ACCOUNTABILITY TO BUILD TRUST

After working together for almost a decade, civil society networks from all regions of the world launched in Nairobi in April 2023 the Global Standard Partnership. As we confront civic space challenges worldwide, our Partnership aspires to build and reinforce trust in civil society organisations through the practice of dynamic accountability.

The Global Standard Partnership’s objective is to transform the work of civil society organisations (CSOs) for strengthened impact and resilience by becoming more transparent, responsive, and accountable towards the people whom they work for and with.

Our Partnership aims to enable civil society organisations around the world to use the Global Standard for CSO Accountability by promoting its implementation, endorsement, and application. This partnership is founded upon a new paradigm, one that puts people at the core of all work, and embraces new forms of dynamic accountability and dialogue with stakeholders. The Global Standard understands that accountability is not a one-size-fits-all exercise, but a practice that aims to continuously represent stakeholders’ interests. It shifts the power directly towards the people whose lives CSOs impact with their work. Civil society needs tools and an enabling environment to prove their adaptive and resilient capacity, and creatively engage with the people that we work for and with. Our partnership rises to this challenge.
OUR COMMON JOURNEY

The partnership began in the early 2010s, at a time when many of our networks had started to reflect, and to act on the increasing demands for transparency and accountability of civil society organisations. The absence of collaboration had led to a proliferation of standards and duplication of efforts in different parts of the world. We saw the need for a global standard that organisations around the world could align to and share as a benchmark for their effectiveness and accountability, and we responded.

An extensive, diverse consultation process with more than 1500 organisations around the world, led us to co-design the Global Standard for CSO Accountability, which we launched at International Civil Society Week in Fiji in 2017. Since then, the Global Standard has continued to evolve and our efforts have been geared towards its institutionalisation, the development of codes and tools, the enhancement of our communication and outreach and advocacy capacity. We are creating a movement that embraces diverse commitments to the Global Standard for CSO Accountability, and celebrates the unique ways our partners can live out this action.
1. JUSTICE AND EQUALITY
   We will address injustice, exclusion, inequality, poverty and violence to create healthy societies for all.

2. WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY
   We will promote women’s and girls’ rights and enhance gender equality.

3. HEALTHY PLANET
   We will protect the natural environment and enhance its ability to support life for future generations.

4. LASTING POSITIVE CHANGE
   We will deliver long-term positive results

5. PEOPLE-DRIVEN WORK
   We will ensure that the people we work with have a key role in driving our work.

6. STRONG PARTNERSHIPS
   We will work in fair and respectful partnerships to achieve shared goals.

7. ADVOCATING FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE
   We will address root causes by advocating for fundamental change.

8. OPEN ORGANISATIONS
   We will be transparent about who we are, what we do and our successes and failures.

9. EMPOWERED AND EFFECTIVE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
   We will invest in staff and volunteers to develop their full potential and achieve our goals.

10. WELL-HANDLED RESOURCES
    We will handle our resources responsibly to reach our goals and serve the public good.

11. RESPONSIVE DECISION-MAKING
    We will ensure our decisions are responsive to feedback from people affected by our work, partners, volunteers, and staff.

12. RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP
    We will ensure our management and governing body are accountable.

The Global Standard for CSO Accountability is a reference standard that CSOs can adopt and implement to strengthen their accountability practices and to build internal capacities. By relying on 12 accountability commitments, it captures a shared understanding of accountability from CSOs from all over the globe. It embodies a dynamic approach to accountability, encouraging organisations to engage in a continuous two-way dialogue with stakeholders while committing to specific internal improvement processes.
Here are just a few examples.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

OUR

IMPACT AND

ACCOUNTABILITY WORLDWIDE

We have devoted numerous efforts
to raise the voice of civil society in
the global fora and our advocacy
work has resulted in the inclusion
of the Global Standard principles in
international tools. The OECD DAC
Recommendation on Enabling Civil
Society in Development Co-operation
and Humanitarian Assistance, adopted
with unanimous approval from the
22 countries DAC members, outlines
clear and practical guidance on how
DAC members and other development
and humanitarian assistance providers
can respect and promote civic space,
support civil society and incentivise civil
society accountability and effectiveness.
Importantly, the Recommendation
calls for greater support for CSO-led
self-regulatory standards, specifically
recognising the Global Standard for
CSO Accountability as a valuable
and globally relevant accountability
mechanism for civil society. In parallel,
one of the objectives of the DG NEAR
Guidelines for EU Support to Civil
Society 2021-2027 is to reinforce
CSO capacity and resilience to carry
out their activities: the guidelines
indicate the Global Standard as
a widely accepted framework of
reference for what constitutes CSO
accountability. Furthermore, the
Open Government Partnership
(OGP) current Co-chair Agenda also
presents civil society strengthening,
resilience and accountability as
one of its most important goals.

ALIGNING CIVIL SOCIETY
GLOBALLY TO STRENGTHEN
ACCOUNTABILITY

Translating the Global Standard to local
realities has received much attention
and dedication. INGOs networks as
well as CSO networks in Australia,
Uganda, Kenya, India, Cambodia, Latin
America and the Caribbean countries,
in the Balkans region, and in United
States have designed or updated
their Codes of conduct or revamped
their own standards around the 12
commitments outlined by the Global
Standard for CSO accountability.

In the Pacific, Global Partners have been
working to use the Global Standard
as the foundation for developing a
CSO accountability framework for the
region with the end goal to strengthen
CSO accountability mechanisms.

PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE
CENTRE THROUGH DYNAMIC
ACCOUNTABILITY

Putting people at the centre of our work
is probably the core objective of each
step that we take. Permanent interactive
dialogue with our stakeholders is
the basis of dynamic accountability.
Our work in West Africa, for example,
helps to reshape power dynamics and
give voice, especially to the people
impacted by the organisations work.
This includes rethinking leadership
internally at different staff levels and
recognising power dynamics within
the organisation, through to the
interactions with external actors.

PROVIDING THE TOOLS TO BUILD
CAPACITIES AND REINFORCE TRUST

User friendly self-assessment tools and
dynamic reporting mechanisms have
been designed aiming at improving
civil society accountability practices.
RendirApp (app.rendircuentas.org) is a
way for self-evaluating an organisation
or network in relation to the Global
Standard for CSO Accountability.
More than 1500 CSOs in more than 70
countries from all over the world have
applied this form of self-regulation
and devised improvement plans. Some
CSOs prepare their Annual Reports
based on the fulfilment and needs
of improvement based on the Global
Standard, while international CSOs are
advocating for fundamental change (one
of the Global Standards commitments)
by ensuring that advocacy is research
based, involving stakeholders throughout
the cycle of advocacy, or raising the
voices of those who are affected.

Training programs around the Global
Standard and its accountability
paradigm have attracted thousands
of participants in Latin America, the
Caribbean, the Balkans, Africa, and
several other countries and regions.

GROWING A TRULY GLOBAL
NETWORK OF PARTNERS
AND ALLIES

Global Standard for CSO Accountability
is constantly reaching out to a growing
network of partners and allies, that
make use of our tools and incorporate
our accountability approach into their
own practices. Civil Society Networks
from all regions of the world have
attended our training programs, while
organisations in Albania, Portugal and
other countries have constructed and
developed own tools based on the
Global Standard and on RendirApp.

ACCOUNTABILITY WORLDWIDE

The challenging and wonderful
journey that we initiated in the
early 2010s has represented
meaningful changes in promoting
a culture of civil society
transparency and accountability.

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BUILDING OUR FUTURE

After working together for one decade, 12 Civil Society Networks from all corners of the world in April 2023 the Global Standard Partnership was officially launched. The new Alliance has defined its vision for a global civil society sector that is more responsive, impactful, sustainable and resilient as a result of improved accountability practices and mechanisms. Its mission is to transform CSOs’ work, as individuals and as a collective, to strengthen impact and resilience by becoming more transparent, responsive, ethical, and accountable towards the people whom we work for and with.

In order to attain this vision, the Global Standard Partnership is regulated by its own Governance structure and by-laws. The structure of the Global partnership consists of: a Global Assembly, comprised of all partners of the Global Standard Partnership; the Board of Directors, comprised of the persons elected to the Board by the members of the Global Assembly and the Advisory Group, comprised of individuals appointed by the Global Assembly. A Board of 3 members has been elected for the period 2023-2026 and a Global Secretariat may be eventually appointed by the Global Assembly.

For the next three years, the Global Standard aims to continue the implementation of the Global Standard, supporting CSOs to strengthen their accountability practices by fostering more horizontal and dynamically accountable relationships between CSOs and actors like donors, governments, and international organisations. We will also continue improving existing and developing new tools and further guidelines of how to be really accountable to the people that we work for and with. Furthermore, we will also develop a methodology for collecting and systematising the learnings and impact that dynamic accountability brings to organisations and creates change. Our ambition is that the principles developed by our Partnership are embraced by new civil society organisations and that our instruments can become useful and adaptable to new coalitions and different types of CSOs.