



EU-Youth Sounding Board Inputs to the Civil Society Roadmap (CSRM) 2025–2027

1. Background and Purpose

This document presents consolidated Youth Sounding Board (YSB) inputs to inform the development of the Civil Society Roadmap (CSRM) 2025–2027. The recommendations are drawn from thematic group discussions focused on youth inclusion and co-creation, visibility and access to information, and civic space, governance, and accountability.

The objective of this brief is to translate youth perspectives into clear, actionable priority actions that can be integrated into the CSRM to strengthen meaningful youth participation in EU–Kenya cooperation.

Across the thematic discussions, YSB members highlighted that while youth engagement within EU programming is increasing, it remains uneven and largely consultative. Structural barriers including limited access to information, restrictive funding models, shrinking civic space, and weak accountability mechanisms continue to constrain meaningful youth participation, particularly for grassroots and marginalised groups.

At the same time, youth-led and community-based actors demonstrate strong commitment, innovation, and legitimacy at community level, positioning them as critical partners for effective CSRM implementation.

2. CSRM Priority Actions (2025–2027)

EU-Youth Sounding Board Recommendations:

- **Priority Action 1: Embed Youth Co-Creation as a Standard Practice**
Institutionalise youth co-creation by involving young people systematically in programme design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation across EU–Kenya cooperation. This includes strengthening and sustaining youth advisory structures such as Youth Sounding Boards, ensuring diverse representation (including rural and marginalised youth), and integrating youth feedback into Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems.
- **Priority Action 2: Strengthen Youth-Responsive Communication and Access to Information**
Adopt youth-friendly, mobile-first communication approaches to make CSRM and EU initiatives visible, understandable, and timely. This includes institutionalising the use of platforms such as TikTok, producing simplified summaries of policies and opportunities, and strengthening localised, offline, and community-based information pathways to reach youth with limited digital access.
- **Priority Action 3: Enable Youth-Led and Grassroots Action Through Flexible Financing**

Expand access to resources by introducing dedicated, trust-based, and flexible funding mechanisms for youth-led and community-based organisations, including youth-led accountability and watchdog initiatives. Application and reporting procedures should be simplified and made proportionate to organisational capacity to enable broader participation beyond established actors.

- **Priority Action 4: Protect and Expand Youth Civic Space and Safety**

Prioritise the protection of youth civic space by strengthening safeguards for freedom of expression, physical and digital safety, and accessibility for youth with disabilities. The CSRM should prioritise co-created engagement spaces and explicitly address risks faced by youth engaging in governance, including intimidation, harassment, and digital threats.

- **Priority Action 5: Strengthen Youth Participation in Governance and Accountability**

Ensure youth and CSOs are engaged beyond programme design, including in implementation, monitoring, and accountability processes. This includes youth representation in project committees, support for youth-led monitoring activities such as site visits, and stronger coordination with youth networks, CSOs, and strategic partners. Progress should be tracked through clear indicators, such as the number of youth-led monitoring initiatives supported annually by EU Delegation.

The Youth Sounding Board emphasises that the effectiveness of the CSRM 2025–2027 will depend on moving from symbolic youth engagement towards shared power, sustained investment, and locally driven solutions. Embedding these priority actions within the CSRM will strengthen trust, accountability, and impact across EU–Kenya civil society cooperation.

About the EU Youth Sounding Board Kenya

The EU Youth Sounding Board Kenya is a youth advisory platform established in 2024 under the EU-funded project *Meaningful Engagement – Transformative Action (META) for Structured CSO Dialogue in Kenya*. The initiative is implemented by a consortium led by FEMNET, in partnership with SDG Kenya Forum and WECF, with the objective of strengthening inclusive dialogue and meaningful youth participation within the EU–Kenya partnership framework.

The YSB brings together 15 young leaders aged 18–30 from across Kenya’s regional economic blocs. The composition of the Board reflects a strong commitment to inclusion, ensuring representation across gender, geographical location, disability, expertise, and other dimensions of diversity. Members serve a two-year mandate, contributing both technical expertise and lived experience to inform policy dialogue and programme development. YSB members are selected through a transparent, competitive, and consultative process. Applicants are assessed against clear criteria, including leadership potential, commitment to youth engagement, and the capacity to contribute meaningfully to policy processes and transformative action.

The Youth Sounding Board serves as an advisory mechanism to the project and the EU Delegation in Kenya, facilitating structured engagement between youth, civil society, and decision-makers. Through thematic working groups aligned with key EU–Kenya priorities, the YSB ensures that young people’s perspectives inform EU programming and policy processes, while remaining responsive to emerging issues.