

Accountable Now

GLOBAL STANDARDS LOCAL TRUST



CIVICUS **Independent Review Panel Feedback**

Accountability Report 2015-2016
Review Round July 2017



CIVICUS

Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round July 2017

07 September 2017

Dear Danny Sriskandarajah,

Thank you for submitting your Accountability Report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to continuously strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the individual assessment below. Before we share this with you, however, we want to highlight a few issues of concern that we found throughout most of the nine reports assessed in the last review round.

Closing the feedback loop with stakeholders (NGO2, NGO9)

A [recent study](#) on 40 international civil society organisations' (CSOs') accountability practices - conducted by the *direct impact group* on behalf of Accountable Now - revealed that only three out of these 40 CSOs responded with an appropriate answer to a complaint test within three weeks.

This is alarming. All Members of Accountable Now should have a fully functioning feedback mechanisms in place. However, when checking your reports we found a consistent lack of reporting filed complaints per type, quantity, and region as well as a total lack of information on how they were resolved. We believe this is not an acceptable level of accountability. CSOs should not only have a mechanism in place but should first be capturing complaints with the appropriate level of detail and then monitoring their resolution and agreeing what actions need to be taken to ensure the same issues do not arise.

[Feedback Labs](#), with whom Accountable Now collaborated on the [People-Powered Accountability project](#), also serve as a valuable source of information on how to close feedback loops.

Collaboration with partners, communities and networks (NGO6, EC7 & SO1)

As part of the [12 Accountability Commitments](#), Accountable Now Members commit to working in genuine partnership with local communities and partners. With increased globalisation of information, more empowered citizens engage and civic space is challenged, it becomes ever more important to help local communities and partners to thrive. However, we found that coordination with local communities is still an overall weakness area among the Accountability Reports we received. Some "common" ICSO practices can have intended or unintended consequences on local



communities. We would thus like to particularly highlight a lack of contributions to building local capacity and resources. Do you take into account local market conditions and think about working alongside local organisations building their capacity? We suggest that ICSSOs should start to consider their impact on the sustainability and independence of local civil society in all their work (such as planning, budgeting, economic impact, etc.).

Adding to what people do to improve their lives

(NGO3)

To state the obvious, impact measurement is important. However, many evaluations mentioned in received Accountability Reports focus on collecting relatively large amounts of data on people reached, however, this does not tell us much about the improvement in their lives. Moreover, we should critically ask ourselves: What is the ICSSO's credit in this improvement and what positive impact is actually due to the people and beneficiaries themselves?

While we are of course aware that resources are limited, there is clearly no substitute for a robust and honest impact evaluation of our programmes and activities.

Organisation-specific feedback to CIVICUS:

CIVICUS' eighth accountability report provides a comprehensive and interesting overview of the organisation's commitment to accountability and the actions and policies that support this.

CIVICUS demonstrates a strong commitment to accountability at the highest level, with the Secretary General promoting a "lived commitment to open, transparent and accountable institutions". The promotion of CIVICUS' accountability efforts with a dedicated page on their [website](#), including reference to Accountable Now, prominent use of Accountable Now's logo, and links to CIVICUS' Accountability Reports, are further signs of a strong external **institutional commitment to accountability**.

CIVICUS' Accountability Report is comprehensive and goes into detail with many helpful examples and graphics. Almost all sections of the report are addressed satisfactorily, and the Panel appreciated the response to its previous feedback on issues such as the how the Accountability Report is put together (3.5) and internal feedback mechanisms (4.4 and NGO9). CIVICUS' efforts to increase local hires (EC7) is a commendable example of **good practice**.

On the other hand, **weaknesses** include the yet to be developed feedback and complaints mechanism (NGO2) which is a mandatory component of Accountable Now [membership](#), exploration of diversity considerations beyond gender and age (NGO4 and LA13), an insufficient overview of greenhouse gas emissions (EN16), and insufficient information on CIVICUS' anti-corruption, Fraud Prevention and Information Privacy Policies (SO3). These sections would have particularly benefitted from consideration of the Panel's previous feedback and questions. The



provision of more **evidence** that policies and processes work well in practice, and of links to relevant documents, would also have strengthened the report.

Due to the fact that CIVICUS has not finalised an organisation-wide feedback and complaints handling mechanism yet, the Panel cannot yet allow CIVICUS for the interim reporting cycle (i.e. submitting full reports every two years with shorter interim reports in the years between). The Panel expects a complaints mechanism to be in place by the next report, in order to fully comply with mandatory Accountable Now requirements.

Our intention is that this feedback letter, and any response you may wish to provide, is made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report – as it is the case with all previously reviewed reports. However, should there be errors of fact in the feedback above or in the note below; we would of course wish to correct these before publication. Please share any comments or amendments by 22 September 2017.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

			
Mihir Bhatt	Rhonda Chapman	John Clark	Louise James

		
Jane Kiragu	Nora Lester Murad	Saroeun Soeung



Cover Note on CIVICUS's Accountability Report 2015-2016

Review Round July 2017

PROFILE DISCLOSURES

I. Strategy and Analysis

1.1	<p>Statement from the most senior decision-maker</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The opening statement by CIVICUS' Secretary General, Dr. Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, promotes a "lived commitment to open, transparent and accountable institutions" in a time where trust in institutions is diminishing. It demonstrates a strong commitment to transparency and accountability, and highlights CIVICUS' close cooperation with members and partners in decision-making processes, as well as mechanisms to provide feedback on CIVICUS' Strategic Priorities and wider work. The Panel looks forward to learning more about the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 in the next report. In this regard, the visualised "Consultation Highlights" is a commendable communications tool.</p> <p>Examples of systems of engaging members are also provided, and accountability is highlighted as a "critical component of delivering on our role as a civil society alliance". Overall, CIVICUS' accountability is to their members around the organisation's "core mission of strengthening citizen action and civil society".</p>
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II. Organisational Profile

2.1 – 2.2	<p>Name of organisation / Primary activities</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The panel appreciated the examples of activities that were given which brought to life how the strategic and operational plan were being delivered. The link provided to CIVICUS' Strategic Priorities 2013-2017 in 2.2 does not work (but could be found online here), and the Operational Plan 2013-2017 could also have been linked in the report (and can be found here).</p>
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2.3	<p>Operational structure including national offices <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The report explains the operational structure of the CIVICUS secretariat, and the organigram in Annex I is a helpful visual support. CIVICUS' registration with Companies House in the UK in 2016, as well as motions to register in Switzerland and increasingly decentralised staff, are indicative of continued efforts to grow as a global organisation.</p>
2.4 – 2.6	<p>Headquarter location / Number of countries / Nature of ownership <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
2.7	<p>Target audience <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>General information about the target audience and affected stakeholders – civil society organisations and citizens around the globe – is provided. The Panel notes that the inclusion of government as a target audience addresses the supply end, as those in positions of power do not always fully understand or appreciate the roles and processes of CSOs. An updated list of all voting members, provided in the 2013-2014 report, could be included.</p>
2.8	<p>Scale of organisation <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The report provides a comprehensive overview of CIVICUS' scale and scope, with 217 voting members and 3,318 associate members with a commendable distribution around the world. CIVICUS can again be commended for increasing its income (by 64% in 2016, 38% in 2015 and 81% in 2014). In this regard, the Panel would be interested to learn more about CIVICUS' growth strategy (see also 2.3).</p>
2.9	<p>Significant changes <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS' significant increase in income in 2016 – due to additional funding – has allowed it to expand its project base as well as its staff, with another 15 new staff members expected by mid-2017.</p> <p>A rotation system for the election of the Board of Directors was introduced in early 2016, whereby two thirds of non-executive directors retire by rotation and are either re-elected if they have not served two consecutive terms, or are replaced by newly elected Directors. This ensures continuity and retention of skills, and decreases delays caused by a complete overhaul of the Board. A new Board of Directors was</p>



	elected in April 2016. The Panel would be interested to know how effective this system is in practice, or if it poses any governance challenges.
2.10	Awards received <i>Fully addressed</i>
III. Report Parameters	
3.1 – 3.4	Reporting period / Date of most recent report / Reporting cycle / Contact person <i>Fully addressed</i>
3.5	Reporting process <i>Addressed</i> CIVICUS has provided a detailed overview of the process of compiling its report, which the Panel had requested in its last Feedback Letter. The Panel appreciates the detailed manner in which feedback is prioritised and internalised: a broad range of CIVICUS staff, from managers and their units to the management team, board, and Secretary General, are involved in compiling and reviewing the report. This commitment in the higher levels of the organisation increases awareness and stresses the importance of the Accountability Commitments throughout the organisation. However, it would be interesting to know how feedback from staff and the public has shaped the report's content, as well as how the outcome of the Panel's review is shared internally to drive organisational change. The Panel would be interested in some examples of change in this context. The Panel further appreciates the explanation of the absence of a specific accountability task team, due to the organisation's lean nature. CIVICUS' publication of the report on its website to allow stakeholders, donors, and the public access is noted positively.
3.6	Report boundary <i>Fully addressed</i> It is noted that the report only covers the activities and performance of CIVICUS' secretariat, and <i>not</i> those of organisations or partners who may be CIVICUS members and part of the CIVICUS alliance.



3.7	<p>Specific limitations <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The report states that there are no specific limitations on the content of the report, but notes that CIVICUS' limited financial and human resources pose a challenge to the compilation of the report. Nonetheless, the development of an internal management dashboard has improved the data available for inclusion. The Panel envisages that the future reporting framework will be less challenging for Accountable Now Members. Furthermore, by investing in a complaints mechanism and moving to a two-year reporting cycle, the burden of reporting will be lightened.</p>
3.8	<p>Basis for reporting <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>In addition to the boundaries mentioned in 3.6, CIVICUS cannot ensure that consultants adhere to the Accountability Commitments. However, consultants are usually sourced from partner or member organisations, and are thus obliged to adhere to CIVICUS' guidelines. Overall, also in relation to 3.6, the Panel would be interested to know how CIVICUS ensures that members comply with strong accountability standards at the local level. What is seen as "standard performance management"?</p>
3.10 – 3.12	<p>Changes in reporting parameters / Reference table <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>It is noted that the main changes in this report are around the participatory and transparent processes that CIVICUS initiated in the reporting year towards the development of their new strategic goals.</p>
<p>IV. Mission, Values, Governance, and Stakeholder Engagement</p>	
4.1	<p>Governance structure <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS has provided a comprehensive overview of its governance structure, including different Board committees. The openness regarding the challenges posed by the governance model – namely the fact that a "working" Board needs to balance their commitments with their roles as CEOs – is appreciated. As in the previous report, it is stated that CIVICUS must invest in Board development or co-opt Board members to address this challenge; examples of this in</p>



	<p>practice would be interesting and to understand the number of co-opted members that they have.</p> <p>CIVICUS again provides comprehensive insights into its solid risk management system, though the link to risk management tools does not work.</p>
4.2	<p><i>Division of power between the governance body and management</i> <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel's previous request for more information on whether the Board of Directors evaluated the Secretary General, and how it is ensured that both bodies optimally support each other, has not been addressed.</p>
4.3	<p><i>Independence of Board Directors</i> <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The Secretary General is an ex-officio Board member, and the only paid member of the Board. All other 14 Board Directors are unpaid, and work on a voluntary basis.</p>
4.4	<p><i>Feedback from internal stakeholders</i> <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS provides a detailed overview of the various mechanisms for internal stakeholder engagement. There are opportunities for members and employees to provide recommendations to the Board, feedback from the Annual Constituency Survey (ACS) feeds directly into programming and operations, the AGM (conducted virtually since 2014 to support increased participation) and CIVICUS World Assembly offer opportunities to give feedback on the organisation's direction, and annual member surveys and ad hoc consultations shape programmatic and membership work plans. Internal reviews, scheduled staff-Board interactions and regular Committee meetings allow employees to provide recommendations to the Board.</p> <p>CIVICUS has expanded on the information in its last report, providing examples of participatory processes, e.g. in the development of its new Strategic Priorities Plan for 2017-2022. These consultations included a range of stakeholders in 28 countries.</p>
4.5	<p><i>Compensation for members of highest governance body</i> <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS provides no financial compensation for their Board Directors, but does cover transport and logistics costs for meetings and events,</p>



	<p>within reason. Salaries of senior management are based on the Paterson grading scale, and are benchmarked every few years against similarly sized CSOs. The provision of an explanation of the Paterson scale, together with a grading table, are appreciated. Some Accountable Now Members such as Plan International or World Vision even provide detailed figures of salaries paid to senior management.</p>
4.6	<p>Conflicts of interests <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
4.10	<p>Process to support highest governance body's own performance <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The new Board self-evaluation reviewed at the Board meeting in November 2015 was piloted in the election of the 2016 Board, serving as guidance for necessary improvements and skill sets. The self-evaluation process will be completed by the new Board mid-term and at the end of the second term. It will be interesting to see whether positive outcomes of the self-evaluations can be demonstrated.</p> <p>Relevant information on procedures for appointment, terms limits, and skill sets of Board members (including the newly adopted staggered election of the Board) is provided.</p>
4.12	<p>Social charters, principles or other initiatives to which the organisation subscribes <i>Fully addressed</i></p>
4.14	<p>List of stakeholders <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The report includes a comprehensive overview of CIVICUS' stakeholders. The primary constituency, alliance members, are divided into two categories – voting and associate. New information on national associations and umbrella bodies, as well as non-members, is included.</p> <p>New information has also been provided on processes to ensure data integrity on reporting on CIVICUS' associate members, and their adherence to CIVICUS' values. Overall the information provided is very comprehensive and helpful.</p> <p>The introduction of a new CRM system will improve communication with stakeholders and improve information management among</p>



	<p>CIVICUS staff. Research into software that will centralise knowledge management and allow for greater stakeholder engagement is repeated in this report (it was also mentioned in the previous report). It would be interesting to know whether any progress has been made on this front.</p>
4.15	<p><i>Basis for identification of stakeholders</i> <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS aims to be a diverse and globally representative alliance of CSOs. The Secretariat has increasingly been allocating sub-grants to national members and partners, in an effort to support local CSOs and not be in competition with them. This is commendable. The partnerships checklist referred to in the selection of sub-grantees should be provided in a link.</p> <p>More information could be provided on the prioritisation of stakeholder groups, beyond the general focus on national CSOs. Previous reports moreover provided more information on e.g. the membership policy.</p>

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

I. Programme Effectiveness

NGO1	<p><i>Involvement of affected stakeholder groups</i> <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>As in their previous report, CIVICUS defines their own membership as the primarily affected stakeholders and provides examples of their involvement in key decision-making processes (through AGMs, the annual Membership Survey, during the Strategic Priorities consultation process) and in projects (Civic Space Initiative), publications (the 2016 State of Civil Society Report) and research initiatives (Civic Pulse and Enabling Environment National Assessments). Partners did not only provide input but co-created these projects which is much appreciated.</p>
NGO2	<p><i>Mechanisms for feedback and complaints</i> <i>Partially Addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel appreciates that CIVICUS actively invites feedback from a multitude of stakeholders, through various means (e.g. the Annual Constituency Survey, event feedback forms, and project evaluations). The results of the Annual Constituency Survey (the link provided is to the 2015 survey, rather than 2016) are published in</p>



	<p>CIVICUS' Annual Report. It is noted positively that findings from these feedback channels are incorporated into annual planning processes, internal reviews and external evaluations.</p> <p>Reference is made to managers "following correct procedure" in dealing with external complaints "as per CIVICUS' code of conduct". A link to the relevant document would be appreciated.</p> <p>However, there is still no formal feedback and complaints handling mechanism in place, which is mandatory for all Accountable Now Members (see membership criteria). A formal policy and well evidenced practice on this indicator is also the basis to qualify for the biannual reporting cycle. Work on an external complaints policy began in spring 2016 and is expected to be implemented "in time for the launch of the 2017-2022 Strategic Goals" (when this will be was not indicated). It will be interesting to see how this mechanism is promoted. Other Accountable Now Members such as Sightsavers have recently introduced commendable Feedback and Complaints Policies. It is suggested to get in touch with them for peer advice.</p> <p>A complaints logging mechanism, referred to in CIVICUS' previous report, due to launch by end-June 2016 as part of the new CRM, was not mentioned in this report. The Panel would appreciate further information on this.</p>
NGO3	<p><i>Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning</i></p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>An overview of CIVICUS' monitoring and evaluation framework is provided. CIVICUS has not conducted any impact evaluations in the reporting period, but did conduct an internal mid-term review of its Strategic Priorities 2013-2017. The key strengths and weaknesses highlighted in the review would be interesting to see. The Panel looks forward to seeing how the results of the review fed into the external evaluation flagged for July-August 2016.</p> <p>A list of internal assessment completed during the reporting period was also provided, but some hyperlinks to those of interest to the general public would be appreciated, as mentioned in the Panel's last Feedback Letter – especially as there is reference to findings of some evaluations being published on the CIVICUS website.</p> <p>Further suggestions from the Panel from the last reporting round which have not been addressed are inclusion of progress against CIVICUS' strategic priorities in the Organisational Dashboard (Annex III) and concrete evidence of how evaluations have resulted in significant management response.</p>



<p>NGO4</p>	<p>Gender and diversity</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>It is positively noted that all CIVICUS' public positions are grounded in a gender and diversity policy (which unfortunately has not been linked again). CIVICUS' Gender Working Group, launched in 2015/16, is stated to guide and input into CIVICUS' work on gender. More specific examples of this beyond the networking opportunities and safe space listed, and initial results/value add of the group's work, would be of interest to the Panel.</p> <p>The theme of CIVICUS' 2016 State of Civil Society report was inclusion, but unfortunately this report is not linked. An inclusion audit on all CIVICUS' internal policies and practices, including gender, was conducted and recommendations will be adopted in 2017 – a link to the audit's findings would be appreciated in the next report, as well as an update on implementation of the recommendations.</p> <p>A new Youth Action Team (YAT) has been created to mainstream youth issues into CIVICUS' activities and provide strategic advice. This is an interesting initiative, and the Panel looks forward to a reflection on the YAT's achievements in this regard, with the inclusion of the first YAT introspective report in CIVICUS' next Accountability Report.</p> <p>Unfortunately, some other points from the Panel's last feedback were also missing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has CIVICUS set itself any targets for gender and diversity issues? ● Could CIVICUS link to the Gender and Diversity Scorecard mentioned in the 2013-2014 report? <p>Furthermore, it was again unclear what CIVICUS does to drive overall inclusion in their work beyond gender and youth. The Panel echoes its previous suggestion to implement systems to identify stakeholders that are potentially excluded from CIVICUS' work due to e.g. disability, ethnicity, poverty, or illiteracy.</p>
<p>NGO5</p>	<p>Advocacy positions and public awareness campaigns</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS can be commended for its rigorous procedures in place to ensure a thorough evidence base of the organisation's advocacy positions – e.g. meaningful stakeholder consultation and partner feedback (also locally/from the ground), research, situation analyses, management monitoring, bi-annual reporting processes, publications, and corrective adjustments after external criticism. All</p>



	<p>positions taken are grounded in CIVICUS' values and gender and diversity policy.</p> <p>However, the Panel would have again appreciated information on whether there are examples for corrective actions or for exiting a campaign. Are there examples for mentioned criticism received from external stakeholders?</p>
NGO6	<p>Coordination with other actors <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS' belief that they are stronger when working towards the same goal together with other actors, whilst ensuring they do not compete with or displace their local partners, is commended. So too is CIVICUS' aim of supporting and complementing the work of local civil society through their resources and knowledge.</p> <p>CIVICUS regard themselves as a network and knowledge broker, bringing local concerns to a global level. CIVICUS' efforts to bridge sectors and other differences to identify common goals and opportunities is noted positively. In this regard, the Panel had requested more information about how CIVICUS handles differences and power dynamics among their membership.</p> <p>Established criteria for the selection of local partners are mentioned, with the primary requirements being relevance, expertise, and alignment with the organisation's priorities. The Panel asks again whether these criteria are codified as a written policy, and whether CIVICUS' Accountability Commitments are ensured at the partner level. Furthermore, have there been any instances of these quality assurance processes resulting in "missed opportunities" in the advocacy field?</p> <p>Reference in CIVICUS' last report to the intention to introduce new partnership policies and procedures in the latter half of 2016 were not mentioned in this report. Is this still intended? If so, the Panel looks forward to more information once they are established, and subsequently to evidence that the effectiveness of partnerships is evaluated and works well in practice.</p>
II. Financial Management	
NGO7	<p>Resource allocation <i>Fully Addressed</i></p> <p>The report outlines a strong resource allocation and tracking system with multiple policies and standards in place as well as how these processes ensure key strategic objectives are achieved. CIVICUS'</p>



	<p>most recent externally audited financial figures can be found on page 27 of their Annual Report (linked on page 11).</p>
NGO8	<p>Sources of Funding <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>Whereas in the last reporting period, CIVICUS was highly dependent on Swedish SIDA, in this reporting period there are two main donors, SIDA and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Panel's question from the previous Feedback Letter however remains – is there a risk management strategy in case these funds would no longer be available? This is particularly important given the possible challenges associated with the current funding environment.</p>
<p>III. Environmental Management</p>	
EN16	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions of operations <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS has provided a more detailed explanation of their greenhouse gas emissions. Whilst the emissions for this reporting period were even higher than in the last report, the majority of these (89%) were due to long distance travel to the International Civil Society Week in Colombia. The use of solar power supply for 50% of the average work day is commended.</p> <p>The Panel would again appreciate in the next report an overview of carbon footprint development over years in a way that depicts developments more clearly (e.g. in a table). Oxfam International provides a good example in their reports.</p>
EN18	<p>Initiatives to reduce emissions of operations <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel appreciates the inclusion of an Environmental Management Policy (Annex IV) in this report. This is flagged as a basic policy to be implemented in the interim, whilst a participatory process will yield a more comprehensive policy in 2017. The Panel looks forward to the inclusion of targets, a monitoring system, management support and responsibility levels, and a link to this policy in CIVICUS' next report.</p> <p>Overall the panel commends the fact that CIVICUS is looking to show leadership in this area and looks forward to seeing the outcomes.</p> <p>The use of solar power as mentioned in 5.9 is appreciated as one initiative to reduce emissions. What other initiatives is CIVICUS</p>



	considering or implementing, particularly given the steady increase in travel and staff?
EN26	<p>Initiatives to mitigate environmental impact of activities and services <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS does not currently conduct environmental assessments of its projects, due to the difficulties posed by conducting joint projects with external organisations. However, the Environmental Management Policy (Annex IV) and planned developments to it demonstrate CIVICUS' commitment to mitigating its environmental impact.</p> <p>CIVICUS is still planning a new travel policy which will include measurement and control of the environmental impact of travel and events generated by CIVICUS. The Panel would be interested in knowing when this is expected to be finalised (or is it to be part of the Environmental Management Policy?) and looks forward to seeing the policy accordingly.</p>
IV. Human Resource Management	
LA1	<p>Size and composition of workforce <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The report provides relevant information on CIVICUS' relatively flat HR structure, full-time employees, and interns/volunteers. In this reporting period there was yet again an increase of employees throughout the year, and almost twice as many female staff as male staff. There was more than twice as many non-Republic of South Africa (RSA) residents as RSA residents, but three fifths of all staff were RSA-based.</p> <p>Due to the continuing growth of staff numbers, CIVICUS is considering broadening its existing supervisory level and diverting more management responsibilities to the next level. The panel found the provision of the data and graphics helpful. The Panel would appreciate the provision of comparisons of staff numbers and composition over years, as well as numbers on the different responsibility levels.</p>
EC7	<p>Procedure for local hiring <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The international secretariat continues to represent a broad diversity regarding citizenship (see LA1) but is making an effort to hire locally. In its previous report, CIVICUS noted the challenges of finding suitable local hires due to lack of international exposure, experience and understanding of the candidates. The Panel is pleased to note that CIVICUS has had more success with local hires, as well as building its</p>



	<p>presence in South America, due to the possibility of sharing work spaces with member/partner organisations. Subsequently, interviews now include a focus on working virtually and flexible, as well as across time zones. This is seen as good practice by the Panel.</p> <p>CIVICUS' commendable efforts not to undermine the local civil society and public sectors are addressed in 4.15 and NGO6.</p> <p>The Panel would be interested to know whether CIVICUS' ideas to collaborate with universities and hire candidates at more junior levels to further increase local hires were pursued. A link to the CIVICUS' recruitment policy, as requested previously, would also be appreciated.</p>
LA10	<p>Workforce training</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The identification of training as a vital element of employee development, satisfaction and retention, and the subsequent focus on making training more accessible is noted positively. CIVICUS' efforts to create training that includes and is accessible to all employees (virtually as well as locally) in an effort to foster a common language and understanding of the organisation are commendable. The Panel also appreciates CIVICUS' incorporation of feedback on inductions into an in-depth investigation on improving the induction process, and looks forward to more information on developments in this regard.</p> <p>The Panel would however still appreciate information on how training needs are identified, what percentage of the overall administrative budget is invested into training, and whether there is evidence that training is successful.</p>
LA12	<p>Global talent management</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS is commended for conducting quarterly performance reviews with all staff. Did 100% of staff actually receive these reviews in 2015/2016? The development of a performance review cycle document and accompanying process flows is noted with interest, and the Panel would appreciate a copy of this document.</p> <p>There was no reference to the Nine Box Performance and Potential Grid in this report. Is this still in use? If so, concrete examples of how feedback from reviews has shaped the Grid would be appreciated. It is noted positively that CIVICUS is considering how to automate and entrench probation period reviews in light of the ongoing increase in</p>



	<p>staff numbers. The Panel looks forward to more information in the next reporting period.</p>
LA13	<p><i>Diversity of workforce and governance bodies</i> <i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS presents the composition of their workforce and Board according to age, gender and work base. Figures for Board Members are included in this report. However, information would be appreciated on other groups that might be excluded in the workforce and governance body (e.g. religious minority groups, people with disabilities). Furthermore, a written component to accompany the figures provided would allow CIVICUS to address the questions in the reporting guidelines more fully – particularly reflections on which groups should be represented in the workforce to improve its legitimacy and effectiveness, and the setting of targets for future improvements.</p>
NGO9	<p><i>Mechanisms to raise grievances</i> <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS has provided a comprehensive outline of its grievance process for staff and consultants. Grievances should first be raised with the immediate supervisor, and if outcomes are unsatisfactory, can be escalated to a formal grievance investigation by the COO and investigation by the Secretary General. It would be interesting to know how the policy was developed and if/how it conforms to relevant standards and CIVICUS' values.</p> <p>Whilst the Panel recognises that CIVICUS' grievance process is strong, it would be interested in understanding how it works in practice, such as through examples of grievances in the reporting period and whether they were resolved satisfactorily. Additionally, it may be interesting to see what learning is emerging around the effectiveness of the procedures and whether they yield results in line with CIVICUS' values.</p>
<p>V. Responsible Management of Impacts on Society</p>	
SO1	<p><i>Managing your impact on local communities</i> <i>Addressed</i></p> <p>As in the previous two years, CIVICUS states that their work and influence is often done indirectly through members or partners and that it is therefore challenging to measure the organisation's impact on local communities. Nevertheless, their Impact Planning and Learning Framework (IPLF) and new projects and proposal</p>



	<p>development guidelines ensure to assess and manage the operations' impacts including entering, operating and exiting.</p> <p>The Panel stresses again that CIVICUS should link to the mentioned documents and provide information on any feedback received from communities.</p>
SO3	<p>Anti-corruption practices</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>As in the previous year, CIVICUS states that the two relevant documents are their Fraud Prevention policy and Information Privacy policy, but links are still missing to these documents (or to the Staff Handbook in which they appear). Evidence that these policies are known by staff and work in practice is required for the next report – this is critical in view of CIVICUS' stated mission around giving a voice to communities.</p> <p>CIVICUS also states in SO4 that they are informed by their external auditors annually on the latest fraud and corruption schemes as well as by their bankers on phishing schemes etc. Does this equal a systematic risk analysis on where CIVICUS' work might be exposed to corruption? CIVICUS is advised to look internally at potential bad practices as corruption is an internal threat as well as an external one. Also, the Panel refers CIVICUS to a recent blog post on Accountable Now's website which outlines the significant role of leadership in fighting corruption in the sector.</p>
SO4	<p>Actions taken in response of corruption incidents</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The report states that no corruption incidents were reported in 2015/2016. A number of initiatives to prevent corruption and fraud (e.g. external auditors as independent fraud and corruption hotline for management, technologies to prevent cyber-attacks on data) are mentioned. However, more information on general procedures and the publication of any potential incidents were they to arise would be appreciated in the next report.</p>
<p>VI. Ethical Fundraising</p>	
PR6	<p>Ethical fundraising and marketing communications</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>CIVICUS has several procedures in place to ensure that their fundraising and marketing activities are in line with the organisation's five basic principles, South African law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This includes a Resource Mobilisation Policy, reflecting Ethical Fundraising Guidelines and the Accountability</p>



Commitments. Unfortunately, the link to this policy was not provided, and was not functional in the previous report, so the Panel repeats its request for a functioning link in the next report. The other policies and guidelines mentioned in this section are also not linked.

The organisation states that they have not received any complaints for breaches of fundraising or marketing during 2015/2016. Will the new Feedback and Complaints Handling Policy (see NGO2) also include processes for this specific area (e.g. on the escalation steps and resolution of received complaints)?

For further information, see [Sightsavers' recent contribution to Accountable Now's blog](#) on accountable fundraising.