

CSO network mapping:

TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

March 2023

1- INTRODUCTION

This digital brief informs FAO staff in Field Offices and HQ about a new tool to map FAO's engagement with Civil Society Organizations that can support to establish and amplify strategic partnerships. CSO relational mapping is a practical tool to support the 'transformative partnership' element of FAO's reinvigorated business model of the Strategic Framework 2022-31.

2- WHAT THE TOOL CAN DO

The starting point for developing transformative partnerships is the analysis of existing partnership network. To facilitate the network analysis, mapping methodology has been created by PSU in collaboration with ITC-ILO. Such **live actor network map** can help make evidence-based decisions on partnership development:

- to illustrate the status quo of the current CSO partnership network;
- to monitor change over time in network density and quality;
- to identify potential strategic engagement

The map visualizes the data with the help of a software that is cloud-based called Kumu (www.kumu.io) that can map social systems. The map can be used to visualize and analyze relationships between stakeholders, and explore the web of loyalties, interest, influence, and alignment of key players around important issues. It allows to capture the structure of networks and reveal key players (actor network hubs).

In particular, a CSO network map may be used for the following:

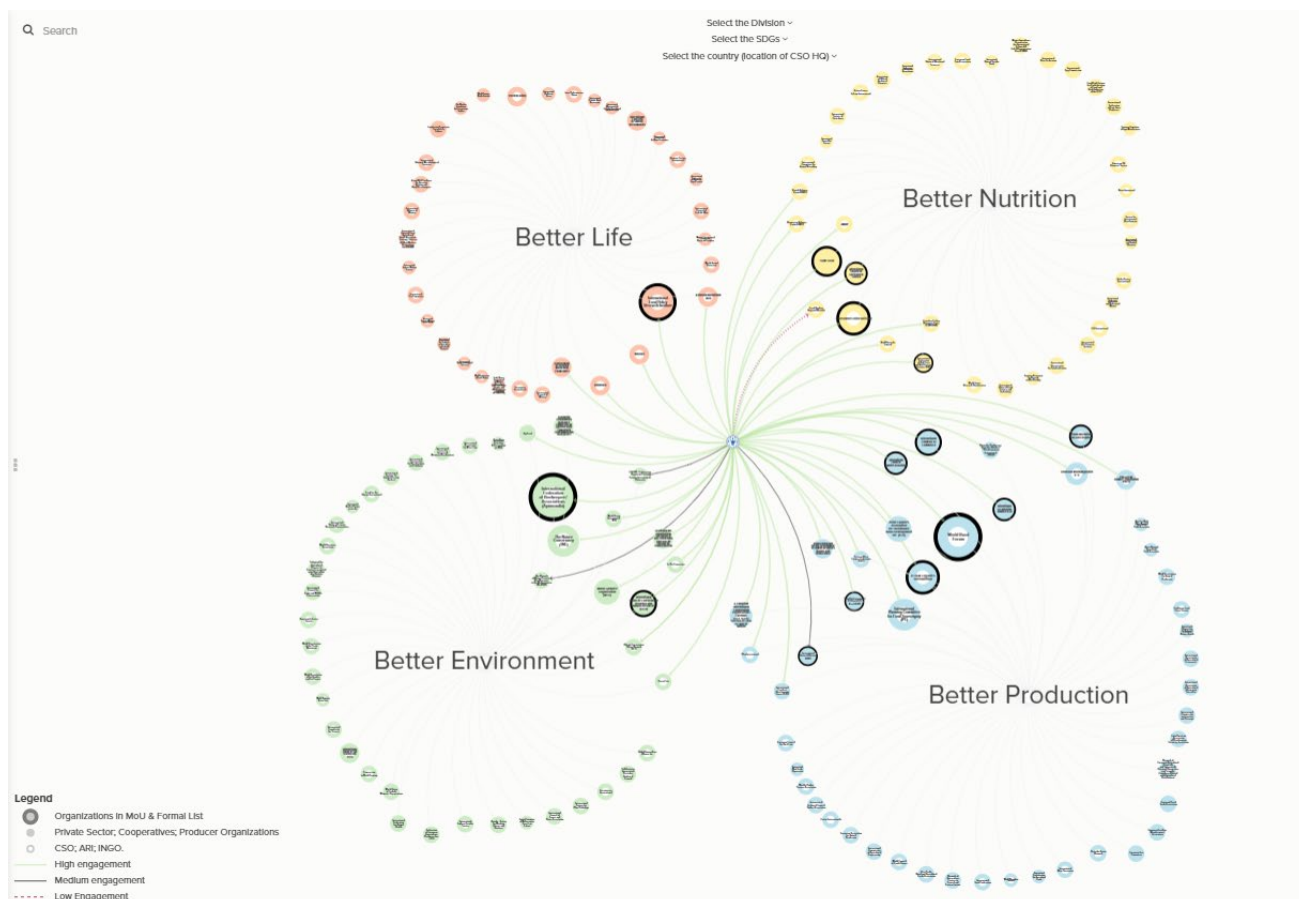
- In the process of CPF/UNDSCF development, map the status quo to illustrate who is where doing what
- At the inception of projects, map the stakeholders (and use for screening/selection)
- To identify gaps in partnership in the context of four Betters/CPF/Regional Initiatives to look for new CSOs
- To identify the weak links to explore to invigorate the relationship
- To identify the strength to explore to do more with the CSO
- To identifying partners for specific (ad-hoc) engagement when organizing workshop with targeted audience
- Make referral of CSOs across Divisions / projects
- To monitor and evaluate, by updating the data to capture and visualize change overtime.

The data to generate the map can be entered centrally or directly by actors and maps are updated in real-time, allowing to monitor change as it happens. Data can be entered with excel sheets.

EXAMPLES OF FAO CSO MAPS

Illustrated below is a snapshot of the network map of the global CSO partnership network of the FAO. The map groups CSOs along the four 'betters' and draws a distinction between active and non-active partnership agreements. Actors are labelled by area of collaboration. The map shows at a glance that the network is complex, that some organizations are clearly better connected than others, and that collaboration emphasizes on selected result areas. In the interactive version of the map, the user can zoom into the network and analyze individual actors and single connectors.

Snapshot of FAO's global CSO partnership network

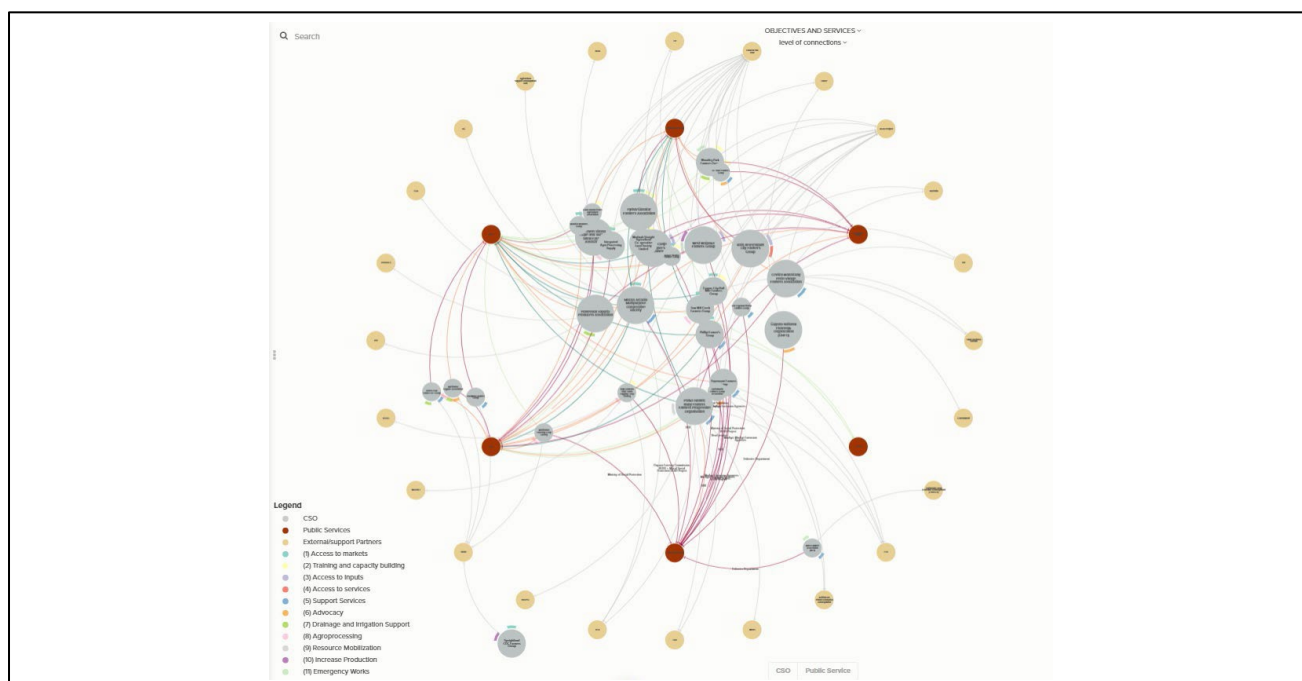


Source: <https://embed.kumu.io/ed63db59271506948dd896b7cf6a4783>

A second example of an actor network map developed in the Guyana Country Office is illustrated below. It represents the CSOs (grey) in the middle and their connections with both the Public services (red) and the external/support partners (yellow). The arc around the CSOs shows the objectives and services of the organization and the colour of the ties denotes the level of the connection.

Organized on these 3 groups of organizations, the system map visualization immediately makes us realize how densely but mostly weakly connected the organizations are (red connections).

Snapshot of FAO Guyana CSOs network



Source: <https://embed.kumu.io/bff9647d83ad4beec61f9bc31fc7d738>

3- HOW TO BUILD THE MAP

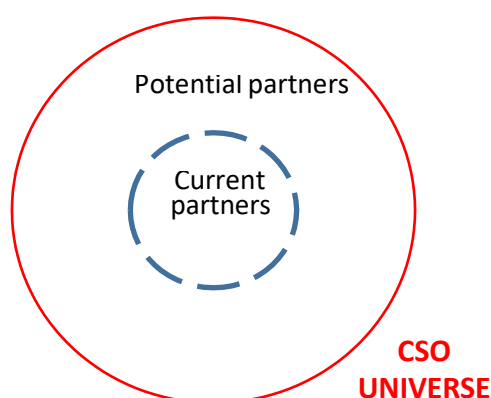
The following steps can be followed to create CSO actor maps.

- Step 1: identify what we wish the map to illustrate and for what purposes (i.e. the intended use of the map)
- Step 2: define the map parameters and identify the data needs
- Step 3: compile/collect additional data as needed
- Step 4: create the map (version 1)
- Step 5: review/validate the map and identify the adjustment needed
(step 3-5 repeats as required)
- Step 6: training and hand-over (training might start at earlier stage)

Step 1 and 2: PLANNING

The starting point is stocktaking is analyzing the existing partners and partnership network. To this end, the concerned office needs to develop a database or list of current contacts, and define its CSO universe. Most likely, the universe of CSO (i.e. the sum total of CSOs working in fields linked to the FAO mandate) will exceed the number of current networkpartners. Each CSO linked to FAO by way of a partnership constitutes a network actor. A mapping plan should then be developed to define the objectives, boundaries and parameters of the map.

Building blocks of the CSO universe



Step 3 to 5: CREATION OF THE MAP

Based on the mapping plan, existing data is prepared/processed to be in a visual form. Supplementary data is collected where applicable. Upon creating the map, validate the information (with the CSOs if applicable), review if the map answers the questions that were defined in the planning sheet, and make adjustment of the parameters and visual effects. These steps repeats until the map that serves the intended purposes is developed.

Step 6: MAINTENANCE OF THE MAP

Capacity is built at DO/HQ Division so that the map can be adjusted and updated by the map owner office. This step may starts earlier.

4- RESOURCES REQUIRED

Staff time to define the specifications of the map, take stock of existing data, collect additional data if applicable, clean the data, and review the draft map. Upon finalization of the map, to update the map regularly.

Technical support: actual production of the map (currently collaboration is planned with ITCILO)

Duration: approximately 6 months

ANNEX

What is a transformative partnership?

At the corporate level, FAO defines transformative partnership as:

*FAO's partnerships are transformative when they deliver **sustainable** outcome(s) through **systemic, long-term** and **disruptive** action; when they catalyse **impact at scale**; and when all partners invest complementary resources (technical, financial, human, or knowledge) to create value beyond what FAO could achieve operating alone.*

To be regarded as transformative more concretely applied in the context of engagement with CSOs, a partnership between FAO and CSOs should meet at least one of the following criteria:

- **SCALE:** The partnerships have boosted the outreach of policies and programmes for enhanced food and nutrition security.
- **IMPACT:** The quality of these policies and programmes has further improved.
- **VOICE:** The voice of the people represented by the partnering CSO has been heard and included in local, national, regional and global policy dialogue.
- **LEGITIMACY:** Member countries and development partners acknowledge FAO policies and programmes to be accountable and relevant to the people.

Intervention areas for transformative partnerships

FAO focuses on five intervention areas for transformative partnerships between FAO and CSOs, learning back on the areas of collaboration identified in the 2013 partnership strategy:

- **Joint Programming:** Large international and national NGOs and farmer associations have considerable stocks of human and financial capital, supplies, assets and capacity development strengths. Some of these entities are specifically mandated and funded to provide support to UN agencies with a range of services. In turn, grassroots CSOs will have numerous contacts, not only at grassroots level, but also with large formal and informal social networks and platforms. FAO will increase cooperation with some organizations to jointly programme the wide human, physical and financial resources available including under the umbrella of the FAO Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF), create synergies and ensure improved accountability to affected populations.
- **Capacity development alliances:** through working with CSOs, FAO is in a unique position to support the knowledge exchange and to strengthen the capacity of Member Countries to work towards efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems through four betters (better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life), and also to finance stakeholders working in the food, agriculture and nutrition sector. In turn, FAO will also capitalize on the detailed knowledge CSOs have from the grassroots level and regional contexts, which will greatly complement the stock of global knowledge, skills and technical expertise for the benefit of other stakeholders and to increase the scale and focus of FAO's technical support.
- **Policy dialogue:** FAO may establish fora for policy dialogue or, when requested, support Member Countries in creating policy dialogue fora on issues related to food security and nutrition and involving institutional intermediaries. These fora could be formal and informal,

and multi-stakeholder discussions including CSOs in the dialogue together with Member States and decision-makers, thus increasing ownership, accountability and sustainability of policy adoption and implementation.

- **Normative activities:** FAO supports the involvement of CSOs along with Member Countries, research institutions and other interested stakeholders in the development and implementation of codes of conduct, global conventions and regulatory frameworks in areas related to FAO's mandate.
- **Advocacy and communication:** FAO and civil society partners will jointly raise public awareness and build support and political will in the fight against poverty and food insecurity. They will benefit from each other's extensive experience, networks and outreach. Together they can reach grassroots audiences, raise issues to key decision-makers, and inform public opinion.

Illustrated below is the theory of change linking these result areas to the immediate outcomes and the overall outcome of the FAO engagement strategy with CSOs.

The theory of change underpinning transformative partnerships between FAO and CSOs

INTERVENTION AREAS	EXPECTED RESULTS	IMMEDIATE OUTCOME	OVERALL OUTCOME
JOINT PROGRAMMING	SCALE IMPACT VOICE LEGITIMACY	TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN FAO AND CSOs	MORE EFFICIENT, INCLUSIVE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS FOR BETTER PRODUCTION, BETTER NUTRITION, A BETTER ENVIRONMENT AND A BETTER LIFE, LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCES			
POLICY DIALOGUE			
NORMATIVE ACTIVITIES			
ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION			