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TRF INSIGHTS

**Rising pressure,
rising needs**

A TrustLaw 2025 rapid
member survey

TrustLaw





REUTERS/Darren Whiteside

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Executive summary

Civil society organisations (CSOs) globally are facing some of the biggest challenges in decades, from sweeping cuts to international aid budgets, to increased political pressure and scrutiny, to authoritarian leaders weaponizing the law to cut off CSOs from their support networks.

In September 2025, TrustLaw, the Thomson Reuters Foundation's global pro bono service, surveyed our CSO members to understand how their legal needs had changed over the past 12 months, and what they were expecting in the coming 12-24 months. Most respondents were small, grassroots organisations with fewer than 50 staff, distributed across the world.

Their responses paint a concerning picture of civil society under pressure. Answers vary depending on region and size of the organisations, but there are common trends:

- 1. Loss of funding is a dominant risk:** It was consistently selected as one of the top 3 risks across regions, sizes, and sectors. Several organisations link funding risk directly to stricter NGO and foreign funding laws that make it harder for organisations to receive funding, especially from international donors.
- 2. Regulatory and political pressure on civil society is intensifying:** Organisations frequently cited new or stricter NGO/CSO laws, “foreign agent” laws, Anti-terrorism/national security legislation, and laws affecting freedom of expression, assembly, media, and advocacy as affecting their ability to carry out their activities.
- 3. Legal needs are increasing for many organisations:** 50% of respondents globally reported increasing legal needs, while 44% said their needs remain consistent. This rises to 65% in Asia and 71% in North America.
- 4. Emerging areas of concern:** While many needs remain constant, several areas are becoming more critical, including regulatory compliance, data protection, Governance and structuring, and navigating political/legal restrictions.
- 5. Legal support remains a lifeline:** Organisations cite the need for legal support as they face increasing scrutiny and increased demand on their services and activities. However, a gap persists between supply and demand for legal assistance.
- 6. Demand is expected to grow:** We expect demand for legal assistance to grow in the future, as organisations assess their priorities and plan either to downsize, or scale up. Strategic investment in legal capacity building, responsive pro bono services, and advocacy against laws that unduly restrict civic space will be essential.



REUTERS/Ueslei Marcelino

Introduction

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a crucial role in fostering free, fair and informed societies worldwide. Yet, they often face complex legal challenges that can hinder their work. Many governments worldwide are implementing restrictive laws and practices that limit the ability of CSOs to operate freely and effectively.

TrustLaw is the largest pro bono legal network in the world. Launched in 2010, TrustLaw's network of civil society organisations¹ and social enterprises has grown to over 7,000 members globally, which offers us insights into the state of civil society globally.

In 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we surveyed over 1,000 members about their needs, priorities, and obstacles. At that time, funding, capacity building, and compliance with evolving regulations were already top concerns.

¹ While most of TrustLaw members are non-governmental organisations (NGOs), we support organisations that work to address social, humanitarian, or environmental challenges, which is why we use the broader term civil society organisation (CSO). TrustLaw's eligibility criteria are available online here: [TrustLaw-Eligibility-Criteria.pdf](#)

Since then, political pressure on civil society organisations has intensified worldwide. Democracy has receded across all continents and just 6.6% of the world's population now lives under a full democracy, according to the Economist's annual Democracy Index². Sweeping aid cuts led by the dismantling of USAID in early 2025 have left many organisations without the funds they need to operate. In addition, countries around the world are implementing increasingly restrictive regulations aimed at civil society and media. These laws often force organisations to register with government authorities to be able to continue operating and impose heavy reporting and financial requirements, making it extremely difficult for CSOs to comply while carrying out their activities. In some cases, these laws also come with severe restrictions on the ability of registered CSOs to receive foreign funding, and are meant to depict them as "foreign agents" and give governments legal cover to repress civil society, especially those requesting government accountability, and control public narratives.

In September 2025, we launched a rapid survey among our members to understand how their legal needs had evolved over the past 12 months and learn more about their plans for the future. The findings from the survey and follow up interviews will inform how we shape our support to CSOs globally and provide a useful insight into the complexities of running a CSO during one of the most challenging periods in recent years.

The findings highlight the importance of pro bono legal support and the need to address the existing access gap, by making it easier for CSOs to receive pro bono support globally. It is heartening to see this echoed in recent policy developments, such as the EU Strategy for Civil Society, which explicitly recognised the critical role of pro bono legal support for civil society—however, more is needed.³

This report offers insight into what we have learned so far about how CSOs' legal needs are evolving, their ability to access support, the key legal challenges they face, and their plans as they navigate uncertain waters ahead.

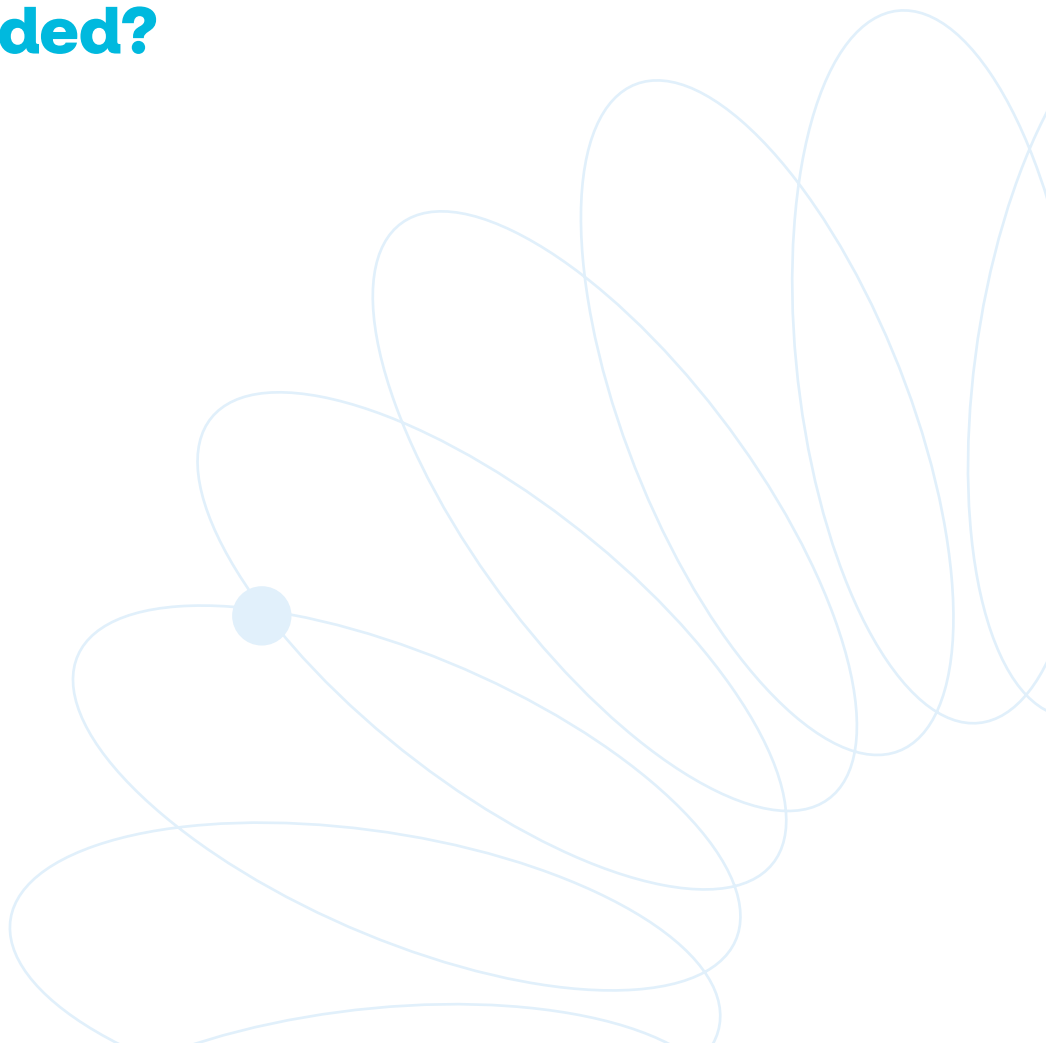
2 As reported by the Independent in February 2025: [Just 6% of the world's population live in a full democracy, new study claims | The Independent](#)

3 European Commission, [Communication on the EU Strategy for Civil Society | European Commission](#), accessed 4 December 2025



REUTERS/Shruti Shrestha

Who responded?



Through a rapid assessment in September 2025, we surveyed TrustLaw network members. Over two weeks, we received 147 completed responses with common themes providing a timely snapshot of how a diverse cross-section of organisations are experiencing and responding to a rapidly changing legal and regulatory environment.

Most respondents represented non-profit organisations. Around 10% were social enterprises, and 3% other forms of CSO.

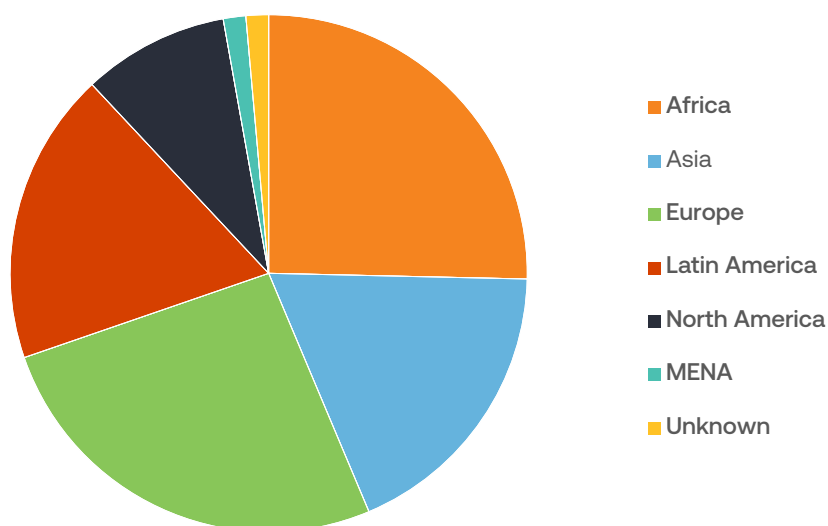
Size of respondent	%
Less than 10	35.37%
Between 10-50	42.18%
Between 50-100	12.24%
Between 100-200	5.44%
More than 200	4.76%

The vast majority had a staff of fewer than 50 people (77.55% of respondents), which mirrors the wider network of TrustLaw members, which is predominantly comprised of small and grassroots organisations.

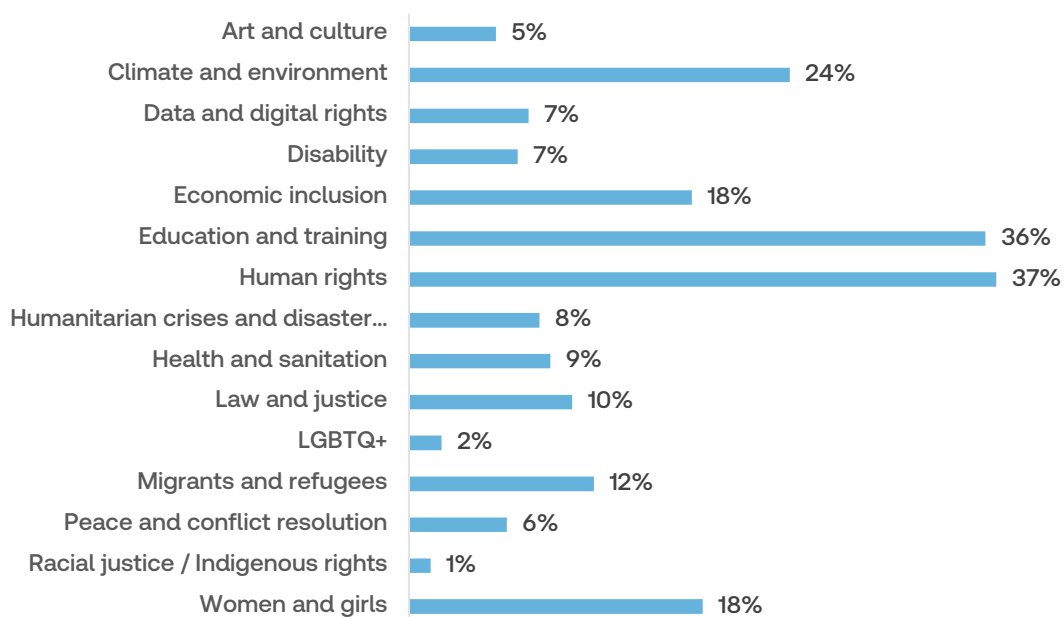
We received a good response rate from all regions, particularly from Europe and Africa (26% and 25% respectively). The lower number of responses from North America was expected: we had recently conducted one-to-one outreach in the region and received similar insights.

The area of work of the respondents varied, with almost 40% of organisations citing human rights and/or education and training as their primary fields. A significant number of organisations also work on issues relating to climate, economic inclusion and women and girls.

Respondents' region



Respondents' area of work





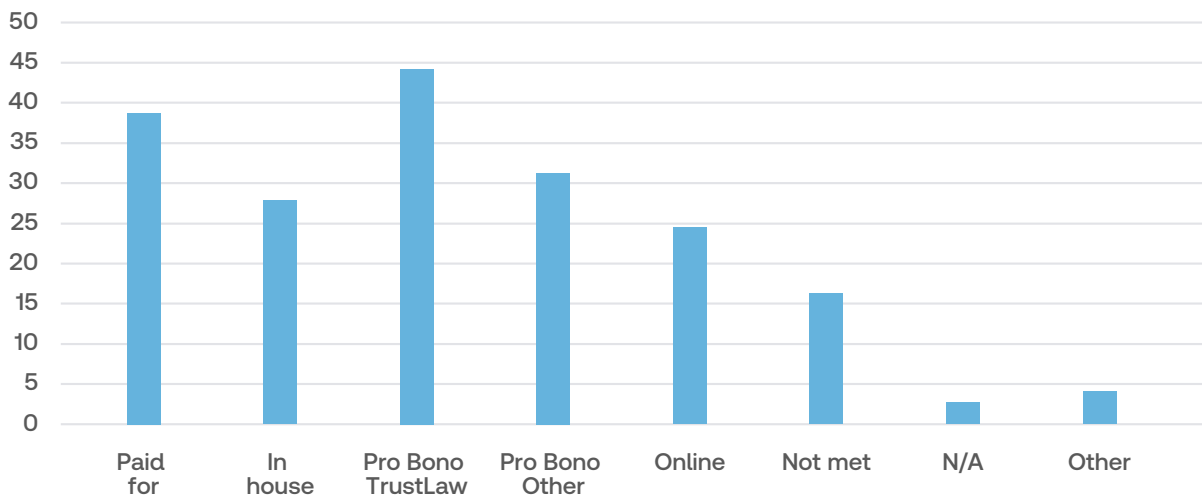
REUTERS/Lisi Niesner

Ability to access legal support



When asked about their ability to access legal support and how they addressed their legal needs in the past 12 months, respondents reported using a variety of approaches.

How respondents meet their legal needs



Almost 45% received support through TrustLaw, and 31% addressed their legal needs through other pro bono services or clearinghouses.

However, 39% had to pay for some legal advice over the past 12 months, and 16% of the respondents were not able to find a solution to all their legal needs. Meanwhile, 24% sought solutions online.

The demonstrable reliance on online resources warrants careful consideration. There are increasingly high-quality legal resources online and tech-enabled access to justice initiatives pose a significant opportunity to close the justice and legal gap. However, the quality of legal information currently available online varies significantly. The rising use of public generative AI and large language models (LLMs) to answer legal queries is particularly concerning, as these tools can produce inaccurate or incomplete advice that may expose individuals and organisations to serious compliance, operational and other risks.

The numbers paint a more complex picture when they are broken down by geography and size of the respondents. In Latin America, almost one in four (23%) had some unmet legal needs. In North America, more than 1 in 5 (21%) were not able to address all their legal challenges.

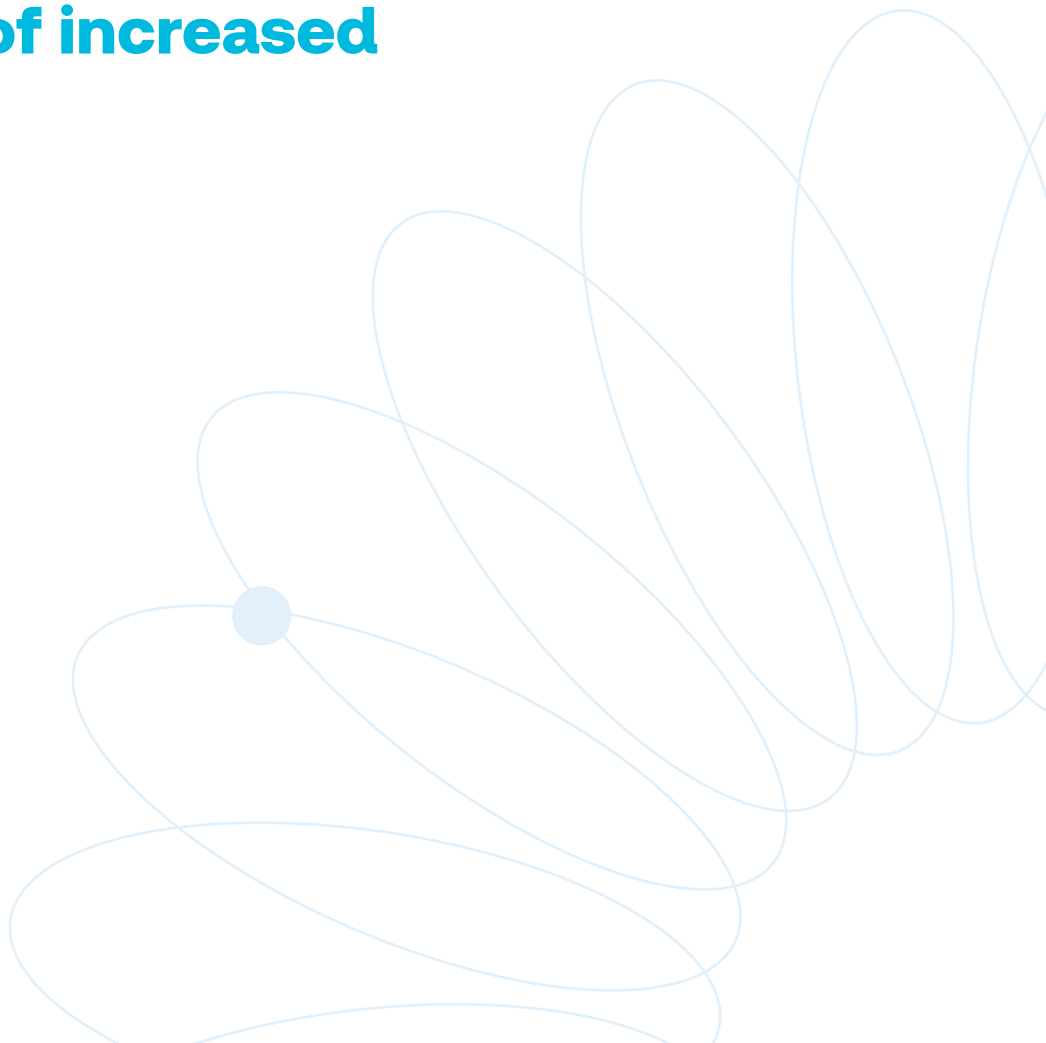
Unmet legal needs are highest for small organisations, which are also those receiving less pro bono support:

- Organisations with fewer than 10 staff members:
 - Only 19% paid for legal advice (likely due to lack of funds rather than lack of need).
 - While about 60% mentioned getting some pro bono support either through TrustLaw or other providers, 27% were unable to address all their legal needs.
- Organisations with 10 to 50 staff:
 - 42% paid for legal advice, with only 10% saying they could not meet their legal needs.
 - 79% of respondents said they received pro bono support in the past 12 months.
- Organisations with 50-100 staff:
 - 100% mentioned receiving pro bono support either through TrustLaw or other providers.
 - Still, 17% reported not being able to meet all their legal needs.
- Organisations with 100-200 staff reported fewer cases of unmet legal needs:
 - 65% reported paying for legal advice, and only 13% said that they could not meet their legal needs. 75% of them benefitted from pro bono support in the past year.
- Organisations with 200+ staff:
 - No unmet legal needs, with 85% receiving pro bono support in the past year.



REUTERS/Ueslei Marcelino

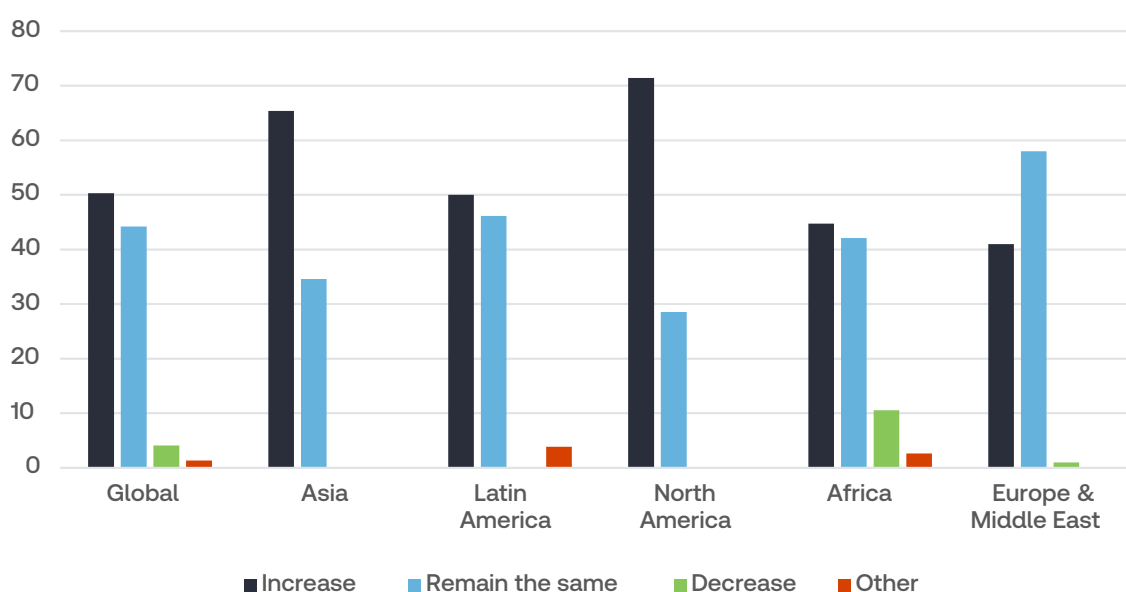
Perception of increased legal needs



When asked how their legal needs have changed in the past 12 months, 50% of respondents globally reported an increase, and 44% said that their needs remained consistent, and only 6% reported a decrease.

This represents a significant rise in demand, with marked regional differences. While 36% of organisations in Europe reported increasing legal needs (41% when considering Europe and Middle East jointly), the figure goes up to 65% in Asia and 71% in North America.

Evolution of legal needs

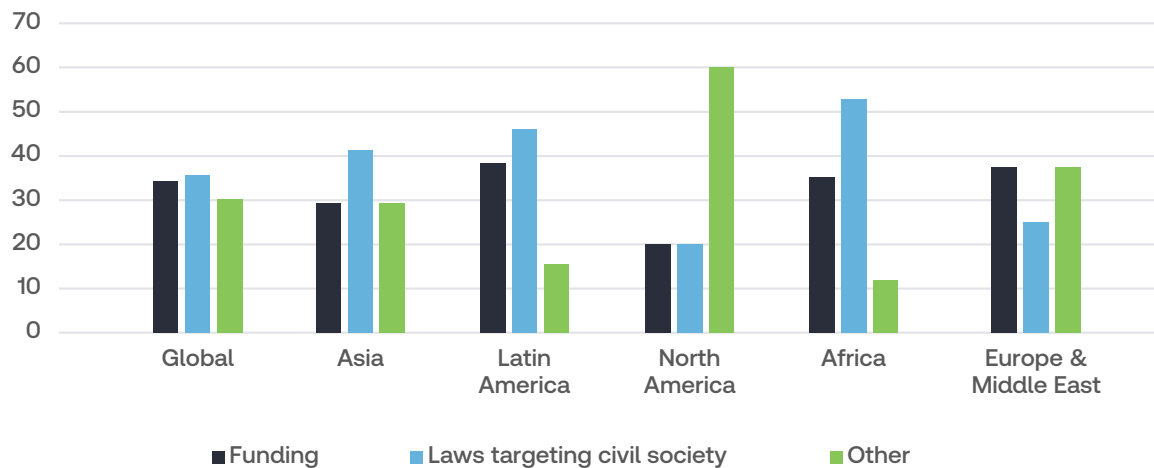


We asked respondents whose legal needs had increased to explain the main drivers. Globally, 34% identified funding cuts as the main reason their legal needs increased in the past 12 months. The figure is more or less consistent across the world, ranging from 29% in Asia to 38.5% in Latin America. Given the general funding challenges for CSOs and the impact of USAID and other foreign aid funding cuts, the finding is unsurprising. North America is an outlier, with only 20% of respondents citing funding cuts as a driver of increased legal needs:

Responses were more diverse on the impact of new laws targeting civil society:

- More restrictive regulations were cited by 36% of respondents globally as a cause of increased legal need, but only 25% of those based in Europe and the Middle East, and 20% in North America.
- However, this was cited as a key driver for 41% of respondents in Asia, 46% in Latin America, and 53% in Africa.

Drivers of increased legal needs



This finding is not surprising and reflects, among other worrying trends, the proliferation of laws regulating (and often targeting) civil society around the world. As reported recently by CIVICUS, a global civil society alliance, foreign agent laws and other restrictive measures that criminalise international funding are “going global” with countries across multiple regions having adopted similar laws in the last two years, and dozens more proposing similar legislation, such laws are “becoming normalised as an authoritarian tool for silencing dissent.”⁴

The numbers paint a nuanced picture when it comes to the size of organisations and their perception of increasing legal needs.

While smaller organisations are more likely to report increased legal needs, larger organisations were more concerned about funding and political risks:

- Smaller organisations (fewer than 50 staff) were more likely to say that their legal needs increased (58% compared to 42% for larger organisations (with 50 or more staff)); while
- Larger organisations were more likely to view funding as a priority risk (85% compared to 71% for smaller organisations); and
- Larger organisations were more likely to view political and legal restrictions as urgent threats (28% compared to only 15% for smaller organisations).

4 CIVICUS, Cutting civil society’s lifeline, <https://publications.civicus.org/publications/foreign-agents-laws-report/introduction/>, accessed 4 December 2025.

A respondent based in Asia and working internationally on digital rights and economic inclusion, explained that:

“The past year has seen accelerated regulatory activity in areas such as data governance, AI, and local operating requirements. These shifts, often varying by jurisdiction, have increased compliance obligations and introduced additional complexity into routine decision-making and program delivery.

... the pace and divergence of requirements across jurisdictions make ongoing compliance an active effort. The areas of greatest exposure stem from the speed at which rules around data governance and emerging technologies, including AI, continue to evolve.

We have adopted a conservative, front-loaded approach to compliance, integrating legal review early in operational planning. Maintaining strong relationships with knowledgeable local counsel is essential, as they help us navigate jurisdiction-specific requirements and mitigate exposure before issues arise.”

The response is similar to the one given by an Africa-based organisation working on climate and education, who told us that

“In Kenya [where the organisation is based], navigating around the constant evolving compliance frameworks and channels has been a bit challenging. First, due to the continuous updating of the Business Registration Services websites, some updates and reshuffling of applications relevant to our organization have been difficult to trace. This is coupled with majority of tutorials on the BRS being outdated and not accounting for the most recent updates. To ensure compliance on its end, [we] regularly visits BRS and has contact persons at the state agency to assist its compliance requirements such as submission of annual documents and reporting of changes.

... Moreover, [we] intend to increase [our] Legal partnerships with reputable law firms in Kenya and Ghana to provide additional guidance and sound legal advice to navigate any potential risks or challenges identified from our audit reports.”

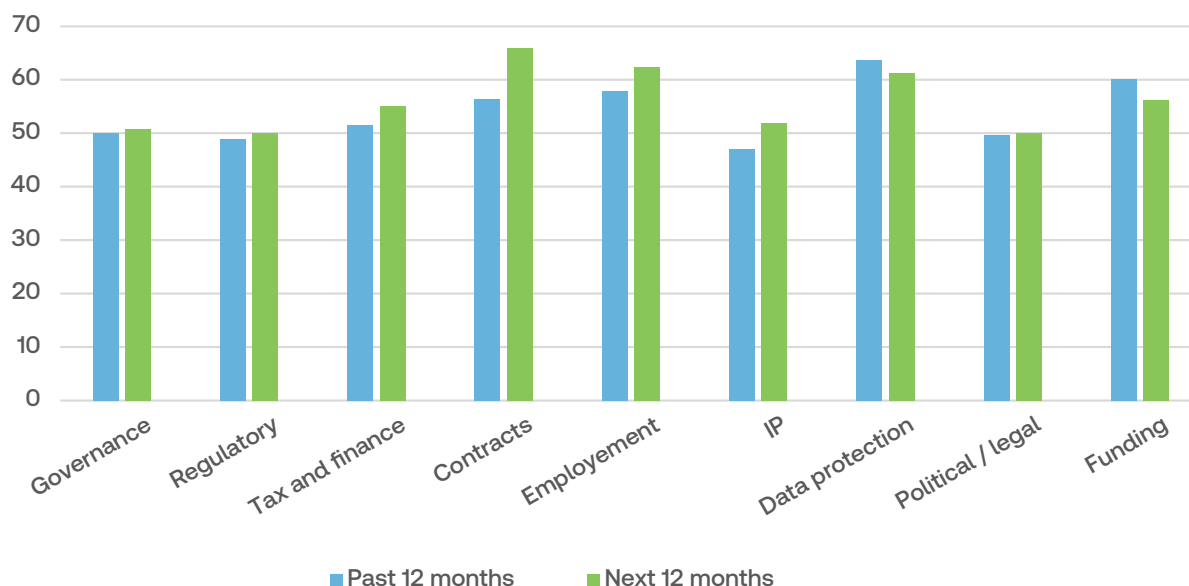


REUTERS/Yannis Behrakis

Critical needs identified

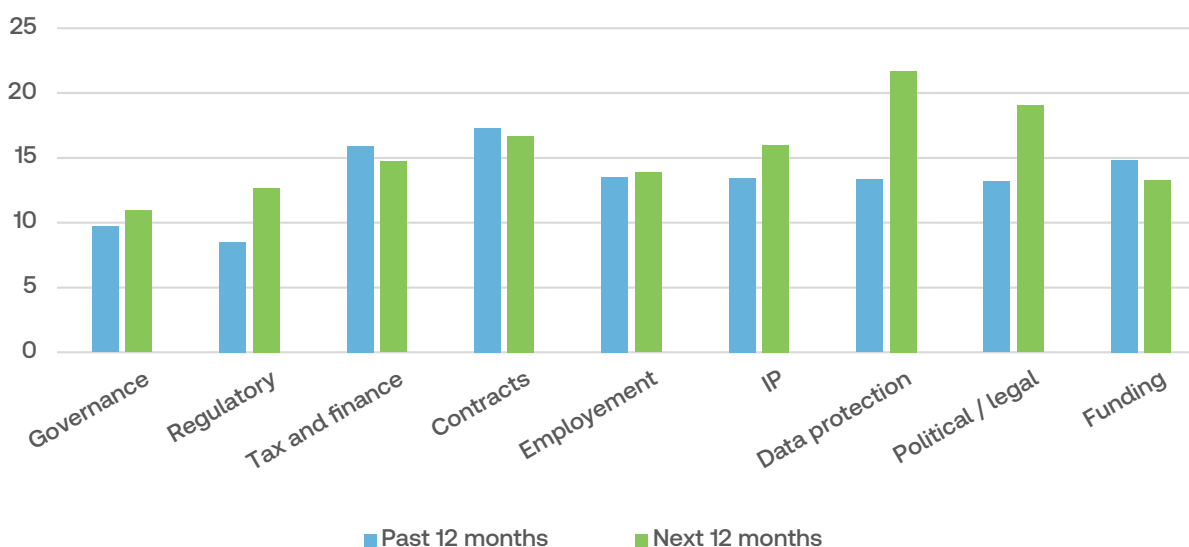
We asked respondents what legal needs they identified as moderate to critical in the last 12 months, and which they expected to see in the next 12 months.

Significant legal needs over time



Most areas showed a slight increase in anticipated need, consistent with the overall expectation among respondents that their legal needs will continue to rise. Similarly, when asked about the evolution of their most critical need, answers showed that respondents expect a general increase across the board, with more marked increase when it comes to data protection, legal needs linked to political and legal restrictions, and governance & corporate matters or those linked to public and regulatory law.

Most critical legal need over time



There are some interesting differences based on the geography of the respondents:

- Priority legal needs in Africa, Asia and Latin America are linked to increased scrutiny and political pressure. Respondents based in these countries were more likely to mention corporate and governance, and legal needs linked to political and legal restrictions as the most significant need they expect to have in the next 12 months.
- Respondents based in Europe and North America, on the other hand, more often cited “compliance-adjacent” needs as the most critical. Their responses often included data protection, commercial contracts, and employment.



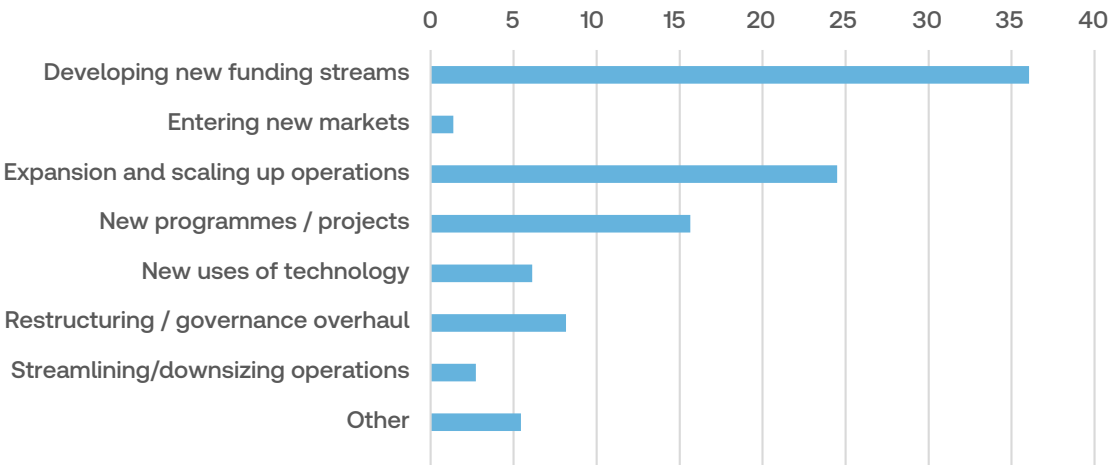
REUTERS/Thomas Mukoya

Future plans and challenges



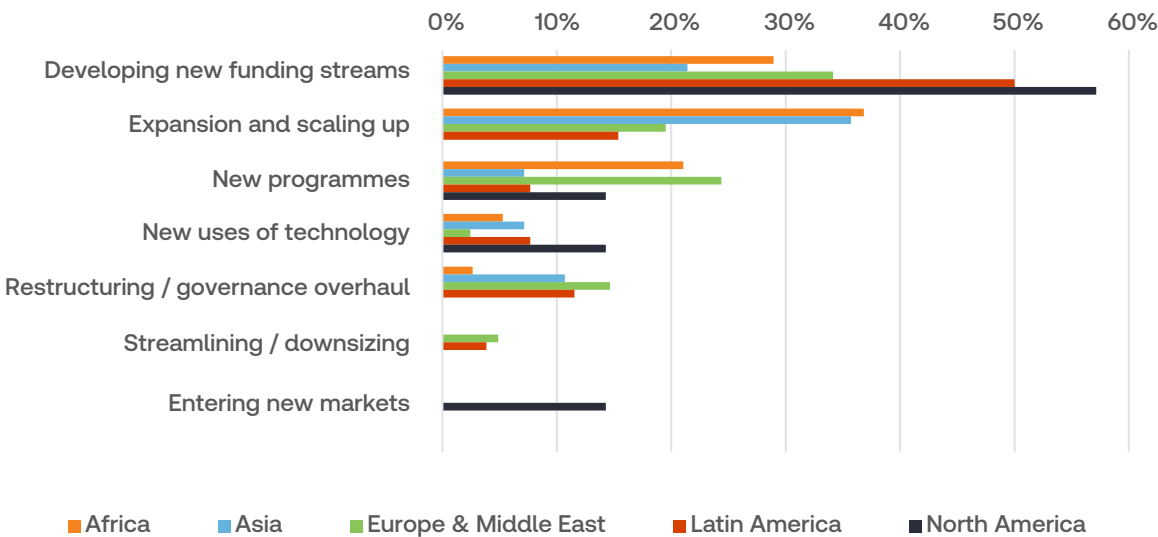
Unsurprisingly, when asked about their planned activities and priorities in the near future, more than a third of respondents said they would focus on developing new funding streams.

Major organisational initiatives in the next 36 months



Perhaps more unexpectedly, almost 25% of respondents globally said that they would be planning organisational expansion or scaling up operations, and 15% plan to embark on new programmes or projects. This may be a hopeful note for the future, but could equally reflect a harsher reality that – as some CSOs are forced to close or consolidate due to dwindling funding – surviving organisations may have to expand their remit and absorb work currently carried out by others to avoid critical gaps. Alternatively, they may be diversifying activities or scaling up to remain competitive for limited funding, effectively being forced to “do more with less” as needs grow but resources shrink.

Major organisational initiatives in the next 36 months



We do not see meaningful differences in planned activities by region. It is striking that very few organisations – none in Africa, Asia and North America – reported planning or considering downsizing in the near future. This may be due to the fact that the sample is a limited one and such plans tend to be much more sensitive and less likely to be disclosed in a survey of this type. It may also reflect selection bias, as CSOs most likely to engage with an online survey are likely to be those that are not currently in survival mode.

Nonetheless, at least 2 respondents described acute struggles. An international NGO said:

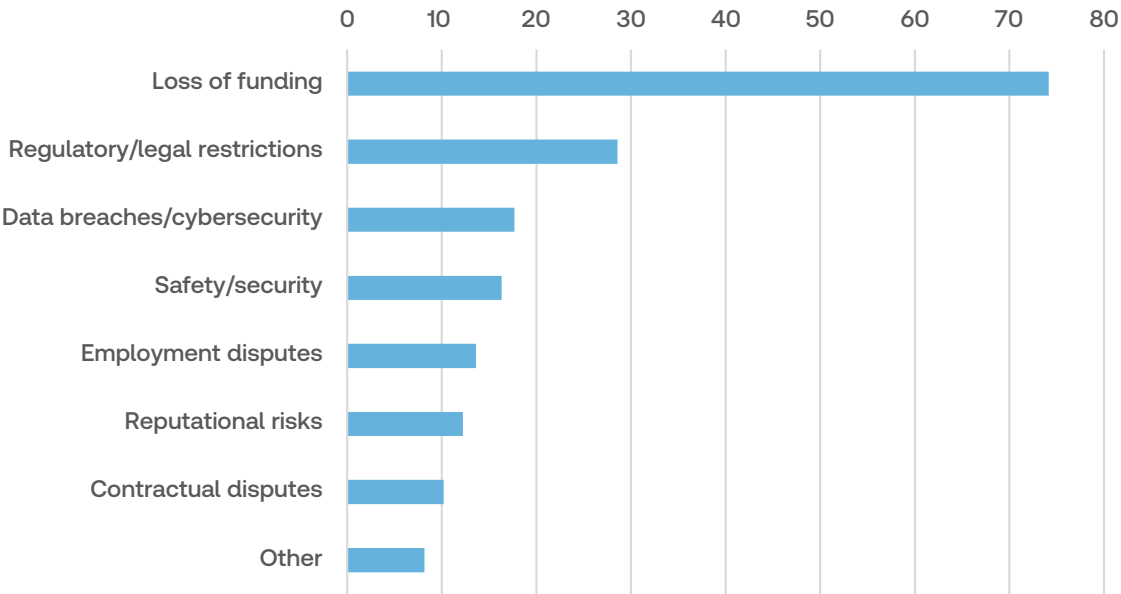
“We have had to let go around 2000 staff globally. We are also closing several country operations and downscaling a large majority of country operations – of course this impacts the humanitarian assistance we are able to offer, which has severe consequences for those communities most at risk and marginalized – both on the short and longer term.”

And another respondent, based in Asia, said they would be focusing on expansion and scaling up activities, but acknowledged:

“Increasing compliances [sic] is impacting funding especially for ongoing projects [as it] leads to delay in receiving funds to run the project effectively. Also, there are grey areas and not everyone is [knowledgeable of the] requirements.”

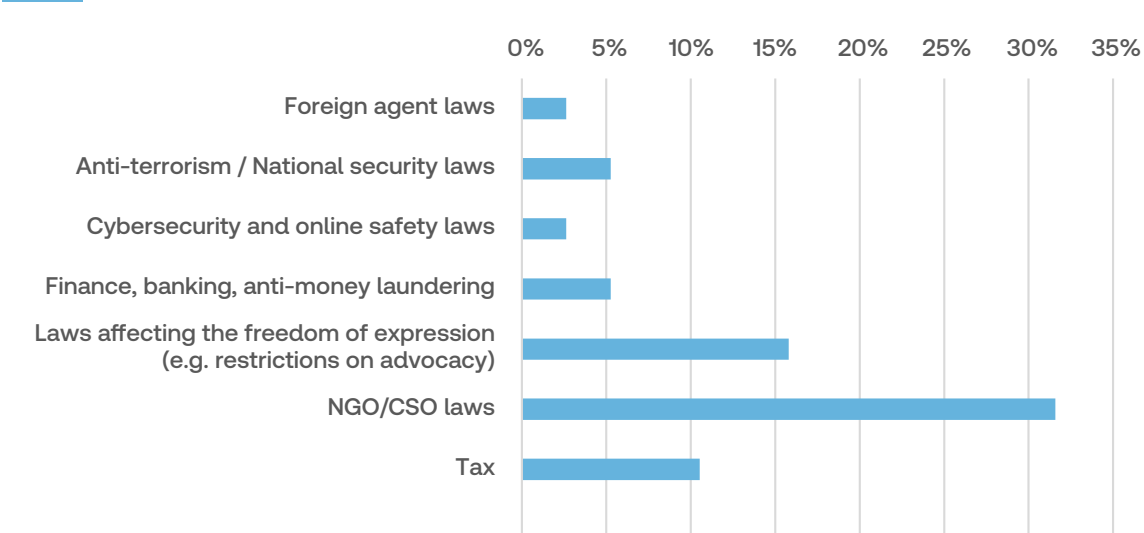
Loss of funding is the most serious risk facing organisations everywhere, with 74% of respondents citing it among the top 3, followed by regulatory and legal restrictions, mentioned by 29% of the respondents. There is little regional variation.

Most serious risk facing your organisation



Respondents who identified legal restrictions as a serious risk were particularly concerned about laws targeting civil society organisations specifically, followed by laws affecting freedom of expression and changing tax legislation.

Specific legal risks





REUTERS/Bazuki Muhammad

Conclusions and looking ahead

CSOs are navigating one of the most challenging environments in recent decades: funding is shrinking, regulatory and political pressure is intensifying, and legal risks are multiplying faster than most organisations can reasonably track or manage.

- **Our survey confirms that legal needs are rising across all regions and sizes of organisations**, with especially acute pressure on smaller, grassroots organisations that lack inhouse capacity but are often closest to the communities most affected by these crises.
- **A significant proportion of respondents report unmet legal needs** in the last year: 16% globally, but rising to 27% for small organisations with less than 10 staff.
- **Highquality, accessible pro bono legal support is not a “nice to have”**: it is a critical enabler of CSOs’ survival, resilience and impact. The findings show clearly that the demand is not only growing but also diversifying. Organisations need support that ranges from traditional areas such as corporate governance, contracts and employment law, to increasingly complex and fastmoving domains like data protection, technology and AI regulation, public and regulatory law, and compliance with restrictive NGO and “foreign agent” frameworks.
- **CSOs working in politically sensitive areas**, such as human rights and accountability, are simultaneously facing the heaviest legal burdens and the greatest barriers to accessing counsel.

What organisations are telling us

- **Compliance is becoming a defining challenge**, both as a result of new legislation aimed at civil society and because of the CSOs’ need to expand and diversify their income streams. As one organisation based in Latin America explained, “a key challenge for the next cycle will be ensuring compliance”, and CSOs will “need more and more help when it comes to policies, [including support with] getting more in to [sic] business agreements with companies that are now moving away from grants”, as an Africa-based respondent put it. A respondent based in Europe agrees: “[our most significant legal challenge is related to] compliance obligations imposed by donor agreements vis a vis almost exclusively project-bound funding.”
- **Increased political scrutiny and pressure are also becoming a common concern.** A respondent based in the Middle East told us that the most significant legal challenge they faced in the past 12 months was due to “political restrictions on civil society and financial investigation. [Our] executive director [was] arrested and questionned [sic] by police”, while an African organisation explained that:

“the actions from the state take different forms – from freezing accounts, unleashing the tax man, raiding office premises, lodging online smear campaigns about being agents of foreign interests, leaking banking information online (sometimes doctored). This has directly affected us in the last year, and it has affected our partners and other allies where we operate from.”

- **Legal challenges stem from a broader narrative change globally that depicts CSOs as untrustworthy, corrupt, and inefficient**, and which is putting their ability to continue holding governments and corporates to account and providing services to their beneficiaries at risk. As a respondent based in Europe put it, their most significant challenges have come as a result of “Online hate speech, misinformation/disinformation, far-right rhetoric dressed up as nationalism, racism and discrimination in accessing employment opportunity.”

What is needed

Meeting this moment requires more pro bono support, but also more diverse and strategically-organised support. This includes:

- **Deepening the pro bono bench**, especially in contexts where pro bono is newer or less formalised, to improve access for CSOs to local expertise.
- **Building longterm partnerships that combine oneoff advice with capacity building, training and preventive risk management.** Through our work with independent newsrooms around the world for more than 40 years, the Thomson Reuters Foundation have developed a tried-and-tested model for building 360° organisational resilience. We are now working to adapt and replicate this model specifically for NGOs. This will include legal support, communications advice, financial planning, digital security guidance, AI adoption, and much more.
- **Engaging a broader ecosystem of legal actors** – law firms of all sizes, inhouse legal teams, bar associations, universities and specialist clinics – and connecting them more systematically with CSOs including with the support of clearinghouses like TrustLaw.
- **Supporting strategic litigation.** In particular, one respondent highlighted the importance for CSOs to be able to tap into lawyers who can help with strategic litigation and push back on the most damaging new regulations, and on laws clearly infringing on established human rights.

The recently published EU Strategy for Civil Society also emphasises this point, noting that “navigating the current legal, administrative, regulatory and technological environment in which CSOs operate increasingly requires not only having the necessary financial means, but also to have specific skills and expertise.

Legal support provided by pro bono lawyers can play a key role in this regard” and stating that the “Commission will therefore work to connect communities of pro bono lawyers with CSOs across sectors and in need of support, so as to facilitate support on administrative, mobility, legal and financial matters”.⁵

If current trends continue, CSOs will be asked to do more with less: to absorb the work of organisations forced to close, to respond to new crises, and to operate under increasingly constrained civic space. Without a corresponding expansion in pro bono legal infrastructure, many will lack the tools needed to stay compliant, protect their staff and beneficiaries, and continue advocating for the communities they serve. Investing in wider, more diverse, and better coordinated pro bono support is therefore essential.

5 European Commission, [Communication on the EU Strategy for Civil Society | European Commission](#), accessed 4 December 2025



REUTERS/Danish Siddiqui

ANNEX 1 – Methodology

The findings in this report are based on a snap online survey conducted by TrustLaw in September 2025 among its global network of CSOs and social enterprises, and partly on data from the TrustLaw service. The survey was distributed via email to TrustLaw member organisations and remained open for responses for two weeks. It was distributed in English and Spanish, and consisted primarily of multiple-choice questions, with some open-ended questions to capture qualitative insights and examples. Questions focused on how organisations' legal needs have evolved over the past 12 months, their ability to access legal support, priority legal issues by area of work and geography, and their strategic plans for the next year.

Responses were analysed both in aggregate and disaggregated by region, organisation size and area of work, in order to identify common global trends as well as regional differences and specific vulnerabilities. Percentages cited in this report are calculated on the basis of total responses to each question, and in some cases are rounded for clarity. Qualitative quotes have been lightly edited for length and readability, without changing their substance.

Over two weeks, we received completed responses from 147 organisations, with good regional distribution. We recognise that there might be a significant gap in the findings: it's unlikely that we have heard from the most at-risk organisations, or those struggling to keep afloat.

While the sample reflects the profile of TrustLaw's membership – predominantly small and mid-sized CSOs – and may not be fully representative of all civil society globally, the results provide a timely snapshot of how a diverse cross-section of organisations are experiencing and responding to a rapidly changing legal and regulatory environment.



REUTERS/Pilar Olivares

ANNEX 2 – Survey questions

Section 1: about your organisation

1. Organisation name (Optional):

2. Type of organisation:
(Select all that apply)
 - ☐ Non-profit organisation
 - ☐ Social enterprise
 - ☐ Media / newsroom
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

3. Main countries of operation (i.e. countries where your organisation has offices and/or members of staff) (Select up to 5)
Use the “Ctrl” button to select multiple options

If you have chosen more than one country of operation, please provide answers in the rest of this survey based on the location where your legal needs/risks are currently highest or most representative.

4. Primary field(s) of work:
(Select up to 3)
 - ☐ Human rights
 - ☐ Education and training
 - ☐ Health and sanitation
 - ☐ Economic inclusion
 - ☐ Climate and environment
 - ☐ Law and justice
 - ☐ Data and digital rights
 - ☐ LGBTQ+
 - ☐ Migrants and refugees
 - ☐ Women and girls
 - ☐ Racial justice/Indigenous rights
 - ☐ Art and culture
 - ☐ Disability
 - ☐ Humanitarian crises and disaster management
 - ☐ Peace and conflict resolution
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

5. How many staff members (including volunteers) does your organisation have?
 - ☐ Less than 10
 - ☐ Between 10-50
 - ☐ Between 50-100
 - ☐ Between 100-200
 - ☐ More than 200

Section 2: recent legal needs & challenges

6. For each legal area below, please indicate the level of need or challenge your organisation experienced in the past 12 months:

(**1** = No need/challenge (easily handled internally/not applicable), **3** = Moderate need (moderate threat to your operations and mission, and some legal support was required), **5** = Critical need/challenge (serious threat to your operations and mission, and legal support was required and crucial))

If you have more than one country of operation, please provide answers based on the location where your legal needs/risks are currently highest or most representative. Please, name the country you are referring to.

Legal Area	1	2	3	4	5
Governance and structuring (e.g., governance structure, board, decision-making processes, internal policies, and bylaws)					
Regulatory compliance (e.g., registration, charity law)					
Tax and finance (e.g., tax status, fundraising regulation, financial reporting)					
Contracts (e.g., agreements with partners, vendors, clients, and issues relating to terms, payment, or delivery of goods and services)					
Employment (e.g., employment and consultancy contracts, labour disputes, human resources policies)					
Intellectual property (e.g., copyright, trademark)					
Data protection/cybersecurity (e.g., privacy policies, confidentiality, artificial intelligence)					
Political/legal restrictions on civil society and media (e.g. NGO and foreign influence laws, freedom of expression)					
Funding-related legal issues (e.g., grant agreements and amendments)					
Other (please specify): _____					

7. How have you addressed your legal needs in the past 12 months?:

- ☐ Paid for legal advice from a lawyer / law firm
- ☐ In-house counsel
- ☐ Pro-bono legal advice / assistance through TrustLaw
- ☐ Pro-bono legal advice / assistance by other means
- ☐ Online resources
- ☐ Have been unable to address
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

8. Please briefly describe the most significant legal challenge your organisation faced in the past 12 months (Optional):
[Open text field]

Section 3: current and future legal needs

9. For each area, please indicate the anticipated level of legal need for your organisation in the next 12 months:

(1 = No anticipated need, 3 = Moderate anticipated need (moderate threat to your operations and mission, and some legal support is likely required), 5 = Critical anticipated need/challenge (serious threat to your operations and mission, and legal support is likely to be crucial)

If you have more than one country of operation, please provide answers based on the location where your legal needs/risks are currently highest or most representative. Please, name the country you are referring to.

Legal Area	1	2	3	4	5
Governance and structuring (e.g., governance structure, board, decision-making processes, internal policies, and bylaws)					
Regulatory compliance (e.g., registration, charity law)					
Tax and finance (e.g., tax status, fundraising regulation, financial reporting)					
Contracts (e.g., agreements with partners, vendors, clients, and issues relating to terms, payment, or delivery of goods and services)					

Employment (e.g., employment and consultancy contracts, labour disputes, human resources policies)					
Intellectual property (e.g., copyright, trademark)					
Data protection/cybersecurity (e.g., privacy policies, confidentiality, artificial intelligence)					
Political/legal restrictions on civil society and media (e.g. NGO and foreign influence laws, freedom of expression)					
Funding-related legal issues (e.g., grant agreements and amendments)					
Other (please specify): _____					

10. What major organisational projects or initiatives do you plan to undertake in the next 2-3 years?

- ☐ Expansion and scaling up operations
- ☐ Entering new markets
- ☐ Restructuring / governance overhaul
- ☐ Developing new funding streams
- ☐ New programmes / projects
- ☐ New uses of technology
- ☐ Streamlining/downsizing operations
- ☐ Winding down operations
- ☐ Other: [Open text field]

Section 4: trends, risks, and context

11. How have your organisation's legal needs changed in the past 12 months?
(Select all that apply)

- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Remained about the same
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

If your legal needs have increased, please explain why

- ☐ New/stricter laws targeting civil society activity
- ☐ Funding changes/cuts
- ☐ Other reasons (please specify): _____

12. What do you consider the most serious risks facing your organisation right now?
(Select up to 3)

- ☐ Regulatory/legal restrictions
- ☐ Loss of funding
- ☐ Contractual disputes
- ☐ Employment disputes
- ☐ Data breaches/cybersecurity
- ☐ Safety/security
- ☐ Reputational risks
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

[Optional] If you think 'regulatory/legal restrictions' pose a serious risk to your organisation, please explain what these are: [Select all that apply]

- ☐ NGO/CSO laws
- ☐ Anti-terrorism / National security laws
- ☐ 'Foreign agent' Laws
- ☐ Beneficial ownership / Corporate transparency requirements
- ☐ Laws affecting the freedom of expression (e.g. restrictions on advocacy)
- ☐ Laws affecting the freedom of assembly and right to protest
- ☐ Laws relating to fundraising and access to foreign funding
- ☐ Finance, banking, anti-money laundering
- ☐ Tax
- ☐ Cybersecurity and online safety laws
- ☐ Other: Please specify

Section 5: final comments

13. Do you have any additional comments, suggestions, or concerns about your legal needs (current or in the past 12 months) or the support you require?
[Open text field]
14. Would you be willing to be contacted about your responses or participate in a brief interview/focus group? (Please note that we value your feedback, but your participation is entirely optional, and refusal to take part will have no impact on your ability to receive our support)

If yes, please provide your contact details (Please refer to our privacy policy)

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