regranteeing organisations, which means another layer of removal from MFA. LFS is a welcome means to strengthen Southern women’s rights movements. Better access to resources is likely to increase feminist civil society capacity to develop its activities at all levels, including advocacy. While funds are a great vehicle to access smaller local/regional WRGE organisations, smaller organisations often have difficulty contributing to changes in policy spaces. Organisations that may still be working on their capacity at the national level would struggle to contribute at the regional or global levels.

5.2 Relevance and alignment of implementation design

Overall, the partnership programmes’ international advocacy is relevant to regional and global policies and frameworks and is grounded in references to existing norms and in evidence. Global advocacy displays good examples of complementarity with Dutch diplomatic work, especially in the field of WRGE. All consortia consider intersecting dimensions of inequality.

5.2.1 Relevance to regional and global policies and frameworks

RQ3: To what extent are the global/regional components of the strategic partnership programmes aligned to relevant regional and global policies and frameworks?

The international components of the strategic partnership programmes refer to a wide range of regional and global norms and policies, which reflects the diversity of consortia memberships.

The partnerships refer to multiple international norms and policies and target a multitude of spaces; among other objectives they advocate for WRGE, SRHR, people-centred and climate-just climate action and freedom of religion or belief, and they amplify voices of structurally silenced population groups and their activism. Their programme proposals set out plans for international advocacy that usually refer to (i) specific international norms, e.g. CEDAW on women’s rights and UNFCCC on climate, and (ii) policies, e.g. the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and subsequent declarations on women’s rights, and the Paris Agreement on climate change. They also state the targeted advocacy arenas, such as CSW in New York and the CEDAW Committee at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva. The 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, in particular SDG 5, are common references too.

A special feature of international advocacy under the PoV funding instrument is that it targets not only multilateral bodies but also powerful international business actors (multinational companies). Regarding LFS funds, their key objective is to strengthen the resource base of women’s movements in the global South. Their international advocacy therefore strives to influence international funding policies – not only among multilateral and bilateral donors but also with private foundations.

In view of the partnerships’ large and diverse structures, they tend to refer to several international norms and policies, and sometimes to a large number of international advocacy arenas which are best addressed in a collective effort.

5.2.2 Complementarity to MFA’s diplomacy work

RQ4: How does the lobby and advocacy work by strategic partnerships aim to achieve complementarity to the diplomacy work of the Netherlands MFA Permanent Representations?

The Strategic Partnership can build on existing processes for collaboration with MFA diplomats at CSW; in other advocacy arenas, strategies for cooperation are to be developed.

Three of the four **global advocacy arenas** selected for our research are based at the UN in New York: CSW, CPD and UNSC. The fourth global advocacy arena, COP, is linked to the UN process and takes place at a different site every year, i.e. it does not happen near any single Netherlands Representative Office (RO). Experts in The Hague are in charge of the Dutch contribution to COP.

At CSW, MFA has a history of good practice in engaging with CSOs. The partnerships working on WRGE and SRHR build on pre-existing working relationships with Dutch diplomats, as presented in Section 5.4. According to our KII interlocutors, MFA and SRHR activities at CPD are very limited, focusing mainly on following developments in that arena. Instead, consortia with global SRHR advocacy target CSW, where Dutch diplomats are among those who push most vigorously for SRHR of people affected by exclusion.

WPS topics at the global level are discussed at UNSC, which offers less room for CSO advocacy than CSW (see also Section 3.2). Dutch diplomats report approaching trusted CSO leaders to get ideas and inputs for the national statement the Netherlands delivers at annual UNSCR debates on WPS. Our KIIs suggest that trust is closely linked to CSO legitimacy (examined in Section 5.3).

With regard to AU, the Netherlands are not a member state, and therefore the RO’s potential role is different from that at global arenas. Collaboration with the consortia is more about information exchange and less about joint advocacy with AU. The RO organises a dialogue forum with interested strategic partnerships about twice a year to exchange information on AU-level activities. Under distinct funding schemes, MFA supports think tanks that feed evidence into AU debates on WPS, for example. Large CSOs, such as Plan International, have their own offices in Addis Ababa to engage directly with AU diplomats.

5.2.3 International advocacy in the partnerships' Theories of Change

RQ5: To what extent do the ToCs of the strategic partnerships (1st tier) include global/regional advocacy and dedicate resources to these processes? What risks specific to this international work have been identified and reflected in the ToC? To what extent are underlying assumptions linked to existing high-quality literature and evaluations?

All strategic partnerships include international advocacy in their evidence-based programme ToCs; resources reserved for international advocacy vary greatly. Risks identified include contextual, programmatic, organisational and technology/data risks.

Advocacy at regional or global level, or at both levels, was mentioned by all the 18 consortia and two LFS funds in our sample. Key intended outcomes are predominantly (i) to create access for the target CSOs working with the population of interest to the decision-making spaces, (ii) to frame the issues of interest as a central focus in international policymaking, and/or (iii) to influence the development of enabling – and blockage of restricting – international policies or regulations. 11 out of the 20 sample partnerships reserved resources in their budgets for international advocacy, with percentages varying from 7% to 56% of the total budget.³¹

The assumptions underlying the programme ToCs have been based on literature reviews and learning from previous experience. Literature reviews included relevant studies, statistics and research reports on the contextual issues and technical aspects of the particular issue of concern. Partnerships and consortium members with a history of cooperating with MFA have used evidence from reviews and evaluations of the predecessor programmes in ToC design.

All the consortia in the sample have carried out detailed risk assessments specific to their international work. The risks encompass: (i) contextual risks arising from the regulatory, political or physical surroundings, e.g. conflicts and COVID-19; (ii) programmatic risks (linked, for example, to the diversity of the target actors for advocacy and to limited access to the target decision-making spaces); (iii) organisational risks, which may involve management/administrative issues, human resources adequacy and integrity; (iv) risks associated with use of technology and subsequent collection, storage, transfer, use and destruction of data.

5.2.4 Addressing dimensions of inequality and discrimination

RQ6: What dimensions of inequality and discrimination against groups that are structurally excluded do the partnership programmes aim to address at global and regional levels? To what extent are the international advocacy activities of the consortia aligned with the interests of their partners in the global South during the implementation of the programme?

All consortia and LFS funds address intersecting dimensions of inequality and discrimination against groups that are structurally excluded, with gender inequality being addressed across all consortia.

All consortia and LFS funds in the international component address gender inequality, either as their central topic or within a gender mainstreaming approach. As described in our mapping, all SDG 5 consortia and LFS funds have a strong focus on WRGE. Promising intersectional approaches have been observed.

The structures and processes partnerships use to elevate the voices of partners in the global South in international advocacy have been described in Section 3.3 (discussion of indicators SCS6 and SCS7). Section 5.3 focuses on the question of Southern leadership, and Section 5.5 discusses the partnerships' approaches to inclusion.

³¹ In three partnerships the budget does not show any dedicated international advocacy funds, but their programme proposals refer to funding being set aside for international advocacy activities, e.g. to cover related travel costs.

5.3 Southern leadership and legitimacy

Southern leadership has been a defining intention in international advocacy among the consortia and LFS funds and an important ingredient for effective advocacy. Previous collaboration at international arenas appears to be a key condition for effective Southern leadership in international advocacy. The extent to which Southern leadership materialises may be limited by shrinking spaces for civil society, restrictions on organisational bandwidth, and persistent inequities in North–South power dynamics.

The SCS partnerships derive their legitimacy from a combination of formal accreditation, expertise, experience, networking with powerful stakeholders, and strategies of inclusive movement building.

5.3.1 Southern civil society leadership in international advocacy programme design

RQ7: To what extent did Southern leadership materialise in the design of the global/regional-level advocacy and lobby components of the programmes?

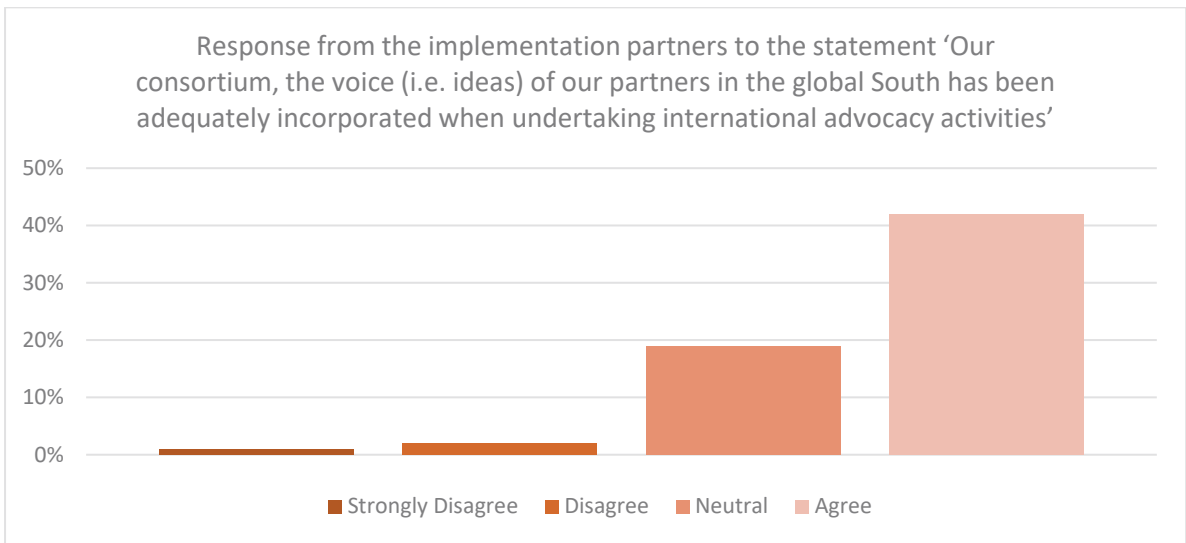
The inclusion of Southern CSOs in the consortia’s core group and governance structures has enhanced their (potential) role in international advocacy.

Interviews with consortium leads and partners suggest a spectrum of approaches to Southern leadership in international advocacy for, with and by Southern partners (as described in our findings against indicators SCS4 and SCS7 in Section 3.3). Leadership by Southern CSOs is inherent to Southern-led consortia but has also been observed in Northern-led consortia, where Southern members and contractual partners lead in certain advocacy arenas or on certain topics.

Consortia explored in the horizontal case study have developed approaches to governance which seek to redress North–South power imbalances, build mutual accountability and trust, and amplify Southern voices. One consortium has established a quarterly steering committee meeting whose chair rotates annually between its members, all of whom – except the consortium lead – are based in the global South. In another consortium, every engagement between members of a consortium-wide steering committee uses translation services to ensure the meaningful participation of national organisations.

Southern CSOs involved in the consortia as implementation partners, though not in the lead in most cases, contribute to developing their consortium’s international advocacy strategy. In our survey with consortium partners, a majority indicated that their voice and ideas were being incorporated in international advocacy (see also our findings against indicator SCS7 in Section 3.3). Southern contracting partners are also involved in the design of international advocacy components. This finding is in line with findings from the survey with consortium members, which revealed that most (78%) of the consortium members’ advocacy activities align with those of consortium members or implementation partners from the global South.

Figure 7: Survey results on the inclusion of partners’ voices in the global South



The structure and processes within the SCS framework can limit Southern leadership, especially leadership by smaller, less prominent Southern CSOs.

Although the partnerships include good examples of joint and Southern leadership (the latter being guaranteed in LFS funds and global South-led consortia), most SCS partnerships have a CSO in the global North at their helm as the lead contracting partner with MFA. This (often pyramid-shaped) structure, combined with fund disbursement and reporting processes, creates an inherent imbalance in power dynamics. As emerged during our validation workshop with SCS partners, this approach risks disrupting locally rooted CSO efforts at international levels – especially when Northern partners, enjoying easier access to international arenas, dominate in international advocacy. In that situation, Southern partners’ role might be limited to providing examples that can be fed into their international advocacy:

‘Civic space at the international level is becoming increasingly challenged. CSOs from the global South are being excluded from the international conversation. They are facing trouble with accreditation at the UN level and can be blocked from attending meetings. They find it difficult to even go because of visas and costs.’

Furthermore, CSOs in SCS partnerships have pointed out that compliance with MFA requirements, e.g. on proposal and report formats, requires specialised skills and a considerable investment in time and other resources. The impending DQA phase of this research will show how the partnerships enable members at all levels to generate appropriate monitoring information for reporting to MFA. Developing effective mechanisms for reporting from all levels of the partnerships up to MFA requires dedicated resources – and potentially diverts resources from work that is more likely to contribute to desired changes at the political level.

Supporting Southern leadership is both an outward and inward-looking process for Northern CSOs. Working to shift the power relations takes time and involves a commitment to humility and dialogue.

Work for Southern leadership is outwardly focused in terms of enabling Southern-based organisations to access spaces and support opportunities for leveraging. It is also inwardly focused in terms of timing, resources and governance arrangements that enable space, opportunities, reflection and engagements. However, whether this is set out explicitly in a ‘ways of working’ document within partnerships is not clear at this point.

Reflections from KIIs saw an acknowledgement that supporting Southern leadership is linked to a shift in power relations; within that is a need to be open, to let go of previous ways of working and to listen. All of these were seen to take time:

‘Looking at how we engage with advocacy is completely different due to Southern leadership – through the commitment of not representing others, it’s core to how consortia members operate – all members coming from the same approach.’

The six consortia in our sample that had worked under an earlier MFA-funded partnership identified, in their baseline reports, more prevalence of Southern-led international advocacy than other partnerships. The enabling effects of pre-existing relationships and ways of working have been corroborated by KIIs:

‘We are a consortium of women’s rights organisations which were previously partners, which made it easy to come together to apply for the MFA fund. We have established relationships and ways of working; trust. It’s easier than starting from scratch. That continues to guide our policy and advocacy work.’

‘The most important enabling factor is that we all know each other. Our past experiences [...] made a huge difference. It was easy to come together as individuals and organisations.’

‘We were not involved in Phase I but our involvement [in another Dutch-funded programme] helped us to find a flow for [the consortium].’

Perhaps unsurprisingly, some Southern organisations who are core members and/or have been selected to lead on regional advocacy have extensive prior experience of advocacy in international forums.

5.3.2 Legitimacy towards duty bearers and rights holders in international advocacy

RQ8: How do consortium partners view their own legitimacy towards duty bearers in relation to their global and regional lobbying and advocacy? What gives consortium partners legitimacy to conduct global and regional lobbying and advocacy on behalf of rights holders?

Legitimacy towards duty bearers in international advocacy arenas is based on (i) formal status, (ii) closeness to government negotiators, and (iii) knowledge and experience in the thematic field and in navigating international advocacy arenas.

Consortia and funds have derived their legitimacy in international advocacy vis-à-vis duty bearers from formal ECOSOC status, technical expertise, and a history of engagement within specific advocacy arenas. Across the SCS framework, consortium members in international advocacy are frequently CSOs with a track record at global or regional levels. Those that are registered with ECOSOC can participate formally as observers in multilateral government negotiations. Others contribute to NGO forums and pursue other forms of civil society advocacy. MFA diplomats have mentioned consulting with ‘trusted partners’ in civil society when preparing for international negotiations – a concept that may deserve further exploration.

Legitimacy towards rights holders has rested on partners’ credibility and a strategy of inclusive movement building.

Legitimacy towards rights holders is closely related to credibility. When asked about the credibility of consortium members in international advocacy on behalf of rights holders, partners referred most often to

the **relevance, breadth and depth of their expertise and experience**. This included length of engagement, geographical coverage and knowledge acquired or generated through research and publications.

Credibility to advocate on the behalf of rights holders was widely seen as being enhanced by joint working:

‘Women’s rights organisations have been working on these issues for years. Their entire existence has focused on advocacy and on SGBV and women’s political participation. They are even more credible when they come together to join voices on common issues.’

Credibility derived from inclusive movement building was seen as being related to the structures of consortia and constituent organisations – many of whom are membership-based, are networks, or have worked within wider federation structures – as well as their relationships with rights holders more broadly:

‘[Consortium] partners work with the communities which are most affected by the issues we are working on e.g. [...] SGBV survivors in communities. [They] really understand the context, issues and are themselves part of the communities we are trying to support.’

However, not all consortia see movement building as their *raison d’être*. Several consortium member and MFA responses to relevant interview questions suggested that consortium formation was driven, at least partly, by pragmatism – i.e. the opportunity to access funding that would not be available to organisations applying individually – rather than being an aspiration to represent partners or their constituents.

5.4 Alignment and cooperation with other players in selected spaces

RQ9: To what extent were global/regional advocacy components of programme design coordinated with relevant players at global and regional levels? To what extent was MFA involved in coordinating the different efforts, and are there any tangible plans in place for coordination of implementation?

SCS partnerships have built on previous experience at international arenas and with MFA for mutually beneficial cooperation in international advocacy – MFA facilitating access, CSOs providing evidence.

Most partnerships with substantial international advocacy components build on their members’ experience in global and regional advocacy and on the contacts they have developed over the years with a range of players in these arenas. As outlined in the SCS ToC and the ToCs of related instruments (see Section 5.1), MFA is not only an important funding partner for international advocacy but also a potential door opener and ally in these arenas, especially at global and EU levels, where MFA is a state party.

Several interview partners quoted the example of CSW, where MFA has included CSO representatives both in the preparation of annual CSW sessions and in its actual delegation to the negotiations. MFA has also found ways of consulting with CSOs platforms such as Wo=Men in real time during official negotiations via web-based messenger services, thus enabling Dutch diplomats to build CSO positions into the negotiations:

‘MFA can offer entry points [for WRGE advocacy], via the MFA’s Director for Gender Equality or embassies, which the partners might find it difficult to contact on their own. MFA can also inform partners on MFA activities in the Human Rights Council or other arenas, giving partners and opportunity to add their voice.’

‘This is their [MFA’s] general model [at CSW] – constant interchange with CSOs. [...] Member states generally don’t include NGOs in their delegations. With the Netherlands, CSOs are in the negotiation room itself – and part of [the] negotiation process. This was

limited this year because only two days in advance did they get confirmation that CSOs could participate in person.'

Ad hoc consultation with representatives of SCS consortia and LFS funds has been a lighter-touch way of MFA open space for CSO demands. However, one interviewee from the baseline sample described that such consultation could feel tokenistic, as MFA contacts tended to seek ad hoc advice at short notice.

Collaboration with other SCS partnerships in international advocacy has not started across most consortia.

International advocacy is a major focus for a small number of partnerships only. Most consortia in our research support national advocacy across several countries, with international advocacy complementing this work to varying degrees. Several KII respondents have admitted that their main work in 2021 and 2022 has been to organise systems, to strengthen capacity within countries and to conduct national-level advocacy. The programme proposals of 14 out of the 20 sample partnerships have included strategies to collaborate with other partnerships under the MFA SCS framework, striving for synergies particularly in relation to groups they have prioritised (mainly women and youth). However, planning documents (e.g. advocacy strategies and action plans) do not foresee any significant cooperation with other consortia.

5.5 Gender, inclusion and intersectionality

WRGE has been a key consideration for consortia and LFS funds in the design and monitoring of their international advocacy. Inclusive and intersectional approaches are central for consortia when designing the global and regional advocacy components of their programmes.

Given the nature of this policy framework, participation by different target groups of interest is primarily indirect at the design phase of global and regional advocacy components. However, more could be done – including by MFA – to facilitate the participation of traditionally excluded groups.

5.5.1 Gender mainstreaming, gender transformative, rights-based, inclusive and intersectional approaches

RQ10: To what extent is gender mainstreamed effectively in the global and regional lobbying and advocacy components of the programmes in the related budgets? To what extent do these components use gender transformative, rights-based, inclusive and intersectional approaches in their design, and have these been translated in concrete operational and MEL plans (e.g. gender budgeting)?

Gender mainstreaming and gender transformative, rights-based approaches are highly prevalent across the SCS partnerships.

With regard to minimum requirements for mainstreaming gender, as part of the process to define their goals, consortia have conducted **gender analysis** and gender-sensitive stakeholder mapping. Gender-sensitive stakeholder mapping was found to be used for gender analysis by the majority of the consortia in our sample. Most partnerships included gender equality as one of the core end goals of their international advocacy activities. There has been further deepening on this concept of gender equality through advocacy, with emphasis on rights of Indigenous women (three partnerships), rights of women with disability (one consortium), rights of girls and young women (three consortia), rights of LGBTQI persons (three consortia) and rights of persons involved in sex work (three consortia).

The strong focus on women's rights – and their intersection with the rights of other marginalised groups – is perhaps not surprising, given that four of the five SCS policy instruments are reserved for **feminist organisations** and WRGE mainstreaming is a funding requirement.

Many partnership alliances have adopted intersectional approaches.

Our research has found examples for intersectional approaches across the SCS framework. For instance, three partnership programmes plan to focus most of their international advocacy on the rights of Indigenous

women, one on the rights of women with disabilities, three on the rights of girls and young women, three on sex workers' rights, three on LGBTQI rights, three on economic rights for women, and three on gender justice more broadly.³²

Good practice from the PoV policy instrument includes examples where some consortia use **intersectional gender mainstreaming** when working on topics not primarily focused on WRGE. For example, a consortium on climate mitigation and adaptation has integrated considerations of the interconnected themes of gender equality, inclusion and youth participation into the design of its international advocacy component. The consultation process for this programme involved ten NGOs, five environmental justice funds, six women's rights funds, two strategic allies and eight CBOs, who contributed to joint context, problem and actor analysis and to ToC sections with local, regional and intersectional perspectives.

Many SCS partnerships take an **inclusive and intersectional approach** to reflect the multiple layers of oppression experienced by rights holders. All but two PoV consortia in our sample detail this approach in their plans for their global and regional lobbying and advocacy components. Approaches include: (i) bringing the intersectional voices together in consultation during the design phase; (ii) channelling and amplifying these voices within meetings; (iii) conducting power analysis and reflecting on leadership levels within communities involved; (iv) analysing multiple layers of discrimination. Consortia within the SRHR policy instrument highlight in particular the need for an intersectional approach to their advocacy. One defines intersectional SRHR advocacy as 'to give voice to and create space for marginalised youth with little power by accounting for their overlapping, multiple marginalised identities and how they shape their SRH needs, so they will be able to defend their SRHR, with the aim to influence decisions for improvement in legislation, economics, social systems and institutions'. A representative of one SRHR consortium noted that their diversified membership with six different organisations and backgrounds 'are diversity exemplified'. They plan to use different experiences to improve existing tools and approaches. Other consortia expressed interest in piloting intersectionality tools to further strengthen strategic collaboration and movement building across communities and issues. The consortia plan to use data from intersectional SRHR research to develop credible advocacy goals and to use the evidence for agenda setting. Intersectionality encourages developing common advocacy goals cross-identity, cross-sector and cross-level.

Half of the respondents to the consortium members' survey reported that their international advocacy participants experienced either implicit or explicit discrimination related to age, gender, class, religion, caste, race, sexual orientation or disability.

5.5.2 Risks potentially limiting to social inclusion in international advocacy

This brief section focuses on risks only. For a fuller discussion of inclusion in international advocacy spaces, please refer to Section 3.3 (SCS 8).

Risks linked to shrinking civic spaces particularly affect persons experiencing intersectional discrimination, including, among others, women with disabilities, Indigenous women, LGBTIQ persons and sex workers. These risks are deepening; for example, 2021 has seen an unprecedented number – 375 – of recorded murders of transgender people.³³ Risk assessments have been a routine requirement by MFA but should not be treated as routine, especially when it comes to risks faced by persons who are traditionally excluded:

'We need [to] remember to look at things from the perspective of 'Leave No One Behind'. Women are not a homogenous group. We need to look at intersectionalities. The spotlight needs to be on dissecting, analysing and prioritising.'

³² There are overlaps in counting as some consortia focus on two different groups.

³³ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiewareham/2021/11/11/375-transgender-people-murdered-in-2021-deadliest-year-since-records-began/?sh=597753d7321c>

5.5.2 Inclusive participation of rights holders

RQ11: How have girls and boys, adolescents, youth, young women and men, adults, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ people, religious & ethnic minorities and people in the lowest wealth quintiles been involved in designing the global and regional lobbying and advocacy components of the programme? To what extent could that ensure equal and meaningful participation of all groups?

There are promising examples of meaningful involvement of women, youth and other groups of interest during the design phase of partnership programmes.

Given the nature of this policy framework, participation by different target groups of interest is primarily indirect at the design phase of global and regional advocacy components.

The partnership structure generates processes for engagement that leave individual consortium members responsible for the involvement of the different groups they represent. Interviews with members of consortia have suggested that each consortium member is in constant dialogue with their implementing partners, who have direct links to the constituencies. Involvement of the local partners of the consortia – who represent the girls, women and other target population – with the SP strategy ensured inclusion of the voice of the target population and their interests into the advocacy strategy.

Within our sample of 20, eight consortia reported direct involvement of rights holders in their programme design. Types of involvement included co-creation workshops, consultations and interviews with rights holders from targeted communities. For example, in one consortium international advocacy components were developed through a co-creation process that included workshops and brainstorming sessions in working groups with youth, leading to the creation of a global youth panel to help steer global priorities. Other examples of meaningful involvement of interest groups at this stage tend to be limited to programme design more broadly (rather than international advocacy specifically). One PoV consortium used its existing networks to invite girls and young women to comment on which aspects of its previous MFA-funded programme should be included in the new programme. During these consultations, participants also confirmed consortium partners' experiences that unequal power relations exist between the Dutch-based lead organisation and the other consortium members. This led the consortia to review their governance structures; girls' and young women's representatives were selected to form a board speaking directly to the consortium's global steering committee.

Despite these promising examples, interviewees have acknowledged that more needs to be done to directly include rights holders in the design phase of advocacy components. Particularly in PoV, which covers a broad range of topics, consortia have highlighted that they intend to be more explicit in their inclusion of different groups. They have conducted research to understand how they can better include women and youth when designing advocacy components. Consortia are also reflecting on refining their funding structures to engage more local organisations and provide space for them to contribute to the global agenda.

Furthermore, the contracting and funding structures of SCS international and implementation processes, as well as the predominance of the English language in documentation and SCS-wide events, impose limits to participation of excluded groups. For instance, a tight reporting rhythm leaves little time for consortium members to translate documentation from their working languages into English (and vice versa for MFA documentation). This is an issue that would deserve some attention in the DQA/TPM phase.

5.6 Conflict sensitivity and integrity

Most partnerships are employing an appropriate, gender-sensitive, three-pronged approach to conflict, which includes conflict analysis, informed design and implementation, and monitoring and adaptation. All partnerships and most of their members have policies in place to ensure integrity.

RQ12: What measures were taken to integrate conflict sensitivity in the design of the partnership programmes (where relevant for global/regional lobbying and advocacy components)?

RQ13: To what extent do all SCS strategic partnerships use integrity and safeguarding policies and principles in the design of the global and regional advocacy and lobby components of their programmes?

5.6.1 Conflict sensitivity of the consortia in their international advocacy activities

Where relevant, most consortia are employing a three-step approach to conflict sensitivity, which includes conflict analysis, informed design and implementation, and monitoring and adaptation.

Conflict is a significant driver of inequality and injustice in many focus countries of the consortia, which has implications on the design of their international advocacy activities. 71% of consortia reported that they operate in a context affected by conflict, predominantly focused on Latin America, West and East Africa, MENA, and south and southeast Asia. Measures taken to integrate conflict sensitivity in the design of the partnership programmes have focused primarily on a three-step approach, the first step being to conduct a conflict analysis. 63% of consortia partners reported that they undertook a dedicated conflict analysis during the design phase of their programmes. This aligns with similar findings from the document review, which found that all but six consortia and funds (two PoV, two LFS, one PoW and one SRHR) in our sample included conflict sensitivity analysis in their proposals. A key component of this stage is working with local partners and activists on the ground to better understand their needs before determining advocacy components.

The second step is to use this analysis to inform the design and implementation of the advocacy strategy and to foster collaboration around a shared contextual understanding. Given the focus of most consortia on national advocacy, many work closely with their local partners so that they can do advocacy in inclusive ways that they themselves determine will be effective and safe, given their own experiences of the national context. However, it is important to note that at this stage of the policy framework **it is too early to determine how conflict sensitivity at the national level will flow into the actual design of international advocacy strategies.**

The last step is the continued monitoring of the context and adapting advocacy activities where necessary. Of those that conducted conflict analysis, 16% of consortium partners reported that this was a one-off activity, and 42% plan to undertake another analysis. The process of reviewing and updating is in line with good practice and acknowledges that conflict analysis can never be exhaustive. Consortia that plan to conduct ongoing analysis note that they will attempt to identify potential or increasing tensions and the (unintended) impact of the programme on possible conflict. Based on the results of monitoring, they plan to adapt advocacy activities as necessary.

Given the focus on WRGE within the SCS framework, gender considerations are a key part of conflict-sensitive approaches.

Consortia under the SCS framework, and particularly under the SDG 5 fund, highlight the need for gender considerations within conflict sensitivity approaches. Within documentation and interviews, consortia report that their analysis pays particular attention to understanding (i) the specific risks faced by women and non-binary people and (ii) the power dynamics and dominating gender norms at play within conflict settings. For example, conflict analysis by one PoW consortium shows that their international advocacy agenda needs to be sensitive as to how advocacy – including alliance building and also resource allocation targeted to specific women and youth – will affect the overall political and social dynamics within the region. Under PoV, a climate change-focused consortium emphasises how the degradation of nature can lead to gender-based violence, and so analyses the risks involved in worsening existing conflicts or sparking new conflict through their advocacy efforts. To mitigate the risks involved in working on promoting inclusion for women and non-binary people in conflict-affected regions, consortia plan to use gender toolboxes within their MEL systems, vulnerability assessments and feminist protection frameworks to identify (potential) backlashes, and they also plan to remain flexible to adapt international advocacy activities accordingly.

5.6.2 Integrity

The majority of consortium members have policies in place to ensure compliance and accountability in relation to sexual exploitation and harassment (SEAH) and integrity under the SCS policy framework, which underpins the design of the international advocacy components of their programmes.

Overall, integrity and safeguarding policies are common across all members of the partnerships, not just the consortium leads. 86% of the partnership members participating in our survey reported that their organisation had a safeguarding and whistleblowing policy in place, while 91% had an anti-discrimination and harassment policy, 80% an ethics policy and 89% an anti-corruption policy. Other integrity policies reported included child protection policies, digital security policies and confidentiality declarations. Although there is not always a clear link between these policies and the design of advocacy components, 14 consortia specify in their documentation that their integrity and safeguarding policies and principles are embedded in all programme planning.

The research team has found some examples of how these policies have led to consortia undertaking a safeguarding risk assessment during the design and planning phase, considering specific risks related to advocacy, including media campaigning. As part of their duty of care obligation, the consortium partners currently have in place different training programmes on integrity, safeguarding on SEAH, and security. For example, one PoV consortium adheres to the principle of ‘zero tolerance for inaction’ to ensure that local partners have adequate capacity for preventing and responding to SEAH (and/or will provide extra training) and that any serious cases of misconduct will be reported to consortium members and MFA.

Our survey with consortium members suggests there is a North–South divide in the prevalence of integrity policies, with some 74% of consortium members based in the global North reporting they had at least one form of integrity policy in place and 43% of the respondents in the global South reporting having such policies for their organisation.

Principles of ‘Do No Harm’ and social cohesion underpin the design of advocacy components, particularly with a view to safeguard activists and other rights holders.

Partnerships recognise the principle of ‘Do No Harm’ as a key component of international advocacy, especially in conflict contexts and areas where civic space is decreasing. Activists are facing growing levels of risk, and so consortia highlight the need for safeguarding approaches, determining which voices can be elevated at a certain time without doing harm. For example, one consortium has emphasised the importance of constant analysis and dialogue with local partners to find alternative ways to engage in advocacy where spaces are restricted. Some consortia, particularly in the PoV instrument, aim to go beyond the ‘Do No Harm’ approach and strive to ‘Do More Good’ by not only minimising or avoiding negative impacts but also by striving for a mitigating or transformative impact on local conflict dynamics.

5.7 Inclusion of lessons learned from previous policy framework implementation

The partnerships have used lessons and opportunities from previous partnership programmes, both internally (regarding ways of working) and externally, when engaging in advocacy arenas. Key changes that have arisen from such learning include more systematic efforts to facilitate Southern leadership and engage in longer-term international advocacy.

RQ14: To what extent have lessons learned from previous partnership programmes been considered in the design of global/regional advocacy and lobby activities in the programmes with previous partnerships?

Six consortia in our sample had previous partnerships with MFA, of which three worked in PoV, two in LFS and one in WPS policy instruments. Evidence from KIIs and the analysis of programme proposals shows that this experience has not only given consortia time to work together in their target area of interest but has also allowed ToCs and related assumptions to be tested and refined. All partnerships under the previous

policy instrument commissioned evaluations to distil learning. For example, the evaluation of the previous programme for one consortium identified a gap between country and international advocacy; to address this, specific approaches were designed for the current phase of the consortium's programme.

Lessons learned from earlier cooperation helped partnerships to identify needs and develop strategies on, among other things, strengthening international advocacy capacities of the Southern CSOs. Moreover, the working relationship among these consortium and implementation partners ensured incorporation of their voice and ideas into programming of the present phase of the MFA SCS policy framework of 2021–2025:

'Previous strategy partnership was very critical for design of this programme – WPS focus from previous programme and delivery including these elements in this programme helped us to really understand how we can engage with very fragile communities, with ongoing security situations.'

One of the key lessons from the previous frameworks has been the need for increased prominence of different voices. **Southern leadership** is a new central theme across the SCS policy framework. This has brought new voices and perspectives into the design of advocacy and has meant that some previous local partners are now consortium members. It has also meant that roles and responsibilities are more equal in terms of governance structures compared to the previous framework. Learning from previous partnership programmes highlighted the need for participation of different voices, including more participation from rights holders, which has been translated into current programmes (see also Sections 5.3 and 5.5).

From the previous framework, recognition has grown for the need to be consistent and constant with their advocacy work. This has led to partnerships taking a **multi-year approach to their international advocacy** which includes, inter alia, (i) continuous movement building, (ii) keeping engaged with state parties with whom there has been previous cooperation, and (iii) **responding to shrinking civic spaces**, for example by constant opposition monitoring and by making fuller use of evidence to counteract negative rhetoric.

Additionally, consortia have highlighted difficulties under the previous policy framework to determine the effect of their international advocacy. Although these difficulties have not been fully addressed, consortia are taking steps to **improve MEL systems** to better capture results. For example, some consortia in the PoW instrument are focusing more on feminist MEL, which acknowledges that transformative change in unequal gender and power relations is complex and nonlinear. However, informants noted that this approach is sometimes at odds with MFA reporting requirements.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

A set of tentative conclusions and recommendations was discussed in an online validation workshop with MFA and representatives of the partnerships in mid-October 2022. In addition, MFA provided specific feedback after the validation workshop. Those inputs were taken into consideration to develop the conclusions and recommendations below.

6.1 General conclusions on the SCS policy framework

The SCS policy framework has been designed with the objective to strengthen advocacy capacities in the global South with a combination of funding (a key element of advocacy capacity), learning activities and diplomatic support via Netherlands RO and Embassies.

During the baseline phase, most partnerships in the international component have focused on strengthening capacities at national and subnational levels. Only a few have started implementing international advocacy (as of mid-2022). Evidence for effective Southern leadership can be found mainly in partnerships with lead organisations based in the global South.

There are two main explanations for this apparent slow start – one related to the partnerships’ programme logic and one to the structure and processes within the SCS policy framework:

- Most partnerships in the international component focus their advocacy and advocacy capacity strengthening at **national and subnational levels** before considering international advocacy activities. That is a valid strategy. Only a few SCS partnerships have a focus on international advocacy.
- During the first year of their programme, most partnerships focus on establishing internal structures, decision-making systems and reporting processes. This is a necessary focus since MFA funding flows within consortia can be intricate and involve funding transfers from the consortium lead to the consortium members, from the consortium members to the contracting partners, and occasionally from contracting partners to their partners. This takes time to set up, and can therefore cause delays to beginning work in other areas.

6.2 Conclusions against the research questions

This section summarises top-level conclusions regarding the RQs for the baseline phase. More specific findings and conclusions from which we have derived a first set of provisional recommendations are listed in Section 6.3.

6.2.1 Overall conclusions from baseline measurement per SCS indicator

The baseline findings described in Sections 3.3–3.5 of this report yield the following conclusions per SCS indicator. *See also Section 6.12 for conclusions on RQs that are linked to some SCS indicators.*

SCS025: # of international agreements blocked, adopted or improved for sustainable and inclusive development as a result of CSO engagement. As evidenced by the survey data, all consortia and funds report some level of (planned) involvement in international advocacy in various sets of global and regional arenas, with CSW in New York and the CEDAW Committee in Geneva mentioned most frequently. Contrary to the partnerships’ and funds’ work at national levels, blocking, adopting or improving existing global norms is rarely among their objectives, which is understandable given that changes at that level are beyond the realm of influence of CSOs; they may take decades to materialise, and then take even longer to have an impact on CSO constituencies and intended beneficiaries – if they ever do. This is because governments must endorse international norms (e.g. ratify human rights treaties) and translate them into national contexts. In that situation, it is legitimate for CSOs to focus on national and subnational-level enforcement of international norms instead of aiming for international norms change. SCS international advocacy can make a difference in multilateral arenas by drawing attention to gaps in national implementation of international

norms, e.g. via shadow reports to international treaty bodies such as the CEDAW Committee in Geneva, or by convincing powerful state parties to prevent the passing of resolutions that would interpret international norms in a restrictive manner. Some SCS partnerships are active at the international level, while others use international advocacy arenas more for networking and to enhance their visibility.

SCS031: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or creating space to engage at international level. Strategic partnerships adapt their influencing strategies to their priorities and contexts, ranging from low-key lobbying to public campaigning. Consortium members and their sets of (sub-)grantees and allies come with different backgrounds, skill sets and experience: one partner may be particularly good at developing advocacy strategies; a different consortium member may be good at organising public campaigns. Combining such different skills that contribute to international advocacy capacity has yielded promising advocacy strategies and activities among some partnerships. KIIs with Dutch diplomats and external specialists suggest that some CSOs involved in SCS are influential in international arenas, especially CSW.

SCS4: # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs for, by or with their membership/constituency at international level. Although most partnerships are yet to undertake international advocacy work, there is strong evidence from KIIs with consortium leads, and from the survey, for joint planning within the partnerships that has enabled contractual partners to (potentially) contribute to a wide range of advocacy activities. Partnerships have facilitated, or plan to facilitate, Southern civil society access to international decision-making spaces. Key barriers to ensuring/increasing partners' representation in international policy spaces have been funding concerns, COVID-19 and geography.

SCS5: # of CSOs with increased L&A capacities. As of mid-2022, most partnerships were in the early stages of international advocacy and related capacity building – the focus being mainly at national levels. Top-level findings on four dimensions of international of advocacy capacity are listed in Table 3.

SCS6: # of CSOs included in SP programmes. Evidence from the longitudinal case study, as well as KIIs with consortia members and leads, identified movement building as a key strategy for advocacy for, with and by Southern CSOs, as it is seen as enabling CSOs to connect with allies, facilitate Southern access to global arenas and foster Southern leadership. Active governance arrangements seek to improve equity among partners.

SCS7: # of CSOs that have enhanced representation of constituencies. Although most consortium members stated that the voices of their implementing partners were considered, nearly one-third did not. Consortia that had worked together previously appeared to have more effective internal structures and processes to integrate the voices of their implementing partners.

Levels of participation tended to be moderate to good (between consultation and partnership on the ladder of participation), with activities varying across this scale within each consortium member. Issues of geographical location and speed of response were noted as challenges in enabling Southern-based organisations to take the lead in global arenas. Good practice has been identified in partnerships that use urgent action funds to enable implementing partners to respond flexibly to new opportunities (and threats).

SCS8: # of CSOs using a gender and social inclusion lens during all phases of the programming cycle, with specific attention to youth. Gender and social inclusion are key considerations in the design of the programmes. At this early stage of SCS implementation, understanding the profile of partners and key contextual gender and social inclusion issues is the current focus across consortia. Numerous challenges were highlighted in ensuring gender and social inclusion as part of international advocacy, especially for Southern-based CSOs. Barriers are often linked to geographical location (combined with travel restrictions), language and cultural obstacles, political barriers to civil society activism, biases prevalent in society (racial, class, religion, caste, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical features), and skills gaps. In this context, it has been noted that the predominance of the English language in the documentation and learning events organised by MFA has presented challenges for inclusion of partnerships with non-English working languages.

Table 3: Initial conclusions on international advocacy capacity against our four-dimensional model

Dimension	Consortium members	Contracting partners
Strategy	There is evidence of high-quality international advocacy strategies among consortium partners and LFS funds, including promising efforts to include voices from grass roots level up.	As of early 2022, in most cases consortium members, not their contractual partners, are leading international advocacy on behalf of the consortia. Contracting partners that do not lead in international advocacy are involved to varying degrees in international advocacy strategy development and planning, depending on their experience and resources.
Collective action	Collective action and movement building have contributed to capacity for collective action within the partnerships.	Collective action is a defining feature and a strength in contracting partners' international advocacy.
Technique and tactics	On the whole, consortium partners and LFS funds display appropriate technical and tactical knowledge in international advocacy arenas, with slight differences between Northern and Southern members.	The majority of contracting partners involved in international advocacy hold relevant technical and tactical expertise.
Access	CSOs from the global North have better access to, and more engagement in, international decision-making spaces than their Southern peers in the consortia. Resource constraints particularly affect organisations working on controversial topics.	Contracting partners' access to international advocacy arenas is restricted due to external factors and lack of resources.

6.2.2 Conclusions on RQs 2–14

RQ2: Relevance of SCS ToCs at the framework and instrument levels

The MFA ToCs for the SCS policy framework and its policy instruments strive to capture all major levels of activity within SCS, which has required a level of abstraction. The ToC encompasses the full SCS framework, including all national-level partnerships. As a result, there are no specific ToCs or ToC pathways that capture the ways in which advocacy works differently at the international level or on capacity building within SCS.

For Contribution Analysis in our MTR, it will be important to jointly reconstruct the implicit ToC of the international component, which necessarily differs from the overall ToC because the intervention levels are different and the meandering pathways or weaves of change are even more complex than at national levels.

Among the ToCs of the policy instruments in our study, the WPS ToC displays the strongest relevance in the field of international advocacy, in that it is aligned to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related UNSCR resolutions and the Netherlands National Action Plan 1325. It displays clear policy objectives at that international arena, and justifies the inclusion of a service delivery component.

RQ3: Relevance to regional and global policies and frameworks

The international components of the strategic partnership programmes refer to a wide range of regional and global norms and policies, which reflects the diversity of consortia memberships.

Overall, the partnerships refer to regional and global norms which support their work and which they appear to integrate in their work. However, this does not necessarily mean they conduct targeted international advocacy on these norms (see also the summary of our findings on indicator SCS025 above – Section 3.3.1). Many partnership proposals mention a wide array of norms and international advocacy arenas without necessarily displaying advocacy strategies for all potential spaces for influencing. That is especially understandable for partnerships with a strong focus on national and subnational work.

RQ4: Complementarity to MFA's diplomacy work

The strategic partnerships can build on existing processes for collaboration with MFA diplomats, especially at CSW. Conversely, in the other international advocacy arenas reviewed here, closer contacts and joint strategies for cooperation may need to be developed.

RQ5: International advocacy in the partnerships' ToCs

All strategic partnerships include international advocacy in their evidence-based programme ToCs. This is encouraging, as clear ToCs enable them to reflect on their causal assumptions and verify them when monitoring their progress, so that adjustments can be made. However, the level to which they engage in international advocacy varies greatly, which is in turn reflected in the diversity of how much resource is reserved for advocacy at the international level.

Risks identified include contextual, programmatic, organisational and technology/data risks.

RQ6: Addressing dimensions of inequality and discrimination

Thanks to MFA's requirements and selection criteria for the SCS framework, all consortia and LFS funds address intersecting dimensions of inequality and discrimination against groups that are structurally excluded in their programme proposals, with gender inequality being addressed across all consortia.

Women's leadership and gender sensitivity are, unsurprisingly, highly prevalent across the WRGE, SRHR, WPS and LFS funds, and are also prevalent, more unexpectedly, in PoV. Some partnerships are specifically geared to strengthening groups that are experiencing intersecting types of inequality and discrimination, such as women with disabilities, lesbians in the global South, sex workers of all genders, and women in the global South more broadly. We have found good practice examples whereby people affected by intersectional discrimination prepare themselves for leadership in advocacy, e.g. in advocacy training for grass roots women experiencing social marginalisation.

RQ7: Southern civil society leadership in international advocacy programme design

Southern leadership has been a defining feature in international advocacy planning among many consortia and LFS funds and is an important ingredient for effective advocacy. Apart from consortium/fund leadership from the global South, previous collaboration at international arenas appears to be a key condition for effective Southern leadership in this field. The extent to which Southern leadership materialises may be limited by shrinking spaces for civil society, restrictions on organisational bandwidth, and persistent inequities in North–South power dynamics.

RQ8: Legitimacy towards duty bearers and rights holders in international advocacy

Legitimacy towards duty bearers in international advocacy arenas is based on (i) formal status, (ii) closeness to government negotiators and (iii) knowledge and experience in the thematic field and in navigating international advocacy arenas. Legitimacy towards rights holders has rested on partners' credibility and a strategy of inclusive movement building. However, not all consortia have a focus on movement building; several interviewees pointed out that the formation of their consortium was driven by the pragmatic purpose of accessing MFA funding that would not be available to CSOs applying individually.

RQ9: Alignment and cooperation with other players in selected spaces

SCS partnerships have built on previous experience at international arenas and with MFA for mutually beneficial cooperation in international advocacy – there are already good examples of MFA facilitating access and CSOs providing evidence, especially in the CSW context. We have found no evidence of collaboration of consortia with other SCS partnerships (as opposed to collaboration between organisations that happen to be part of different partnerships) in international advocacy at this phase of SCS implementation.

RQ10: Gender mainstreaming, gender transformative, rights-based, inclusive and intersectional approaches

WRGE has been a key consideration for consortia and LFS funds in the design and monitoring of their international advocacy. Inclusive and intersectional approaches are central concerns for consortia when designing the global and regional advocacy components of their programmes. Given the nature of this policy framework, participation by people who experience particularly severe forms of marginalisation is primarily indirect at the design phase of global and regional advocacy components. However, there are examples of partnerships supporting persons experiencing marginalisation for active roles in advocacy, especially at national levels.

RQ11: Inclusive participation of diverse rights holders

There are promising examples of meaningful involvement of women, youth and other groups of interest during the design phase of partnership programmes. However, the overall structure and processes of the SCS policy framework, as well as the predominance of the English language in SCS documentation and events, limit opportunities for participation by ultimate intended beneficiaries.

RQ12: Conflict sensitivity of the consortia in their international advocacy activities

Where relevant, most consortia are employing a three-step approach to conflict sensitivity, which includes conflict analysis, informed design and implementation, and monitoring and adaptation. Given a pronounced focus on WRGE within the SCS framework, gender considerations are a key part of conflict-sensitive approaches. However, it is too early to determine how conflict sensitivity at the national level will flow into the actual design of international advocacy strategies.

RQ13: Integrity

The majority of consortium members have policies in place to ensure compliance and accountability in relation to SEAH and integrity under the SCS policy framework, which underpin the design of the international advocacy components of their programmes. Principles of 'Do No Harm' and safeguarding underpin the design of advocacy components.

RQ14: Learning from previous frameworks

The partnerships have used lessons and opportunities from previous partnership programmes, both internally (regarding ways of working) and externally, when engaging in advocacy arenas. Key changes that have flown from such learning include more systematic efforts to facilitate Southern leadership and engage in longer-term international advocacy.

6.3 Recommendations

Initial recommendations derived from our baseline research were adjusted and refined after the validation meeting with MFA and partnership representatives.

Recommendations on advocacy capacity strengthening

- Sections 4.1 and 5.1 highlight that there is no shared definition of advocacy capacity and that MFA's expectations on *international* advocacy capacity development – 'international' referring to advocacy at regional and global policymaking spaces – are not clear in the SCS framework and instrument ToCs. MFA and its SCS partners are therefore encouraged to jointly develop a shared understanding of international advocacy capacity and its strengthening, to fully make use of the wealth of experience in the partnerships and to better capture it in SCS M&E. The international advocacy capacity assessment tool developed in this research can contribute to this process.
- Consortia and contractual partners display a wide range of international advocacy knowledge and experience that deserves to be shared across SCS (Sections 3.1 and 4). International advocacy capacity strengthening should not be limited to training delivery (by Northern experts). Instead, international advocacy capacity strengthening within consortia should facilitate the participation of organisations at diverse levels in designing and implementing international advocacy. For consortia and MFA, it should facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge and experience exchange in all directions – including partners based in the global North and MFA learning from Southern advocates.
- Further SCS research (e.g. case study research) should take a closer look at how MFA and CSOs can work together in international advocacy arenas and at defining scenarios for MFA's role in supporting partnerships in their paths towards the objectives of the SCS framework e.g. passive / active roles, and when to draw on these.
- Section 4 highlights how the inclusive involvement of partners at varying levels of consortia appears to have contributed to strengthening international advocacy capacities. Partnerships should continue encouraging participatory proposal development and inclusive MEL, which appear to have contributed to strengthening contractual partners' capacities.

Recommendations on fostering Southern leadership

- Southern leadership is an intention across SCS. However, in most partnerships, the involvement of Southern-based CSOs in international advocacy has been limited so far. The case studies have identified some good practice on Southern leadership and inclusion (Section 5.3). MFA should promote experience exchange on Southern leadership in international advocacy. This could include dedicating part of the Learning and Research Programme for SCS commissioned by MFA in 2022.
- Partnerships' international advocacy strategy should involve an international-to-local implementation strategy to ensure that the outcomes of the international advocacy activities can be utilised in regional and local contexts and that the benefits reach the target population.
- Strategic partnerships with a track record in joint international advocacy are engaged in international advocacy and expanding space for inclusive CSO advocacy (Section 3.3). Consequently, future policy frameworks that aim for Southern leadership in international advocacy should run over more than five years so that newer partnerships have sufficient time to develop genuine Southern

leadership. Most partnerships are still in the process of developing international advocacy and related capacities.

- In Section 3.3, issues of geographical location and speed of response were noted as challenges in enabling Southern-based organisations to take the lead on certain aspects of international advocacy, especially in negotiations. Good practice has been identified in partnerships that use urgent action funds to respond flexibly to new opportunities (and threats). Northern-led partnerships are encouraged to maintain – or develop – mechanisms to flexibly disburse funding for Southern CSOs to react with the necessary speed to new opportunities and threats in the changing regional and global advocacy landscapes.

Recommendations on inclusion and WRGE mainstreaming

- Tight time frames for proposal development and reporting, combined with other constraints (e.g. the need to translate materials into several languages), make such participation difficult, especially for newly established consortia (Section 3.3). MFA time frames for submitting proposals and reporting should be adjusted to ensure that traditionally excluded groups can participate in planning. MFA should also provide learning and guidance materials in several UN languages (including e.g. Spanish and French) with simultaneous translation.

Annexes

The annexes to this report are delivered in two separate documents – one containing the list of annexes below, and a searchable database with our mapping of the consortia (Excel file).

Annex 1: List of acronyms

Annex 2: Glossary of key terms and indicators used in this report

Annex 3: Methodological notes

Annex 4: Evaluation matrix for use in baseline study

Annex 5: Baseline data reported in the partnership baseline reports

Annex 6: International advocacy capacity assessment scorecards

Annex 7: Assessing international advocacy capacity

Annex 8: Indicator definitions

Annex 9: Sampling strategy

Annex 10: Revised research questions

Annex 11: External literature sources

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Annex 13: KIIs list (anonymised) and triangulation of perspectives

Annex 14: Semi-structured interview guide for KIIs with MFA staff involved in implementing SCS and partnership leads

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Annex 16: 1st tier partner survey questions

Annex 17: 2nd tier partner survey questions

Annex 1: List of acronyms

Table 4: List of acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
AWA	AIDS Watch Africa
AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
AWG	Advocacy Working Group
BL	Baseline Sample
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
Cmi	Count Me In!
COP	Conference of the Parties
COP27	27th Conference of the Parties
CPD	Commission on Population and Development
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
D&D	Dialogue and Dissent
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
EAC	East African Community
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FIMI	International Indigenous Women's Forum
GAGGA	Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action
GIMAC	Gender is My Agenda Campaign
GNP+	Global Network of People living with HIV
GTAGA	Global Trade and Gender Arrangement
HCS	Horizontal Case Study
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICAN	International Civil Society Action Network
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization

INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IR	Inception Report
JASS	Just Associates
JISRA	Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action
KII	Key Informant Interview
L&A	Lobby and Advocacy
LAC	Latin American and Caribbean
LCS	Longitudinal Case Study
LFS	Leading from the South
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Gender-Diverse, Intersex
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Gender-Diverse, Intersex and Queer
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Gender-Diverse, Intersex, Queer and Questioning
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Gender-Diverse, Queer and Questioning
LLMIC	Low- and lower-middle Income Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MFA	(Netherlands) Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGOWG	NGO Working Group
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
NL	The Netherlands
OAS	Organisation of American States
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PLGHA	Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance
PoV	Power of Voices
PoW	Power of Women
PWD	Person with Disabilities
RO	Representative Office
RQ	Research Question
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCS	Strengthening Civil Society (Policy Framework)

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation and Harassment
SG	Secretary-General
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SIHA	Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
SP	Strategic Partner
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STITCH	Sustainable Textile Initiative – Together for Change
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPM	Third Party Monitoring
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USD	US Dollars
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEE	Women’s Economic Empowerment
WGWD	Women and Girls with Disabilities
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WRGE	Women’s Rights and Gender Equality
WTO	World Trade Organization

Annex 2: Glossary of key terms and indicators used in this report

Table 5: Glossary of key terms

Key term	Description
1st tier partner (MFA terminology)	Member organisation of a consortium of civil society organisations (CSOs) that is supported under MFA's Strengthening Civil Society (SCS) policy framework.
2nd tier partner	Contractual partner organisation of a 1st tier partner within an MFA-funded programme (usually in the global South).
3rd tier partner	Organisation (usually in the global South) partnering with a 2nd tier partner(s).
Advocacy	The act or process of pleading in favour of a cause or proposal, using a wide range of activities, from low-key lobbying to public campaigning. It is the set of actions taken by CSOs on behalf of its stakeholders or persons of interest to influence policy decisions to support a given position.
Advocacy capacity	Raynor, York and Sim (2009) define four critical capacities for advocacy organisations: leadership, adaptation, management and technical. A review guide developed by the Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program and Rhonda Schlangen on SRHR advocacy capacity in sub-Saharan Africa (2020) similarly distinguishes between four broad categories: (1) strategy & implementation (including, inter alia, adaptation and learning & evaluation); (2) tactical skills (including, inter alia, networking & coalition building, and use of evidence); (3) commitment (including, inter alia, sector engagement and constituent connections); (4) management & operations.
Agenda setting	Influencing the topics tabled in international decision-making arenas.
Alliance member	Synonymous with 'consortium partner' (under a previous policy instrument, the consortia were designated as 'alliances').
Capacity	Someone's ability to do a particular thing or the power to produce, perform or deploy. Baser and Morgan (2008) describe capacity as an elusive, transient system phenomenon that enables agents to grow and demand power, control and space to create public value regarding organisational capacity in the development context. They have defined 'five core capabilities critical to organisations and systems: the capabilities to (1) commit and engage, (2) carry out functions or tasks, (3) relate and attract resources and support, (4) adapt and self-renew, and finally, (5) balance coherence and diversity'.
Case study	Research on a specified, limited number of questions with a subset of the sample of consortia and LFS funds to be examined in our research, with each case study examining more than one consortium.
Consortium	Group of CSOs that have jointly applied for and received Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) support under SCS.
Consortium lead	CSO leading a consortium supported under SCS.
Consortium partner	Member of a consortium supported under SCS.
Duty bearer	International law distinguishes between duty bearers and rights holders. Duty bearers are state parties who have signed international treaties and formally agreed to respect international norms and their executive, legislative and judiciary institutions. It is their duty to translate those international norms into national policies, laws and practice.
Gender mainstreaming	Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realising gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies,

	regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between persons of different genders and combating discrimination.
Gender transformative	Examining, questioning and changing rigid gender norms and imbalances of power which disadvantage women and girls and generate discrimination at all ages, starting from early childhood, in societies.
Global advocacy	Advocacy at global level, e.g. with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) or the United Nations (UN) Security Council.
Inclusive	Including everyone, especially allowing and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (because of their background, gender, sexuality or ability).
International advocacy	Advocacy in international policy spaces, such as multilateral organisations (as opposed to advocacy at bilateral, national and subnational levels). International advocacy encompasses both global advocacy and regional advocacy.
International advocacy capacity	For the purposes of our research, international advocacy capacity is defined along four dimensions: (i) strategy development; (ii) collective action; (iii) technical and tactical knowledge; (iv) access to and engagement in international decision-making spaces.
Intersectionality	The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism and classism) combine, overlap or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalised individuals or groups.
Lobbying	Any attempt by individuals or interest groups to influence the decisions of duty bearers. Lobbying is one of the activities that can be carried out as part of advocacy.
The Ministry	MFA.
Partnership	Synonymous with 'consortium'.
Policy instrument	In this research, framework for MFA partnerships with consortia and LFS funds – the five policy instruments in Lot 4 being 'Power of Voices', 'Power of Women', 'Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights', 'Women, Peace and Security' and 'Leading from the South'.
Regional advocacy	Advocacy focusing on specific continents or regions, bringing together several countries.
Rights-based approach	A conceptual framework for human development that is normatively based on international human rights and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyse inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress and often result in groups of people being left behind.
Rights holder	A person on whom rights have been conferred by international norms
Sample	A subset drawn from a greater set – in our case, the subset of Lot 4 consortia and LFS funds our research will focus on.
SCS international	The international component of the SCS policy framework (subject of our study).
SCS stakeholders	Organisations involved in the implementation of the SCS policy framework and its intended beneficiaries.
Southern (LFS) fund	SCS-supported grant-making fund based in the global South (four LFS funds in SCS).

Table 6: Indicators used by MFA for the overall SCS policy framework

Indicator	Description
SCS basket indicators	Nine SCS basket indicators ('SCS indicators', 'basket indicators') for application throughout the policy framework, each of which has two to five indicator codes for differentiation, e.g. between results levels (from subnational to national) or target groups (e.g. women-led and youth-led vs CSOs with neither female nor young leadership).
SRHR indicators	11 SRHR indicators – indicators A–F and K focusing on changes in health-seeking behaviour, health service provision and development of SRH treatment, and indicators G–J focusing on advocacy.
WRGE thematic indicators	15 WRGE thematic indicators designed to measure broadly the same phenomena as basket indicators SCS2, SCS3 and SCS5, plus attitude, practice and capacity change in individuals, with a focus of specific aspects of WRGE (ending violence against women and girls, and women's political and economic empowerment).

Annex 3: Methodological notes

This baseline report has been preceded by a full inception report explaining our approach and methodology. In dialogue with MFA, key instruments for our research were developed after approval of the inception report, including, among other things, a sampling strategy, two online surveys and an analytical tool to assess international advocacy capacity. All these instruments are included in separate annexes.

The iterative character of our research has meant that we needed to adapt our research strategies and the concrete steps, which are summarised below.

Inception (January–June 2022): The inception phase formally ended with MFA’s approval of Itad’s inception report (IR) on 31 May 2022. However, the clarification and learning process continued into June 2022, to select specific advocacy arenas for our research and to develop a capacity assessment tool.

- Step 1: Clarification and refinement of the research questions (RQs) and indicators defined by MFA in dialogue with the Ministry.
- Step 2: Mapping of all partnerships and LFS funds in our research to develop a searchable database for sampling and subsequent research. That mapping, based on a rapid review of the partnership proposals, provided us with much-needed basic information on the diverse structures and modes of operation of the consortia and LFS funds.
- Step 3: Purposeful sampling for more in-depth research from 2022 to 2024, guided by MFA’s wish to include as many consortia and LFS funds as possible, with thematic foci on women’s rights and gender equality (WRGE), SRHR and climate change. Also, Itad and the Ministry agreed on a set of four global advocacy arenas and the African Union (AU) as a multi-faceted regional advocacy arena to focus on in our research.
- Step 4: Instrument development for data collection and analysis, including, inter alia, survey questionnaires, key informant interview (KII) guides, a primary data evidence matrix, a database of information from the partnerships’ baseline reports, and an analytical tool defining the dimensions of international advocacy capacity.

Research and analysis (April–August 2022), encompassing:

- Step 5: Data collection and initial analysis triangulating perspectives and instruments. While internal perspectives provided a large portion of our secondary and primary data, it has been important to differentiate between: (i) direct (1st degree) SCS stakeholders, i.e. consortium members and LFS funds, and MFA officers involved in SCS development and management; (ii) indirect SCS stakeholders, i.e. contractual partners of consortium members, and MFA diplomats directly involved in international advocacy (but not in SCS management); (iii) third parties commissioned by SCS stakeholders, such as consulting firms and researchers who have conducted baseline research on behalf of the consortia or on behalf of the Ministry; (iv) fully external players, such as international advocates and think tanks who are active in the advocacy arenas selected for our research.
- Step 6: Joint analysis: Our research has achieved wide coverage as desired by MFA and has attempted to deepen analysis on specific research questions. (i) An initial survey reached out to the full set of consortium members and Southern funds in the international lot defined by MFA. 152 consortia members participated. (ii) A second survey was sent to all contractual partners of the consortium members who had shared details of implementing partners involved in international advocacy. 95 partners participated. (iii) Itad conducted KIIs and analysis of secondary data (generated by third parties and/or the consortia) for 18 consortia and one LFS fund. (iv) A one-off case study focused on consortium governance within four consortia in international advocacy. (v) The first phase of a longitudinal case study with two different consortia involved in WRGE and SRHR advocacy focused on

advocacy capacity and partnerships. (vi) Itad analysed the situation in the selected global and regional advocacy arenas based on KIs and a review of external literature.

Synthesis (August–September 2022):

- Step 7: Synthesis and validation in (i) internal validation meetings to compare initial findings from the different strands of our research and synthesis of tentative findings, conclusions and recommendations, and (ii) an online validation workshop with MFA and consortium members involved in international advocacy in October to discuss, nuance and deepen key findings, first conclusions and recommendations.
- Step 8: Baseline report writing, with a draft report, presentation and discussion of the draft report with MFA and its review panel, and finalisation of the baseline report after the validation workshop.

Annex 4: Evaluation matrix for use in baseline study

The matrix (Table 7) outlines the RQs and corresponding baseline phase approach/component, criteria and information sources.

Table 7: Evaluation matrix for baseline phase

Research question	Approach	Criteria and indicators	Information sources
1. What is the current situation (i) in the global/relevant regional civic spaces and (ii) with respect to the SCS indicators selected?	Primary data collection on international policy spaces for civil society L&A, analysis of secondary data	SCS, WRGE and SRHR indicators and guiding questions as outlined in Annex 8 and Annex 10.	Online survey with all Lot 4 consortia and LFS fund leads (specific indicators) Online survey with contractual (2nd tier) partners External literature on and documents produced in selected policy spaces KIIs: (a) MFA staff in The Hague; (b) external specialists Documentation of consortia and LFS funds in sample (chiefly baseline reports and action plans) International advocacy capacity assessment
2. To what extent are the ToCs of the SCS policy instruments relevant in the global/selected regional contexts?	Strategy review (focus on SCS strategy)	Assess (inter alia) the extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ToCs set out the problems they seek to address within the international context ToCs reflect the roles of international duty bearers the conceptual framework for understanding change processes within the ToCs is relevant to the international context ToCs are considered realistic. 	ToCs of SCS and the policy instruments in Lot4 External literature on and documents produced in selected policy spaces, systematic reviews, (impact) evaluations and other research KIIs: (a) MFA staff in The Hague; (b) external specialists
3. To what extent are the global/regional components of the strategic partnership programmes aligned to relevant regional (e.g. AU)	Strategy review (focus on consortia and LFS Fund strategies)	Assess (inter alia) the extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an international context analysis was undertaken of L&A design and its quality and completeness an assessment has been undertaken of how international L&A should interact with the international institutional context, and the likely implications 	Online survey with all consortia and LFS fund leads Online survey with contractual (2nd tier) partners External literature on, and documents produced in, selected policy spaces KIIs: (a) consortium leads (sample); (b) external specialists

<p>and global (e.g. UN) policies and frameworks?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ international L&A has been designed to align with relevant regional and international policies, plans and frameworks of identified international institutions. 	<p>Consortia and LFS funds documentation (mapping of targeted policy spaces across all Lot 4 consortia, review of action plans for sample)</p>
<p>4. How does the L&A work by strategic partnerships aim to achieve complementarity to the diplomacy work of the NL Permanent Representations?³⁴</p>	<p>Strategy review (complementarity analysis)</p>	<p>Related to international L&A components, assess (inter alia) the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ programme plans identify strategic linkages with NL MFA Permanent Representations ▪ the design of L&A initiatives takes these linkages into consideration and is complementary to the work of NL MFA Permanent Representations ▪ the design of L&A initiatives represents good practice which other partnerships may benefit from. 	<p>Online survey with all Lot 4 consortia and LFS fund leads</p> <p>Online survey with contractual (2nd tier) partners</p> <p>KIIs: (a) MFA ROs; (b) external specialists</p> <p>Consortia and LFS funds documentation (mapping of targeted policy spaces across all Lot 4 consortia, review of action plans for sample)</p>
<p>5. To what extent do the ToCs of the strategic partnerships include global/regional L&A and dedicate resources to these processes? What risks specific to this international work have been identified and reflected in the ToC? To what extent are underlying assumptions linked to existing high-quality literature and evaluations?</p>	<p>Strategy review</p>	<p>Assess (inter alia) the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the development of programme ToCs has been informed by an analysis of the international context (see RQ3 above), including identification of the problem to address and associated change pathways incorporating international L&A ▪ risks and assumptions related to international L&A components have been clearly articulated within ToCs ▪ evidence and research relating to the international context has been used to develop programme ToCs, including relevant assumptions. 	<p>External literature on and documents produced in selected policy spaces, evidence reviews and evaluations</p> <p>KIIs: (a) consortium leads (sample); (b) external specialists</p> <p>Consortia and LFS Fund action plans and budgets (sample)</p>

³⁴ UN Geneva, UN Vienna, UN New York, UN Rome, Council of Europe in Strasbourg, EU in Brussels, OECD and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, NATO in Brussels, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna, and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in The Hague.

<p>6. What dimensions of inequality and discrimination against groups that are structurally excluded do the partnership programmes aim to address at global and regional levels? To what extent are L&A activities of consortium leads aligned with the interests of the consortium members in the global South (and their constituencies) during programme implementation?</p>	Case studies	<p>Related to international L&A components, assess (inter alia) the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ plans respond to the needs, policies and priorities of international rights holders and duty bearers ▪ plans identify dimensions and mechanisms of inequality and discrimination and how initiatives are designed to address identified dimensions and mechanisms. 	<p>Online survey with all Lot 4 consortia and LFS fund leads</p> <p>Online survey with contractual (2nd tier) partners</p> <p>KIIs: (a) consortium and LFS leads (sample); (b) selected partnerships (case studies); (c) external specialists</p> <p>Programme documentation (sample)</p> <p>Further sources as identified during implementation of horizontal case study</p>
<p>7. To what extent did Southern leadership materialise in the design of the global/regional-level advocacy and lobby components of the programmes?</p>	Case studies	<p>Related to international L&A components, assess (inter alia) the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ extent to which the partnership culture enabled space for Southern partners to influence the design of international L&A components ▪ extent to which design processes were participatory and created space for Southern actors to take ownership and leadership in the design of international L&A components ▪ way in which alliance governance arrangements have formed and how they relate to international L&A components, including structures, roles and relationships. 	As above, RQ6
<p>8. How do consortium partners (including selected 2nd tier partners</p>	Case studies	<p>Related to international L&A components, assess (inter alia) the:</p>	As above, RQ6

<p>in the case studies) view their own legitimacy towards duty bearers in relation to their global and regional L&A? What gives the consortium partners legitimacy to conduct global and regional L&A on behalf of behalf of rights holders?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ basis on which consortium partners believe they have legitimacy to lobby and advocate to duty bearers or on behalf of rights holders ▪ extent to which duty bearers (to which CSOs lobby and advocate) consider CSOs to have legitimacy, and for what reason ▪ extent to which the views on CSO legitimacy are shared by CSOs and duty bearers. 	
<p>9. To what extent were global/regional L&A components of programme design coordinated with relevant players at regional and global levels? To what extent was the Ministry involved in coordinating the different efforts, and are there any tangible plans for coordination of implementation in place?</p>	<p>Case studies</p>	<p>Related to international L&A components of programmes, assess (inter alia) the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a mapping exercise was undertaken during programme design which resulted in the identification of players relevant to the international L&A work ▪ an assessment of interests and influence was undertaken and used to identify players with whom to coordinate in the design of L&A ▪ design processes were sufficiently coordinated with identified players ▪ coordination between programmes took place during programme design, the role of MFA in this, and what plans for future coordination were included in the designs ▪ coordination resulted in shared objectives among the L&A programmes involved. 	<p>External literature on, and documents produced in, selected policy spaces</p> <p>KIIs: (a) consortium leads; (b) staff of NL Representative Offices; (c) external specialists</p> <p>Programme documentation (sample – action plans, progress reports, products for L&A)</p> <p>International advocacy capacity assessment</p>

<p>10. To what extent is gender effectively mainstreamed in the global and regional L&A components of the programmes, in the related budgets? To what extent do these components use gender transformative, rights-based, inclusive and intersectional approaches in their design, and have these been translated into concrete operational and MEL plans?</p>	<p>Strategy review</p>	<p>Within international L&A components of programmes, assess (inter alia) the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ gender analysis was undertaken during the design of programmes, and the quality of analysis ▪ the tools or frameworks used to undertake the gender analysis have been adapted to the international/regional context, and how the design of international L&A initiatives incorporates specific gender transformative, rights-based, inclusive and intersectional approaches ▪ programme MEL systems respond to, and enable measurement of, gender transformative, rights-based, inclusive and intersectional approaches, and are designed to capture gender disaggregated data ▪ programmes have used gender or equity budgeting. 	<p>Online survey with all Lot 4 consortia and LFS fund leads</p> <p>External literature on gender transformative and human rights approaches in L&A</p> <p>KIIs: (a) MFA staff in The Hague; (b) external specialists</p> <p>Consortia and LFS funds documentation (review of documentation for sample)</p> <p><i>MEL systems of consortia and LFS funds to be reviewed in TPM/DQA phase</i></p>
<p>11. How have girls and boys, adolescents, youth, young women and men, adults, people with disabilities, LGBTI people, religious & ethnic minorities and people in the lowest wealth quintiles been involved in designing the global and regional L&A components of the programme? To what extent could that ensure equal and meaningful participation of all groups guaranteed?</p>	<p>Strategy review/case studies</p>	<p>Within international L&A components of programmes, assess (inter alia):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ what techniques were used to engage different stakeholder groups in the design of L&A programmes ▪ what techniques were used to enable equal and meaningful participation of different stakeholder groups in international L&A ▪ the extent to which equal and meaningful participation of different stakeholder groups in L&A design and planning was achieved. 	<p>Online survey with consortia and LFS fund leads</p> <p>Online survey with contractual (2nd tier) partners</p> <p>External literature on intersectional approaches in L&A</p> <p>KIIs: consortium leads (sample)</p> <p>Consortia and LFS funds documentation (review of documentation for sample)</p>

<p>12. What measures were taken to integrate conflict sensitivity in the design of the partnership programmes (where relevant for global/regional lobbying and advocacy components)?</p>	<p>Strategy review</p>	<p>Assess (inter alia) the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ conflict sensitivity context analysis was undertaken during the design of international L&A components of programmes, and the quality of analysis ▪ the tools or frameworks used to undertake the conflict sensitivity analysis are suitable to the international context ▪ an assessment has been undertaken of how international L&A initiatives interact with the conflict sensitivity context, the likely implications, and how the design of international L&A initiatives has been adjusted to minimise negative impacts/maximise positive impacts. 	<p>Online survey with all consortia and LFS fund leads</p> <p>External literature on conflict-sensitive approaches in L&A</p> <p>Consortia and LFS funds documentation (review of documentation for sample)</p>
<p>13. To what extent do all SCS strategic partnerships use integrity and safeguarding policies and principles in the design of the global and regional L&A components of their programmes?</p>	<p>Strategy review</p>	<p>Assess (inter alia) the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ integrity and safeguarding policies and principles are set out in the design of programmes' L&A components, and the quality of these ▪ the design of international L&A initiatives takes into consideration integrity and safeguarding policies and principles. 	<p>Online survey with all consortia and LFS fund leads</p> <p>External literature on safeguarding principles in L&A</p> <p>Consortia and LFS funds documentation (review of documentation for sample)</p>
<p>14. To what extent have lessons learned from previous partnership programmes been considered in the design of global/regional advocacy and lobby activities in the programmes with previous partnerships?</p>	<p>Strategy review</p>	<p>Assess (inter alia) the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ lessons learned from the international L&A activities of previous partnership programmes have been identified and documented ▪ the design of international L&A initiatives takes into consideration these lessons learned. 	<p>Programme documentation, including evaluation report of any previous MFA funding phase</p> <p>KIIs: consortium leads</p>

Annex 5: Baseline data reported in the partnership baseline reports

Table 8: Baseline findings reported by consortia against SCS indicators 025, 031, 4–8

#	Partnership	SCS025	SCS031	SCS4	SCS5	SCS6	SCS7	SCS8
1	The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA)	n.a.	n.a.	Qualitative	426	-	n.a.	-
2	Green Livelihood Alliance: Forests for a Just Future	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	n.a.	0	0
3	Amplifying Voices for Climate Action	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
7	Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA)	n.a.	23	n.a.	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
8	Just Future	0	n.a.	0	0	n.a.	0	n.a.
13	Our Voices Our Futures	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0
14	Count Me In! (CMi)	n.a.	0	n.a.	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
15	She Leads	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Qualitative	Qualitative
16	Women Gaining Ground	n.a.	n.a.	0	0	n.a.	0	n.a.
17	Power Up!	0	n.a.	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
18	Fem PAWER	0	0	n.a.	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
19	We Cannot Wait	0	n.a.	n.a.	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
20	AWESOME	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
21	Love Alliance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
23	Masarouna 'Our Pathway'	n.a.	0	0	n.a.	0	0	n.a.
25	Make Way	n.a.	n.a.	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0
27	Al-thawra Untha: The Revolution is Female	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-
30	Resourcing Women's Rights Activism in Africa and the Middle East	n.a.	-	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
31	Indigenous Women Walking Together for our Rights	6	36	n.a.	34	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
32	Women's Political Participation for Peace Programme	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4	n.a.	n.a.

Table 9: List of consortia reporting against SCS indicators 5–8 broken by down by CSO type

#	Consortium	Indicator	Category	Value
1	The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA)	SCS5	Women-led	426
1	The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA)	SCS8	Women-led	426
2	Green Livelihood Alliance: Forests for a Just Future	SCS5	Not specified	0
2	Green Livelihood Alliance: Forests for a Just Future	SCS7	Not specified	0
2	Green Livelihood Alliance: Forests for a Just Future	SCS8	Not specified	0
7	Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA)	SCS5	Not specified	0
8	Just Future	SCS5	Women-led	0
8	Just Future	SCS5	Youth-led	0
8	Just Future	SCS5	Other	0
8	Just Future	SCS7	Women-led	0
8	Just Future	SCS7	Youth-led	0
8	Just Future	SCS7	Other	0
13	Our Voices Our Futures	SCS8	Not specified	-
14	Count Me In! (CMI)	SCS5	Women-led	0
15	She Leads	SCS7	Not specified	0
15	She Leads	SCS8	Not specified	0
16	Women Gaining Ground	SCS5	Women-led	0
16	Women Gaining Ground	SCS7	Women-led	0
18	Fem PAWER	SCS5	Women-led	0
19	We Cannot Wait	SCS5	Not specified	0
21	Love Alliance	SCS5	Other	-
23	Masarouna 'Our Pathway'	SCS6	Women-led	0
23	Masarouna 'Our Pathway'	SCS6	Youth-led	0
23	Masarouna 'Our Pathway'	SCS6	Both	0
23	Masarouna 'Our Pathway'	SCS6	Other	0
23	Masarouna 'Our Pathway'	SCS7	Not specified	0
25	Make Way	SCS8	Not specified	0
27	Al-thawra Untha: The Revolution is Female	SCS7	Not specified	-
27	Al-thawra Untha: The Revolution is Female	SCS8	Not specified	-
31	Indigenous Women Walking Together for our Rights	SCS5	Women-led	34
32	Women's Political Participation for Peace Programme	SCS6	Women-led	0
32	Women's Political Participation for Peace Programme	SCS6	Other	4

Table 10: Baseline values against SRHR H and J reported by the consortia in baseline sample

#	SRHR H	SRHR J	Comments
21	6, apparent focus on national level	No data, level unclear	
23	No data, apparent focus on national level	4 organisations involved at regional, 2 at global level	Descriptive on J lists priority fields for capacity building
25	n.a.	0, focus on integrating intersectionality	CSO level

Table 11: Baseline values against WRGE 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, and 4.1 reported by the consortia in baseline sample

#	WRGE 1.1	WRGE 2.1	WRGE 3.1	WRGE 4.1	Comments
13	n.a.	Reference to international instruments	n.a.	n.a.	No baseline data, international norms as reference only
17	0	Description of goals, focus on media	0	n.a.	Focus on national level; 2.1 not about duty bearer action
18	n.a.	n.a.	Qualitative	n.a.	Focus on national level
20	Description of goals	Description of goals	n.a.	n.a.	Focus on (sub)national levels
27	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Description of goals	Focus on national level

Annex 6: International advocacy capacity assessment scorecards

MFA has voiced a desire to see individual scoring for each guiding question under every capacity dimension. In the examples below, we have reverted to our originally proposed approach of scoring per dimension. At this point in our research, we have privileged large coverage over in-depth data collection and analysis, making it difficult to address every question in the scorecard evenly across all organisations reviewed.

Table 12: Completed capacity assessment scorecard for a member (A) of consortium A³⁵

Dimension 1: Capacity for strategy development						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No international advocacy strategy (but the CSO may participate ad hoc in advocacy activities) International advocacy is implemented strictly to plan Advocacy plans are gender-blind CSO does not consult the people whose interests it claims to represent CSO does not monitor its advocacy activities and outcomes 			X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive international advocacy strategy articulating the CSO's contribution to intended changes in specified regional & global normative frameworks and policies CSO regularly reviews and adapts international advocacy plans based on evidence from various sources Advocacy plans use a gender and social inclusion lens People whose interests the CSO claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in developing the CSO's international advocacy work CSO uses monitoring data to explain its international advocacy results and uses evidence from research
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p> <p>MEMBER A has an advocacy strategy in place for 2021–2024, which includes clear plans and objectives for developing its international advocacy. There is only one reference to a specific global organisation responsible for frameworks and policy – the Global Fund. Much of its advocacy takes place at national level.</p> <p>MEMBER A produces a regular series of briefs and papers based on evidence. Since 2014, they have run the Sex Workers Academy Africa, which trains sex workers in advocacy leadership, including data collection and presentation of evidence.</p> <p>Planning includes consideration of gender, of feminist approaches and of key marginalised populations (LGBTQ+, young people, those living with HIV/AIDS or using drugs, etc.).</p> <p>All organisations are sex worker-led, and have to be majority sex worker-staffed to be included in the alliance. Strategy was developed in consultation with networks and communities of sex workers, led by an independent consultant.</p>	Overall score (please mark one box only)					

³⁵ Consortium and partner names have been anonymised, as KIIs were conducted under the conditions of anonymity. The term 'MEMBER' refers to partners within the consortium at 1st and 2nd tiers.

	There is not enough evidence to judge the level of reporting on advocacy impact. The secretariat is not large enough to have a dedicated MEL staff member. Independent evaluation of the Sex Worker African Academy was carried out.					
Additional notes (optional)						
Dimension 2: Capacity for collective action						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy, or carries out its advocacy independently with no connection to other actors pursuing similar goals • CSO does not involve the people whose interests it claims to represent in its international advocacy • CSO advocacy emphasises opposition against influential actors’ policies and practice • Any efforts to engage decision makers are indirect or passive • CSO carries out occasional, public advocacy events only 	Overall score (please mark one box only)					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO develops and implements aligned and complementary advocacy strategies in collaboration with other actors • People whose interests it claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in implementing the CSO’s international advocacy work • CSO lobbies decision makers across political fronts, breaking up traditional alignments of interests • CSO strategically engages appropriate norm-setting and policymaking bodies and specific decision makers • CSO carries out long-term lobbying with decision makers across the political spectrum to engage deeply on their subject
Evidence (explain the score)	<p>The strategic plan was developed in consultation with member organisations across Africa, so was designed to represent and align with their interests. There is evidence of collaboration and implementation with other Love Alliance actors, including Sisonke (a founding member of MEMBER A), and MEMBER A (Global Network of Sex Worker Projects). However, it’s not clear whether the strategy was designed to align.</p> <p>Sex worker-led organisations and their constituencies are centrally involved in MEMBER A’s work at national and pan-African levels. The Sex Worker African Academy trains and develops sex workers’ leaderships skills and capacity to engage in advocacy. MEMBER A has not yet been able to engage extensively or regularly at global level.</p> <p>MEMBER A works across African countries and seeks, therefore, to engage with a range of political viewpoints, even where those are strongly opposed to sex workers’ rights. This is currently at national level. They have not yet been able to engage fully with regional spaces, although they have focused on the African Commission for Human and People’s Rights, an AU body. It is challenging for them to make headway there.</p> <p>This also applies to norm-setting and policymaking bodies and decision makers – there is limited evidence that MEMBER A is able to engage at international level. They have engaged with the Global Fund.</p>					

	MEMBER A clearly views advocacy as a long-term endeavour, and plans accordingly. However, limited resources prevent them from engaging in the way that they would like; their influence is largely concentrated in south and east Africa.					
Additional notes (optional)						
Dimension 3: Technical and tactical capacity						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy • CSO does not propose any international normative/policy recommendations and/or • CSO has no understanding of the international policy arena it targets • CSO recommendations do not refer to any analysis or evidence • CSO has no communication plan or implementation, and uses inconsistent messages with unclear outreach 	Overall score (please mark one box only)					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO develops and chooses advocacy tactics based on its strategic advantage and the tactics' likely effects on decision makers • CSO produces recommendations ready to flow into international normative and policy implementation processes • CSO has advanced understanding of and/or experience in the policy arena it targets • Evidence from research and testimonies are used to develop policy solutions; gaps in evidence are acknowledged • Clear communication plans with designated audiences and tools to monitor outreach
Evidence (explain the score)	<p>Advocacy tactics appear to be based on MEMBER A's ethos – centring sex worker voices. Strategic decision making is constrained by a lack of resources at international level. There was no clear evidence of specific tactics or approaches being taken for specific decision makers.</p> <p>MEMBER A regularly produces publications and evidence-based pieces which could feed into policy processes. They lack the access and influence to ensure that their materials reach an international audience.</p> <p>MEMBER A has a detailed understanding of the landscapes in which its members operate, and is developing knowledge of the regional/pan-African arenas it seek to engage. It has not yet had the opportunity to develop extensive knowledge of global platforms.</p> <p>MEMBER A regularly produces publications and evidence-based pieces which inform its policy and practice. The Sex Workers African Academy also develops members' capacity to collect, interpret and communicate evidence. Mapping and monitoring tools are used to collect evidence on specific themes, e.g. murder and violent crime committed against sex workers.</p> <p>There is a dedicated policy and communications officer on the secretariat. There is not enough evidence to assess the extent to which clear communication plans are in place to monitor impact. Resourcing likely constrains this aspect of their work.</p>					

Additional notes (optional)																
Dimension 4: Access to and engagement in international decision-making arenas																
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO carries out no international advocacy CSO has no funding/no staff for international advocacy CSO has no/a bad reputation and/or only superficial thematic knowledge CSO advocates lack skills in dominant languages at international forums CSO has no/only occasional connections to other advocacy players in its field 	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; text-align: center;">X</td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">Overall score (please mark one box only)</td> </tr> </table>						X				Overall score (please mark one box only)					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO with highly advanced skills and/or experience in international advocacy CSO has a budget for international advocacy and dedicated staff CSO has a reputation as a thought leader and a resource on the thematic field of its international advocacy CSO advocates speak the main language(s) practised in international arenas, e.g. English for global advocacy CSO maintains and continuously updates relationships with other players in its field for mutually beneficial cooperation and coordination in international advocacy
	X															
Overall score (please mark one box only)																
Evidence (explain the score)	<p>MEMBER A has significant skills and experience at national level within Africa, and is expanding its opportunities at pan-African level. It has less experience of global advocacy.</p> <p>Resources are limited. The secretariat is small, and they are reliant on project funding to engage in international work.</p> <p>MEMBER A is well-regarded within the pan-African movement, and has a reputation for effective capacity building (Sex Workers African Academy). There is not clear evidence that this has translated to international levels yet.</p> <p>MEMBER A is anglophone, since it is based in Kenya. It has more trouble engaging with francophone and lusophone countries in Africa, and would need more resources to do this.</p> <p>MEMBER A maintains good relationships across its own networks, particularly in south and east Africa. They would like to expand further but resources are a constraint. Access to international arenas has only come through better connected, global North-based partners, e.g. MEMBER A.</p>															
Additional notes (optional)																

Table 13: Completed capacity assessment scorecard for a member (B) of consortium A

Dimension 1: Capacity for strategy development						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No international advocacy strategy (but the CSO may participate ad hoc in advocacy activities) International advocacy is implemented strictly to plan Advocacy plans are gender-blind CSO does not consult the people whose interests it claims to represent CSO does not monitor its advocacy activities and outcomes 					X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive international advocacy strategy articulating the CSO's contribution to intended changes in specified regional & global normative frameworks and policies CSO regularly reviews and adapts international advocacy plans based on evidence from various sources Advocacy plans use a gender and social inclusion lens People whose interests the CSO claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in developing the CSO's international advocacy work CSO uses monitoring data to explain its international advocacy results and uses evidence from research
	Overall score (please mark one box only)					
Evidence (explain the score)	<p>Comprehensive advocacy strategy in place articulating three-year plan. Clear overarching topics/priorities in place – including a decriminalisation agenda. Priority, based on knowledge of current climate and increasing pushback, in on maintaining the gains already achieved.</p> <p>Within the wider strategy, advocacy priorities are determined annually in consultation with representatives from each geographic region – including across the global South. Advocacy tools are also developed in response to emerging events, e.g. monkeypox. There is a strong history of generating high-quality evidence, and there is high capacity to gather, interpret and disseminate it.</p> <p>MEMBER B advocacy considers and includes key populations within the sex worker community – LGBTQ+, users of drugs, young people, all genders.</p> <p>There are clear structures in place for representatives of each region to contribute to and shape the advocacy agenda each year. It offers technical support and capacity building to members to develop their skills to be involved in all aspects of advocacy – from data collection and evidence presentation to involvement in international advocacy arenas (e.g. CSW side events).</p> <p>Clear MEL processes are in place to monitor impact and progress. Clear pipeline from research and evidence into advocacy tools.</p>					
Additional notes (optional)						
Dimension 2: Capacity for collective action						

Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO carries out no international advocacy, or carries out its advocacy independently with no connection to other actors pursuing similar goals CSO does not involve the people whose interests it claims to represent in its international advocacy CSO advocacy emphasises opposition against influential actors' policies and practice Any efforts to engage decision makers are indirect or passive CSO carries out occasional, public advocacy events only 				X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO develops and implements aligned and complementary advocacy strategies in collaboration with other actors People whose interests it claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in implementing the CSO's international advocacy work CSO lobbies decision makers across political fronts, breaking up traditional alignments of interests CSO strategically engages appropriate norm-setting and policymaking bodies and specific decision makers CSO carries out long-term lobbying with decision makers across the political spectrum to engage deeply on their subject
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>					<p>MEMBER B is a membership/umbrella organisation, so works with its members and member networks. It looks for opportunities to work with movements with intersecting interests – women's rights or LGBTQ+ movements. It's not clear whether they seek to harmonise their advocacy agenda to fit other movements. They have a very fixed and firm set of positions, largely because they face considerable hostility and opposition, and often have to act in defence of members' interests.</p> <p>Every example shared of involvement in an international platform included a delegation of sex workers, not just the Scotland-based secretariat. Capacity building efforts are in place to support them to do this.</p> <p>MEMBER B engages with and lobbies political actors. The nature of their agenda, however, means that they are often in opposition to influential actors; this is activism that faces hostility, including from other rights movements (e.g. women's rights movements).</p> <p>Strategic engagement with norm-setting and policymaking bodies where possible – largely in approaching the agenda from a human rights or public health angle and trying to ensure sex workers' concerns are reflected there. Strategy based on the contentious/contested nature of their advocacy agenda.</p> <p>As above, the nature of their advocacy agenda makes it difficult to engage across the political spectrum. They carry out a regular/busy calendar of public advocacy events – but it's not possible for them to engage more conservative or regressive political actors easily.</p>
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>						
<p>Dimension 3: Technical and tactical capacity</p>						

Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO carries out no international advocacy CSO does not propose any international normative/policy recommendations and/or CSO has no understanding of the international policy arena it targets CSO recommendations do not refer to any analysis or evidence CSO has no communication plan or implementation, and uses inconsistent messages with unclear outreach 				X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO develops and chooses advocacy tactics based on its strategic advantage and the tactics' likely effects on decision makers CSO produces recommendations ready to flow into international normative and policy implementation processes CSO has advanced understanding of and/or experience in the policy arena it targets Evidence from research and testimonies are used to develop policy solutions; gaps in evidence are acknowledged Clear communication plans with designated audiences and tools to monitor outreach
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p> <p>Selective, tactical approach to advocacy objectives and spaces where they engage. The marginal, excluded nature of the population they represent makes them hyper-aware of likely responses from different actors, including decision makers (since responses are often hostile).</p> <p>There is a range of advocacy tools developed by MEMBER B which they draw on and add to annually and in response to emerging events. These can then be fed into policy processes.</p> <p>MEMBER B has developed experience and deep knowledge of the advocacy landscape over time, and continually invests in research to develop their understanding further.</p> <p>Each knowledge product developed is based on research using a range of methods – including first-person testimony from relevant sex worker communities. Mapping is used e.g. to track legislation affecting sex workers, including gaps.</p> <p>Targeted communication plans are included in the strategy. There is not enough evidence to judge the extent to which these are differentiated by actor and/or advocacy arena.</p>					
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>						
<p>Dimension 4: Access to and engagement in international decision-making arenas</p>						
<p>Low capacity</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>High capacity</p>
				X		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy • CSO has no funding/no staff for international advocacy • CSO has no/a bad reputation, and/or only superficial thematic knowledge • CSO advocates lack skills in dominant languages at international forums • CSO has no/only occasional connections to other advocacy players in its field 	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO with highly advanced skills and/or experience in international advocacy • CSO has a budget for international advocacy and dedicated staff • CSO has a reputation as a thought leader and a resource on the thematic field of its international advocacy • CSO advocates speak the main language(s) practised in international arenas, e.g. English for global advocacy • CSO maintains and continuously updates relationships with other players in its field for mutually beneficial cooperation and coordination in international advocacy
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>Significant skills and experience in the secretariat of international advocacy – for every aspect of the advocacy process.</p> <p>Budget to engage is limited. There is a limited number of funders who will fund sex workers’ movements. MEMBER B also has ethical standards in place guiding who they will accept money from, e.g. not the pharmaceutical industry, which would be one source, due to their history of exploiting sex workers. This limits capacity to engage in advocacy, though capacity allows them to ‘punch above their weight’ (conclusion of independent value for money assessment).</p> <p>MEMBER B is able to engage at high-level international arenas, including those which are seen as hostile to sex workers’ rights movements. They describe their own reputation as ‘fierce but honest’. Largest global network representing sex workers’ interests. Advocacy based on evidence and consultation – lending them legitimacy.</p> <p>CSO advocated speak English. Resources are produced in five languages (English, Chinese, French, Spanish, Russian). Translation is used in their consultation processes to support engagement across their regional networks.</p> <p>MEMBER B maintains relationships with its members through technical and ad hoc support and through clear processes for consultation and engagement, which rotate around countries within regions. Engaging with movements with similar or aligned interests is a clear part of their strategy and practice (where this is possible).</p>	
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>		

Table 14: Completed capacity assessment scorecard for a member (C) of consortium A

Dimension 1: Capacity for strategy development						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No international advocacy strategy (but the CSO may participate ad hoc in advocacy activities) International advocacy is implemented strictly to plan Advocacy plans are gender-blind CSO does not consult the people whose interests it claims to represent CSO does not monitor its advocacy activities and outcomes 					X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive international advocacy strategy articulating the CSO's contribution to intended changes in specified regional & global normative frameworks and policies CSO regularly reviews and adapts international advocacy plans based on evidence from various sources Advocacy plans use a gender and social inclusion lens People whose interests the CSO claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in developing the CSO's international advocacy work CSO uses monitoring data to explain its international advocacy results and uses evidence from research
Overall score (please mark one box only)						
Evidence (explain the score)	<p>Comprehensive international advocacy strategy in place, available in five languages, with video explainer available.³⁶ Includes references to normative framework – Global Targets on HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Extensive selection of resources and publications developed by MEMBER C itself, or shared from partner organisations or third parties. Strategy update published in annual report based on year's evidence.</p> <p>Work of MEMBER C considers young people 'in all their diversity' – intersecting issues of gender, LGBTQ+, young people who use drugs, and young sex workers. This includes supporting and working with organisations and networks which represent these key populations. This is referenced in the strategy document as 'diversity and inclusion'.</p> <p>MEMBER C is structured as a network of networks – organisations at local and national level brought together into regional networks. These feed into MEMBER C itself, and allow feedback of information from grass roots to global level. The secretariat and board of the organisation are young people living with HIV/AIDS, representing some of the key populations the organisation aims to represent. There are mechanisms for involving extremely marginalised or criminalised populations anonymously.</p> <p>MEL officer and evidence advisor roles are included in the secretariat of the organisation. The annual report presents progress against the advocacy strategy.</p>					
Additional notes (optional)	MEMBER C came out of the Global Network for People living with HIV/AIDS – and therefore has inherited, or mirrors, its key structures in this dimension. UN funding means it can dedicate resources to ensuring strategy development is carried out.					

³⁶ <https://www.yplusglobal.org/strategic-plan-2022-2025>

Dimension 2: Capacity for collective action						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO carries out no international advocacy, or carries out its advocacy independently with no connection to other actors pursuing similar goals CSO does not involve the people whose interests it claims to represent in its international advocacy CSO advocacy emphasises opposition against influential actors' policies and practice Any efforts to engage decision makers are indirect or passive CSO carries out occasional, public advocacy events only 				X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO develops and implements aligned and complementary advocacy strategies in collaboration with other actors People whose interests it claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in implementing the CSO's international advocacy work CSO lobbies decision makers across political fronts, breaking up traditional alignments of interests CSO strategically engages appropriate norm-setting and policymaking bodies and specific decision makers CSO carries out long-term lobbying with decision makers across the political spectrum to engage deeply on their subject
	Overall score (please mark one box only)					
Evidence (explain the score)	<p>Not enough evidence to judge the extent to which MEMBER C advocacy strategy is aligned with other global actors. Its process involves consulting national and regional organisations, but the extent to which its priorities align with theirs is unclear.</p> <p>The secretariat, who represent MEMBER C internationally, are all young people living with HIV/AIDS. There is capacity building/mentoring in place to support young people involved in their member organisations and networks to speak, present and observe in international arenas.</p> <p>Not enough evidence to judge how MEMBER C targets their lobbying or the political actors that they engage with. Since they include structurally excluded groups – young people living with HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ+ young people, drug users, sex workers – there are many powerful political interests in opposition to their agenda.</p> <p>Strategic engagement of international HIV/AIDS and public health norm-setting and policymaking bodies – World Health Organization (WHO), Global Fund, AIDS conference – they sit on technical working groups and have access to influence guidelines/policy.</p> <p>Significant evidence of calendar of public advocacy events of different types in different arenas. There is more evidence of engagement with public health arenas, rather than more clearly political spaces (e.g. CPD, CSW – which are member state-driven) – which may be a strategic choice in itself.</p>					
Additional notes (optional)						

Dimension 3: Technical and tactical capacity						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO carries out no international advocacy CSO does not propose any international normative/policy recommendations and/or CSO has no understanding of the international policy arena it targets CSO recommendations do not refer to any analysis or evidence CSO has no communication plan or implementation, and uses inconsistent messages with unclear outreach 				X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO develops and chooses advocacy tactics based on its strategic advantage and the tactics' likely effects on decision makers CSO produces recommendations ready to flow into international normative and policy implementation processes CSO has advanced understanding of and/or experience in the policy arena it targets Evidence from research and testimonies are used to develop policy solutions; gaps in evidence are acknowledged Clear communication plans with designated audiences and tools to monitor outreach
Overall score (please mark one box only)						
Evidence (explain the score)	<p>There is not enough evidence to judge how targeted the choice of advocacy approach is or how much strategic advantage is considered. They see young people's voices, advocating for themselves, as the most effective way to ensure the right messages get to decision makers.</p> <p>There was a strong sense that MEMBER C positions itself well to contribute to policy processes and that it's ready to capitalise on 'quick wins' where possible, e.g. contributing to updated WHO guidelines on HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>There was a clear understanding of the international HIV/AIDS policy landscape; less evidence that this is the case with broader advocacy arenas (CSW, AU, CPD).</p> <p>Clear structures in place to gather feedback and testimonies from members and their constituencies at local and national level. Resources and publications are available, some of which they produce and some of which are shared by partners. However, the research-to-policy process is less clear.</p> <p>Communications and evidence post is included in the secretariat. Different methods of communicating with members in place – including for those who would want to be involved anonymously. Reach is monitored and reported on. Not enough evidence to judge extent to which communication plans are in place, specific to designated policy audiences.</p>					
Additional notes (optional)						
Dimension 4: Access to and engagement in international decision-making arenas						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
				X		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy • CSO has no funding/no staff for international advocacy • CSO has no/a bad reputation, and/or or only superficial thematic knowledge • CSO advocates lack skills in dominant languages at international forums • CSO has no/only occasional connections to other advocacy players in its field 	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO with highly advanced skills and/or experience in international advocacy • CSO has a budget for international advocacy and dedicated staff • CSO has a reputation as a thought leader and a resource on the thematic field of its international advocacy • CSO advocates speak the main language(s) practised in international arenas, e.g. English for global advocacy • CSO maintains and continuously updates relationships with other players in its field for mutually beneficial cooperation and coordination in international advocacy
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>It seems as though the secretariat and board have well-developed skills for advocating on the global stage. Capacity building is taking place to develop skills of member organisations and the young people within them – to enable them to advocate more effectively without the secretariat. The interview evidence suggests this is an area for further development.</p> <p>Budget and dedicated staff for advocacy – UN funding. MFA has been particularly helpful here – 70% of funding allowed to be directed towards staff costs.</p> <p>MEMBER C, though a new organisation, was able to build on the reputation and contacts of Global Network of People living with HIV (GNP+), giving them a shortcut to influence in major policymaking spaces. They sit on technical working groups/in advisory capacity for WHO and Global Fund, so can be seen as influential in the HIV/AIDS sector. It’s less clear whether they have similar influence in broader international advocacy spaces – like CPD or CSW.</p> <p>Resources produced in the five UN languages. English-speaking secretariat is place, and the board includes representatives from all regions.</p> <p>Structures in place for regular check-ins with its own regional and national networks. Less evidence on extent to which it coordinates with other global-level actors working in the same space.</p>	
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>		

Table 15: Completed capacity assessment scorecard for a member (A) of consortium B

Dimension 1: Capacity for strategy development						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No international advocacy strategy (but the CSO may participate ad hoc in advocacy activities) International advocacy is implemented strictly to plan Advocacy plans are gender-blind CSO does not consult the people whose interests it claims to represent CSO does not monitor its advocacy activities and outcomes 	X					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive international advocacy strategy articulating the CSO's contribution to intended changes in specified regional & global normative frameworks and policies CSO regularly reviews and adapts international advocacy plans based on evidence from various sources Advocacy plans use a gender and social inclusion lens People whose interests the CSO claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in developing the CSO's international advocacy work CSO uses monitoring data to explain its international advocacy results and uses evidence from research
Overall score (please mark one box only)						
Evidence (explain the score)	<p>No formal advocacy strategy. The network is not yet working consistently at international level, but has been involved on ad hoc basis in making submissions to CEDAW and the UN special rapporteur on rights of PWDs. CREA has supported them to attend the Convention on the Rights of PWDs in New York, and they have attended an African SRH conference.</p> <p>There is no process for reviewing advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Inclusion/access to services and increased political participation are key topics for the network.</p> <p>The network is made up exclusively of women with disabilities. They have community-level networks which they work with and consult.</p> <p>There is no formal monitoring of activities in place.</p>					
Additional notes (optional)						
Dimension 2: Capacity for collective action						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
	X					

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO carries out no international advocacy, or carries out its advocacy independently with no connection to other actors pursuing similar goals CSO does not involve the people whose interests it claims to represent in its international advocacy CSO advocacy emphasises opposition against influential actors' policies and practice Any efforts to engage decision makers are indirect or passive CSO carries out occasional, public advocacy events only 	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO develops and implements aligned and complementary advocacy strategies in collaboration with other actors People whose interests it claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in implementing the CSO's international advocacy work CSO lobbies decision makers across political fronts, breaking up traditional alignments of interests CSO strategically engages appropriate norm-setting and policymaking bodies and specific decision makers CSO carries out long-term lobbying with decision makers across the political spectrum to engage deeply on their subject 				
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>Beyond collaboration between the member organisations within the network, MEMBER A has not yet had much opportunity to collaborate. It has been put in touch with MEMBER B (equivalent organisation in Uganda) which is more established and experienced – in order to share learning.</p> <p>WWDs are responsible for all advocacy undertaken at national level by the network.</p> <p>There is not yet any significant engagement with political actors.</p> <p>There is not yet strategic engagement with policymakers.</p> <p>Active lobbying of political decision makers at national level is not yet part of the network's strategy. They work with regional organisations to influence local and community-level policy.</p>					
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>						
<p>Dimension 3: Technical and tactical capacity</p>						
<p>Low capacity</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>High capacity</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO carries out no international advocacy CSO does not propose any international normative/policy recommendations and/or CSO has no understanding of the international policy arena it targets 	<p style="text-align: center;">Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO develops and chooses advocacy tactics based on its strategic advantage and the tactics' likely effects on decision makers CSO produces recommendations ready to flow into international normative and policy implementation processes CSO has advanced understanding of and/or experience in the policy arena it targets

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO recommendations do not refer to any analysis or evidence CSO has no communication plan or implementation, and uses inconsistent messages with unclear outreach 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from research and testimonies are used to develop policy solutions; gaps in evidence are acknowledged Clear communication plans with designated audiences and tools to monitor outreach 																	
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>Tactics not yet based on strategic advantage – network developing and strengthening its position at local levels, and looking for national opportunities to engage.</p> <p>The network does not produce formal policy recommendations – but is involved in decision making and implementation of policy at local level.</p> <p>There is considerable lived experience of disability – expertise strong in that area, and in local and community-level advocacy and politics. Little experience of regional or international spaces at this point (one regional panel meeting).</p> <p>Network does not yet carry its own research or evidence building, though it recognises need to do this. Resources are not sufficient.</p> <p>No evidence of communication plans in place.</p>																		
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>																			
<p>Dimension 4: Access to and engagement in international decision-making arenas</p>																			
<p>Low capacity</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>High capacity</p>													
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO carries out no international advocacy CSO has no funding/no staff for international advocacy CSO has no/a bad reputation, and/or or only superficial thematic knowledge CSO advocates lack skills in dominant languages at international forums CSO has no/only occasional connections to other advocacy players in its field 	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%; text-align: center;">X</td> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td rowspan="2" style="width: 50%; vertical-align: middle;"> <p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="6"></td> </tr> </table>					X						<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO with highly advanced skills and/or experience in international advocacy CSO has a budget for international advocacy and dedicated staff CSO has a reputation as a thought leader and a resource on the thematic field of its international advocacy CSO advocates speak the main language(s) practised in international arenas, e.g. English for global advocacy CSO maintains and continuously updates relationships with other players in its field for mutually beneficial cooperation and coordination in international advocacy
X						<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>													
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>Network members, often volunteers, do not have experience of international advocacy.</p>																		

	<p>There is very little budget at all. They do not have NGO status, so find it very challenging to obtain funding; what they have usually has to go through one of the member organisations, or support is offered in kind.</p> <p>The network is developing a strong reputation within Kenya – and has been invited to one regional panel meeting so far.</p> <p>The network is anglophone.</p> <p>The network works to maintain relationships between its member organisations, but has not yet developed partnerships for international advocacy.</p>
Additional notes (optional)	

Table 16: Completed capacity assessment scorecard for a member (B) of consortium B

Dimension 1: Capacity for strategy development						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No international advocacy strategy (but the CSO may participate ad hoc in advocacy activities) International advocacy is implemented strictly to plan Advocacy plans are gender-blind CSO does not consult the people whose interests it claims to represent CSO does not monitor its advocacy activities and outcomes 	X					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive international advocacy strategy articulating the CSO's contribution to intended changes in specified regional & global normative frameworks and policies CSO regularly reviews and adapts international advocacy plans based on evidence from various sources Advocacy plans use a gender and social inclusion lens People whose interests the CSO claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in developing the CSO's international advocacy work CSO uses monitoring data to explain its international advocacy results and uses evidence from research
Evidence (explain the score)		<p>There is a 2021–2025 strategy document in place, which outlines some priorities for advocacy. However, international advocacy is not mentioned.</p> <p>There is no clear evidence of regular review of policies – but the strategy recognises the importance of research and evidence, and has measures in place to improve capacity to gather and utilise evidence in advocacy.</p> <p>MEMBER B's focus is on greater inclusion of women and girls with disabilities, so this forms the basis of all their work.</p> <p>MEMBER B's staff team is made up of women with disabilities. It has networks through its member organisations to communities of women and girls with disabilities, and consults them regularly, e.g. in developing strategic priorities.</p> <p>There is a staff member responsible for M&E. Developing an M&E system and using it throughout the organisation is one of the priorities in the new strategy. There is no evidence that monitoring data is currently being used for advocacy activities.</p>				
Additional notes (optional)						
Dimension 2: Capacity for collective action						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
	X					

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy, or carries out its advocacy independently with no connection to other actors pursuing similar goals • CSO does not involve the people whose interests it claims to represent in its international advocacy • CSO advocacy emphasises opposition against influential actors’ policies and practice • Any efforts to engage decision makers are indirect or passive • CSO carries out occasional, public advocacy events only 	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO develops and implements aligned and complementary advocacy strategies in collaboration with other actors • People whose interests it claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in implementing the CSO’s international advocacy work • CSO lobbies decision makers across political fronts, breaking up traditional alignments of interests • CSO strategically engages appropriate norm-setting and policymaking bodies and specific decision makers • CSO carries out long-term lobbying with decision makers across the political spectrum to engage deeply on their subject 				
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>MEMBER B aligns and collaborates with other consortium members in implementation (e.g. Femme Forte). There is not enough evidence to judge whether its advocacy strategies align with other actors in the space.</p> <p>Women and girls with disabilities are trained and encouraged to participate in community and local-level advocacy as well as events at national level. MEMBER B’s staff is made up of women with disabilities, so any international advocacy is carried out by the people whose interests it represents. There is not enough evidence to judge the extent of involvement in international advocacy.</p> <p>MEMBER B lobbies a full spectrum of political actors, as well as cultural and religious leaders, in its local and national-level work. There is not enough evidence to make a judgement about its international work.</p> <p>MEMBER B uses CEDAW strategically, as well as targeting political leaders at local and community level.</p> <p>Long-term lobbying is happening at local and national level.</p>					
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>						
<p>Dimension 3: Technical and tactical capacity</p>						
<p>Low capacity</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>High capacity</p>
	X					

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy • CSO does not propose any international normative/policy recommendations and/or • CSO has no understanding of the international policy arena it targets • CSO recommendations do not refer to any analysis or evidence • CSO has no communication plan or implementation, and uses inconsistent messages with unclear outreach 	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO develops and chooses advocacy tactics based on its strategic advantage and the tactics' likely effects on decision makers • CSO produces recommendations ready to flow into international normative and policy implementation processes • CSO has advanced understanding of and/or experience in the policy arena it targets • Evidence from research and testimonies are used to develop policy solutions; gaps in evidence are acknowledged • Clear communication plans with designated audiences and tools to monitor outreach 				
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>Advocacy tactics at local and national level build on strategic advantage and knowledge of decision makers.</p> <p>MEMBER B contributes to local and national level debates on policy where it is able to.</p> <p>MEMBER B has considerable lived experience of disability, so has thematic expertise as well as in-depth knowledge of local and national contexts. There isn't enough evidence to judge the extent to which this applies at international level.</p> <p>Evidence and research are understood to be important, and are a priority in the 2021–2025 strategy. However, it's not clear how this feeds into international advocacy work.</p> <p>There is no evidence of communication plans in place.</p>					
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>						
<p>Dimension 4: Access to and engagement in international decision-making arenas</p>						
<p>Low capacity</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>High capacity</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy • CSO has no funding/no staff for international advocacy • CSO has no/a bad reputation, and/or or only superficial thematic knowledge 	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO with highly advanced skills and/or experience in international advocacy • CSO has a budget for international advocacy and dedicated staff • CSO has a reputation as a thought leader and a resource on the thematic field of its international advocacy • CSO advocates speak the main language(s) practised in international arenas, e.g. English for global advocacy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO advocates lack skills in dominant languages at international forums • CSO has no/only occasional connections to other advocacy players in its field 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO maintains and continuously updates relationships with other players in its field for mutually beneficial cooperation and coordination in international advocacy
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>It's not clear whether MEMBER B has staff with extensive skills in international advocacy. The executive director attends international events, but at the time of writing no information had yet been received on the kind of meetings or involvement.</p> <p>There is no dedicated budget or staff allocated to international advocacy work.</p> <p>MEMBER B has a reputation among disability and women's rights movement in east Africa (e.g. Kenya). There is no evidence to judge its reputation more widely.</p> <p>MEMBER B is anglophone.</p> <p>MEMBER B works with other consortium members and maintains good relationships with its member organisations. Again, there's not enough evidence to judge its level of involvement, and therefore cooperation, in international advocacy.</p>	
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>		

Table 17: Completed capacity assessment scorecard for a member (C) of consortium B

Dimension 1: Capacity for strategy development						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No international advocacy strategy (but the CSO may participate ad hoc in advocacy activities) International advocacy is implemented strictly to plan Advocacy plans are gender-blind CSO does not consult the people whose interests it claims to represent CSO does not monitor its advocacy activities and outcomes 		X				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive international advocacy strategy articulating the CSO's contribution to intended changes in specified regional & global normative frameworks and policies CSO regularly reviews and adapts international advocacy plans based on evidence from various sources Advocacy plans use a gender and social inclusion lens People whose interests the CSO claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in developing the CSO's international advocacy work CSO uses monitoring data to explain its international advocacy results and uses evidence from research
Evidence (explain the score)		<p>No international advocacy strategy yet in place. Some ad hoc participation in regional networks as/when opportunities arise; these are mainstream SRH networks where MEMBER C can advocate for more inclusive practice re Women and Girls with Disabilities (WGWD).</p> <p>Focus for advocacy is defined in consultation with WGWD at grass roots level. Ad hoc interventions at regional level driven by agenda set by network.</p> <p>Feminist leadership and inclusion of WGWD is central to the organisation's purpose and operating model.</p> <p>WGWD from informal settlements are included in determining advocacy priorities at local and national level.</p> <p>There is no dedicated MEL person on staff team (the team is too small), but the five-person board oversees reporting and progress.</p>				
Additional notes (optional)		<p>Young organisation developing capacity at local and national level with ambition to develop much further (applies to all dimensions).</p>				
Dimension 2: Capacity for collective action						
Low capacity	1	2	3	4	5	High capacity
		X				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy, or carries out its advocacy independently with no connection to other actors pursuing similar goals • CSO does not involve the people whose interests it claims to represent in its international advocacy • CSO advocacy emphasises opposition against influential actors’ policies and practice • Any efforts to engage decision makers are indirect or passive • CSO carries out occasional, public advocacy events only 	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO develops and implements aligned and complementary advocacy strategies in collaboration with other actors • People whose interests it claims to represent, particularly those who are marginalised and difficult to reach, are involved in implementing the CSO’s international advocacy work • CSO lobbies decision makers across political fronts, breaking up traditional alignments of interests • CSO strategically engages appropriate norm-setting and policymaking bodies and specific decision makers • CSO carries out long-term lobbying with decision makers across the political spectrum to engage deeply on their subject 				
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>No evidence of a formal advocacy strategy shared. Organisation maintains good awareness of other actors in the space, and looks proactively for opportunities to offer a disability/inclusion lens to the conversations being had there.</p> <p>WGWD being trained in feminist leadership – building towards including them in implementation and advocacy at community level. Not yet involved at national or international level.</p> <p>Political lobbying done when there is an opportunity relevant to needs of WGWD, e.g. passage of bill regarding people with disabilities in Kenyan parliament.</p> <p>MEMBER C does not yet have enough connections at regional and global level to have secure links to framework and policymaking bodies.</p> <p>Public advocacy is consistent at community level, becoming more constant at national and regional level. There is no evidence of targeted political lobbying yet beyond key community leaders.</p>					
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>						
<p>Dimension 3: Technical and tactical capacity</p>						
<p>Low capacity</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>High capacity</p>
		X				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy • CSO does not propose any international normative/policy recommendations and/or • CSO has no understanding of the international policy arena it targets • CSO recommendations do not refer to any analysis or evidence • CSO has no communication plan or implementation, and uses inconsistent messages with unclear outreach 	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO develops and chooses advocacy tactics based on its strategic advantage and the tactics' likely effects on decision makers • CSO produces recommendations ready to flow into international normative and policy implementation processes • CSO has advanced understanding of and/or experience in the policy arena it targets • Evidence from research and testimonies are used to develop policy solutions; gaps in evidence are acknowledged • Clear communication plans with designated audiences and tools to monitor outreach 				
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>Ways of engaging with regional networks (mainstream SRH-focused) are developed based on knowledge of the spaces and on likely opportunity within events or meetings to share disability lens. They use question and answer sessions where no other opportunity is available to ask how the needs of WGWD are addressed – and then use the opportunity to network and build new contacts.</p> <p>MEMBER C does not yet have capacity to position recommendations ready to be taken up by policymakers. They instead position themselves as advisors/experts/consultants on the inclusion of WGWD within mainstream spaces in their regional advocacy.</p> <p>Extensive knowledge of the WGWD they work with in Nairobi, and their needs, developed through significant fieldwork. Developing knowledge of regional networks – CREA supporting with developing new connections.</p> <p>Evidence from WGWD used to help determine advocacy priorities.</p> <p>No evidence of clear communication plans in place.</p>					
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>						
<p>Dimension 4: Access to and engagement in international decision-making arenas</p>						
<p>Low capacity</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>High capacity</p>
		X				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO carries out no international advocacy • CSO has no funding/no staff for international advocacy • CSO has no/a bad reputation, and/or or only superficial thematic knowledge • CSO advocates lack skills in dominant languages at international forums • CSO has no/only occasional connections to other advocacy players in its field 	<p>Overall score (please mark one box only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO with highly advanced skills and/or experience in international advocacy • CSO has a budget for international advocacy and dedicated staff • CSO has a reputation as a thought leader and a resource on the thematic field of its international advocacy • CSO advocates speak the main language(s) practised in international arenas, e.g. English for global advocacy • CSO maintains and continuously updates relationships with other players in its field for mutually beneficial cooperation and coordination in international advocacy
<p>Evidence (explain the score)</p>	<p>Starting to build up connections with regional/pan-African networks and conferences in SRH arena, where they can represent the needs of WGWD and push for better inclusion in the mainstream.</p> <p>Budget is dependent on project funding. Staff team too small to have dedicated advocacy or policy officer. Executive director takes responsibility.</p> <p>MEMBER C building reputation in African SRH movements, and within broader disability rights movement in Kenya and east Africa.</p> <p>Anglophone team, based in Kenya.</p> <p>Evidence of proactive network building whenever opportunities arise with support and mentoring from CREA. This has not yet translated into significant coordination of efforts in international advocacy.</p>	
<p>Additional notes (optional)</p>		

Annex 7: Assessing international advocacy capacity

Supplement to the Inception Report, 7 June 2022

There is no off-the-shelf framework for measuring international advocacy capacity. Therefore, based on literature on capacity in the development context, on advocacy capacity and on the more recent concept of policy entrepreneurship, we propose a tool that will be applied in our assignment with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Acknowledging that the tool is based mainly on research produced in the global North (but informed by practice in the global South), we expect to refine it iteratively as we apply it in the baseline and mid-term review phases of our research with members of the consortia and their partners.

Defining international advocacy capacity

Dictionaries commonly define ‘**capacity**’ as someone’s ability to do a particular thing or the power to produce, perform or deploy. Baser and Morgan (2008) describe capacity as an elusive, transient system phenomenon that enables agents to grow and demand power, control and space to create public value regarding organisational capacity in the development context. They have defined ‘five core capabilities critical to organisations and systems: the capabilities to (1) commit and engage, (2) carry out functions or tasks, (3) relate and attract resources and support, (4) adapt and self-renew, and finally, (5) balance coherence and diversity’.

Advocacy is the act or process of pleading in favour of a cause or proposal, using a wide range of activities, from low-key lobbying to public campaigning. Raynor, York and Sim (2009) define four critical capacities for advocacy organisations: leadership, adaptation, management and technical. A review guide developed by the Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program and Rhonda Schlangen on SRHR advocacy capacity in sub-Saharan Africa (2020) similarly distinguishes between four broad categories: (1) strategy & implementation (including, inter alia, adaptation and learning & evaluation), (2) tactical skills (including, inter alia, networking & coalition building and use of evidence), (3) commitment (including, inter alia, sector engagement and constituent connections), and (4) management & operations.³⁷

In recent literature the concept of **policy entrepreneurship** has added a promising analytical lens, drawing attention to individual ‘actors who seek policy changes that shift the status quo in given areas of public policy’ (Mintrom, 2015, quoted in Tanner *et al.*, 2019). They engage deeply with the policy space, finding ways to break down traditional alignments of interests and to facilitate diverse networks and coalitions. Policy entrepreneurs invest their resources for that purpose – echoing Baser and Morgan’s ‘capability to commit and engage’.

Finally, our research on the **international advocacy** component focuses on multilateral global and regional policy spaces. These spaces are characterised by limited accessibility, highly technical debates requiring advanced knowledge of the subject matter and of the specific international law or policy instruments discussed, specific social norms, and a predominance of a small number of languages, e.g. English at global venues.

Process and analytical tool

Core dimensions of Southern civil society international advocacy capacity

³⁷ Although the longer list of capacities produced by Elbers and Kamstra (2020) largely fits into these analytical frameworks, it is more difficult to apply in practice. This is because it conceptually mixes the abilities of organisations to carry out certain activities (e.g. the capacities to produce evidence, analyse the political arena, produce tailored messages and work collectively) with the effects of their activities (e.g. to inspire trust among and build rapport with power holders) and issues linked to governance structures and processes (to represent constituency interests).

Building on these definitions and our initial findings from interviews and consultations with experts in international advocacy spaces, we have developed a bespoke tool to assess **Southern civil society advocacy capacity in international policy spaces**. It focuses on the following core dimensions:

- (1) **Strategy development**, including
 - advocacy planning
 - learning and adaptation
- (2) **Collective** action, including
 - networking
 - working in coalitions
 - working as/with policy entrepreneurs
- (3) **Technical and tactical** knowledge, including
 - factual/testimony-based knowledge of the subject matter
 - knowledge and skills to navigate international policy arenas
- (4) **Access to and engagement in** international decision-making spaces, including
 - sector engagement/relationships and constituent connections
 - resources for international advocacy
 - reputation and profile.

Data collection

During the baseline phase of our assignment (2022), the following data will be collected:

- **Baseline data on the core dimensions** across all consortia and funds in the baseline sample (n=20), drawing from the full range of data sources (KII with stakeholders representing diverse perspectives, survey with 1st tier partners, and review of documentation), to ensure both internal (MFA, and partnerships and funds) and external perspectives are triangulated.
- In addition to gathering and analysing data on these capacity dimensions, we will compile data on the **consortia's planned activities to strengthen Southern civil society advocacy capacity** in international policy arenas.
- Our online survey with 1st tier partners will identify Southern 2nd tier partners involved in international advocacy in the selected international policy spaces. A separate **online survey with 2nd tier Southern organisations** will focus on their international advocacy capacities.
- Our **case studies** will use process evaluation to gain a deeper understanding of the processes used to strengthen and apply international advocacy capacities in selected arenas.

During the TPA/DQM phase (2023), data on the consortia's monitoring systems may flow into the advocacy capacity assessment, especially regarding learning and adaptation abilities. In 2024 the tool will also be applied in our Mid-Term Evaluation.

Analytical tool

We propose a scorecard template to record our findings on the core dimensions of advocacy capacity for Southern CSOs (chiefly 2nd tier partners) involved in international advocacy. The scorecard includes rubrics for each dimension. Numerical assessment can be a blunt tool; therefore it is essential to explain the score in the dedicated text boxes. The consortia use different approaches to assess advocacy capacity; our tool is not meant to judge individual performances but to analyse our data so as to obtain aggregated findings across Southern partners.

Annex 8: Indicator definitions

Table 18: Selected indicators and guiding questions for the baseline phase – updated 22 August 2022

Indicator number	Indicator and guiding questions	Comments, including on focus, scope and definitions
SCS025 WRGE 1.1 WRGE 2.1 WRGE 3.1 WRGE 4.1 SRHR H	# of international agreements blocked, adopted or improved for sustainable and inclusive development as a result of CSO engagement	International normative instruments and policy arenas that international advocacy by the consortia and LFS funds focuses on Objectives pursued by the partnerships in the selected advocacy arenas (CSW, CPD, COP, SG Report on UNSCR 1325, AU) Description of the current situation in the selected arenas
SCS031	# of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or creating space to engage at international level	Focus on the selected international advocacy arenas (CSW, CPD, COP, SG Report on UNSCR 1325, AU) 'Agenda setting' is defined as CSOs influencing the topics tabled in international decision-making arenas, e.g. by engaging with political actors involved in preparing the agendas (lobbying), and by publishing and/or submitting a position paper/shadow report/testimonials/research to feed into discussions 'Influencing the debate' is defined as CSO demands and positions being voiced in international decision-making arenas by participants in those debates 'Creating space to engage at international level' is defined as facilitating engagement among CSOs and with international decision makers, e.g. by hosting side events, training CSOs in international advocacy
SCS4	# of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs for, by or with their membership/constituency at international level	'Membership/constituency' is defined as the consortium members' contracting/implementing partners, with the focus on those in the global South (not the home constituencies of Northern partners)
SCS5	# of CSOs with increased L&A capacities SCS051: # of women-led CSOs with increased L&A capacities SCS052: # of youth-led CSOs with increased L&A capacities	Focus on international L&A capacities at the levels of 1st tier and selected 2nd tier partners in the global South, as defined by four dimensions: (1) strategy development; (2) collective action; (3) technical and tactical knowledge; (4) access to and engagement in international decision-making spaces

	SCS053: # of other CSOs (not youth or women-led) with increased L&A capacities SCS054: # of CSOs which are both women and youth-led with increased L&A capacities	Data by type of organisation will be based on baseline reports of the consortia in our sample (n=20)
SCS6	# of CSOs included in SP programmes (differentiating between types of CSOs as in SCS5)	Levels and ways in which the consortia include Southern CSOs in their international advocacy (including lobbying)
SCS7	# of CSOs that have enhanced representation of constituencies	Focus on strategies that consortia use to represent their implementing partners and their constituencies in the global South in international advocacy
SCS8	# of CSOs using a gender and social inclusion lens in international L&A, with specific attention to youth	Strategies the consortia and funds use to apply a WRGE and social inclusion lens in international advocacy. Specifically, the evaluation looked at whether the consortium partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ disaggregate monitoring data by gender ▪ use any indicators on WRGE ▪ have a budget which includes specific lines for WRGE-related activities ▪ have dedicated staff working on issues relating WRGE
WRGE 1.2	# of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions on violence against women and girls, through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or movement building	See definition of SCS31 above; focus on strategies CSOs use in their international advocacy on violence against women and girls Compilation of baseline values from consortia in our sample who use that indicator
WRGE 2.2	# of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions on women's voice, agency, leadership and representative participation in decision-making processes in public, private and civic sphere – through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or movement building	See definition of SCS31 above; focus on strategies CSOs use in their international advocacy that CSOs on women's voice, agency, leadership and representative participation in decision-making processes in public, private and civic sphere Compilation of baseline values from consortia in our sample who use that indicator
WRGE 3.2	# of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions on women's economic rights, empowerment and entrepreneurship – through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or movement building	See definition of SCS31 above; focus on strategies CSOs use in their international advocacy on women's economic rights, empowerment and entrepreneurship Compilation of baseline values from consortia in our sample who use that indicator
WRGE 4.2	# of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions on promote women's meaningful and equal participation and leadership in conflict	See definition of SCS31 above; focus on strategies CSOs use in their international advocacy on women's meaningful and equal participation and leadership in conflict

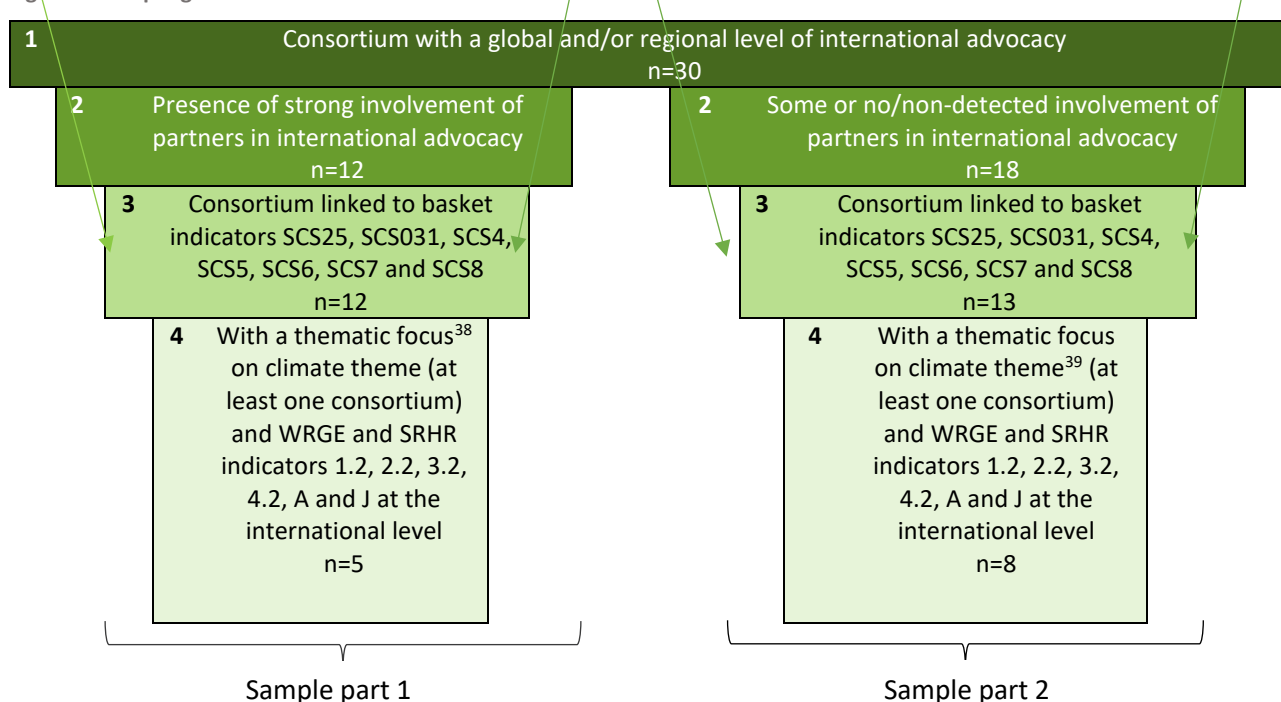
	prevention and peace- and state-building and protecting women’s and girls’ rights in crisis and (post-)conflict situations – through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or movement building	prevention and peace- and state-building and protecting women’s and girls’ rights in crisis and (post-)conflict situations Compilation of baseline values from consortia in our sample who use that indicator
SRHR J	# of CSOs and advocacy networks with increased L&A capacities	See definition of SCS5 above; focus on consortia funded under the SRHR policy instrument

Annex 9: Sampling strategy

In view of (i) the large number of indicators to be covered by our research and (ii) MFA’s wish for the research team to collect primary data against the baseline from the largest number of partnerships possible, it has been agreed to cover the full SCS international (28 consortia and 4 LFS funds) in a limited set of data collection and analysis activities, and to conduct more in-depth research on a large sample. Further depth would be obtained in a set of case studies focused on specific partnerships and advocacy spaces.

Our first analysis of all programme proposals emanating from the SCS international partnerships (‘mapping’) served as a basis on which to draw a sample that would reflect the overall composition of that population in its diversity, with a focus on key topics for the Ministry. In close consultation with MFA, we established inclusion criteria to determine characteristics of partnerships in the baseline. Decisions about the criteria were informed by a delicate balance between ensuring a strong study and robust findings (external validity) on the overall policy framework, its policy instruments, and their implementation by the different partnerships and MFA. The criteria displayed in Figure 8 outline key characteristics of the partnerships identified in the sampling process. An initial sample of 13 strategic partnerships was drawn based on four inclusion criteria in a two-part sample branching out at criterion 2, as shown below.

Figure 8: Sampling inclusion criteria



This initial sample did not include any consortia supported under the WPS policy instrument and LFS funds. To close this gap, and responding to the Ministry’s strong preference for a sample encompassing 20 consortia and LFS funds (almost two-thirds of the population of consortia), we have purposively selected additional PoV, WPS and LFS consortia for stronger coverage of those policy instruments and of the climate theme. The sample ultimately agreed with MFA is shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Proposed sample during inception

³⁸ One consortium has a climate theme (PoV), one Security and Rule of law (PoV), two WRGE (PoW) and one SRHR.

³⁹ Out of eight consortia, six have WRGE (PoW) and two have SRHR themes.

#	Programme name	Consortium lead/Southern fund	Instr.	Sample part
1	Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action	Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres	PoV	added
2	Green Livelihood Alliance: Forests for a Just Future	Milieudefensie	PoV	1
3	Amplifying Voices for Climate Action	World Wildlife Fund	PoV	added
7	Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA)	CMC	PoV	added
8	Just Future	Cordaid	PoV	1
13	Our Voices Our Futures	CREA	PoV	2
14	Count Me In! (CMi)	Mama Cash, NL	PoV	1
15	She Leads	Plan	PoV	2
16	Women Gaining Ground	CREA	PoW	1
17	Power Up!	Just Associates (JASS)	PoW	2
18	Fem PAWER	Kvinna Till Kvinna	PoW	2
19	We Cannot Wait	Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) Network	PoV	2
20	AWESOME	Womankind Worldwide	PoW	2
21	Love Alliance	Aidsfonds – Soa Aids NL	SRHR	1
23	Masarouna	Oxfam Novib	SRHR	2
25	Make Way	Wemos	SRHR	2
27	Al-thawra Untha: The Revolution is Female	Pax NL	WPS	added
30	Resourcing Women's Rights Activism	African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)	LFS	added
31	Indigenous Women Walking Together for our Rights	International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)	LFS	added
32	Women's Political Participation for Peace	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)	WPS	added

Annex 10: Revised research questions

The RQs that MFA has included in its overall Terms of Reference (TOR) for the three-year assignment across all lots of SCS consortia and LFS funds have been adjusted to the context of global and regional L&A, as presented in Table 20.

Table 20: Overview of revised RQs for baseline phase

RQ	Original RQs as per TOR	Adjusted RQs for the baseline phase
1	What is the current situation on the SCS and the thematic indicators (and relevant intermediate outcome indicators) and the international civic space?	What is the current situation (i) in the global/relevant regional civic spaces and (ii) with respect to the SCS indicators selected?
2	To what extent are the SCS and thematic ToCs of the policy instruments relevant in the international context?	To what extent are the ToCs of the SCS policy instruments relevant in the global/selected regional contexts?
3	To what extent are the strategic partnership programmes aligned to regional and international policies, strategic plans and frameworks, including from (but not limited to) the EU (European External Action Service), AU, UN, OECD, OSCE?	To what extent are the global/regional components of the strategic partnership programmes aligned to relevant regional (e.g. AU) and global (e.g. UN) policies and frameworks?
4	To what extent is the lobby and advocacy work by strategic partnerships complementary to the diplomacy work of the NL MFA Embassies and Permanent Representations (UN Geneva, UN Vienna, UN New York, UN Rome, Council of Europe in Strasbourg, EU in Brussels, OECD in Paris, UNESCO in Paris, NATO in Brussels, OSCE in Vienna and ICC in The Hague)? What lessons learned and good practices in achieving synergy and good collaboration for joint results can be identified?	How does the lobby and advocacy work by strategic partnerships aim to achieve complementarity to the diplomacy work of the NL MFA Permanent Representations (UN Geneva, UN Vienna, UN New York, UN Rome, Council of Europe in Strasbourg, EU in Brussels, OECD in Paris, UNESCO in Paris, NATO in Brussels, OSCE in Vienna and ICC in The Hague)? ⁴⁰
5	To what extent are the ToCs of the different partnerships adjusted to international context? To what extent have potential risks been identified and taken into account in the ToC? To what extent are the assumptions underlying the ToCs validated by existing high-quality literature and evaluations?	To what extent do the ToCs of the strategic partnerships include global/regional lobbying and advocacy and dedicate resources to these processes? What risks specific to this international work have been identified and reflected in the ToC? To what extent are underlying assumptions linked to existing high-quality literature and evaluations?
6	To what extent are the activities aligned with the needs of the beneficiaries during the implementation of the project? What dimensions of inequality and discrimination against groups that are structurally excluded do the partnership programme aim to address?	What dimensions of inequality and discrimination against groups that are structurally excluded do the partnership programmes aim to address at global and regional levels? To what extent are the lobby and advocacy activities of consortium leads aligned with the interests of the consortium members and 2nd tier partners in the global South during the implementation of the programme?

⁴⁰ Questions related to lessons learned and good practices will be addressed in the MTR.

7	To what extent did Southern leadership materialise in the design of the programmes? How have the in-country partnership alliances been formed?	To what extent did Southern leadership materialise in the design of the global/regional-level advocacy and lobby components of the programmes?
8	How do partners view their own legitimacy towards beneficiaries and duty bearers? What gives these civil society organisations legitimacy towards beneficiary's rights holders and duty bearers? (Constituency, expertise, independence, service provision, religious belief, human rights treaties, etc.)	How do consortium partners (including selected 2nd tier partners in the case studies) view their own legitimacy towards duty bearers in relation to their global and regional lobbying and advocacy? What gives the consortium partners legitimacy to conduct global and regional lobbying and advocacy on behalf of behalf of rights holders?
9	To what extent had programme design been coordinated with relevant players (embassies and delegated programmes, other strategic partners, national NGOs, multilaterals, etc.)? To what extent was the Ministry involved in coordinating the different efforts and are there any tangible plans for coordination of implementation in place? Have shared ambitions between partnerships been developed?	To what extent were global/regional lobbying and advocacy components of programme design coordinated with relevant players at regional and global levels? To what extent was the Ministry involved in coordinating the different efforts and are there any tangible plans for coordination of implementation in place? ⁴¹
10	To what extent is gender mainstreamed effectively in the design of the programmes? To what extent do programmes use gender transformative, rights-based, inclusive and intersectional approaches in their design and have these been translated in concrete approaches and MEL activities? Has gender-based budgeting been applied?	To what extent is gender mainstreamed effectively in the global and regional lobbying and advocacy components of the programmes, in the related budgets? To what extent do these components use gender transformative, rights-based, inclusive and intersectional approaches in their design and have these been translated in concrete operational and MEL plans (e.g. gender budgeting)?
11	How have girls and boys, adolescents, youth, young women and men, adults, people with disabilities, LGBTI people, religious & ethnic minorities and people in the lowest wealth quintiles been involved in programme design? To what extent and how was equal and meaningful participation of all groups guaranteed?	How have girls and boys, adolescents, youth, young women and men, adults, people with disabilities, LGBTI people, religious & ethnic minorities and people in the lowest wealth quintiles been involved in designing the global and regional lobbying and advocacy components of the programme? To what extent could that ensure equal and meaningful participation of all groups?
12	What measures were taken to integrate conflict sensitivity in the design of the partnership programmes?	What measures were taken to integrate conflict sensitivity in the design of the partnership programmes (where relevant for global/regional lobbying and advocacy components)?
13	To what extent do all SCS strategic partnerships use integrity and safeguarding policies & principles in the design of their programmes?	To what extent do all SCS strategic partnerships use integrity and safeguarding policies & principles in the design of the global and regional advocacy and lobby components of their programmes?
14	To what extent have lessons learned from previous partnership programmes been taken into account in programme design?	To what extent have lessons learned from previous partnership programmes been considered in the design of global/regional advocacy and lobby activities in the programmes with previous partnerships?

⁴¹ Question on shared ambitions will be addressed in the MTR.

Annex 11: External literature sources

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Van Wessel, M., Arensman, B., Hihorst, T. Richert, W., Klaver, D.C., van Bodegom, A., van Waegeningh, C., Rashch, E. and Wagemakers, A. (2015). International Lobbying and Advocacy Evaluation. MFS II International Lobbying and Advocacy Evaluation 2012–2015.

Annex 12: Internal literature sources

Table 21: Partnership documentation available for use in our baseline research

#	Partnership programme name	Proposal	Baseline	Annual plan
1	The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA)	✓	✓	✓
2	Green Livelihood Alliance: Forests for a Just Future	✓	✓	
3	Amplifying Voices for Climate Action	✓		✓
4	Benkadi ('Working Together in the Same Direction' in Bambara)	✓		✓
5	Power of Pride	✓		
6	We Are Able! Co-creating Inclusive Governance for Access to Basic Resources that Leaves No One Behind	✓		
7	Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA)	✓	✓	✓
8	Just Future	✓	✓	✓
9	Strengthening Civil Courage	✓		
10	Sustainable Textile Initiative – Together for Change (STITCH)	✓		
11	Fair for All: Improving Value Chains at Scale	✓		✓
12	Reclaim Sustainability	✓	✓	✓
13	Our Voices Our Futures	✓	✓	✓
14	Count Me In! (CMi)	✓	✓	✓
15	She Leads	✓	✓	
16	Women Gaining Ground	✓	✓	
17	Power Up!	✓	✓	
18	Fem PAWER	✓	✓	✓
19	We Cannot Wait	✓	✓	
20	AWESOME	✓	✓	✓
21	Love Alliance	✓	✓	✓
22	We Lead	✓		✓
23	Masarouna 'Our Pathway'	✓	✓	✓
24	Break Free	✓		✓
25	Make Way	✓	✓	✓
26	Mwanamke Amani na Usalama 2.0.	✓		
27	Al-thawra Untha: The Revolution is Female	✓	✓	✓
28	The Power of Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Activisms for New Feminist Realities	✓		
29	The Power of Asian Activisms for New Feminist Realities	✓		

30	Resourcing Women's Rights Activism in Africa and the Middle East	✓	✓	
31	Indigenous Women Walking Together for our Rights	✓	✓	
32	Women's Political Participation for Peace Programme	✓	✓	✓

Annex 13: KIIs list (anonymised) and triangulation of perspectives

Type of respondent	Number of interviews	Number of people interviewed	Comments
Partnership lead	18	18	Covering 19 partnerships
Partnership member (lead)	14	17	HCS and LCS
Consortium member (non-lead)	12	16	HCS and LCS
Implementing partner (2nd tier)	11	20	HCS and LCS
MFA (programme management)	4	6	Covering 5 SCS policy instruments
MFA (diplomats)	1	2	Covering all selected advocacy arenas
External advocacy specialists	18	19	Covering all selected advocacy arenas
3rd tier partner	1	1	
Total ⁴²	74	99	

Triangulation of perspectives: As agreed with MFA, a first set of scoping interviews focused on the formal lead organisation in each of the 20 partnerships sampled out of a total of 32 partnerships active (or intending to become active) in international advocacy. Despite difficulties in obtaining a response from some partnership leads, the research team managed to carry out 18 scoping interviews with a total of 22 persons representing the partnership lead organisation. Furthermore, our case studies carried out in-depth KIIs with 21 persons representing a total of 20 CSOs in six consortia (1st tier partners). In parallel, in-depth KIIs were carried out with 16 persons representing 11 contractual partners (2nd tier partners) of the case study consortia. A **1st step of triangulation** has consisted of comparing the data provided by respondents at different levels and in different organisations within the same consortium.

At MFA level, scoping interviews were held with MFA staff managing SCS partnerships, covering 1–2 persons per policy instrument. In addition, the research team interviewed MFA diplomats active in or observing the global advocacy arenas selected for our research. Emerging findings from the consortia were triangulated with data from MFA respondents.

However, both MFA and partnership respondents (especially partnership respondents serving as consortium leads) hold strong stakes in the SCS policy framework. Therefore, the research team established contacts and implemented KIIs with external advocacy specialists with a robust track record and ongoing involvement in the selected global and regional advocacy arenas. ('External' means that they have worked independently from the organisations involved in SCS implementation.) In that way, data collected from MFA and its partners could be triangulated both within the wider partnership structures and externally (external KIIs and external literature). The 19 external specialists, whom we intend to contact again for the mid-term review, have included:

- two female experts in UNFCCC-related climate advocacy (a senior climate activist from Europe and a young but experienced and highly interconnected African climate activist)

⁴² The numbers of interviews in the rows add up to more than 64 as some interviews had people from different respondent categories.

- three senior female experts in WRGE advocacy at CSW (as well as the CEDAW Committee in Geneva, not targeted in our research), the UN Security Council (on WPS), CDP, and with AU
- three male experts in African Union advocacy (mid-level seniority), with a focus on security (including WPS) and climate themes
- a senior official within the Danish MFA, focused on gender equality and SRHR in the context of CSW and CPD
- two professors, one focused on Women, Peace and Security and the other on the intersection of LGBTQI rights and WPS
- two independent researcher/practitioners.

Annex 14: Semi-structured interview guide for KIIs with MFA staff involved in implementing SCS and partnership leads

Instructions for interviewers:

Introduce the review – Itad has been contracted to assess the international component of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ policy framework for Strengthening Civil Society and its implementation across SCS partnerships and Southern funds. Our focus is on lobbying and advocacy efforts at the global and regional level.

Request informed consent – Ask respondents whether they are happy to participate in the interview. Explain that their responses will be treated as strictly confidential and the sources of specific findings will not be named. And that if at any point during the interview or afterwards they wish to change or retract anything they have said, they are free to do so.

Use the semi-structured interview guide below to inform your interview. This topic guide is modular: *text which is italicised in orange* indicates which type(s) of respondent each question is relevant to. The priority is to get through all of the main questions (for the respective respondent type) in each interview (this may mean skipping some prompts). Essential **questions that must not be skipped are in bold print**.

For each interview, please:

- Save a copy of this document, with a new filename in the format: ‘Interviewee type (CO/MFA/external), interviewee name, interview date DDMMYY, interview time HH:MM’. Re interview time, please record the time in the UK.
- Make notes in the document under the relevant question(s).
- Upon completion of the interview, make bullet points at the bottom of the document of any emerging findings or lines of enquiry.
- Make a note at the bottom of the document of any standout quotes.
- Upload to MS Teams folder ‘3. Implementation/KII notes’.

It is up to interviewers whether they wish to record interviews (pending the interviewees’ consent). The main required output will be the set of notes.

Section 1: Introduction

- *All respondents*: Is there anything you would like to ask before we ask our questions?
- *All respondents*: What is your title/role at [organisation name]? What does it involve?
- *Partnership leads*: How did you get involved in the SCS policy framework?
Prompt:
 - Any MFA funding under predecessor framework?
- *Consortium leads (RQ9)*: Has the Dutch MFA or its policies influenced the way you have designed the international elements of the programme? How?
- *MFA staff*: Could you describe your role in the SCS policy framework and the specific instrument you work on?

- *Partnership leads (RQs 3 and 6 and RQ1 re SCS025 and SCS031):* Could you summarise in a few sentences what advocacy work the consortium is doing internationally (i.e. at global and regional level)?
 - Prompts:
 - What types of inequality and discrimination against excluded groups is it addressing at an international level? How?
 - What are the key international spaces for CSO advocacy being targeted and how? What are the chances for success in these policy spaces?

Section 2: Strategy review

- *MFA staff (RQs 2 and 5):* **How was the ToC for the policy instrument developed?**
 - Prompts:
 - Who participated in the process?
 - How were problems to be addressed identified?
 - How were solutions identified?
- *MFA staff (RQ1):* **From your point of view, which are the key fora/venues for international civil society L&A on the key themes linked to your policy instrument?**
 - Prompts:
 - Which of these spaces are of particular interest to you, and why?
 - How do you perceive the situation in these spaces regarding L&A by Southern civil society representatives – how present are they, who are they, what are their opportunities...?
- *Partnership leads (RQ4):* Have you engaged or do you plan to engage with Dutch MFA Representative Offices in relation to advocacy to international organisations?
 - Prompt:
 - What has this engagement involved?

Section 3: Process evaluation

- *Partnership leads (RQ7):* **Who designed the international L&A components of your programme?**
 - Prompts:
 - **What did the process involve?**
 - Were 2nd tier partners involved? How?
 - Which sociodemographic groups participated in the design process of the international L&A components, and how?
- *Partnership leads (RQs 7 and 8 and RQ1 SCS4, SCS5, SCS6):* **Can you describe consortium governance arrangements with respect to the structures, roles and relationships relating to the international L&A components?**
 - Prompts:
 - What do you do to increase Southern partners' L&A capacity at global and regional levels? (if lead is 'Northern')
 - What do you do to foster Southern leadership within the consortium?

- What steps has the programme taken to ensure the meaningful participation of marginalised groups?
- How would you describe the relationship between consortium members and the groups they represent?
- *MFA staff (RQ9)*: How do you see MFA's role in the implementation of the policy instrument? What are the key things the MFA structures can do to reach the goals of the policy instrument?
 - Can you give one example of MFA cooperation with a partnership in the last 6 months or so under this policy instrument?

Section 4: Cross-cutting issues

- *All respondents (RQ14)*: How have **lessons learned from international lobbying and advocacy activities** of previous partnership programmes been identified and documented?
 - Prompts:
 - How have these lessons informed the design of current international L&A initiatives?
- *All respondents (open question)*: **Is there anything you would like to add?**

Interviewer notes

Emerging findings/lines of enquiry

Quotes

Annex 15: Semi-structured interview guide for KIIs with MFA diplomats and external specialists in policy arenas

Name of the interviewee:

Advocacy Arena the KII focuses on (please highlight/bold the corresponding one)

CSW	AU on WRGE
CPD	AU on SRHR
UN SG report on Resolution 1325	AU on WPS
COP	AU on climate

Instructions for interviewers:

- i. *Introduce the review* – Itad has been contracted to assess the international component of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ policy framework for Strengthening Civil Society and its implementation with civil society organisations across the world. Our focus is on advocacy at the global and regional level.

External respondents: We are interviewing you as someone who is familiar with international advocacy, including lobbying, and who can give us an external perspective on civil society activism in international arenas.

Our focus is on the *[interviewer to select ONE]* African Union (AU)/Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)/Commission on Population and Development (CPD)/Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (SG report)/Conference of the Parties (COP) in the UNFCCC process.

MFA respondents: We are interviewing some diplomats to get a better understanding as to how you work with civil society in these arenas, and to get your perspective on international civil society advocacy.

Our focus is on the *[interviewer to select ONE]* African Union (AU)/Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)/Commission on Population and Development (CPD)/Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (SG report)/ Conference of the Parties (COP) in the UNFCCC process.

- ii. *Request informed consent* – Ask respondents whether they are happy to participate in the interview. Explain that their responses will be treated as strictly confidential; the sources of specific findings will not be named. And that if at any point during the interview or afterwards they wish to change or retract anything they have said, they are free to do so.
- iii. *Use the semi-structured interview guide below* to inform your interview. This topic guide is modular: *text which is italicised in orange* indicates which type(s) of respondent each question is relevant to. The priority is to get through all main questions (for the respective respondent type) in each interview (this may mean skipping some prompts). Essential **questions that must not be skipped are in bold print**.
- iv. For each interview, please:

- Save a copy of this document, with a new filename in the format: 'Interviewee type (MFA/external), advocacy arena (AU, CPD, COP, CSW, SG), interviewee name, interview date DDMMYY'.
- Make notes in the document under the relevant question(s).
- Upon completion of the interview, make bullet points at the bottom of the document of any emerging findings or lines of enquiry.
- Make a note at the bottom of the document of any standout quotes.
- Upload to MS Teams folder '3. Implementation/KII notes'.
- Enter key data in your Baseline Primary Data Matrix by 24 July 2022 (https://itadltd.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/msteams_365d2c_576375/Shared%20Documents/General/3.%20Implementation/baseline_Primary_Data_Matrices?csf=1&web=1&e=9sB2GF)

It is up to interviewers whether they wish to record interviews (pending the interviewees' consent). The main required outputs will be notes and the data in the baseline primary data matrix.

Section 1: Introduction

- *All respondents:* Is there anything you would like to ask before we ask our questions?
- *All respondents:* What is your title/role at [organisation name]? What does it involve?

Section 2: Baseline (RQ1) SCS 2, 3 and 5

- *All respondents (RQ1 SCS2):* **What are the most prominent topics in the field of...** [interviewer to select ONE] women's rights and gender equality (WRGE)/sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)/women, peace and security/climate

... that are **currently** discussed at the

[interviewer to select ONE] African Union (AU)/Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)/Commission on Population and Development (CPD)/Secretary-General's report on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (SG report)/Conference of the Parties (COP) in the UNFCCC process?

- Prompt:
- **Why** are they key topics?
- Do you see these topics being significant **for the next years** as well?
- Prompt with **WRGE-linked** and **climate-linked** respondents: The CSW approved the **first-ever set of agreed conclusions focused on empowering women and girls in the context of climate action**, as it concluded its sixty-sixth session. How did this set of agreed conclusions come about? Who were the CSOs that contributed to this process? What role did MFA play in achieving this set of conclusions?
- Prompt with AU-linked respondents: **Where within the AU – which specific bodies or events – do these debates take place?**

- **All respondents (RQ1 SCS3): Have any of these topics been put on the agenda by civil society organisations?** Or, if the topics are not new, how has the debate shifted and what has civil society done to shift or maintain the space for debate?
 - Prompt:
 - Which specific topics, when?
 - What civil society organisations?
 - How did they manage to bring the topic on the agenda, or shift/maintain the debate?

- **All respondents (RQ1 SCS3): How do you assess the influence civil society organisations, especially those from the ‘global South’, currently have on the debates and the decisions at the [selected international arena AU/CSW/CPD/SG report on 1325/ COP]?**
 - Prompt:
 - Do you have a recent example of successful civil society influence on decisions? Please elaborate.

- **All respondents (RQ1 SCS3 & SCS5): From your point of view, which civil society organisations are influential in this arena and why?** [*In shrinking spaces, esp. SRHR: We are aware that success can be maintaining a space for debate as well.*]
 - Prompt:
 - **What is it that makes them influential**, as compared to others?
 - **Can you give us a few concrete examples** – from this year or last year – of successful agenda setting or influencing of debates and decisions by civil society [in the specified arena]?
 - Do you also have bad examples? What is bad international CSO advocacy like?

Section 3: Process evaluation

- **MFA diplomats (RQ9): How do you consult, coordinate and cooperate with civil society organisations in or on this international arena** [selected international arena AU/CSW/CPD/SG report on 1325/COP]?
 - Prompt:
 - Please give some examples from 2021 and 2022.
 - When does the engagement happen (pre-event, during the event, post-event)?
 - How often did you engage?
 - How structured is the engagement (joint strategy planning for the event or ad hoc)?

 - Prompt with **WRGE-linked** and **climate-linked** MFA diplomats: The CSW approved the **first-ever set of agreed conclusions focused on empowering women and girls in the context of climate action**, as it concluded its sixty-sixth session. What role did MFA play in achieving this set of conclusions?

- **MFA diplomats (RQ9): To what extent are you (or is your office) involved in coordination different advocacy efforts at** [selected international arena AU/CSW/CPD/SG report on 1325/COP]? **What form does this mostly take?**

Prompt:

- **What role does MFA diplomacy play** in the formation of the positions of CSOs in the issues being discussed at these spaces?
 - **Which organisations** do you coordinate with? (types, names of specific organisations)
 - **Which coordination activities** have you carried out or are you planning in 2022–2024?
 - How is dissonance, if any, between the position of the CSOs on various issues in these spaces and official MFA policies resolved?
- *External respondents (RQ9):* How can diplomats from the Netherlands or from other European countries promote or support civil society advocacy in this international arena [selected international arena AU/CSW/CPD/SG report on 1325/COP]?
- Prompt: Would you have any examples from 2021 and 2022?

Section 4: Cross-cutting issues

- *All respondents (open question):* **Is there anything you would like to add?**

Interviewer notes (optional)

Emerging findings/lines of enquiry

Quotes

Annex 16: 1st tier partner survey questions

SECTION 0: BACKGROUND

Name of Organisation (List of 32 consortia/funds)

Name of SCS Consortium/Programme (Dropdown list) *(Select the programme mentioned in our survey invitation e-mail only)*

SECTION 1: RQ1 – KEY ISSUES PERTINENT TO ADVOCACY (INCLUDING LOBBYING) IN GLOBAL & REGIONAL ARENAS

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements on issues related to international advocacy under the MFA-funded programme.

KEY: [1] = Disagree Strongly [2] = Disagree [3] = Neutral [4] = Agree [5] = Agree strongly

Statement	DS	D	N	A	AS
1.1 Our organisation can easily access international decision-making spaces.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
1.2 Our organisation understands the language used in international decision-making spaces.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
1.3 Our organisation has personal contacts with country delegates in international spaces.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
1.4 Our organisation faces biases linked to international advocacy participants' age, gender, class, religion, caste, race, sexual orientation or disability.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
1.5 Our organisation has adequate knowledge of the structures and processes of international decision-making spaces.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
1.6 Our organisation has adequate technical advocacy skills (e.g. writing position papers, working in caucuses).	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
1.7 Our organisation has adequate knowledge of the lobbying & advocacy subject matter.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
1.8 Our organisation can easily access funding for international lobbying & advocacy.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

SECTION 2: RQ3 – ADVOCACY (INCLUDING LOBBYING) IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL POLICY SPACES

2.1 List the specific global agreements and policies that your organisation's advocacy (including lobbying) work focuses on at the global level.

1.
2.
3.

2.2 List the specific global agreements and policies that your organisation’s advocacy work focuses on at the regional level.

1.
2.
3.

SECTION 3: RQ4 – COMPLEMENTARY DIPLOMACY WORK

<p>3.1 Which Dutch Representative Offices (MFA ROs) do you work within your international L&A work? (Select all that apply)</p>	<p>List</p> <p>[1] Dutch RO to the UN in Geneva [2] Dutch RO to the UN in Vienna [3] Dutch RO to the UN in New York [4] Dutch RO to the UN in Rome [5] Dutch RO to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg [6] Dutch RO to the EU in Brussels [7] Dutch RO to the OECD in Paris [8] Dutch RO to the UNESCO in Paris [9] Dutch RO to the NATO in Brussels [10] Dutch RO to the OSCE in Vienna [11] Dutch RO to the ICC in The Hague [12] MFA in The Hague [13] None of the above Other _____</p>
<p>3.2. How frequently do you coordinate and partner with MFA Representative Offices in lobbying and advocacy? [1] Never [2] Rarely [3] Occasionally [4] Sometimes [5] Frequently _____</p>	
<p>3.3. Which statement best describes how you coordinate and partner with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its ROs? [1] We only share information with the MFA RO [2] We actively/jointly plan and coordinate with MFA on advocacy</p>	
<p>3.4. If Yes, how beneficial has your relationship with the Dutch MFA and its RO or ROs been to achieving advocacy goals? [1] Not at all beneficial [2] Slightly beneficial [3] Somewhat beneficial [4] Very beneficial [5] Extremely beneficial</p>	

SECTION 4: RQ6 – INCLUSION OF CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

KEY: [1] = Disagree Strongly [2] = Disagree [3] = Neutral [4] = Agree [5] = Agree strongly

Statement	DS	D	N	A	AS
4.1 Our organisation’s lobbying and advocacy activities are aligned with those of other members of our consortium.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

4.2 The voice (ideas) of our partners in the global South has been adequately incorporated when designing advocacy activities.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
4.3 The voice (ideas) of our partners in the global South has been adequately incorporated when undertaking advocacy activities.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
4.4 Our consortium's internal coordination of international advocacy activities is corresponding with our international advocacy goals.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
4.5 Please list your organisation's partners in the global South that participate in international advocacy under the SCS programme. List:					

SECTION 5: RQ10 – GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE MFA-FUNDED PROGRAMME

5.1 Does your organisation disaggregate monitoring data by gender?	[1] Yes [2] No
5.2 Does your organisation use any specific indicators on women's rights and gender equality? If yes, please list at least two of those indicators. (If there is only one indicator, please state it here.)	[1] Yes [2] No List:
5.3 Does your budget include any specific lines for WRGE-related activities?	[1] Yes [2] No
5.4 Do you have dedicated staff working on issues relating to WRGE under the programme funded by MFA?	[1] Yes [2] No
5.5 Have you conducted any gender analysis or audit under the MFA-funded programme?	[1] Yes [2] No
5.6 Do you have gender-specific budget lines?	[1] Yes [2] No

SECTION 6: RQ12 – CONFLICT ANALYSIS

6.1 Does the consortium operate in a context affected by conflict (armed/cold war, etc.)?	[1] Yes [2] No
6.2 Did you undertake a dedicated conflict analysis in the design of the programme funded by MFA?	[1] Yes [2] No
6.3 Is the conflict analysis a one-off or do you plan to undertake another?	[1] Yes, it's a one-off [2] No, we plan to undertake another analysis

SECTION 7: RQ13 – INTEGRITY AND SAFEGUARDING

7.1 Does your organisation have an integrity policy?	[1] Yes [2] No
7.1 Does your organisation have a safeguarding policy?	[1] Yes [2] No

Annex 17: 2nd tier partner survey questions

Background

1. Please indicate the partnership programme referred to in our invitation letter for the survey. If your organisation is in several programmes, kindly repeat the survey for each programme.

[List of 32 consortia – no need to include LFS funds]

SECTION A: International advocacy arenas and activities

2. Please indicate which role your organisation has in the selected programme regarding international advocacy – choose one answer:

- International entity responsible for leading international advocacy within the programme
- Regional international entity responsible for leading regional advocacy within the programme
- Regional entity (working in more than one country)
- National-level entity (civil society organisation, association, platform, etc.)
- Local entity (civil society organisation, association, platform, etc.)
- Other (please explain) _____

3. The list below shows a number of ‘advocacy arenas’, i.e. global and regional spaces where international norms (for example, UN human rights treaties) and their implementation are discussed by international organisations and government representatives. Some advocacy arenas are large conferences with side events (e.g. the annual meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York and civil society site events), others are specific products (such as the reports of United Nations Special Rapporteurs). Which advocacy arenas does your organisation target in its international advocacy work? (Multiple answers are possible)

- African Union (AU)
- If possible, please indicate the specific entity within AU or specific events _____
- CSW (Annual Commission on the Status of Women)
- CPD (Annual Commission on Population and Development)
- COP (Annual Conference of the Parties) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Annual Reports of the UN Secretary-General on the application of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and related UNSCRs
- Other global arenas (please specify) _____
- Other regional arenas (please specify) _____

4. How has your organisation contributed, or how does it plan to contribute, to the advocacy arenas specified in question 2, in 2021–2025?

Select all that apply:

- Planning the international advocacy strategy
- Development of publications on the issues we advocate on (e.g. position papers, press releases)
- Drafting of policy papers, civil society reports (shadow reports), and other information to provide information to and possibly influence the advocacy arenas
- Collection of information and testimonials to be used in international advocacy
- Participation in the events for global or regional government representatives as an accredited observer

- Organising side events (e.g. as part of a civil society forum) to the main events
- Participation in side events
- Informal meetings (lobbying) with decision makers at the advocacy arenas
- Formal and informal (lobbying) meetings with diplomats from the Netherlands
- Networking with other civil society organisations active in the advocacy arena
- Other activities – which? _____
- Comments _____

5. Which of the following strategies does your funding partner use, or plan to use, to facilitate your participation in international advocacy? (Multiple answers are possible)

- Facilitation of (or use of your funding partner's) ECOSOC accreditation so that your organisation can participate in the main, multilateral event of the targeted arena
- Facilitation of your organisation's participating in side events of the targeted advocacy arena
- Facilitating your organisation's participation in media briefings and/or debriefings
- Organising formal and informal meetings with government representatives and UN/regional officials in the targeted advocacy arena
- Facilitating contacts with other civil society organisations active in the advocacy arena for sharing of information and/or development of joint work
- Providing regular updates on the daily proceedings at formal meetings in the targeted arena
- Providing training workshops on international advocacy techniques
- Providing training materials on international advocacy in the targeted arena
- Other strategies – which? _____
- Comments _____

6. What challenges is your organisation/entity facing within international advocacy?

- Lack of ECOSOC status
- Lack of appropriate contacts for introduction into the targeted arena
- Our government does not allow us to participate in the events of the targeted civil society spaces
- Lack of knowledge of the subject matter discussed in the targeted arena
- Lack of technical skills, (e.g. legal skills, research skills) for development of key documents (e.g. position papers, shadow reports)
- Lack of cultural knowledge and skills (e.g. formalities, language) to navigate through the formalities of the targeted civil society spaces
- Societal discrimination (e.g. based on race, caste, sexual orientation, gender, etc.) that hinders the access to the targeted civil society spaces
- Other challenges – which? _____

SECTION B: International advocacy opportunities and capacities

To answer all following questions, please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. Only one answer is possible for each question.

7. Our organisation has strongly contributed to developing an international advocacy strategy with our funding partner.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

- I do not know
- Comments (If you have any) _____

8. Our organisation has been, or will be, strongly involved in international advocacy activities under our current partnership with the funding partner.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I do not know
- Comments (If you have any) _____

9. Under the current partnerships with our funding partner, our organisation collaborates with a wide range of organisations to achieve the planned results of the international advocacy.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I do not know
- Comments (If you have any) _____

10. The international advocacy under our partnership brings our national advocacy activities to the international level.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I do not know
- Comments (If you have any) _____

11. Our organisation has all the technical expertise (in-house or access to external expertise) needed to carry out international advocacy.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I do not know
- Comments (If you have any) _____

12. The international advocacy strategy makes full use of our organisation's strengths.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I do not know
- Comments (If you have any) _____

13. Our funding partner has facilitated, or is planning to facilitate, our access to international advocacy arenas.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I do not know
- Comments (If you have any) _____

14. Our international advocacy strategy reflects the needs and interests of the target population of our organisation (e.g. women, adolescents, persons with disabilities, and other persons who experience discrimination and marginalisation). (Put tick mark)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I do not know
- Comments (If you have any) _____

15. Here you can add any other comments on the international advocacy component of the programme.



Itad is a global organisation. Our strategy, monitoring, evaluation and learning services work to make international development more effective. We generate evidence on important issues – from malnutrition to migration – to support our partners to make informed decisions and improve lives.

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