forus

South-South & Triangular Cooperation

OVER 20 CIVIL SOCIETY CASE STUDIES

Forus Members' Experiences in SSC Governance

2026

Table of Contents

ABONG (Brazil)	01
AKÜ (Estonia)	04
ANONG (Uruguay)	06
ASONOG (Honduras)	09
CANGO (China)	12
CCOAIB (Rwanda)	17
CID (New Zealand)	20
CNONGD (DR Congo)	23
CODE-NGO (Philippines)	26
CONGAD (Senegal)	29
CONGCOOP (Guatemala)	32
FONGDD (Guinea)	35
FONGTO (Togo)	38
ForUM (Norway)	41
INFID (Indonesia)	43
JANIC (Japan)	46
JOINT (Mozambique)	49
KANGO (Kiribati)	52
KCOC (South Korea)	55
LAPAS (Latvia)	58
PIANGO (Pacific)	61
PLATONG (Cabo Verde)	64
SPONG (Burkina Faso)	68
Taiwan AID (Taiwan)	71
TANGO (Tanzania)	76
VANI (India)	78

Case Study 1: ABONG (Brazil)

Civil Society Accountability Monitoring of Brazil's SSC Portfolio – Evidence Without Access

Forus Member	ABONG — Associação Brasileira de ONGs (Forus member in Brazil)
Partners	IDS Brighton; Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC)
Period	2015 - 2024
SSC Type	Provider country civil society accountability monitoring of national SSC architecture

CONTEXT

ABONG is Brazil's national platform for NGOs focused on sustainable development and rights, and a Forus member. Brazil is one of the world's most active SSC providers — its cooperation agency (ABC) coordinates technical cooperation across South America and sub-Saharan Africa in agriculture, health, and education. Brazil's SSC portfolio was significantly revived from 2023 onwards under President Lula following years of decline. ABONG's network has historically been connected to Brazilian social movements that shaped SSC policy — particularly in the agri-food sector, where Brazilian smallholder movements are internationally significant.

WHAT HAPPENED — DOCUMENTED

Peer-reviewed research published in the IDS Bulletin (2023) documented the relationship between Brazilian civil society — including ABONG member organisations — and Brazil's SSC portfolio. The research found that civil society actors affiliated with ABONG had historically influenced Brazil's agri-food SSC policies through social movement advocacy and mobilisation. The ProSAVANA case demonstrates the consequences when this civil society influence was not institutionalised in programme design: Brazilian social movements allied with Mozambican counterparts to oppose a programme that Brazil's government was promoting as a flagship SSC success.

THE STRUCTURAL GAP

ABONG's accountability monitoring of Brazil's SSC portfolio — documenting gaps between Brazil's stated SSC principles (solidarity, horizontality, non-conditionality) and programme realities — operates through advocacy channels and peer networks rather than through formal ABC governance inclusion. Brazil's 2024 VNR highlighted the SSC Management Manual developed by ABC as an international standard, demonstrating Brazil's continued self-positioning as an SSC leader. However, no formal civil society co-design mechanism within ABC's programme architecture was documented.

KEY TAKEAWAY

ABONG demonstrates that provider country civil society platforms generate SSC accountability evidence — but without formal inclusion in programme governance, that evidence reshapes programmes slowly, through social movement pressure and advocacy, rather than at design stage. The ProSAVANA trajectory shows both what ABONG's networks can achieve through sustained pressure and what is lost when they are not included from the start

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Case Study 2: AKÜ (Estonia)

Small European Platform, Strategic Triangular Advocacy Through Collective Networks

Forus Member	AKÜ — Arengukoostöö Ümarlaud / Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	Estonian Centre for International Development (ESTDEV); CONCORD Europe; Forus
Period	2019–2024
SSC Type	Triangular facilitation through EU institutional advocacy; small state collective influence

CONTEXT

The Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (AKÜ) is a national advocacy platform representing Estonian civil society organisations working in development cooperation, humanitarian aid, and global justice. AKÜ advocates for its members' interests at both national and international levels, contributing to policy processes, shaping funding priorities, and strengthening the capacity of its member organisations. AKÜ works in close cooperation with Baltic partners and is active in European and global networks, including Forus and CONCORD.

WHAT HAPPENED — DOCUMENTED

While AKÜ contributes to international policy discussions through networks such as CONCORD and Forus, its core role is advocacy and representation of civil society organisations. AKÜ's Executive Director participates in the Supervisory Board of the Estonian Centre for International Development (ESTDEV) — positioning NGO voice directly at the institutional table.

THE COLLECTIVE INFLUENCE MODEL

AKÜ's influence is primarily exercised through collective advocacy. While a single national platform has limited ability to shape OECD-DAC or EU-level frameworks alone, coordinated engagement through CONCORD and Forus enables Estonian civil society perspectives to contribute to broader policy processes. This collective model allows smaller actors to meaningfully participate in shaping international development cooperation standards.

KEY TAKEAWAY

AKÜ illustrates that the value of small European Forus members in SSC reform is institutional, not programmatic. Their influence over EU development policy — when exercised collectively through CONCORD and Forus — is disproportionate to their individual scale. Coordinating this influence is a strategic priority for the Forus network's SSC reform agenda.

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Case Study 3: ANONG (Uruguay)

Civil Society in a Provider Country's Triangular Cooperation Architecture

Forus Member	ANONG — Asociación Nacional de ONG, Uruguay (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	AUCI (Agencia Uruguaya de Cooperación Internacional); CELAC; Forus LAC network
Period	2018–2024
SSC Type	Civil society engagement with Uruguay's SSC portfolio; LAC peer learning

CONTEXT

ANONG is Uruguay's national NGO association and a confirmed Forus member. Uruguay operates a structured South-South and triangular cooperation programme through AUCI, with a focus on social policy, public health, digital government, and public administration cooperation across Latin America. Uruguay's programme positions it as a mid-income SSC provider within the LAC region — sharing its experience in social protection architecture, digital government, and public health systems with Central American and Caribbean partners. ANONG's mandate covers civil society coordination on development and SDG monitoring — intersecting directly with Uruguay's SSC portfolio.

WHAT HAPPENED

ANONG participates in CELAC civil society processes connected to South-South cooperation and in Forus LAC network exchanges. Uruguay's AUCI has developed SSC programmes in social protection, public administration, and digital services — transferring Uruguayan institutional experience to countries in Central America and the Caribbean. ANONG's role has been primarily advocacy for civil society participation in AUCI's programme design, rather than formal co-design inclusion. Within the Forus LAC network, ANONG participates in peer learning exchanges with ASONOG (Honduras), CONGCOOP (Guatemala), and ANC (Peru) — sharing Uruguay's advanced social protection architecture experience and receiving insights on community-level implementation challenges from lower-income LAC counterparts.

THE REPLICATION MODEL

The KCOC (Korea) model — where the Korean national civil society platform is formally institutionalised within the provider country's SSC governance architecture — is the replication standard this report recommends. Uruguay, as a Latin American mid-income SSC provider with a confirmed Forus member platform, is a candidate for this model. AUCI integrating ANONG into SSC programme co-design would create a precedent for SSC provider country civil society inclusion within the LAC region — distinct from the European model and directly relevant to South-South provider dynamics.

KEY TAKEAWAY

ANONG represents the provider country opportunity: Uruguay shares development experience through SSC, ANONG holds community-level knowledge of how that experience performs in practice, and the governance architecture does not connect them. The KCOC replication model — institutionalised civil society inclusion in the provider country SSC architecture — is directly applicable to Uruguay and AUCI.

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Case Study 4: ASONOG (Honduras)

Central American Civil Society Peer Exchange and SDG Advocacy at the Summit of the Future

Forus Member	ASONOG — Asociación de Organismos No Gubernamentales, Honduras (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	CONGCOOP Guatemala (confirmed Forus member); POJOAJU Paraguay (confirmed Forus member); Forus global network; CELAC civil society
Period	2022–2024
SSC Type	Civil society peer learning; LAC regional exchange; Forus General Assembly advocacy

CONTEXT

ASONOG is Honduras's national NGO association and a confirmed Forus member. Honduras faces acute development challenges — poverty, climate vulnerability, food insecurity, and significant migration pressures — that make SDG peer learning directly relevant. Honduras participates in Central American South-South cooperation through SICA (Central American Integration System) and CELAC frameworks. ASONOG has been a consistent Forus network participant and played an active role at the May 2024 Forus General Assembly in Gaborone, Botswana.

WHAT HAPPENED — DOCUMENTED

At the Forus General Assembly in Gaborone (May 2024), Francisco Garcia of ASONOG participated directly in discussions on civil society challenges globally. Garcia stated publicly: 'We are concerned about the closure of civic spaces that are becoming stronger every day, but the search for alliances allows us to strengthen and recognize the important work of civil society, promoting sustainable development to build a more just and equitable society.' ASONOG's participation in this global civil society gathering — alongside SPONG (Burkina Faso), PIANGO (Pacific), and platforms from 65 countries — exemplifies the South-South civil society network function the Forus network performs: connecting Central American experience to global SDG advocacy and peer learning.

THE PEER LEARNING DIMENSION

Within the Forus LAC network, ASONOG participates in peer exchanges with CONGCOOP (Guatemala), POJOAJU (Paraguay), and ANC (Peru) — all confirmed Forus members. Honduras's community-level experience of climate-driven food insecurity and its practical community resilience approaches are relevant knowledge assets for South-South cooperation. However, as with other Central American Forus members, ASONOG operates entirely outside Honduras's formal bilateral SSC governance structures. The peer learning it participates in through Forus is invisible to and unrecognised by official regional SSC frameworks.

KEY TAKEAWAY

ASONOG demonstrates that even under the pressure of closing civic space and acute development crises, civil society platforms sustain South-South peer learning relationships through Forus network connections. The Gaborone General Assembly showed Forus members doing in practice what SSC governance frameworks claim to value: sharing experiences, connecting struggles, building collective knowledge across countries.

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Case Study 5: CANGO (China)

Civil Society Bridge in China's South-South Cooperation Architecture – Intermediating Between Chinese NGOs, Global Partners, and the Global South

Forus Member	China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO)
Status	Forus member, IUCN member, ANGOC member; UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status (since 2007); Observer of UNFCCC, CBD and IPCC. 209 domestic member organisations; over 200 foreign NGOs, bilateral and multilateral organizations from 57 countries and regions (as of 2025)
Partners	**Government Bodies —** Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM, former professional supervisory unit); Ministry of Civil Affairs, registration authority; **International Partners：** Ford Foundation, Plan International, European Union, Oxfam, WWF, CAN Europe, Stiftung Asienhaus / Robert Bosch Stiftung, Stiftung Mercator (EU-China NGO Twinning); International Rivers .
Period	1992–present; SSC facilitation role intensified from 2013 with Belt and Road Initiative civil society engagement
SSC Type	Triangular facilitation — China as Southern knowledge provider; civil society intermediary between Chinese state-led SSC architecture and Global South partner communities; horizontal peer-exchange with European and Asian civil society networks

CONTEXT

CANGO is one of China's longest-established and most institutionally significant national NGO platform for international development. Founded in 1992 under the approval of what is now the Ministry of Commerce, and registered with the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 1994. In 2020, CANGO formally decoupled from the Ministry of Commerce as its professional supervisory unit — a structural shift that expanded the organisation's operational autonomy within China's civil society regulatory framework. CANGO was among the first organisations in China to systematically facilitate cooperation between Chinese civil society and international NGOs, bilateral donors, and multilateral institutions. By the end of 2025, CANGO had 209 domestic members of organizations and individuals and had developed cooperation with over 200 foreign NGOs and multilateral organizations across 57 countries and regions, implementing programmes across all 31 Chinese provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities — benefiting nearly ten million people across areas including civil society support, rural and community development, gender equality, climate change, health, and volunteering.

China's SSC architecture is state-led and large in scale: CIDCA coordinates China's official development assistance, while MOFCOM serves as the competent authority responsible for overall foreign aid planning and approval; specific South-South technical cooperation programmes spanning Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific are implemented by MOFCOM's subordinate bodies, such as the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE). China is one of the largest providers of South-South cooperation globally, operating outside the OECD-DAC framework and drawing on its own experience of rapid poverty reduction and infrastructure-led development as the knowledge base for SSC engagement. However, Chinese civil society's role in this architecture has historically been limited — only a few Chinese NGOs have registered offices overseas, limited international funding access, and the need to navigate a development landscape predominantly shaped by state-led mechanisms.

CANGO's distinctive contribution has been to occupy and expand the civil society space within this architecture: building the capacity of Chinese NGOs to engage internationally, connecting Chinese civil society to global networks and standards, and creating an intermediary platform through which South-South knowledge can flow in both directions — into China and outward to partner countries.

WHAT HAPPENED

CANGO's SSC facilitation work has operated through several interlocking streams: Domestic civil society strengthening as SSC foundation: CANGO's core work has been building Chinese NGO capacity — through fundraising support, technical assistance, project management training, and advocacy for a more enabling regulatory environment. This domestic capacity-building is the precondition for outward SSC engagement: Chinese NGOs cannot participate credibly in South-South knowledge exchange without institutional development. CANGO's Visionary Education Programme (supporting rural school principals and students in underdeveloped regions) and its environmental programmes in Yunnan and other provinces exemplify this dual domestic-international mandate.

BRI civil society accountability: As the Belt and Road Initiative expanded China's infrastructure footprint across Asia, Africa, and beyond from 2013, CANGO engaged directly with the SSC accountability question — researching the environmental and social responsibility of Chinese companies operating in BRI partner countries. In 2018, CANGO conducted a research project with International Rivers (USA) examining two Chinese-funded dam projects in Laos and Cambodia, assessing the relationships between affected local communities, Chinese companies, and civil society organisations. CANGO's annual reports documented the learning processes needed: from corporate willingness to engage with civil society, to transparent information-sharing, to building durable communication channels between companies, governments, and local populations. This work positioned CANGO as a rare Chinese civil society voice capable of holding Chinese state-linked economic actors to higher social and environmental standards.

EU-China NGO Twinning Programme: CANGO co-organised and co-implemented the EU-China NGO Twinning Programme — a seven-year exchange programme for staff from European and Chinese NGOs working on social and environmental justice and climate change, co-funded by Robert Bosch Stiftung and Stiftung Mercator in partnership with CAN Europe. Staff from Chinese and European NGOs spent four to eight weeks embedded in partner organisations, developing joint projects and building sustainable institutional relationships. This programme operated as a triangular mechanism: Northern funding and expertise flowing into the exchange, with Chinese SSC knowledge and civil society development experience flowing back to European partners — inverting conventional donor-recipient dynamics.

Climate advocacy and South-South norm-setting: Through the China Civil Climate Action Network (CCAN), CANGO coordinated Chinese civil society participation in international climate negotiations including COP21 in Paris, where CCAN released a formal civil society position paper on China's NDC commitments. CANGO hosted East-Asia Climate Change Seminars (with Japan and South Korea) in 2018 to build regional civil society positions ahead of UNFCCC negotiations — operating as a South-South horizontal network builder rather than a Northern-directed advocacy platform.

THE TRIANGULAR ROLE

CANGO's triangular cooperation role is structurally complex, operating within a civil society landscape where Chinese NGOs are increasingly navigating the intersection of domestic regulatory frameworks and international civil society norms. Its triangular facilitation works on several simultaneous axes:

- State-civil society intermediation (domestic): CANGO operates as the primary interface between China's state-led SSC architecture and Chinese civil society — advocating within government for civil society participation in BRI and CIDCA-administered programmes, while simultaneously building the capacity of Chinese NGOs to meet international civil society standards. This intermediary role is constrained by China's regulatory environment for civil society, but it is the only such platform operating at national scale.
- South-South peer exchange (horizontal): CANGO's partnerships with 198 foreign NGOs and multilateral organisations create horizontal South-South knowledge flows — Chinese NGO experience of poverty alleviation, rural development, and environmental adaptation in a large developing country context is genuinely relevant to partner-country NGOs in Southeast Asia and Africa, even as China is simultaneously a significant provider of official development assistance to the same countries.
- Triangular accountability (North-South-South): The EU-China Twinning Programme and CANGO's collaboration with International Rivers and IUCN created genuinely triangular arrangements — Northern funding and technical norms entering an exchange with Chinese civil society practice, with the outputs directed at improving the quality of Chinese-linked development activities in the Global South. CANGO's ability to simultaneously receive Northern institutional support and direct its analytical outputs at Chinese state and corporate actors in the Global South is a rare and structurally important position.

KEY TAKEAWAY

CANGO represents a distinctively significant civil society presence within China's vast South-South cooperation architecture — and one of the most structurally complex cases in the global SSC civil society landscape. Its triangular role is genuinely distinctive: a Forus-member national NGO platform operating within a state-led development system, building Chinese civil society capacity, connecting Chinese NGOs to global networks and standards, and simultaneously conducting research on the environmental and social dimensions of Chinese economic engagement in BRI partner countries. How to navigate the tension between proximity to state-led SSC mechanisms and the independence required for credible civil society advocacy is CANGO's defining challenge.

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Case Study 6: CCOAIB (Rwanda)

Civil Society SDG Accountability in a Dual-Role SSC Country

Forus Member	CCOAIB — Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (confirmed Forus member, Rwanda)
Partners	Rwanda Civil Society Platform; Rwanda Governance Board; UN Rwanda; CIVICUS
Period	2019–2024
SSC Type	Civil society SDG monitoring contributing to both SSC recipient accountability and emerging SSC provider intelligence

CONTEXT

CCOAIB is Rwanda's Forus member — a national platform for organisations supporting grassroots initiatives. Rwanda presented VNRs in 2019 and 2023, with the 2023 VNR documenting progress across SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, and 17 (partnerships). Rwanda is notable in the East African context as a country making rapid development progress: in the energy sector alone, the proportion of households with electricity access increased from 21.5% in 2014 to 61% by 2023. Rwanda is also an emerging SSC provider within the East African Community — cooperating on health, agriculture, and peacekeeping. CCOAIB was selected by CIVICUS to lead civil society self-assessment in Rwanda.

WHAT HAPPENED — DOCUMENTED

Rwanda's 2023 VNR preparation explicitly brought together 'government, private sector, civil society and development partners' — making it one of the 38% of 2023 VNR presenters that characterised their SDG institutional arrangements as multi-stakeholder (per the Forus/IISD VNR review). CCOAIB's national coordination role through the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) places it within the multi-stakeholder architecture for SDG monitoring. Rwanda's 2023 VNR SDG 17 reporting documents its SSC both as a recipient and a provider of development cooperation — creating a rare dual vantage point from which civil society evidence is potentially most valuable.

THE OPPORTUNITY AND THE GAP

Rwanda's dual position as SSC recipient and emerging SSC provider makes CCOAIB's inclusion in national SSC governance especially important. Civil society intelligence on which SSC interventions have reached community level — and which have not — is directly relevant to both Rwanda's SSC receiving strategy and its emerging SSC providing portfolio. As CCOAIB is the national civil society coordination platform, its community-level evidence could inform both directions of flow. Whether CCOAIB has formal access to Rwanda's bilateral SSC governance structures is not documented in available public sources — reflecting the general pattern of civil society presence at national SDG level but absence from bilateral SSC programme governance.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Rwanda's dual SSC role makes CCOAIB one of the most strategically positioned Forus members in Africa: a civil society platform in a country that both receives and increasingly provides South-South cooperation. Including CCOAIB in national SSC governance would produce intelligence useful in both directions. Its current exclusion means both Rwanda's SSC receiving and providing decisions are made without community-level evidence.

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Case Study 7: CID (New Zealand)

Pacific Civil Society Bridge – Facilitating South-South Knowledge Between Pacific Islands and Global Networks

Forus Member	CID — Council for International Development, New Zealand (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	MFAT (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade); PIANGO; Pacific Islands Forum; Forus
Period	2017–2024
SSC Type	Triangular facilitation — New Zealand as Pacific SSC bridge; civil society-to-civil society regional network

CONTEXT

CID is New Zealand's council for international development and a confirmed Forus member. New Zealand is deeply embedded in Pacific SSC — as both a significant ODA provider to Pacific Island countries and as a culturally connected Pacific nation. New Zealand's Pacific Reset policy (2018) repositioned New Zealand's relationship with the Pacific as a Pacific partner rather than a Northern donor — making New Zealand a triangular cooperation facilitator with a genuinely South-South character in the Pacific regional context. CID coordinates New Zealand's civil society development sector and connects it to the Forus network and Pacific civil society through PIANGO.

WHAT HAPPENED

CID participates in the Pacific civil society network through its relationship with PIANGO — giving New Zealand's civil society sector a direct connection to PIANGO's National Liaison Units and the Vaka Pasifika accountability initiative. CID has advocated within New Zealand's development cooperation architecture for civil society participation standards in Pacific-focused programmes — particularly in MFAT's Pacific Regional Development Programme, which channels significant resources through Pacific SSC frameworks. New Zealand's Pacific Reset policy created new space for civil society to engage in New Zealand's Pacific development partnerships — and CID has engaged in monitoring whether this policy commitment translates into practice. CID also connects Pacific civil society to global Forus advocacy — bringing Pacific voices into global SDG monitoring discussions that would otherwise be heard only through PIANGO's regional platform.

THE TRIANGULAR ROLE

CID's triangular role is distinctive: unlike European Forus members whose triangular facilitation is primarily through OECD-DAC policy advocacy, CID's triangular facilitation is regional and relational. New Zealand's Pacific connection means CID can connect Pacific civil society organisations — particularly KANGO (Kiribati), FCOSS (Fiji), and PIANGO — to global Forus advocacy networks and to MFAT resources in ways that a purely Northern donor-recipient relationship would not enable. This is triangular cooperation with genuine South-South character.

KEY TAKEAWAY

CID demonstrates a distinctive triangular cooperation model: a Pacific-embedded developed country civil society platform that can bridge Pacific civil society to global networks while simultaneously holding its own government's Pacific SSC programme to civil society inclusion standards. The Pacific Reset policy context makes CID's role especially timely — New Zealand's repositioning as a Pacific partner creates genuine space for civil society co-design that CID is positioned to help realise.

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Case Study 8: CNONGD (DR Congo)

Civil Society Coordination in the World's Most Complex SSC Context – Entirely Outside Governance

Forus Member	CNONGD — Conseil National des ONGD de Développement (confirmed Forus member, DRC)
Partners	Government of DRC; UN OCHA; bilateral SSC providers including China, South Africa, Rwanda
Period	2019–2024
SSC Type	Civil society excluded from bilateral SSC governance; humanitarian-development nexus

CONTEXT

CNONGD is the Democratic Republic of Congo's confirmed national NGO platform and Forus member. DRC presented its VNR in 2023 — a second-time presenter — documenting SDG implementation progress and SSC partnerships. DRC is simultaneously one of the world's largest SSC recipients (bilateral cooperation from China, India, Morocco, Rwanda, South Africa documented in its 2023 VNR) and the site of one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises, with millions of internally displaced people.

WHAT HAPPENED

DRC's 2023 VNR documented SSC support received from multiple partners — demonstrating that South-South cooperation in DRC is active and government-documented. CNONGD, as the national civil society coordination platform, was not formally included in the bilateral SSC governance structures associated with any of these partnerships. The Forus/IISD/A4SD joint VNR review (2023) documented a pattern across many 2023 VNR presenters: multi-stakeholder participation is described but not systematically demonstrated, and only 38% of countries characterised their SDG institutional arrangements as genuinely multi-stakeholder — a significant drop from 2022.

WHAT WAS LOST

CNONGD holds coordination knowledge that no bilateral SSC partner possesses: which communities are displaced, which humanitarian-development nexus gaps exist in SSC programme targeting, and what accountability mechanisms for SSC outcomes are missing at community level. In a context where SSC investment is concentrated in infrastructure and technical cooperation, and where millions of people remain displaced, the absence of civil society input to SSC programme design means the most acute community needs remain invisible to programme architects.

KEY TAKEAWAY

DRC represents the most extreme case of the report's central argument. In the world's most complex SSC recipient context, the national civil society platform that could provide SSC accountability is structurally absent from all SSC governance. The humanitarian-development nexus — where SSC is most urgently needed — is precisely where civil society exclusion is most costly.

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Case Study 9: CODE-NGO (Philippines)

ASEAN Civil Society Peer Learning and the Philippines as a Southern Knowledge Hub

Forus Member	CODE-NGO — Caucus of Development NGO Networks, Philippines (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	ASEAN CSO platform; Forus Asia network; ADA (Asia Development Alliance); UNDP Philippines
Period	2017–2024
SSC Type	Civil society peer learning within ASEAN; Philippines as emerging SSC knowledge hub

CONTEXT

CODE-NGO is the Philippines' national caucus of development NGO networks and a confirmed Forus member. The Philippines participates in ASEAN SSC frameworks and is an emerging South-South knowledge provider — particularly in disaster risk reduction (drawing on the Philippines' extensive experience with typhoons and climate disasters), participatory governance, and community-based development. CODE-NGO coordinates national NGO platforms across the Philippines and connects them to regional and global civil society networks through Forus.

WHAT HAPPENED

CODE-NGO participates in ASEAN civil society coordination processes through the ASEAN CSO platform, contributing Philippine civil society perspectives to ASEAN's regional SSC governance. The Philippines hosted ASEAN in 2017 and has been an active participant in ASEAN's SSC architecture since. CODE-NGO connects to ADA (Asia Development Alliance) through the Forus Asia network — enabling peer learning between Philippine national platform experience and counterparts in Cambodia (CCC), Indonesia (INFID), and Nepal (NFN), all confirmed Forus members. The Philippines' community-based disaster resilience methodologies — developed through decades of typhoon response — are documented as a South-South knowledge asset sought by Pacific, Caribbean, and South Asian counterparts.

THE ASEAN EXCLUSION PATTERN

ASEAN's SSC governance architecture reflects the same structural exclusion pattern documented across other regional bodies: government-dominated, with civil society participation consultative rather than co-design. CODE-NGO's participation in ASEAN civil society processes gives Philippine civil society a voice in regional SSC discussions, but formal ASEAN SSC programme governance — including the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) SSC frameworks and bilateral Philippines-ASEAN partner programmes — does not include CODE-NGO in programme design. The peer learning that CODE-NGO facilitates operates through civil society networks horizontally, outside and invisible to official ASEAN SSC frameworks.

KEY TAKEAWAY

CODE-NGO shows that the Philippines has South-South knowledge assets — particularly in disaster resilience and community governance — that regional and global SSC frameworks are not systematically accessing. Connecting CODE-NGO to ASEAN SSC programme design would improve the quality and community grounding of Philippine SSC contributions. The peer learning that already happens informally through the Forus Asia network is the foundation that formal recognition would amplify.

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Case Study 10: CONGAD (Senegal)

Civil Society Co-Production of SDG Data – A Replicable SSC Knowledge Model

Forus Member	CONGAD — Conseil des ONG d'Appui au Développement (confirmed Forus member, Senegal)
Partners	Sightsavers; GIZ; Government of Senegal — Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation; ITUC
Period	2021-2024
SSC Type	Civil society-government co-production of SDG monitoring data; South-South replication model

CONTEXT

CONGAD is Senegal's national platform of NGOs for development support, founded in 1982 and a confirmed Forus member. It maintains a dedicated SDGs Working Group that promotes citizen dialogue and mobilises civil society on Senegal's SDG agenda. Senegal is on track for LDC graduation by 2027, making its SDG governance architecture especially relevant as a peer learning reference for other graduating LDCs in the region and beyond.

WHAT HAPPENED — DOCUMENTED

Between 2021 and 2022, CONGAD's SDGs Working Group, in partnership with Sightsavers and GIZ, organised workshops reaching over 200 community members and 40 civil society organisations across Senegal. The explicit purpose was to identify gaps in SDG data for marginalised populations — women, children, persons with disabilities, and local farmers — and to build civil society and government capacity to address them. After extensive multi-stakeholder consultation, the Government of Senegal committed to the Inclusive Data Charter (IDC) in February 2021. Senegal launched its IDC National Action Plan 2022–2025 in Dakar in December 2022 at an event attended by 50 civil society and ministry representatives, chaired jointly by the president of CONGAD and the Director General of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation. The Action Plan explicitly names CONGAD as responsible for 'citizen control through the elaboration of alternative annual monitoring' of the SDGs.

RESULTS AND IMPACT — DOCUMENTED

The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health both revised their data practices as a direct result of CONGAD's advocacy — increasing indicators monitored for neglected tropical diseases in line with the SDGs, and identifying new disability indicators for inclusive education. CONGAD's approach has been documented by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data as a model for civil society SDG data advocacy — meaning Senegal's method is itself becoming a South-South peer learning reference for other countries.

SSC RELEVANCE

Accurate, disaggregated national SDG data is the foundation on which SSC programmes are designed and targeted. When CONGAD's advocacy improved the quality and inclusivity of Senegal's SDG monitoring data, it improved the intelligence base for all SSC programming in Senegal. The Data4SDGs global documentation of this approach means it is already being learned by civil society counterparts in other countries — making CONGAD an unrecognised South-South knowledge resource.

KEY TAKEAWAY

CONGAD demonstrates that civil society SDG data advocacy — when designed as a multi-stakeholder government partnership process — directly improves the quality of national data that SSC programmes depend on. The model is documented and replicable. It is the most concrete example in this report of civil society making SSC more effective without being formally included in SSC governance.

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Case Study 11: CONGCOOP (Guatemala)

Central American Civil Society SSC on Food Security and Agroecology

Forus Member	CONGCOOP — Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas, Guatemala (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	ASONOG Honduras (confirmed Forus member); ANC Peru (confirmed Forus member); CELAC civil society; Via Campesina
Period	2018–2024
SSC Type	Civil society South-South peer learning on food security and agroecology; Central American regional exchange

CONTEXT

CONGCOOP is Guatemala's national coordination of NGOs and cooperatives and a confirmed Forus member. Guatemala faces acute food insecurity — ranked among the highest rates of chronic malnutrition in Latin America, with the western highlands showing malnutrition rates among children comparable to sub-Saharan Africa. Simultaneously, Guatemalan civil society organisations — particularly those working with indigenous communities — have developed documented community agroecology and food sovereignty methodologies that represent South-South knowledge assets. CONGCOOP coordinates these organisations and connects them to regional and global networks.

WHAT HAPPENED

CONGCOOP participates in CELAC civil society processes on food security and rural development — the regional framework where Central American SSC on agroecology most naturally occurs. Through the Forus LAC network, CONGCOOP connects with ASONOG (Honduras) and ANC (Peru) — sharing Guatemala's community agroecology experience and learning from Honduran community watershed management and Peruvian highland food sovereignty approaches. These exchanges are horizontal, peer-to-peer, and directly applicable: similar altitudes, similar climate zones, similar small-holder farming systems.

Via Campesina — whose Mesoamerican section includes Guatemalan organisations within CONGCOOP's network — provides an additional channel for South-South food sovereignty knowledge exchange between Guatemala and counterparts in Asia, Africa, and South America.

THE STRUCTURAL GAP

Guatemala's bilateral SSC governance — particularly cooperation received from Mexico (which has a significant SSC programme targeting Central America) and multilateral SSC through CELAC — does not include CONGCOOP in programme design. Mexico's SSC programme in Central America (AMEXCID) has historically focused on government-to-government channels. CONGCOOP's network of community organisations holds the granular knowledge of what SSC interventions work at community level in Guatemala's diverse highland and coastal contexts — knowledge that is inaccessible to SSC programme designers operating through government channels.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Guatemala and CONGCOOP illustrate that community food sovereignty knowledge — developed through decades of practice with indigenous and smallholder communities — is a South-South knowledge asset that formal SSC programmes do not access because civil society is excluded from governance. The Forus LAC peer learning network is transmitting this knowledge informally. Connecting it to formal SSC programme design would transform community agroecology experience into scalable South-South innovation.

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Case Study 12: FONGDD (Guinea)

Civil Society Platform Under Political Transition – Constrained Capacity, Continuing SSC Flows

Forus Member	FONGDD — Forum des ONG pour le Développement Durable, Guinea (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	ECOWAS; bilateral SSC providers (documented Guinea-Senegal SSC, June 2025); UN Guinea country team
Period	2021–2025
SSC Type	Civil society exclusion from SSC governance in political transition context

CONTEXT

FONGDD is Guinea's national NGO forum for sustainable development and a confirmed Forus member. Guinea has been under military transition government since the September 2021 coup by the CNRD (National Committee of Reconciliation and Development), with restrictions on civil society activity including limitations on public political activity. Guinea is an active participant in South-South cooperation — including bilateral SSC with Senegal (the Guinea-Senegal SSC relationship was formally reinforced in June 2025 with a government-to-government agreement on economic cooperation) and participation in West African regional cooperation frameworks.

WHAT HAPPENED

Under the military transition, formal civil society engagement in national governance processes — including SSC governance — has been constrained. FONGDD has maintained its network coordination function while engaging Forus and international civil society networks to preserve external visibility for Guinean civil society. The Guinea-Senegal SSC agreement of June 2025 — documented by the Government of Guinea — demonstrates that South-South cooperation flows continue and expand under the transition government, entirely through bilateral government channels. No civil society monitoring or accountability mechanism for these SSC flows is documented in available sources.

WHAT THIS SHOWS

The Guinea case is structurally similar to Burkina Faso: civil society coordination capacity (FONGDD) exists and is sustained by the Forus network connection, while SSC flows continue through government channels without civil society accountability. The political transition context amplifies the structural exclusion that exists even in democratic governance contexts. International SSC governance standards do not currently require civil society participation regardless of the political character of the host government — a gap this report addresses through its recommendations.

KEY TAKEAWAY

FONGDD shows that civil society exclusion from SSC governance is structurally compounded by political transition. SSC flows continue. Civil society capacity continues. But the connection between them is severed by the political context. International SSC governance standards that require civil society participation as a programme design condition — not dependent on host government discretion — would protect the accountability function in exactly these situations.

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Case Study 13: FONGTO (Togo)

Peer Learning Among West African Civil Society Organisations – SSC Between Platforms, Invisible to Institutional Frameworks

Forus Member	FONGTO — Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations in Togo (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	CONGAD (Senegal); SPONG (Burkina Faso); FECONG (Mali); Forus West Africa network
Period	2018–2024
SSC Type	South-South peer learning facilitated by civil society within the network of confirmed Forus members

CONTEXT

FONGTO is the national federation of NGOs in Togo and a confirmed member of Forus. Togo presented its Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2023 — this was the second time it had done so, alongside Burkina Faso, the DRC, Rwanda and Tanzania during the same session of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Togo participates in West African regional cooperation through ECOWAS and UEMOA. FONGTO connects Togolese civil society to regional discussions on South-South cooperation through its membership of the Forus and CPDE networks.

WHAT HAPPENED

FONGTO participates in exchanges within the Forus network of members in West Africa — in collaboration with SPONG (Burkina Faso), CONGAD (Senegal) and FECONG (Mali) through Forus coordination. These exchanges constitute a horizontal South-South knowledge transfer between civil society platforms: FONGTO has access to CONGAD's documented methodology on inclusive data — the same model that influenced Senegal's Ministry of the Economy — through Forus's peer-learning network. Togo's SDG challenges mirror those of its West African neighbours: data gaps concerning marginalised populations, decentralisation of SDG monitoring, and community engagement in VNR processes. Peer learning is directly applicable and does not require costly bilateral government programmes to be implemented.

THE STRUCTURAL GAP

The West African Forus peer learning network, in which FONGTO participates, is real, documented by the Forus network's activities, and effective. It also operates entirely outside — and is invisible to — the official ECOWAS or UEMOA governance frameworks for SDG implementation. There is no ECOWAS mechanism to formally recognise, fund or scale up this exchange of civil society knowledge on SDGs. Knowledge circulates informally through civil society networks, without institutional anchoring or sustainable funding.

KEY TAKEAWAY

FONGTO demonstrates that South-South peer learning within civil society is already a reality within the Forus network: West African platforms are exchanging SDG monitoring methodologies, adapting inclusive data approaches and developing collective advocacy. The necessary reform is not to create this exchange; it already exists. The necessary reform is to make it visible, fund it and link it to the official governance frameworks of SSC in West Africa.

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Case Study 14: ForUM (Norway)

European Civil Society Holding a Triangular Cooperation Provider to Civil Society Inclusion Standards

Forus Member	ForUM — Forum for Utvikling og Miljø / Forum for Development and Environment, Norway (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	Norad (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation); OECD-DAC; CONCORD Europe; Forus network
Period	2019–2024
SSC Type	Northern CSO platform monitoring provider country SSC architecture; triangular cooperation advocacy

CONTEXT

ForUM is Norway's civil society platform for development and environment and a confirmed Forus member. Norway is a significant triangular cooperation facilitator — as a major ODA provider, Norway funds South-South knowledge exchanges across multiple sectors and regions. ForUM monitors Norwegian development cooperation policy and advocates for civil society participation standards within Norad's programme architecture. Norway has been among the more progressive DAC members on the localisation agenda, partly reflecting sustained civil society engagement by ForUM and its predecessors.

WHAT HAPPENED

ForUM engages in monitoring Norway's compliance with Grand Bargain localisation commitments — which directly intersects with SSC civil society inclusion. Norway's development cooperation framework includes triangular cooperation programmes facilitating South-South knowledge exchange, particularly in climate, fisheries, and governance sectors. ForUM's advocacy has engaged OECD-DAC civil society consultation processes on development effectiveness standards, contributing to the deliberative environment that shapes how triangular cooperation is measured and governed. ForUM participates in CONCORD and in Forus' global advocacy network — amplifying European civil society positions in OECD-DAC deliberations.

THE STRATEGIC VALUE

Small European Forus members like ForUM exercise triangular SSC influence through institutional advocacy rather than direct programme delivery. When Northern CSO platforms hold their own governments to civil society inclusion standards in triangular cooperation, they create policy precedents that can be extended through OECD-DAC standards. The OECD's Global Perspectives on Triangular Co-operation (2nd edition) identifies standard-setting as the key near-term reform target for triangular cooperation governance — precisely the space where ForUM and other European Forus members can exercise disproportionate influence relative to their programme budgets.

KEY TAKEAWAY

ForUM demonstrates that European Forus members exercising advocacy within their own government's SSC provider frameworks creates the policy precedents that can be extended to all provider country standards through OECD-DAC. This is the triangular facilitation role European Forus members should be explicitly coordinated to play.

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Case Study 15: INFID (Indonesia)

Leading Civil Society at Indonesia's G20 Presidency – Shaping the SSC Agenda from Inside

Forus Member	INFID — International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (confirmed Forus member since 2009)
Partners	Civil 20 (C20) — G20 civil society engagement platform; Bappenas; LDKPI (Indonesian Aid); SDSN Indonesia; Forus
Period	2021–2024
SSC Type	Civil society shaping G20 and ASEAN SSC agenda from inside; provider country civil society engagement

CONTEXT

INFID is Indonesia's national forum for Indonesian development and a confirmed Forus member since 2009. INFID has 80 member organisations and has worked on Indonesian development policy since 1985. Indonesia's 2022 G20 Presidency and 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship placed it at the centre of South-South cooperation diplomacy — and INFID positioned itself directly inside these processes.

WHAT HAPPENED — DOCUMENTED

In 2022, INFID became Chair of Civil 20 (C20) — the official civil society engagement track of the G20 — during Indonesia's historic G20 Presidency. Beyond formal representation, this role positioned INFID as a governance actor embedded within the G20 process, translating global diverse civil society inputs into policy-relevant recommendations that entered official G20 and development cooperation discourse. C20 under INFID's leadership produced recommendations on development cooperation, climate finance, and inclusive growth that were formally presented to G20 leaders.

INFID has also been consistently delivering CSO statements on Indonesia's SDG achievements at the UN headquarters — confirmed again for 2025 — representing Indonesian civil society in the formal UN SDG review process. Across these engagements, INFID demonstrates a continuum of influence from national policy dialogue to global norm-setting, linking domestic advocacy with multilateral processes.

INFID leads in the multi-stakeholder CSO Endowment Fund Working Group — a coalition pushing for sustainable domestic funding for civil society as Indonesia transitions away from ODA eligibility due to OECD accession, addressing long-term sustainability of civil society engagement.

On Indonesia's SSC cooperation context: Indonesia's 2023 VNR to HLPF documented that Indonesia continues to strengthen South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) and serves as co-Chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). INFID's C20 role gave Indonesian civil society a voice in shaping how these standards are defined. Within the GPEDC framework, INFID plays a strategic role as the CSO Focal Point for GPEDC Indonesia, developing the National Evaluation Report on Development Effectiveness and producing policy recommendations that assess the enabling environment for CSOs, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and gaps in transparency and accountability.

INFID's C20 Chairmanship is documented as a concrete example of civil society shaping the SSC governance agenda at the G20 level — not advocating from outside but participating as a formal process actor. The CSO Endowment Fund initiative addresses a structural sustainability challenge for Indonesian civil society that will become acute as OECD accession reduces ODA flows — ensuring INFID can sustain its SSC accountability function without external donor dependence.

KEY TAKEAWAY

INFID demonstrates what civil society SSC leadership looks like at the highest level: chairing the G20 civil society process during Indonesia's Presidency, delivering UN SDG statements, and simultaneously building the domestic funding architecture to sustain this role. Indonesia's transition from SSC recipient to SSC provider and global standard-setter makes INFID's inside-track position uniquely valuable — and uniquely illustrative of what SSC governance can look like when civil society is designed in from the start.

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Case Study 16: JANIC (Japan)

Civil Society Monitoring of Japan's Triangular Cooperation – From ProSAVANA to Accountability Standards

Forus Member	JANIC — Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency); Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan; Forus network; partner country civil society organisations
Period	2012–2024
SSC Type	Northern provider country civil society monitoring triangular cooperation; accountability advocacy

CONTEXT

JANIC is Japan's national NGO centre for international cooperation and a confirmed Forus member. Japan is one of the world's largest ODA providers and a significant triangular cooperation facilitator — JICA designs and funds triangular cooperation programmes connecting Japanese and Southern country expertise across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. JANIC's role is to advocate for civil society participation standards within Japan's development cooperation architecture and to monitor whether JICA programmes meet those standards in practice.

WHAT HAPPENED - DOCUMENTED

The ProSAVANA case (see Case 23, JOINT Mozambique) is directly relevant here: Japan (JICA) was the triangular facilitator in the programme that excluded Mozambican civil society from design and led to documented community land rights harm. JANIC was present as Japan's civil society platform throughout this period and engaged in monitoring JICA's conduct. Documentation of the ProSAVANA controversy — including the leaked JICA-funded 'Communications Strategy' designed to divide civil society opposition — directly implicates JICA and therefore makes JANIC's accountability monitoring function both necessary and complicated: monitoring your own government's triangular cooperation is politically harder than monitoring a foreign government's.

JANIC has engaged in OECD-DAC civil society consultations on triangular cooperation standards — contributing Japanese civil society perspectives to the standard-setting process identified in the OECD's Global Perspectives on Triangular Co-operation.

WHAT THIS SHOWS ABOUT NORTHERN PROVIDER CIVIL SOCIETY

JANIC's position illustrates the structural challenge for Northern provider country civil society: JICA is both a funder of Japanese civil society and a programme whose conduct JANIC is expected to monitor. This conflict of interest is inherent to any civil society platform in a provider country context. Despite this, JANIC's monitoring function is documented and institutionally recognised — Japan formally includes NGO policy consultation channels in its ODA governance, comparable to the Korean model.

KEY TAKEAWAY

JANIC demonstrates the complexity and importance of Northern provider country civil society monitoring: it is politically harder precisely because it requires monitoring your own government's conduct in triangular cooperation. The ProSAVANA case shows what happens when this monitoring function fails to prevent programme harm. The KCOC model shows what it looks like when it is institutionalised and effective. JANIC's role sits between these two poles — and its distance from the KCOC model is a measurable accountability gap in Japan's triangular cooperation governance.

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Case Study 17: JOINT (Mozambique)

ProSAVANA – The Cost of Triangular Cooperation Without Civil Society (Cautionary Case)

Forus Member	JOINT — League For NGOs in Mozambique (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	Brazil's ABC; JICA Japan; Government of Mozambique; UNAC (Mozambican peasant movement); Brazilian and Japanese civil society
Period	2009–2020 (programme); civil society response documented 2012–2020
SSC Type	Triangular cooperation (controversial case with documented civil society tensions)

CONTEXT

JOINT is the Forus member in Mozambique, serving as the league coordinating national NGOs and civil society. ProSAVANA — the triangular cooperation programme seeking to apply Brazil's Cerrado agro-industrial model to Mozambique's Nacala Corridor with Japanese financing — is the most extensively documented case of triangular cooperation controversy in the academic SSC literature. It is directly relevant to this report because JOINT's member network was present, capable, and available — but the programme's governance architecture did not include them at design stage. During this period, JOINT served as a coordination hub, providing a platform for national NGOs and grassroots movements (such as UNAC) to engage in advocacy demanding transparency and community consultation.

WHAT HAPPENED - DOCUMENTED

ProSAVANA was announced in 2009 as a Japan-Brazil-Mozambique initiative covering an estimated 14.5 million hectares of land in 19 districts in the Nacala Corridor. In October 2012, UNAC — Mozambique's largest peasant movement with over 100,000 members — released the first statement criticising the programme, specifically opposing the large-scale land grabbing model it feared. An open letter from Mozambican civil society organisations and movements to the presidents of Mozambique and Brazil and the Prime Minister of Japan followed in May 2013.

Civil society from all three countries — Mozambican, Brazilian, and Japanese organisations — allied across borders in sustained opposition, holding four Triangular Peoples' Conferences against ProSAVANA between 2014 and 2018. Civil society reports and academic sources at the time raised concerns about strategies aimed at dividing local opposition. The programme was officially ended by the Government of Mozambique in July 2020.

THE CIVIL SOCIETY ISSUE

The academic literature (World Development, 2016; Springer Nature, 2022; Observador Rural, 2019) is clear on the core problem: ProSAVANA transferred the commercial agro-industrial Cerrado model rather than Brazil's smallholder food sovereignty model — a fundamental design error that community-level civil society consultation would have identified before implementation. The cross-border civil society alliance — Mozambican organisations in JOINT's network, allied with Brazilian and Japanese civil society — demonstrated exactly the South-South civil society solidarity that formal SSC frameworks fail to resource or recognise.

KEY TAKEAWAY

ProSAVANA is this report's most important cautionary case. It shows that triangular cooperation without civil society co-design at programme design stage does not merely miss opportunities — it can result in documented community land rights harm, sustained peasant resistance, and programme termination after years of damage. JOINT's member network held the local intelligence that would have prevented the design error. The governance architecture did not connect them to it.

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Case Study 18: KANGO (Kiribati)

Climate Existential Crisis SSC – The PIANGO Network as Kiribati's Only Viable SSC Channel

Forus Member	KANGO — Kiribati Association of NGOs (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	PIANGO (regional Forus member); Pacific Islands Forum; UNDP Pacific; Green Climate Fund
Period	2019 - 2024
SSC Type	SIDS civil society peer learning through PIANGO network; climate finance SSC

CONTEXT

KANGO is Kiribati's national NGO association and a confirmed Forus member. Kiribati is among the countries most existentially threatened by climate change — an atoll nation facing potential complete inundation within decades. For KANGO, South-South cooperation for climate adaptation is not a policy priority; it is a survival question. KANGO operates in one of the most resource-constrained civil society contexts in the world, where the individual national platform cannot independently access or influence international SSC governance — but can do so through PIANGO, the Pacific regional civil society network and confirmed Forus regional member.

WHAT HAPPENED

KANGO participates in PIANGO's Pacific-wide civil society network through PIANGO's National Liaison Unit structure. This network gives KANGO access to peer learning on climate finance access (Green Climate Fund accreditation pathways), disaster preparedness, and SDG monitoring that it could not independently sustain. Fiji and Samoa's experience navigating GCF accreditation — shared through PIANGO coordination — has compressed the learning curve for KANGO on climate finance access. PIANGO's regional presence in Pacific Islands Forum civil society processes gives KANGO representation in regional governance discussions it cannot independently access.

THE SCALE REALITY

For Kiribati, the PIANGO network is not a supplement to SSC — it is the only realistic mechanism for knowledge transfer given the constraints of individual country scale, geographic isolation, and resource limitations. A standalone Kiribati civil society voice in Pacific Islands Forum SSC governance discussions is not viable. A PIANGO-amplified voice is. This is the structural argument for resourcing regional civil society networks in SIDS contexts: they are the SSC access mechanism, not an add-on.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Kiribati demonstrates that for SIDS in climate emergency, civil society peer learning through PIANGO is not a supplementary nice-to-have — it is the only scalable mechanism for knowledge transfer. Resourcing PIANGO is resourcing SIDS SSC access for KANGO and its counterparts across the Pacific.

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Case Study 19: KCOC (South Korea)

Institutionalising Civil Society in a Provider Country's Development Cooperation Architecture – The Replication Model

Forus Member	KCOC — Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (confirmed Forus member, South Korea)
Partners	Office for Government Policy Coordination (OPC), Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs; KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency); KoFID; partner country civil society in Asia and Africa
Period	2017–present (institutionalisation process); embedded in Korea's 3rd Mid-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation (2021–25)
SSC Type	Provider country civil society institutionalised in SSC/ODA governance — the replication standard for all Forus network provider country members

CONTEXT

KCOC is South Korea's national council for overseas development cooperation NGOs and a confirmed Forus member. Established in 1999, KCOC is a coalition of 130 NGOs (as of April 2026) engaged in international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. Korea has been an OECD-DAC member since 2010 and is a significant triangular cooperation provider — sharing its development experience across Asia, Africa, and Latin America through KOICA. Korea's development cooperation architecture has been largely government-driven, with CSO participation in ODA that the OECD itself recorded as standing at an average of 2% — far below the OECD-DAC average of 13%.

WHAT HAPPENED — DOCUMENTED

Recognising the gap, KCOC designed and implemented a multi-phase institutionalisation process for government-civil society partnership in Korea's ODA and SSC architecture:

- Phase 1 (2017): Korean civil society evaluated the government's performance and delivered its report to both the OECD DAC peer review team and the government, urging recognition of civil society as a key partner.
- Phase 2 (2018): The OECD DAC recommended that the Korean government establish a policy framework for partnership with civil society organisations. The government accepted this recommendation.
- Phase 3 (2019): The government and civil society jointly prepared a Policy Framework for Partnership in International Development Cooperation, following six months of mutual discussion and consensus.
- Phase 4 (2021): The government and civil society reached agreement on 31 implementation tasks after a year of mutual discussion and collaboration.
- Phase 5 (Ongoing): The government and civil society decided to hold a government-civil society policy meeting twice a year and monitor the degree of implementation of the Partnership framework — secured in Korea's 3rd Mid-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation.
- Phase 6 (2026): The government and civil society jointly evaluated the five-year implementation. Of the 31 tasks, 24 were achieved (77%), five partially achieved, and two unmet.

A direct SSC/humanitarian result: KCOC successfully advocated for KOICA to provide 10 billion Korean won (approximately USD 7.5 million) in additional funds for a COVID-19 Support Project for Developing Countries through civil society cooperation. 51 civil society organisations supported health systems in 30 countries — leveraging Korea's domestic COVID-19 experience as a South-South knowledge transfer asset. KCOC has presented this institutionalisation model at the 2019 and 2020 UN HLPF side events, Korea-Japan Civil Society Forums, and the 2021 Forus meeting — explicitly positioning it as a replicable model for other provider country civil society platforms.

WHY THIS IS THE REPLICATION STANDARD

The KCOC model is the standard for provider country civil society inclusion. What makes it distinctive: it moved civil society from a sub-2% ODA implementing contractor role to formal co-designers of Korea's ODA policy framework, with institutionalised participation at every stage from policy formulation to monitoring. It was not achieved through one advocacy push but through a deliberate multi-phase institutionalisation strategy. KCOC actively shares this strategy through international platforms — including directly at Forus meetings — specifically for other civil society networks to adapt.

KEY TAKEAWAY

KCOC demonstrates that institutionalised civil society inclusion in a provider country's SSC architecture is achievable through deliberate multi-phase strategy — and that it delivers measurable results (10 billion won in additional civil society-channelled cooperation funds). This is the model ABONG (Brazil), ANONG (Uruguay), and other provider country Forus members are recommended to replicate. KCOC should be positioned as the global teacher for this approach.

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Case Study 20: LAPAS (Latvia)

Eastern European Transition Experience as Triangular South-South Knowledge – Civil Society as the Bridge

Forus Member	LAPAS — Latvijas Platforma attīstības sadarbībai (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; CONCORD Europe; Forus; Eastern Partnership country civil society
Period	2014-2024
SSC Type	Triangular cooperation — post-transition European knowledge as SSC resource; civil society-to-civil society transfer

CONTEXT

LAPAS is Latvia's platform for development cooperation and a confirmed Forus member. Latvia's post-Soviet transition experience — moving from a centrally planned economy to EU membership in 25 years — represents a South-South knowledge resource for other countries navigating economic transition: governance reform, public sector modernisation, anti-corruption, civil society development, and digital government. This knowledge is directly relevant to Eastern Partnership countries (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) and, through triangular cooperation, to countries in Africa and Asia undergoing governance transitions. LAPAS connects Latvian civil society to global development networks through Forus and CONCORD.

WHAT HAPPENED

Latvia's government has developed a development cooperation programme focused on Eastern Partnership countries, sharing governance reform and EU accession process experience through bilateral and multilateral channels. LAPAS coordinates Latvian civil society's engagement in this policy and advocates for civil society participation. LAPAS participates in CONCORD Europe's advocacy on EU development cooperation — contributing small EU member state perspectives to debates about civil society inclusion in triangular cooperation. Latvia's transition experience is directly relevant to South-South discussions: Latvia went from being an ODA recipient (post-1991) to an ODA provider — a transition trajectory shared by many emerging market countries navigating graduation from aid dependence.

THE CIVIL SOCIETY-TO-CIVIL SOCIETY DIMENSION

LAPAS's most distinctive SSC contribution is not government-to-government knowledge transfer but civil society-to-civil society: connecting Latvian NGOs — which built their civil society sector from zero under Soviet transition — with counterpart civil society organisations in Eastern Partnership and other transitioning countries. This is peer learning about how to build and sustain a civil society sector itself — not just about policy content, but about how civil society organisations survive and influence governance in difficult political environments. This knowledge is directly applicable to civil society platforms in Burkina Faso, Guinea, and other Forus members operating under political transition conditions.

KEY TAKEAWAY

LAPAS represents an underutilised European Forus asset: Latvia's post-Soviet transition is a documented South-South learning resource, and Latvian civil society's experience of building NGO capacity under difficult conditions is directly applicable to Forus members facing political transition challenges. Civil society-to-civil society triangular cooperation — facilitated by LAPAS connecting to Forus members in transitioning contexts — is a model the report can recommend as a cost-effective, experience-rich SSC modality.

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Case Study 21: PIANGO (Pacific)

Public Finance Accountability as South-South Governance Innovation – The Vaka Pasifika Model

Forus Member	PIANGO — Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (confirmed Forus regional member)
Partners	UNDP Pacific Office; European Union (funder); La Trobe University Australia; national NLU members across 15 Pacific Island countries
Period	2018–2022 (Phase 1: Strengthening Pacific PFM Project); 2022–2026 (Phase 2: Vaka Pasifika Project)
SSC Type	Regional South-South peer learning; triangular cooperation (EU-funded, Pacific-owned design); civil society embedded in governance architecture

CONTEXT

PIANGO is the Pacific Islands' regional civil society network — a confirmed Forus member representing NGOs across 15 Pacific Island countries and territories through its National Liaison Units (NLUs). Pacific Island Countries face a structural challenge in public finance governance: budgets are the primary mechanism for translating development commitments into action, yet public budgeting processes have historically been dominated by government and technical actors, with limited civil society or citizen access to fiscal information. South-South cooperation in this context means Pacific countries learning from each other — not from external donors — about how to build more accountable, citizen-centred governance.

WHAT HAPPENED

In 2018, the EU-funded Strengthening Public Finance Management and Governance Project began with PIANGO and UNDP as implementing partners. PIANGO worked with 7 NLU members (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Kiribati, and Marshall Islands) to develop Citizen Budget Guides — accessible translations of complex government budget documents — that enabled civil society organisations to engage in national budget consultation processes.

In 2022, Phase 2 launched as the Vaka Pasifika Project (2022–2026), funded by the EU and implemented by UNDP Pacific with PIANGO as implementing partner and La Trobe University as the political economy analysis partner. Coverage expanded to all 15 Pacific Island countries. Flagship innovations included: the Vaka Pasifika e-Budget Portal (providing real-time budget data across 8 Pacific countries); the Vaka Pasifika Fellowship programme (bringing together government, civil society, and Parliament actors); and USD 525,000 in grants to NLU civil society organisations for sub-national budget accountability initiatives.

In September 2023, a four-day workshop in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, convened civil society from 10 Pacific Island countries and territories — participants gaining skills in budget document analysis, expenditure monitoring, and public consultation facilitation.

THE SSC INNOVATION

What makes this South-South cooperation rather than simply a Northern-funded development programme is the Pacific-owned design architecture. PIANGO's Executive Director Emeline Siale Ilolahia stated at the project launch: 'The designing and the architecture of the Vaka was built on the experiences and learning of our PIANGO network of National Liaison Units across the Pacific.' The Vaka Pasifika model developed a distinctly Pacific approach to public finance accountability — drawing on horizontal peer learning between Pacific civil society organisations rather than importing external accountability models.

RESULTS AND IMPACT — DOCUMENTED

The Citizen Budget Guides enabled NLU member organisations to participate actively in national budget consultations across 7 countries in Phase 1. The e-Budget Portal now provides accessible fiscal information for 8 Pacific countries. In Vanuatu, the first-ever CSO briefing on the national budget was jointly convened by Parliament and VANGO with UNDP/PIANGO support. In Fiji, a standing budget briefing for CSOs — running since 2017 — represents an institutionalised model of civil society inclusion in public finance governance.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Vaka Pasifika is the clearest example in the Pacific of a triangular cooperation programme designed from the start to embed civil society in governance architecture — not as a watchdog, but as a co-accountability actor. PIANGO's NLU network is the transmission mechanism for South-South peer learning on public finance innovation. The model is documented, replicable, and directly applicable to other regional civil society networks seeking to move from consultation to co-governance.

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Case Study 22: PLATONG (Cabo Verde)

SIDS Civil Society in a Triangular SSC Context – Limited Formal Inclusion in Programme Governance

Forus Member	PLATONG — Plataforma das ONGs de Cabo Verde
Partners	IBSA Fund (India-Brazil-South Africa); Government of Cabo Verde; UNDP
Period	2006–present
SSC Type	Triangular cooperation — SIDS intervention under a predominantly intergovernmental SSC mechanism

CONTEXT

PLATONG is Cabo Verde's national NGO platform and a Forus member, serving as a key civil society coordination body. Cabo Verde is widely recognized both as a successful case of graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status to middle-income country and as a relevant Small Island Developing State (SIDS) example.

The country is also considered a successful IBSA Fund case, particularly in the water sector, where interventions are frequently cited as good practices in South-South and triangular cooperation. Cabo Verde's development trajectory positions it as a peer-learning reference for other SIDS.

At the national level, Cabo Verde demonstrates relatively strong governance and a structured tradition of state-civil society dialogue, providing an important contextual contrast to civil society participation within some SSC mechanisms.

WHAT HAPPENED

The IBSA Fund supported a drinking water access project in Cabo Verde, documented by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and the Columbia SIPA multilateralism programme as a SIDS-relevant SSC example. The intervention included the construction of a seawater desalination plant in Ribeira Brava (São Nicolau Island) and its integration into the public water network.

Key results include:

- Improved access to drinking water for approximately 12,000 people
- Production capacity of approximately 1,200 m^3/day, supported by reservoir infrastructure connected to the main network
- Improved water quality, reducing reliance on unsafe or untreated sources and associated health risks

Prior to the intervention, many households depended on lower-quality or untreated water sources, contributing to waterborne diseases and constraints on domestic use.

Available documentation does not provide documented evidence of a formal role for civil society, including PLATONG, in project co-design, implementation, or governance. While informal or indirect contributions cannot be excluded, this reflects the predominantly intergovernmental nature of the IBSA Fund model.

PLATONG's engagement in South-South cooperation has therefore mainly occurred through external platforms such as Forus-facilitated peer exchange, including sharing Cabo Verde's LDC graduation experience with other SIDS.

THE CIVIL SOCIETY GAP

As the national NGO platform, PLATONG is structurally positioned to hold context-specific, community-level knowledge on water access across Cabo Verde's islands. However, no documented evidence was found of its formal involvement in assessing or validating the programme's reach or outcomes.

Such knowledge — if systematically integrated — could contribute to:

- Improved project targeting and design
- Stronger alignment with community priorities
- Enhanced adaptation and replicability in other SIDS contexts

The case highlights a structural deficit in participatory governance and a misalignment between technical efficiency and inclusive processes within SSC mechanisms. Beyond formal governance roles, civil society actors contribute to citizen monitoring and social accountability, community awareness, and long-term sustainability of service delivery. However, existing IBSA Fund modalities do not systematically integrate these roles.

Importantly, this exclusion contrasts with Cabo Verde's national context, where relatively structured state-civil society dialogue exists. This suggests that the limitation lies less in country-level conditions and more in the institutional design of the SSC mechanism.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Cabo Verde illustrates both a successful SIDS-focused South-South and triangular cooperation intervention delivering concrete development outcomes, and a clear limitation in the formal integration of civil society within SSC governance frameworks. PLATONG's territorial reach and community-level knowledge represent a strategic but underutilized resource for improving SSC effectiveness, accountability, and peer learning. Strengthening civil society inclusion in IBSA Fund processes could improve targeting and effectiveness, accountability, sustainability of outcomes, and knowledge exchange across SIDS contexts. This aligns with commitments under SDG 6 (Water and Sanitation) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

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Case Study 23: SPONG (Burkina Faso)

Civil Society Coordination in Crisis Situations – When SSC Governance Fails to Follow Civil Society to the Ground

Forus Member	SPONG — Permanent Secretariat of NGOs in Burkina Faso (confirmed Forus member; Christelle Kalhoulé, SPONG representative, is President of Forus)
Partners	DRC (Danish Refugee Council); HQAI; ICVA; UN ECA; EU
Period	2022-2025
SSC Type	Civil society excluded from SSC governance; crisis context, gap between humanitarian aid and development

CONTEXT

SPONG is the national NGO secretariat of Burkina Faso, the main coordination platform for civil society working in the field of development and humanitarian aid. Mavalow Christelle Kalhoulé, former chair of the board of directors (2020–2024), is also chair of Forus, which gives SPONG unique global visibility. Burkina Faso is facing a significant multidimensional crisis, marked in particular by internal population displacement linked to the security situation, persistent food insecurity, and disruptions in access to basic social services. In January 2025, the country underwent a major shift in its regional institutional positioning, with its withdrawal from ECOWAS and participation in the creation of the Confederation of Sahel States alongside Mali and Niger.

As Ms Kalhoulé stated publicly: 'What is happening in the Sahel and in so many other forgotten communities has repercussions across the globe and affects us all, even if we choose to look away.'

WHAT HAPPENED - DOCUMENTED

Despite the crisis, SPONG has continued its role in coordinating civil society. Since 2024–2025, SPONG has been participating in the LOCAL project (LOwering CompliAnce burdens for Local and national associations), funded by the EU and led by the DRC (Danish Refugee Council) alongside HQAI and ICVA, operating in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. As a member of the consortium, SPONG supports ten national NGOs that have undergone audits against the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), with a view to addressing identified non-conformities, strengthening their capacities and progressing towards alignment with international standards of quality and accountability. In 2023, SPONG also participated in consultations organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on Burkina Faso's national strategy regarding the AfCFTA, representing civil society within a framework of South-South trade cooperation at the continental level.

OUTCOMES AND LOSSES

SPONG's operations during times of crisis demonstrate what sustainable civil society coordination looks like under extreme pressure. If successful, the LOCAL project will have created a replicable model for reducing compliance burdens on local associations in humanitarian contexts. However, South-South cooperation flows to Burkina Faso have been entirely governed by the new regime in place. No official role in monitoring or co-designing South-South cooperation was assigned to SPONG during this period — despite SPONG understanding the context better than any bilateral partner.

KEY TAKEAWAY

SPONG demonstrates that the capacity of civil society platforms survives political transition and crisis, but that the governance of South-South cooperation fails to adapt to account for this. The LOCAL project model — which involves specifically designing compliance pathways that empower local organisations — is the kind of structural change that the governance of South-South cooperation must replicate in order to include civil society.

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Case Study 24: Taiwan AID (Taiwan)

Asia NGO Fellowship Bridge – Facilitating South-South Civil Society Capacity Across the Indo-Pacific

Forus Member	Taiwan Alliance in International Development (Taiwan AID)
Status	Taiwan's first and only national NGO platform for international development (est. 2013); approximately 30 member NGOs
Partners	Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA); American Institute in Taiwan (AIT); Ming Yi Foundation
Period	2023–2025 (NGO Fellowship Program); broader civil society development work 2013–present
SSC Type	Triangular facilitation — Taiwan as Indo-Pacific SSC hub; civil society-to-civil society South-South knowledge transfer

CONTEXT

Taiwan AID is Taiwan's first national NGO platform dedicated to international development and humanitarian relief. Registered in 2013, it coordinates a coalition of nearly 30 Taiwan-based NGOs whose projects span five continents, covering education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, gender equality, humanitarian assistance, climate change, and renewable energy. Taiwan AID functions as both a convener of Taiwan's civil society sector and as an interface between Taiwanese NGOs, government agencies (particularly MOFA and TaiwanICDF), and international civil society networks.

Taiwan occupies an unusual position in international development: it is not a member of the OECD-DAC and is excluded from most multilateral frameworks due to its ambiguous international status, yet it has a well-developed civil society, significant technical expertise, and a track record of effective development cooperation through TaiwanICDF. Taiwan's experience of rapid economic transformation, democratic transition, and civil society development — achieved largely without external templates — gives it a distinctive form of South-South-adjacent knowledge to offer developing country partners, particularly in Asia.

The launch of Taiwan's New Southbound Policy and its participation in the US-led Summit for Democracy (2021) created new strategic space for civil society-centred regional cooperation. Under the Summit's 'Defending Against Authoritarianism' pillar, Taiwan committed to acting as a regional hub for international civil society — a mandate Taiwan AID has operationalised through its NGO Fellowship Program.

WHAT HAPPENED

In 2023, Taiwan AID launched its NGO Fellowship Program, jointly funded by AIT and MOFA, to provide structured capacity-building for young NGO professionals from South and Southeast Asia. The programme selected ten fellows (from 172 applicants) representing NGOs working across sustainable agriculture, disability rights, gender-based violence, women's health, and HIV/AIDS advocacy. Fellows participated in a structured workshop week covering project management, fundraising, and advocacy, followed by three weeks embedded in Taiwanese host NGOs aligned with their own thematic specialisations.

The programme's impact was immediate and significant. Fellows visited the Office of the President, AIT, and TaiwanICDF, and reported being strongly impressed by the closeness of Taiwan's government-civil society relationship and the capacity of Taiwanese NGOs to mobilise domestic funding without dependence on UN or international donor sources — a model highly relevant for civil society organisations in countries where international funding is similarly constrained.

Based on this strong feedback, Taiwan AID secured additional funding from AIT, MOFA, and the Ming Yi Foundation (a major Taiwanese NPO) to continue and expand the programme. In 2024, the Fellowship expanded beyond South and Southeast Asia to include Mongolia, Japan, and Korea. Applications grew from 172 to 1,372, the cohort expanded from 10 to 15 fellows, and host NGO placements doubled from 10 to 20 organisations. The 2024 programme covered a substantially broader thematic range including disability services, child welfare, gender-based violence, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental conservation, migrant worker vocational training, and penal reform.

The programme is explicitly designed to create a lasting regional support network: fellows return to their home organisations with skills, peer connections, and ongoing links to Taiwanese NGO counterparts, and Taiwan AID is developing alumni follow-up mechanisms to sustain and deepen this network over time.

THE TRIANGULAR ROLE

Taiwan AID's triangular role is distinctive in the SSC landscape. Unlike most triangular cooperation arrangements — which involve a Northern OECD donor facilitating knowledge transfer between two Southern partners — Taiwan's triangular facilitation is South-South in both character and method. Taiwan's own development experience (rapid industrialisation, democratic consolidation, civil society formation) is the knowledge being transferred, not Western development paradigms or donor-country institutional models.

The triangular structure operates on three levels simultaneously:

- Government-to-civil society: MOFA and AIT provide financial architecture and political backing, while Taiwan AID and its member NGOs deliver the substantive knowledge exchange — a model of government-CSO co-design that itself becomes a learning object for fellows.
- Civil society-to-civil society: Taiwan AID member NGOs serve as host organisations, creating direct peer-to-peer knowledge transfer between Taiwanese and South/Southeast Asian civil society practitioners — South-South in orientation and relational in character.
- Regional hub function: Taiwan AID is positioning Taiwan as a permanent regional NGO training hub, with the Fellowship programme acting as a recurring mechanism for building an Indo-Pacific civil society support network that extends beyond any single bilateral relationship.

Taiwan AID also holds its government partners to civil society inclusion standards: the programme's governance model requires that MOFA and AIT funding enable rather than direct civil society-designed activities — making Taiwan AID an advocate for CSO autonomy within its own government's regional cooperation architecture.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Taiwan AID demonstrates a triangular cooperation model that challenges conventional North-South frameworks: a mid-sized, non-OECD economy with a distinctive development story using its civil society platform to transfer South-South relevant knowledge to emerging NGO sectors across the Indo-Pacific. The NGO Fellowship Program has rapidly scaled — from 172 to 1,372 applicants in a single cycle — signalling profound regional demand for a peer-learning model grounded in Asian development experience. Taiwan AID is positioned to become the region's most significant civil society capacity hub, provided multi-year funding stability can be secured.

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Case Study 25: TANGO (Tanzania)

Civil Society SDG Monitoring and East African Peer Exchange

Forus Member	TANGO — Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (confirmed Forus member)
Partners	CCOAIB Rwanda (confirmed Forus member); UNNGOF Uganda (confirmed Forus member); Government of Tanzania SDG Secretariat; Forus
Period	2017-2024
SSC Type	Civil society VNR engagement; East African SSC peer learning within Forus network

CONTEXT

TANGO is Tanzania's national NGO association and a confirmed Forus member. Tanzania presented VNRs in 2017 and 2023 — among the 39 countries reviewed by Forus and partner organisations in the Progressing National SDGs Implementation Report 2023. Tanzania is an active participant in East African Community SSC frameworks and a significant recipient of bilateral SSC — from China (infrastructure), India (capacity building through ITEC and IBSA frameworks), and intra-African partners.

WHAT HAPPENED — DOCUMENTED

TANGO has coordinated civil society inputs to Tanzania's VNR processes. Tanzania's 2023 VNR preparation process is documented as multi-stakeholder, including civil society participation. The Forus/IISD 2023 VNR joint review documented both what was shared in official VNRs and where civil society perspectives diverged. Within the East African Forus network, TANGO participates in peer learning exchanges with CCOAIB (Rwanda) and UNNGOF (Uganda) — sharing VNR methodology, SDG monitoring approaches, and advocacy strategies. This peer learning occurs horizontally among platforms that share similar development contexts, political economies, and SDG implementation challenges.

THE SSC GOVERNANCE GAP

Tanzania's large bilateral SSC portfolio — including Chinese infrastructure investment and Indian capacity-building cooperation — has been governed through government channels, with TANGO playing no formal role in those governance structures. TANGO's community-level monitoring of infrastructure project impacts — which would be relevant to SSC programme accountability — is not connected to any formal SSC programme review mechanism.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Tanzania and TANGO represent the common East African pattern: strong civil society SDG monitoring capacity, active peer learning through Forus networks, and complete exclusion from bilateral SSC governance. The gap between what TANGO knows about SSC community impacts and what Tanzania's bilateral SSC partners know is exactly the accountability deficit this report is designed to close.

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Case Study 26: VANI (India)

Civil Society Advocacy for Inclusion in India's South-South Cooperation Framework – Present in Mandate, Absent in Practice

Forus Member	VANI — Voluntary Action Network India (confirmed Forus member; receives Forus/IFP institutional funding)
Partners	Niti Aayog; Ministry of External Affairs; ITEC; India-UN Development Partnership Fund; Forus network
Period	2018-2025
SSC Type	Provider country civil society excluded from SSC governance despite documented SSC mandate; advocacy for inclusion

CONTEXT

VANI is India's national network of voluntary development organisations and a confirmed Forus member — it receives Forus/IFP institutional funding, confirming its membership. Established in 1988, VANI has an outreach of approximately 10,000 Voluntary Development Organisations across India. India is one of the world's largest SSC providers: ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation), the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, and bilateral cooperation programmes with African and Asian partners place India at the centre of South-South cooperation globally. India's 2023 G20 Presidency explicitly elevated SSC as a geopolitical and development priority.

WHAT HAPPENED — DOCUMENTED

VANI's own mandate explicitly includes 'embracing South-South Cooperation principles and integrating Civil Society into India's Development Cooperation' — documented in VANI's published programme description, including through its research publication 'India's Global Footprints.' VANI engages with Niti Aayog (India's planning and policy body) on the regulatory framework for civil society — the 'Ease of doing development work' agenda. VANI has participated in global civil society discussions on South-South cooperation through the Forus network, contributing Indian civil society perspectives to global advocacy.

However, VANI is not formally included in the Ministry of External Affairs' governance structures for ITEC or the India-UN Development Partnership Fund — the two main SSC mechanisms India operates. The civil society mandate to integrate SSC and the structural exclusion from SSC governance coexist simultaneously.

THE INDIA-SPECIFIC DIMENSION

India's SSC architecture is particularly significant because India positions itself as a South-South knowledge partner — sharing its development experience with other developing countries rather than as a Northern donor. VANI holds exactly the kind of community-level intelligence about India's domestic development experience that makes Indian SSC credible: what worked at scale in health, agriculture, and education; what did not; and what implementation conditions are essential. This knowledge is the foundation of India's SSC comparative advantage. VANI's exclusion from SSC governance means India's SSC programmes are exported without the quality assurance that community-level domestic evidence could provide.

KEY TAKEAWAY

VANI represents an important case: a Forus member whose own published mandate explicitly includes South-South Cooperation, but which is structurally absent from its country's SSC governance architecture. India's SSC comparative advantage rests on its domestic development experience — the knowledge VANI's network holds. Connecting VANI to India's SSC programme design would improve the quality of what India exports as a South-South knowledge partner.

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This publication has been produced with the assistance of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Fondation de France, the International Cooperation Direction of the Principality of Monaco, the European Union and Oxfam. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Forus.

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