

Supporting civil society, government, and financial sector engagement in Yemen

As part of the [INSPIRES project](#), Flexible Response Funds (FRFs) are designed to provide USAID missions and partners with easily accessible and flexible support in the form of technical assistance and subgrants to local organizations that can help address urgent and emerging threats to civic space.

In Yemen, ICNL collaborated with local partner the Civic Democratic Initiatives Support Foundation (CDF) to continue work conducted as part of an earlier FRF to raise awareness, capacity, and collaboration among civil society, government, and banks on issues related to financial reporting and compliance requirements in Yemen. This was done through four key activities:

- Conducting workshops on bank de-risking for civil society;
- Providing trainings for civil society, media, and government representatives on the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) Recommendation 8 on combatting abuse of the non-profit sector using anti-terrorist financing laws;
- Conducting workshops with civil society on issues navigating challenges in working with banks; and,
- Leading a social media campaign to raise awareness on FATF's Recommendation 8 and its implications for civil society.

Support was provided over the course of 7 months from June - December 2022.

In this summary brief, we share learnings and lessons from key informant interviews and document reviews for these activities.

Outputs and Outcomes

The FRF activities in Yemen were designed to produce several key outputs, including support to civil society through trainings, workshops, and social media outreach.

Based on interviews with key informants who were involved in the program, the Yemeni team and partners achieved several key outputs, as highlighted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. FRF Outputs



Evidence from key informant interviews as well as documentation from partners suggest that the FRF activities contributed to several key outcomes:

Greater collaboration and engagement on FATF Recommendation 8 issues by diverse actors.

Building on activities conducted as part of the first FRF in Yemen, ICNL and CDF successfully sought to bring a more diverse set of stakeholders to the table to build capacity and engage on these issues in late 2022. The FRF activities were able to engage government representatives, civil society organizations, media representatives, banks, and even representatives of the judicial sector to discuss the implications of Yemen's laws on the potential infringement on the rights and freedom of civil society in the country and to begin identifying how to prevent these issues in the future.



"Having the government attend these meetings with civil society and the banks and the people working with banks in one room and talking about this topic – that is a real impact, something important that can make changes in the future. This step is really important."

- Key informant interview, February 2023



Increased awareness by civil society and the public about the importance of FATF Recommendation 8 to their lives.

In addition to the direct engagement with a subset of policymakers and civil society, ICNL and CDF were able to have a far greater reach through the use of an innovative social media campaign. CDF developed targeted and user-friendly messages to help civil society understand why Recommendation 8 could impact their work and undertook a multipronged outreach campaign, sharing these messages consistently across several social media platforms. Ultimately the messages were able to reach over 2 million users, and CDF's engagement with some of those users highlighted that they were able to share and spread this message to a wider audience.

New research and evidence for Yemen, available in Arabic. Beyond planned activities ICNL and CDF also undertook research to build the nascent evidence base on FATF in Yemen. Working with a

judge to conduct this research, the partners were able to uncover new findings regarding how Yemen's laws and policies are affecting financial reporting and other issues for civil society and further were able to share this evidence in Arabic to ensure a wider reach and uptake by Yemeni stakeholders.

Helping and Hindering Factors. Key informants were asked about factors perceived to help or hinder this work. Understanding these factors can help support the implementation of future activities.

Helping factors include:

- **Local partner strength**, including their knowledge on issues related to FATF and their experience working with government stakeholders.
- **Improving relationship between civil society and government:** Informants also noted that the new government in Yemen has generally been more open to engaging with civil society, which was helpful in gaining their support for several activities.
- **Realistic activities and timeline:** Finally, informants highlighted that they developed an ambitious but realistic plan for the FRF timeline, allowing all activities to be completed with minimal challenges.

Hindering factors include:

- **Challenges in transferring money to civil society in Yemen:** One logistical factor that ICNL had to overcome was the restrictions in Yemen that make it more difficult to transfer funds to local partners for work in the country.
- **Learning curve related to social media platforms:** Informants also noted that there was a significant learning curve related to understanding the types of social media platforms most often used in Yemen by civil society and how best to use these platforms to get across their messages.

For more information about this FRF, please contact: info@inspiresconsortium.org.



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