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Evaluation

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15 years of partnership- building between the Agence française de développement and civil society organisations

The full evaluation report
can be downloaded from the AFD website:
<https://www.afd.fr/fr/ressources-accueil>

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Disclaimer

With this evaluation, the Agence française de développement (AFD) wished to take stock of AFD's relations with civil society organisations (CSOs) over the past 15 years. The evaluation is part of an overall collective work to redefine or even transform this relationship in the coming years. As this work is still in progress, the evaluation has included, in the form of recommendations, the different challenges to be met to support future discussions between AFD and the CSOs.

The analyses and conclusions of this document are those of its authors. They do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Agence française de développement or its partner institutions.

Cover page

(from left to right and top to bottom)

- Visit to a goods distribution centre in Chisinau (Moldova):
Nicolas Le Guen, head of AFD's civil society division, meets the head of a Moldovan association.
© Paul Lemaire / AFD, April 2022.
- Weaver in the village of Son Koua (Laos), located on the edge of the Nam Et Phou Louey protected area, home to exceptional biodiversity. This area is managed with the technical support of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and supported by AFD.
© Félix Vigné Imagéo / AFD, 2017.
- Awareness-raising session organised by the NGO Racines, in partnership with the French NGO Sidaction, for people living with HIV/AIDS in Benin.
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- Meeting of a women's association in the village of Andavakoera (Madagascar), located in the Andrafiarana Andavakoera protected area, as part of the Fanamby project supported by AFD.
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Editorial

Rémy Rioux, AFD CEO

In a world where geopolitical, economic and democratic tensions are mounting, we are at the same time witnessing greater cooperation on actions to counter vulnerabilities and protect the global commons.

In this arena of international cooperation, civil society organisations (CSOs) are playing a crucial role. They know how to intervene in crisis situations where no one else sets foot. They are vital relays for raising awareness, taking action and mobilising on our collective challenges and emergent themes, even “orphan” topics overlooked by public or private players.

Convinced of the strength that these organisations embody for supporting sustainable and inclusive development trajectories, the Agence française de développement (AFD) is investing in partnerships and operational relationships with a vast diversity of CSOs, through an extensive range of tools.

This year, we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the CSO Initiatives mechanism – the opportunity to take stock of our partnership with civil society in the present study.

Since 2007, over 2,000 projects led by nearly 500 CSOs have been supported by over 2.5 billion euros of solidarity-based and sustainable investments. This strengthened commitment stems from France’s clear political will since 2012 to double the share of official development assistance (ODA) channelled through CSOs, an ambition renewed in 2017. What’s more, the Programming Act of 4 August 2021 on inclusive development and combating global inequalities recognises the role and expertise of CSOs, thereby reinforcing the involvement of AFD teams in supporting non-sovereign actors.

The year 2024 will see the publication of our next AFD Group Strategy and our roadmap “*AFD and CSOs 2024/2027*”. The results of these 15 years of joint action with CSOs lay the foundations for a new ambition, 100% SDG-aligned, by our partners’ side and responsive to the needs expressed by the most vulnerable communities.

We will pursue our drive to step up financing channelled *via* French, international and local CSOs. In 2022, for the first time, we authorised direct financing for initiatives led by Global South CSOs, thereby enabling us to support local citizen dynamics that nurture solutions tailored to each context in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Objectives.

We are also boosting our commitment to expand the roll-out of our mandate to educate our fellow citizens, in mainland and overseas France, on citizenship and international solidarity. We hope to reach out with these challenges to at least one in every two young French people by 2027, and we know that we can count on the energy of the CSOs to achieve this inspirational goal.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to look back at the relationship between the Agence française de développement (AFD) and civil society organisations (CSOs) and evaluate 15 years of partnership (2007–2022).

To grasp the significance of this reflection, it should be noted that the past 15 years have seen a profound transformation of the international context and the civil society actors surrounding it, with phenomena such as:

- **the reconfiguration of the CSO landscape** (the increasing power of the largest CSOs, the emergence of newcomers mainly from the private sector and from the social and solidarity economy [SSE], new roles played by CSOs, new CSO models),
- **the affirmation of new priority themes**, such as climate and biodiversity, gender and youth, which influence both the CSOs' priorities and the available donor financing,
- **the emergence of new kinds of crises** that take up an increasing share of aid and involve a change in the ways in which CSOs intervene,
- **the shrinking of civil society space in many of the Agency's intervention countries**, which appears to be a major obstacle to the CSOs' capacity (local and international) to act in support of development and human rights,
- **the transformation of partnership dynamics** and the change in the respective place of French CSOs and their local partners. Today, this trend has crystallised around the debate on the localisation of aid.^[1]

These trends have deeply influenced the relationship between AFD and the CSOs when it comes to designing support tools for CSOs, channelling the financing, managing dialogue with CSOs and sharing knowledge production.

It should also be understood that, during the period 2007–2022, the place of CSOs alongside AFD was marked by a rapid growth. In 2008, it was decided to transfer responsibility for financing CSO-initiated projects to AFD, whereas this had been the remit of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) for over 20 years. Those present at the time underline the strong resistance within the Agency against integrating this new mandate for CSO financing. During the early years, the newly created ADF division in charge of organising partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) mainly operated in a “bubble”; its culture and links with these new partners were quite different from those in the other AFD structures. The CSOs were themselves somewhat reticent about the transfer of this activity from the MEAE to AFD, considering that the Agency had little experience in supporting their actions.

Since the transfer, the CSOs have become increasingly central to the “mind-map” of AFD officers. This development is linked to the renewal of part of the AFD teams who brought with them knowledge and a fresh view of CSOs. It also resulted from a raft of strategic decisions that pushed AFD to become involved in areas where CSOs proved to be indispensable (interventions in crises, post-crisis situations and/or in fragile states, new thematic mandates given to the Agency).

[1] The “localisation of aid” is the accepted term used to refer to the aim for emergency and development actions to be thought out and supported by local actors who are “closest to the on-the-ground situation”.

What scope and approach for this study?

The approach adopted for this study is “panoramic”. The analysis covers AFD as a whole: both the Civil Society division (CSO),^[2] but also AFD’s other operational entities that work with CSOs in financing various projects. In addition, the study also integrates the different aspects of AFD-CSO relations (financing, dialogue, shared knowledge production, etc.).

[2] Attached to the new Mobilisation and National Partnerships department (MPN), formerly the Partnerships department (DPA).

The abbreviation “CSO” encompasses a broad diversity of organisational profiles.

For this study, we adopted the scope defined by AFD in its latest “Civil Society” strategy, which includes “NGOs, foundations, professional associations, trade unions, as well as actors in the social and solidarity economy”.^[3] The study analyses AFD’s links with all of its partner CSOs, including French, international and local CSOs (i.e., those with head offices registered in a partner country).

[3] “Partnership with Civil Society Organizations 2018-2023” strategy (see <https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources/partnerships-civil-society-organizations-2018-2023-strategy>).

Our approach

The study’s findings are based on several complementary sources:

- a report on AFD financing channelled directly to CSOs, based on several databases provided by AFD (analysis of CSO financing channels, profiles of partner CSOs, priority sectors and geographies, etc.),
- an online survey, garnering 209 responses (107 responses from AFD, 86 from CSOs and 16 external responses),
- a “Timeline” workshop, which helped collective identification of key waymarks and trends in the AFD-CSO relationship,
- a broad-based document review, including policy documents, evaluation of the instruments, studies of sectoral changes, etc.,
- field missions in Madagascar, Lebanon and West Africa (with respondents from Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad and Senegal),
- a benchmark with CSO financing schemes used by German cooperation,
- overall, nearly one hundred people were interviewed for this study.

Figure 1 – AFD funding aimed at CSOs



Source: database of 2007-2022 commitments to NGOs, AFD.

1. What lies ahead for CSO financing?

1.1 Continuous growth that ramps up from 2017

By stepping up its financing for CSOs from €12 million to €414 million between 2007 and 2022 (excluding Expertise France), **AFD has become a key funder of French civil society.**^[4]

This growth in financing was driven by supportive policy decisions made at the highest level.

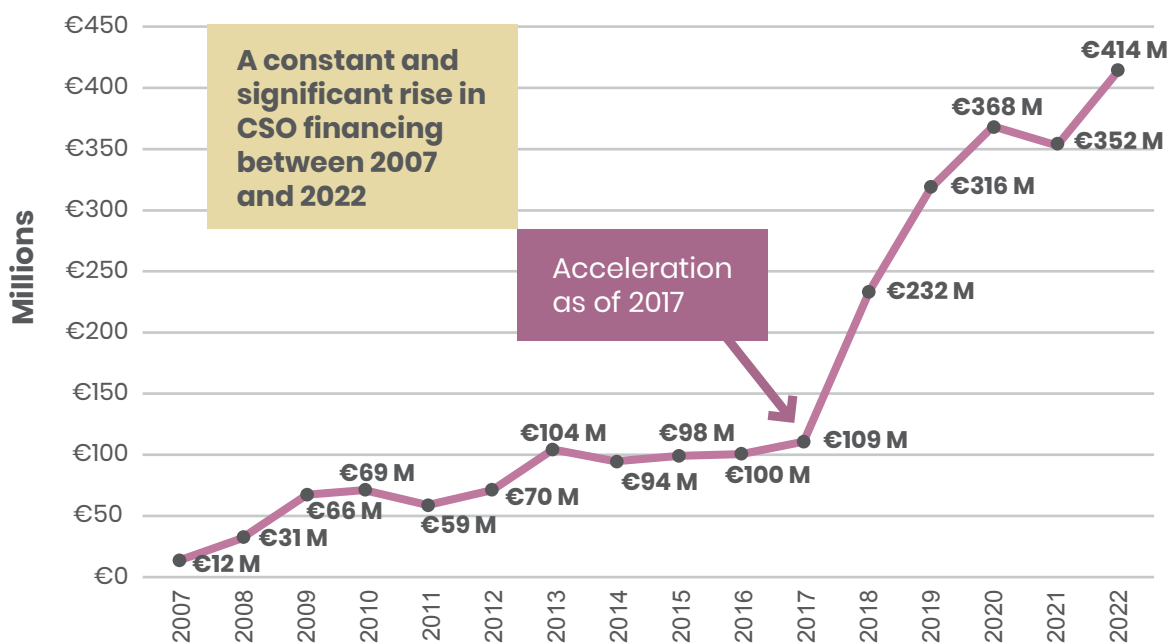
[4] Our study does not take into account the following financing: (i) financing from Expertise France (EF), a public agency that was attached to AFD Group on 1 January 2022 (EF is the French international technical cooperation agency); (ii) European Union (EU) funds for CSO, delegated to AFD; (iii) retrocessions of AFD financing transferred via CSOs to non-CSO project leaders; (iv) various instruments involving small amounts allocated via AFD's Partnership Committee (COPAR). All of this further highlights the substantial amount of financing channelled to CSOs.

Firstly, President François Hollande's decision to double the amount of French Official Development Assistance (ODA) channelled through NGOs during his 2012-2017 term. Then, the volume of financing allocated to CSOs by 2022 compared to 2017, enshrined in the Programming Act on Inclusive Development and Combating Global Inequalities^[5] (August 2021).

The gradual broadening of AFD's mandate also meant that CSOs were more frequently called on to act as third-party leaders of AFD projects. As a result, AFD's growing involvement in crisis response led to the setting-up of the Minka Peace and Resilience Fund in 2016, which allocates around 50% of its funding to CSOs. Moreover, AFD's increasing involvement in themes where CSOs are recognised for their expertise, such as biodiversity, gender, governance or human rights, has also helped strengthen the presence of CSOs among the leaders of AFD-funded projects.

[5] Act that replaced the 2014 Act on guidelines and programming regarding development policy and international solidarity (LOP-DSI).

Graph 1 – Annual change in commitments to CSOs



Source: database of 2007-2022 commitments to NGOs, AFD.

The increasingly frequent recourse to CSOs to implement AFD financing was enacted by the strategic decision of the AFD Group Strategy^[6] 2018-2022, which laid down the principle for the Agency’s project managers that they “systematically ask themselves if a relevant and value-adding non-sovereign financing option exists for all or part of a project, before proposing a sovereign one”. This decision thus fostered greater consideration being given to CSOs.

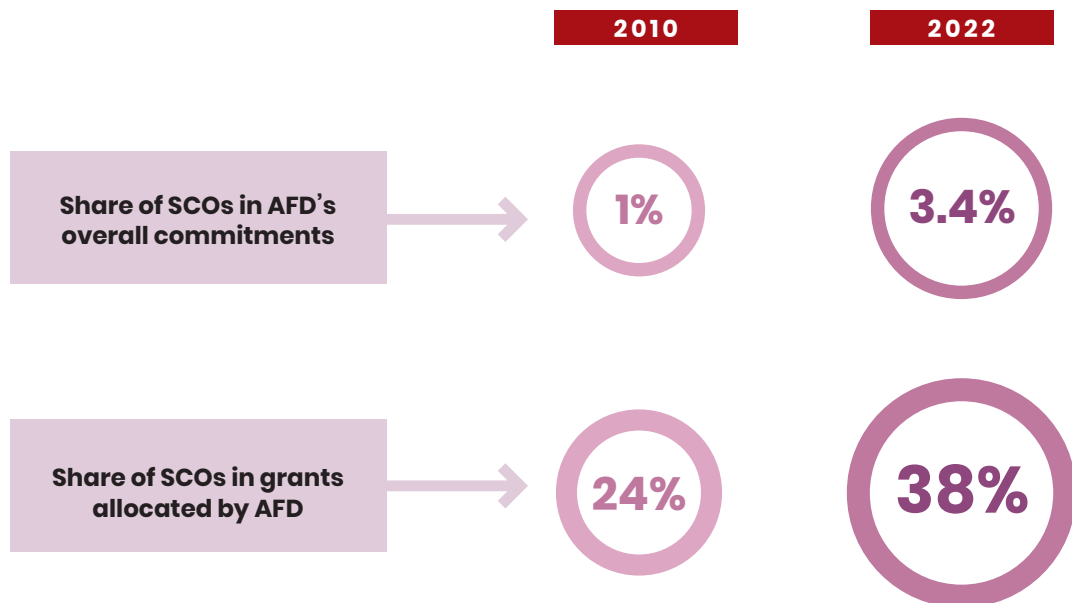
CSOs thus became increasingly important partners for AFD. Between 2010 and 2022, the weight of CSOs in AFD’s financing commitments rose from 1% to 3.4% and from 24 to 38% if only grant-funding is taken into account.

As a sign of this trend, **AFD main form of intervention in some countries today seems to be through CSOs, given the weakness of the local public authorities on the ground.** This is the case in Lebanon, Chad and, to a lesser extent, in Madagascar.

Yet, although AFD’s financing for CSOs increased sharply, figures from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) suggest this should be put into perspective. Much less French ODA is channelled *via* CSOs than the ODA from comparable countries such as Germany or the United Kingdom, even though the gap has narrowed in recent years (in 2022, this share totalled 7.8% of French bilateral ODA, against an average of 15% for OECD member states).

[6] Title in French: Plan d’orientation stratégique.

Figure 2 – Weight of funding for CSOs in AFD’s commitments



Sources: database of overall commitments 2008-2022, AFD.

1.2 Three key instruments for financings CSOs

AFD had different instruments for financing CSOs between 2007 and 2022:

- some instruments managed by the former Operations department (DOE):^[7] the channel for so-called current operations which funds CSOs throughout the entire duration of the projects they lead; the Minka Fund (set up in 2017); the Sectoral Innovation Facility for NGOs (FISONG); a series of instruments for project preparation and technical expertise financing,
- other instruments managed by the former Partnerships division (DPA):^[8] the CSO Initiatives mechanism (I-OSC) created in 2009; the French Local Authorities Financing Facility (FICOL),
- finally, various specific instruments whose secretariat is hosted by AFD: the Fund for Innovation and Development (FID), the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM).

In 2022, three of these instruments alone accounted for 90% of CSO financing:

[7] At the beginning of 2022, DOE was split into two separate departments: Geographies (GEO) and Sustainable Development Solutions (SDD).

[8] Renamed Mobilisation and National Partnerships (MPN) at the beginning of 2022.

current operations, the Minka Fund, CSO Initiatives mechanism. These three instruments are described in more detail below.

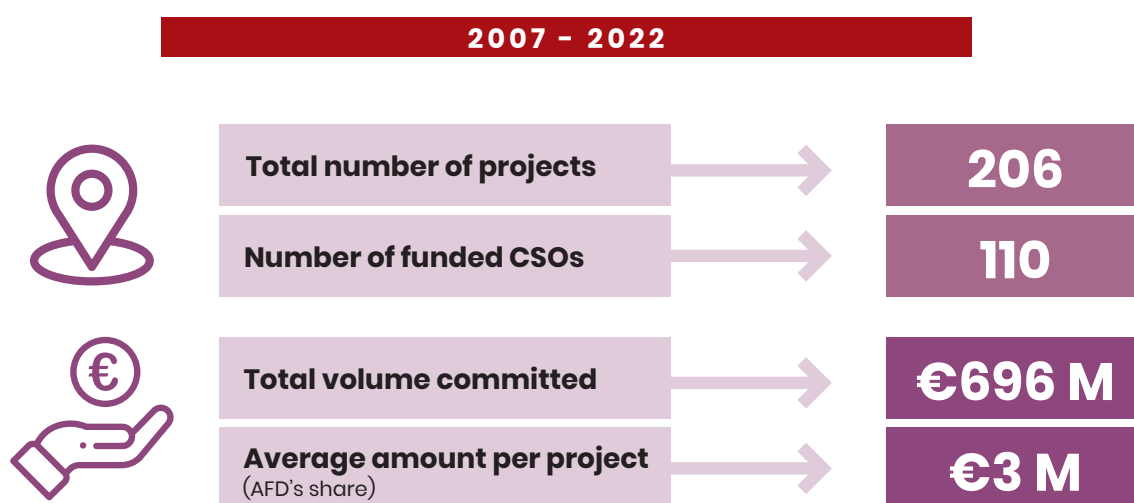
1.2.1 – Current operations channel

Through this channel, the CSOs intervene as third-party project leaders on projects appraised by AFD's technical divisions following tenders, calls for projects (AAP) or through direct contracting.

CSO financing through this channel skyrocketed. The volume jumped from €6 million in 2007 to €138 million in 2022. The earliest CSO actions are to be found in AFD's sectoral strategies in the social sectors (water and sanitation, health, education and vocational training, food security, etc.).

From 2017, CSO financing was increased in almost all of AFD's technical divisions. Yet, some divisions were particularly active in partnerships with CSOs: over the period 2007-2022, the Agriculture, Rural Development and Biodiversity (ARB), Health and Social Protection (SAN) and Education, Training and Employment (EDU) divisions combined allocated 80% of CSO project financing *via* the current operations channel.

Figure 3 – Current operations



Source: database of 2007-2022 commitments to NGOs, AFD.

An analysis of financing from current operations also reveals another trend – the increasing scale-up of project financing. Over the period studied, financing from current operations averaged €3 million *per project*, knowing that financing through this channel rose from €0.75 million in 2007 to €5.8 million in 2022.

1.2.2 – The Minka fund

The Minka Fund was set up in 2017 to respond to crisis/post-crisis situations, which allocated (until end 2022) €448 million to 92 CSO projects proposed by 42 different entities. **The average financing per project was €4.9 million, which places the Minka Fund as the instrument that allocated the highest unit financing among the three key instruments outlined here.**

The calls for projects from the Minka Fund target “crisis basins”: the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad), Lake Chad (Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Chad), Central African Republic (CAR), Middle East (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Türkiye). **These geographically targeted calls for projects indicate that Minka is the instrument that focuses most on Africa, with 67% of its financing allocated to the continent, predominantly to the Sahel region.**

Between 2017 et 2022, it was mainly through the Minka Fund that CSOs received financing to respond to the Sahelian crisis. Among the CSOs financed by the Minka Fund, we find CSOs (either from France or OECD member countries) specialised in crisis response. On this count, we should point out that Minka is the most open to non-French CSOs: between 2017 and 2022, 38% of financing was allocated to CSOs from other countries. The four CSOs that benefited most from the Minka mechanism are: Handicap International – Humanity and Inclusion; Action contre la faim (ACF); Mercy Corps Europe, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Figure 4 – Minka



Source: database of 2007-2022 commitments to NGOs, AFD.

1.2.3 – The CSO initiatives mechanism (I-OSC)

In terms of the number of CSOs funded and the volume of financing committed to them, I-OSC was **by far the most used channel over the period 2009–2022**.

The I-OSC mechanism comprises five instruments offering different terms of eligibility, access, duration and amount: (i) classical projects, (ii) programme agreement (PA), (iii) multi-year partnership agreement (MYPA), (iv) concerted multi-stakeholder programme (CMSP), (v) general interest projects.

Except for the multi-year partnership agreement launched in 2016, the other instruments were already in place in 2009. **The I-OSC mechanism remained stable over the period, as the MEAE had desired when the mechanism was transferred to AFD.**

Figure 5 – I-OSC



Source: database of 2007–2022 commitments to NGOs, AFD.

There is a rationale of “continuity” between the three following instruments: the classical project, the PA and the MYPA. Each instrument targets a smaller number of CSOs than the previous instrument and conversely involves:

- higher commitment volumes,
- more financing for cross-cutting functions,
- the desire for a more intensive strategic dialogue with the CSO.

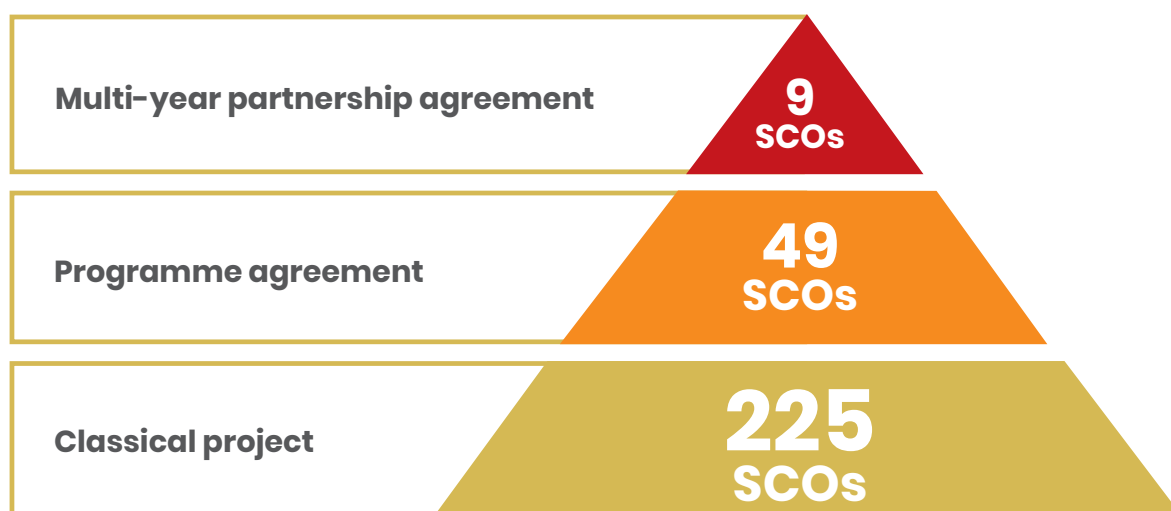
The “general interest” instrument finances two categories of projects: (i) projects aimed at structuring associations (SMA), and (ii) projects for education in citizenship and international solidarity (ECIS). **Financing for “general interest” projects amounted to €183 million over the period 2009–2022, i.e. 7.3% of total CSO financing and 18% of financing from the I-OSC mechanism. These figures confirm AFD’s substantial support to strengthening the CSO sector as a whole.**

The main developments of the I-OSC mechanism were on several levels:

- **an increase in the I-OSC budget** (€36 M in 2009, €138 M in 2022, €161 M – amount projected for 2023), which benefited from all the instruments except CMSP,
- **a single annual call for expression of interest in proposing projects (CEI)** launched in 2015, aimed at better regulating the mechanism and enhancing the equity and transparency of project selection processes,
- **the gradual increase in co-financing rates**^[9] granted by AFD under the I-OSC mechanism: this rate will finally be harmonised at 80% in 2024 for all of the instruments,
- **the increase of the minimum amount per project**, rising from €300,000 to €500,000 as from 2024,
- finally, **in 2023, the opening-up of direct financing through the I-OSC mechanism for CSOs from partner countries** (whose head office is registered in AFD’s intervention countries).

[9] In other words, the proportion of financing that the beneficiary CSO must mobilise to supplement AFD funding for a given project.

Figure 6 – Logic of “progression” between the three instruments (classic project, PA, MYPA)



Source: I-OSC mechanism database 2009–2022, AFD.

1.3 A coherent overall framework, but encumbered by procedures

All of these financing instruments and channels constitute the overall CSO financing framework. Yet, this framework is not static, as the growth was accompanied by the creation of new CSO financing instruments, notably the Minka Fund, but also the Support Fund for Feminist Organisations (FSOF) and the FID. It should be noted that one instrument, FISONG (set up in 2007), was closed down in 2022.

The financing framework as a whole is considered to be relatively coherent and complementary, with little competition between the different instruments. The survey conducted for this study reveals that the main instruments offer different advantages that largely reflect the initial objectives assigned to them:

- the key advantage of the I-OSC mechanism is the principle of independence for the CSOs (highlighted by 75% of respondents),
- the key advantage of current operations is effectiveness and change of scale (59% of respondents),
- the key advantage of the Minka Fund is reactivity (64% of respondents),
- the key advantage of FISONG is innovation (69% of respondents).

The new instruments introduced during the period studied are linked to the emergence or strengthening of specific priorities (e.g., the Minka Fund to respond to crises, FSOF to address the “gender” theme). **These new channels did not create any competition or lack of coherence.**

On the other hand, the scenario of a pathway between the instruments to allow for the scale-up of a project, the diffusion of an innovation or the continuity of an action involves only very few CSOs. **The fact that these pathways are rare reflects a silo-like functioning that has largely persisted while each instrument was developing separately.**

As far as the I-OSC mechanism as a whole is concerned, **three main shortcomings** were pinpointed both by AFD and the CSOs:

- the challenge of **financing mesoprojects** became more significant over time, as the minimum threshold for the I-OSC was rising,
- the context of aid localisation pointed up **the lack of direct financing for local CSOs**, even though substantial indirect financing is channelled through French CSOs. By opening up the I-OSC mechanisms to local CSOs, the 2021 Programming Act addresses this shortcoming,
- the instruments provide little **core funding**, unlike other countries such as Germany. This type of financing is a key concern not only for large CSOs (support for strategy rather than projects) but also for small CSOs (institutional strengthening). This challenge is among the points to be discussed in view of the future roadmap for AFD-CSO partnership 2024-2027.

Overall, it was found that the financing framework as a whole had gradually become more complex and that the procedures were not harmonised. Three risks were identified relating to the growing number of procedures: *(i)* some CSOs were excluded, *(ii)* action was slowed down, *(iii)* the AFD-CSO strategic dialogue was being swallowed up by questions of procedure. **An inhouse project is in progress to improve this situation, largely inspired by the procedures of the CSO division.**

1.4 A new balance between financing channels, which creates new challenges

In 2022, the I-OSC mechanism accounted for no more than a third of CSO financing. This situation differs radically from that at the beginning of the period 2007-2022, when the I-OSC mechanism was overwhelmingly dominant.

AFD's relationship with CSOs is thus no longer limited to managing a budget within a framework where French CSOs propose their own projects to AFD.

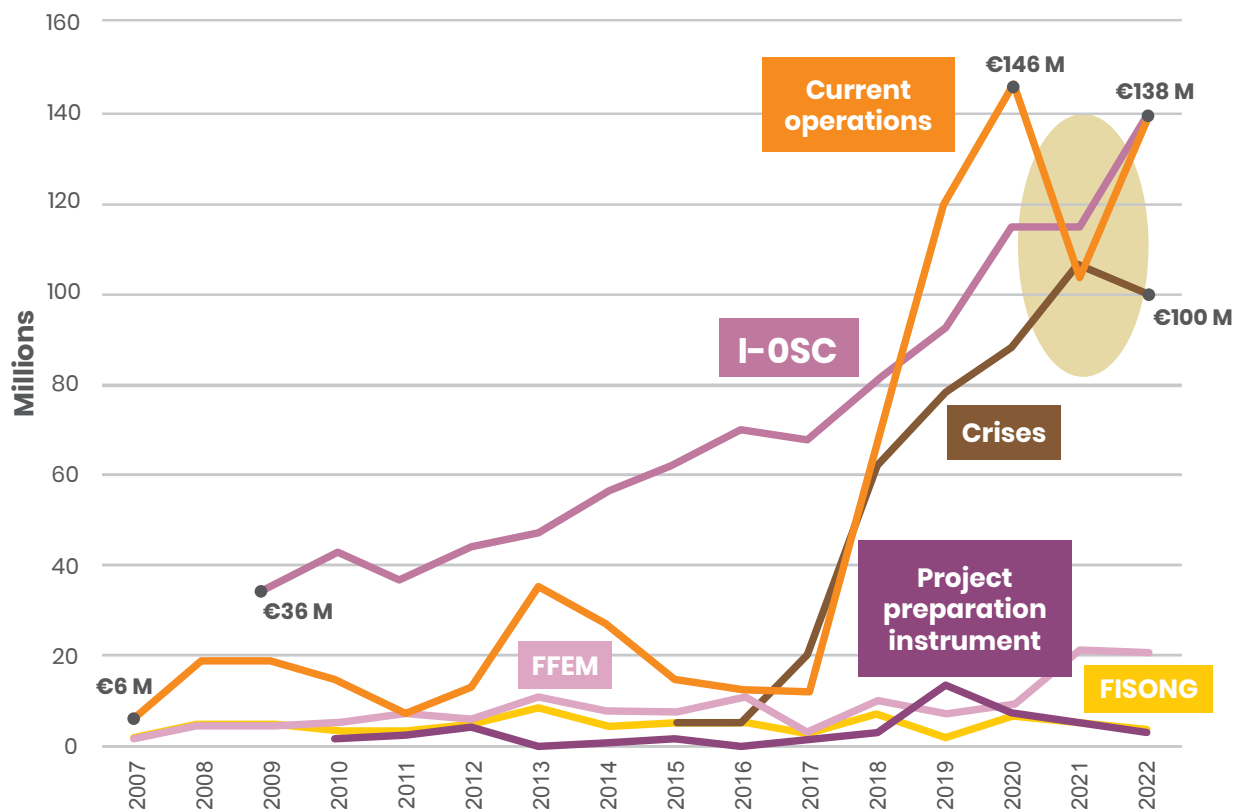
1.4.1 – The place of the right of initiative

The Programming Act No. 2021-1031 of 4 August 2021 on inclusive development and combating global inequalities foregrounds the importance of the CSOs' right of initiative, which thus seems to be firmly protected.

The dwindling importance of the I-OSC mechanism (despite the steady increase in its budget) could nonetheless raise the question of whether its rationale of initiative is under threat.

Under this mechanism, CSOs propose projects to AFD that are based on their own assessment of needs. AFD's other financing instruments allow for the co-construction of projects to a greater or lesser extent depending on the modalities involved (CfPs, tenders, direct contracting). This generates diverse forms of collaboration in which the CSOs feel that they have greater or lesser latitude to propose interventions. **There thus seems to be no impervious border between initiatives on the one hand and services rendered on the other hand, but rather a continuum of situations.**

Graph 2 – Evolution of instruments financing CSOs



Source: Database of 2007-2022 commitments to NGOs, AFD.

Even so, the I-OSC mechanism also has the mandate to preserve the diversity of CSOs. By remaining accessible to the smallest CSOs, AFD enables them to exercise their right of initiative. The mechanism is also characterised by a high level of transparency for CSO financing, which is less the case for current operations according to comments from the survey and interviews. **What the CSOs foreground is thus not simply the individual right to build “from scratch”, but also a vision of the right of initiative for as many CSOs as possible – this within a transparent environment.**

For most of the respondents, it is important that the right of initiative be preserved and that the I-OSC budget continue to increase substantially, without however limiting the CSOs' access to other instruments.

1.4.2 – In-house dialogue

The new balance of CSO financing instruments created the need for dialogue within AFD between the different teams managing these instruments. The initiatives to achieve harmonisation and a flow of information on the actions of CSOs tended to be led by the CSO division, appointed in 2019 by the AFD's Executive Committee (COMEX) as the linchpin of the relationship between AFD and CSOs. AFD has everything to gain from developing an overarching, coherent and transparent partnership strategy *vis-à-vis* civil society and from finding the most productive complementarities.

The CSO division actively sought to step up exchanges and disseminate information within the rest of AFD. Considerable effort was made to open up the mechanism and mobilise more departments (central and local agencies) in project selection and appraisal processes. In recent years, the agencies and regional offices have shown growing interest in CSOs and their intervention capacities.

2. How did the profile of partner CSOs change, and what impact did AFD have on their transformation?

What kind of “civil society did AFD work with over this 15-year period? What were the profiles of the financed organisations? Did these profiles change over time? What impact might AFD have had on changes in the CSO landscape?

2.1 The changing profile of the CSOs financed

AFD financed 479 different CSOs over the entire study period, with a gradual increase in the number of CSOs supported. AFD’s partner CSOs do not form a closed “club” and the regular arrival of new partners is a sign of openness. However, the question arises of the profile of partner CSOs, particularly regarding two key aspects:

- The size of these CSOs,^[10]
- the anchorage of the CSO: in other words, the registered address of the head office (between France, other OECD member countries and partner countries).

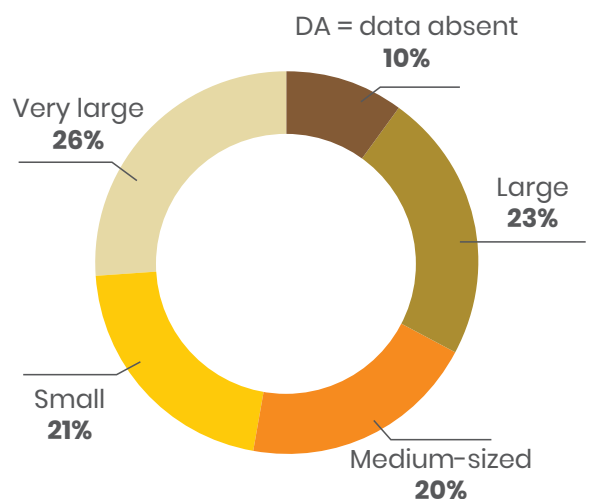
[10] In this study, we distinguished four categories of CSOs according to their budget: “small CSOs” with a budget under €3 M, “medium-sized CSOs” with a budget from €3 to 10 M, “large CSOs” with a budget from €10 to 50 M and “very large CSOs” with a budget of over €50 M.

2.1.1 – A certain balance between small and large partner CSOs, with a trend favouring the larger organisations

A snapshot of the years 2007–2022 shows that, overall, financing was evenly distributed between small and large CSOs throughout the period. This finding is linked to the fact that some instruments give a significant place to the small and medium-sized CSOs. This is particularly the case of the I-OSC budget (which allocated nearly two-thirds of its financing to small and medium-sized CSOs), but also the case of tools such as the FFEM or FISONG (where the small and medium-sized CSOs take the lion’s share of financing).

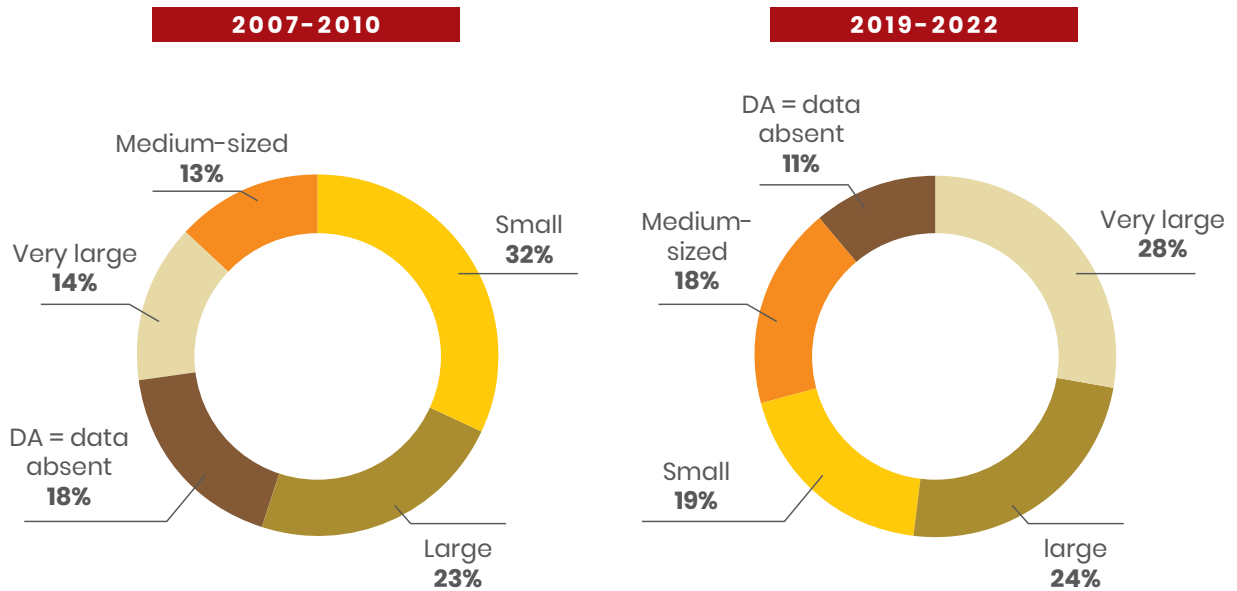
On the other hand, a closer analysis of how this balance has changed over time clearly shows the increasing importance of the very large organisations. These doubled the share of financing they received between the start and end of the period studied.

Graph 3 – Distribution of AFD funding granted to CSOs according to their size, between 2007 and 2022



Source: database of 2007–2022 commitments to NGOs, AFD. Reclassification of NGOs by size, carried out by Kayros.

Graph 4 – Distribution of AFD funding granted to CSOs according to their size



Source: database of 2007-2022 commitments to NGOs, AFD. Reclassification of NGOs by size, carried out by Kayros.

Financing was increasingly concentrated on a panel of AFD’s regular partners. Of the 479 CSOs financed, 10 CSOs took up nearly one quarter of grants; they include Humanity and Inclusion, GRET, Action contre la Faim (ACF), the Croix-Rouge Française (CRF), Médecins du Monde (MDM), and Care France.

This concentration now raises a challenge for AFD: how to approach the specific collaboration with these partners (financing framework, framework for dialogue), while at the same time maintaining the attention given to the other CSOs.

Alongside this rise of large organisations, we noted that, over the whole period, small and medium-sized CSOs found it difficult to forge a direct partnership with the Agency’s operational divisions (the SDD technical divisions and GEO geographic departments). This difficulty is linked to the constraints of project sizing, which these organisations find hard to attain (a minimum of €5-10 M for the operational divisions

to ensure the cost-efficiency of project appraisal and monitoring). The technical divisions underline the “difficulty of making things simple” and having instruments flexible enough to apply a very nuanced approach to small project formats and organisation. **The small and medium-sized CSOs nonetheless manage to obtain financing from AFD’s operational divisions through the retrocessions they receive from larger CSOs, through the development of consortium-based approaches and the increase in mechanisms for intermediated funds.**

2.1.2 – The increasing place of international CSOs

One of the significant developments of the last five years of the period involves the place of international CSOs among AFD’s partners: not only do they account for the majority of new partners but also the financing allocated to them skyrocketed between 2017 and 2022 (rising from €4 to €113 M).

This trend is linked not only to the increase in the number of large-scale projects, mainly in crisis areas where international CSOs more easily position themselves, but also relate to the emergence of themes, such as biodiversity, that were deemed as insufficiently covered by French CSOs. For such topics, financing was mostly channelled to non-French CSOs (Conservation International, IUCN,^[11] etc.).

Today, this change poses the question of knowing how far to go in striking a balance between French and international CSOs as AFD partners. Importantly, this question needs to be put into perspective given the desire to promote the influence of French CSOs on the international stage.

2.1.3 – The challenge of supporting CSOs in partner countries

For many years, AFD has integrated into its strategic documents the challenge of systematically having French CSOs call on CSOs from partner countries (which we also refer to as “local CSOs” to evoke the debate on the localisation of aid) and the need to build a balanced partnership with local CSOs. In fact, this challenge is core to the I-OSC mechanism’s mandate. The I-OSC report for 2022 specifies that “with 131 projects financed (excluding studies), the I-OSC mechanism supports 112 French CSOs (114 in 2021) and over 8,300 local partner CSOs”.

Yet, direct financing for local CSOs remained fairly marginal (totalling 10% of financing over the study period). On the one hand, financing *via* the I-OSC mechanism was reserved for French CSOs until 2022; on the other hand, partner country’s CSOs access to financing instruments of the Agency’s operational divisions (notably current operations and the Minka Fund) remained constrained by a high financial threshold and procedural requirements that were difficult to meet.

The increasing role of local CSOs in recent years should nonetheless be noted, as they represented a third of AFD’s new partners from 2018. **In addition to direct CSO financing, we also, and above all, find a significant increase in redistribution mechanisms** that enable local CSOs to be reached indirectly, mainly thanks to several mechanisms:

- **Intermediated funds:** this type of fund is found in several financing instruments of the I-OSC mechanism (PA, MYPA, CMSP) and, to a lesser extent in the operational divisions (e.g., urban fabric initiatives, FSOE, etc.). This solution is appreciated for its capacity to combine large-scale project management with support for small local actors.
- **consortiums grouping French CSOs and local CSOs as direct partners,** which receive a significant share of the funds. These consortiums target well-established local CSOs, which are often already in contact with international donors.
- Also, and more broadly, the volume of **retrocessions by French CSOs to local CSOs,** which are very frequent in I-OSC projects and in projects from the Agency’s operational divisions.

Despite these advances, **the challenge of aid localisation is still largely to be addressed. It means that AFD must have fine-grained knowledge of local CSOs and their needs.** It also means that tools for local CSO capacity building and structuring must continue to be developed, in tandem with support for their activities on the ground.

[11] International Union for Conservation of Nature.

2.2 AFD's significant impact on french CSOs

AFD, as the main French public donor for French CSOs, has forcibly contributed to their development. Clearly, it is difficult to distinguish AFD's contribution from the other available sources of financing but some key aspects of AFD's impact on the CSOs stand out.

2.2.1 – Contribution to the growth of CSOs

AFD's key impact as perceived by the CSOs is economic: this involves their growth and the development of their resources. For small and medium-sized CSOs, growth was uneven depending on the organisation, but AFD was able to help secure their financing over relatively long time periods, which enabled some CSOs to grow and strengthen their position in the CSO sector.

As for the larger CSOs, their growth was more clearly visible, mainly for the CSOs that managed to access financing from the operational structures, which upscaled their partnership with AFD (e.g., IECD,^[12] Inter Aide, AVSF,^[13] Noé, Solthis, etc.).

Figure 7 – Average annual funding granted to the 10 CSOs most financed by AFD

2007-2016



2017-2022



Source: database of 2007-2022 commitments to NGOs, AFD.

[12] Institut européen de coopération et de développement (European Institute for Cooperation and Development).

[13] Agronomes et vétérinaires sans frontières (Agronomists and Veterinarians Without Borders).

2.2.2 – Support for organisational strengthening

Access to new financing came hand in hand with the CSOs' internal moves towards strengthening their organisation – a point mentioned by many of them. We found that these moves recurrently involved consolidating their governance, working on their strategic orientations, developing their support functions and internal organisational modes.

AFD may have made an interesting contribution to these changes:

- on the one hand, thanks to various instruments in the I-OSC mechanism, mainly the PAs and MYPAs where part of the financing supported the organisational strengthening of the beneficiary structures,
- on the other hand, thanks to financing of “support mechanisms” such as the Institutional and Organisational Support Fund (FRIO) led by Coordination SUD, which has supported over one hundred CSOs since 2007.

2.2.3 – Support for collective structuring

The last two decades saw the multiplication of networks, platforms or coalitions both between French CSOs and with international partners (examples of new AFD partners: Forus,^[14] Réseau Action Climat-France, Plateforme Droits de l'Homme [PDH], Plateforme Océan & Climat [POC], etc.).

Having taken over CSO financing from the MEAE, AFD stepped up the budget **dedicated to structuring associations (SMA) under the I-OSC mechanism.** With an average of ten SMA projects financed each year (averaging nearly €8 M per year), support was provided to a broad diversity of CSOs and French networks (particularly platforms playing a pivotal role in the sector, including **Coordination SUD** –around 70% of its budget on average was financed by AFD over the last six years).

[14] The former international Forum of NGO platforms supported since 2004, first by MEAE, which has significantly diversified.

2.2.4 – Promotion of practices that analyse action

While evaluations were already a relatively integrated practice in the CSOs in 2007, AFD helped to promote their generalisation and encouraged both the diversification of the exercises undertaken (e.g., impact studies, capitalisation, etc.) and the development of new approaches (e.g., “change-oriented” approaches). AFD's contribution involved stricter requirements and setting up budgets specifically for these exercises in the allocated financing (the “evaluation” item in the budgets of submitted projects). It also involved support for structures that assisted the CSOs with this type of approach, particularly for the **F3E^[15] network** which gathers together some hundred French CSOs around different evaluation and learning practices.

2.2.5 – Support in developing advocacy

Over the past 20 years, one of the objectives of the MEAE and AFD has been to reinforce CSOs' contribution to public policy, both in France (cooperation and development policy), in the intervention countries (sectoral policies, the place of civil society) and at international level (great global challenges, SDGs,^[16] etc.).

In the intervention countries, testimonies indicate that AFD was able to play a key role with some CSOs to encourage and support their strategies aimed at enabling civil society to dialogue with public actors and influence public policy. We should note the advantage of developing instruments specifically dedicated to the goal of concertation with public authorities, such as the CMSP, led by the French Committee for International Solidarity (CFSI), Solidarité Laïque and the GRDR (migration, citizenship, development).

[15] Fund for the Promotion of Preliminary Studies, Cross-Cutting Studies and Evaluations.

[16] Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations).

In France, support for the Coordination SUD platform enabled it to play a pivotal role in advocating for the ODA development and defence policies. In addition to Coordination SUD, we should also note importance of AFD's support to myriad platforms, networks and coalitions, which have also engaged in regular dialogue with the public authorities on their respective themes. This is the case, for instance, of the Forum des organisations de solidarité internationale issues des migrations (Forum for International Solidarity Organisations for Migration – FORIM), the Centre de recherche et d'information pour le développement (Collective of international solidarity associations – CRID), the Water Coalition, the Programme Solidarité-Eau (Water Solidarity Programme – pS-Eau), Groupe initiatives (Gi), Commission Agriculture et alimentation (Agriculture and Food Commission – C2A), the Coalition Éducation Réseau Euromed France (Education Coalition, French Euromed Network – REF), etc.

In the international arenas, the continuing challenge seems to be the visibility of French CSOs, even though these may be active and influential within CSO collectives. What has probably been lacking is more strategic support on this count from the MEAE and AFD, with more systematic support for production of their partners' expertise and a link-up with international actors able to recognise and communicate this expertise.

2.2.6 – A risk of standardising partner associations?

Alongside AFD's key role in strengthening CSOs, several respondents highlight the internal changes that the CSOs experienced and the risks linked to these changes.

For small CSOs that had historically operated thanks to volunteering and partly informal arrangements, the access to AFD financing lays down new requirements for financial management, accountability and audits, which change a CSO's culture and required skills.

More broadly, the growing number of procedures pushed the CSOs to review their internal organisation, with an increasing place given to teams dedicated to financial and risk management, institutional relations, etc. Several opinions voiced pointed to **the risk of standardising or formatting the culture and management methods of partner CSOs as more and more projects were being launched**. The risks are to a large extent out of the hands of AFD: they stem rather from a CSO's growth and illustrate the constraints arising from the relationship between an institutional donor and an actor seeking eligibility for donor financing. The requirements for obtaining donor financing are generally becoming more stringent and significantly impact the CSOs' ways of working overall.

3. How are dialogue and shared learning evolving?

Questioning the relationship between AFD and CSOs involves taking a look at how they engage in dialogue and learn together from knowledge collected in the field. What are the drivers and hurdles in this dialogue and shared learning? What spaces and tools enable these dynamics to become rooted?

3.1 The development of the AFD-CSO collective dialogue in all its forms

We identify several different levels of dialogue:

- the “central” policy dialogue around AFD’s orientations and partnership framework,
- the sectoral dialogue in connection with AFD’s technical divisions,
- the geographic dialogue in connection with the AFD’s geographic departments, regional offices and local agencies.

3.1.1 – At “central” level, a sustained dialogue

At the “central” level, policy dialogue with the CSOs was mainly driven by the OSC division, which sought to define the common objectives and partnership terms throughout the study period. The intensity of the dialogue fluctuated over the years. Between 2013 and 2019, there was a close relationship and sustained concertation, whereas towards the end of the period studied the collective dialogue was more attenuated. This recent slackening-off was due in part to a reduction in the time the AFD teams had available, but also to the CSOs’ decision to boycott dialogue with AFD for over a year in reaction to the new “screening” requirements under the anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CTF) rules.

The recent slump in dialogue also seems to be linked to another challenge, namely the capacity of the dialogue to allow CSOs to bring their views to bear on AFD’s strategic orientations. Provision is made for consultation of CSOs when AFD’s successive Group Strategies are prepared, and also during the annual discussion meetings between AFD’s Executive Management and Coordination SUD’s board of directors held since 2007. Nevertheless, this is still perceived as insufficient by many stakeholders (on both the CSOs’ and AFD’s side). **The CSOs specifically underline the need to deepen the relationship with the Agency’s Executive Management** in view of developing a “civil society reflex” in all of the supported projects. This challenge has become increasingly important over time, in parallel with the significant scale-up of financing allocated to the CSOs by AFD’s operational structures.

The question now to be asked is what spaces could support this dialogue and who would be the most relevant leaders to do so, in addition to already existing spaces (mainly through the National Council for Development and International Solidarity – CNDSI).

3.1.2 – Myriad yet heterogenous sectoral dialogues, with the challenge of strengthening concertation on strategies

At sectoral level, AFD’s technical divisions have developed a broad range of spaces and initiatives for collective dialogue. Some spaces are open to ensure transparency and information exchange (e.g., the yearly Water and Sanitation Workshop), while other spaces are dedicated to exchanging expertise and collective reflection (e.g., GTAE – Agroecological Transitions Working Group). The question is to identify the kind of dialogue targeted and the extent to which has it been able to guide the sectoral strategies concerned. On this point, the responses from the online survey remain relatively divided. Moreover, we find another interesting signal in this area: between April 2018 and September 2021, six reference groups were set up by AFD to prepare the different sectoral intervention frameworks, usually referred to as the CIS:

(i) Water and sanitation; (ii) Education, training and employment; (iii) Energy; (iv) Food security; (v) Gender; and (vi) Biodiversity. However, only one CSO was in attendance in only one of these groups, which attests to the difficulty for CSOs to be present in some of the most strategic spaces.

It should be emphasised that the Civil Society Cross-cutting Intervention Framework (CIT) for 2013 and then for 2018 involved many consultations both upstream and downstream of their preparation (post-CIT working groups).

A common observation was made by AFD and the CSOs in this area: when a space for dialogue becomes firmly established and structured (as is the case of the space around FSO, or in the ECIS consultation group), the dialogue gradually becomes more fluid, more constructive and, thus, better able to enrich AFD's strategies.

It should also be noted that in addition to this “formalised” collective dialogue, there are more and more bilateral exchanges with some key partners with whom AFD has developed extensive collaboration. The creation of MYPAs in 2016 under the I-OSC mechanism had the initial ambition of mobilising the (sectoral) technical divisions and AFD's Executive Management in a strategic dialogue with some partner CSOs.

3.1.3 – More dialogue at intervention country level, but a distance still to bridge

At intervention country level, the first finding is that the place of CSO projects in the organisation and culture of local agencies has progressed. This is attested by the increasingly frequent practice whereby the agencies submit “opinions” on the projects related to the I-OSC mechanism, or a “CSO referent” (or “focal point”) is put in place in the agencies. This shift is particularly visible in countries that give a central place to CSO projects (Chad, Madagascar, Lebanon, Haiti, etc.).

Yet, a certain distance often seems to exist between the agencies and the CSOs, and CSO project monitoring by the agencies may remain somewhat limited. Initiatives for collective dialogue with CSOs exist, particularly during the missions of the MPN/OSC teams, but these meetings are on an ad hoc basis and relatively informal. **One of the frustrations expressed by partner CSOs was that these collective exchanges are still rarely organised in view of contributing to the sectoral or even strategic orientations of the agencies.**

To many stakeholders, the regional level appears to be a highly promising scale to organise the AFD-CSO dialogue. In recent years, the organisation of meetings at the level of AFD's regional offices (mobilising the agencies concerned and partner CSOs) was in fact highly appreciated by AFD and the CSOs. Also of note is the pilot experiment to deconcentrate members of the CSO division into regions where there is a strong concentration of CSO projects, which should help to strengthen this dialogue (North Africa Regional Office since 2022; this is under consideration for other Regional Offices in the Indian Ocean, Gulf of Guinea, Central America, Andes, Brazil-Southern Cone).

3.2 The growth of shared learning between AFD and the CSOs

CSOs' knowledge production has been greatly enriched over the years, but the fact remains that **AFD has found it difficult to recognise not only the value and robustness of this production but also the CSOs' expertise more generally**. Inside AFD, the low visibility of CSO knowledge production has contributed to perpetuating this situation. The CSOs on their side seem to find it difficult to promote their work and publications and thus their expertise in a context of ultra-competitive "infobesity".

Throughout the whole period studied, there was no overarching strategic approach between AFD and the CSOs aimed at identifying the connections between CSO interventions and AFD's strategic agendas, at guiding the formatting of knowledge, or at organising its dissemination and related discussions, so that AFD can better use and promote the CSOs' work that is in line with the Agency's strategic priorities.

However, many initiatives show more successful collaboration between AFD and the CSOs in the domain of knowledge production, especially when AFD's research topics coincide with the action research carried out by the CSOs.

This is substantiated by the working groups active across diverse domains (land, evaluation, ESIC, etc.) and the organisation of joint events (e.g., AFD-F3E seminar on evaluation in 2013), as well as the multiplication of programmes with the core objective of capitalisation and knowledge production associating AFD and the CSOs. This most recent model for collaboration seems to have gained momentum.

Moreover, projects aside, several French CSOs which are often among AFD's strategic partners have shown the desire to build a shared AFD-CSO learning dynamic particularly on SDG themes (inequality, migration, ecological transition, etc.).

AFD and the CSOs have influenced each other through these types of collaboration. However, collaboration on knowledge rarely results in shared products (publications and the like), although this could constitute an important way of fostering cross-influences and advance CSO culture within AFD.

Finally, at the end of a period that saw a rapprochement between AFD and the CSOs, the challenges of (i) developing a common production that is widely disseminated inhouse, and (ii) exploring the possibilities for common advocacy still need to be examined.

3.3 The place of the other “Team France” players in AFD-CSO relations

The link between AFD and CSOs is part of a wider interactional ecosystem involving “Team France” actors, more particularly the MEAE and the technical cooperation agency, Expertise France (EF), which integrated AFD Group on 1 January 2022. What place do these two players have *vis-à-vis* partner CSOs? What challenges does the collaboration between these different actors raise today?

3.3.1 – The need for greater efforts to link up with the MEAE in partner countries

The MEAE has retained a significant share of CSO financing through several mechanisms: Humanitarian aid, Volunteering, Embassy Funds (PISCCA^[17] and FSPI^[18]), Programmed Food Assistance (PFA), etc. In addition, throughout the period, the Delegation for Civil Society, Citizen Engagement and Youth (CIV) of the MEAE^[19] played a **pivotal role in promoting ties with CSOs**, as evidenced by the Programming Act of August 2021, the setting up of the CNDSI in 2014, and the recent publication of the new Strategic Guidance Paper 2023–2027 “Civil Society and Civic Engagement”. Also of note is the close collaboration between AFD’s CSO division and the Delegation CIV of the MEAE, driven by regular dialogues on the challenges of civil society.

The challenge of linking up AFD and MEAE in their relations with CSOs is above all found at the level of the intervention countries. Behind a certain complementarity of the financing mechanisms and targets, the coordination and dialogue between the local agencies in AFD’s network and the French embassies are still insufficient. As a result, this often produces a reciprocal lack of visibility on each other’s mechanisms and parties.

In this area, some embassy teams interviewed indicate that they are far-removed from AFD-funded projects, particularly those under the I-OSC mechanism. The expression of an “opinion” which the agencies request from the embassies at project appraisal is doubtless a useful time for the embassies to become informed on projects, but they often consider this insufficient if they are to contribute to the monitoring and visibility of projects. In fact, the embassies’ distance from projects varies quite markedly depending on the country and the embassies’ degree of interest in the CSO projects concerned.

In recent years, however, several initiatives helped to strengthen dialogue and collaboration in the intervention countries:

- the creation of **a local development council** (Programming Act No. 2021-1031 of 4 August 2021) headed by the ambassador, which groups together the different state services, development operators, French CSOs, etc.
- **the “experimentation agreements”** set up in eight countries (Niger, Chad, Lebanon, etc.), which promote regular exchanges, foster concerted project appraisals and give the embassies a “right of initiative” on projects to be financed by AFD.

Although the effects of these mechanisms declined slightly, it seems they have indeed enabled greater concertation between the members of “Team France” on CSO projects.

3.3.2 – A new place for Expertise France, which is developing its relationship with CSOs

In recent years, EF has become an increasingly important financier of civil society (€24 M to CSOs in 2021 and €37 M in 2022), mainly thanks to EU delegated funds (55%), the MEAE (18%) and AFD (16%).^[20]

[17] Innovative Projects of Civil Society and Coalitions of Actors.

[18] <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/development-assistance/>

[19] Delegation of the Directorate-General for Global Affairs, Culture, Education and International Development of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE/DGM)

[20] Figures communicated by EF for the year 2022.

The evolving role of EF is primarily linked to its place as intermediary in managing the funds for CSOs, with a dual function of supporting the actions and strengthening the capacities of CSOs. This two-hatted function of EF has been developing rapidly in recent years and the outlook seems to be that this dynamic will continue.

In its role of intermediary, EF makes it possible to absorb part of the management and accountability for projects led by CSOs, which seems a welcome move in a period that is seeing an increase in funds available to CSOs, growing compliance requirements and the desire to involve more local CSOs.

Even so, the growing role of EF also leads to some misunderstandings and concerns that would need to be addressed collectively with AFD and its partner CSOs:

- **the concern that EF could compete with CSOs, mostly French**, on their area of expertise, i.e., the strengthening of local civil societies,
- **the concern that an additional intermediary** could constitute a “screen” in AFD’s relationship with partner CSOs.

In recent years, EF has thus taken on an increasingly important role in the relationship with CSOs, but its role still needs to be further defined and adjusted, taking into account the concerns and possible misunderstandings of both AFD and the CSOs.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows the changes in the AFD–CSO relationship over the period 2007–2022, in a context of rapidly increasing financing for CSOs and a rapprochement between AFD and CSOs. Several great challenges arose for AFD at the end of the period and will be central to the forward-looking discussions that are to follow this study. Among the most important are the five challenges below:

- the challenge of driving an inhouse dialogue between the different AFD structures that finance CSOs, of harmonising procedures to fluidify the system as a whole and respect the right of initiative,
- the challenge of striking a balance between supporting the diversity of CSOs and building in-depth relationships with a series of privileged partners,
- the challenge of combining continuing support to French CSOs and strengthening them, while opening up to other actors, in particular local CSOs in light of aid localisation,
- the challenge of strengthening the strategic dialogue between AFD and the CSOs, in order to build a shared forward-looking view of the development of international solidarity and a common vision of the place of CSOs in AFD's actions,
- the challenge of creating stronger cross-influences between AFD and the CSOs, particularly by improving shared learning practices and exploring possible alliances for common advocacy based on shared expertise.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACF	<i>Action contre la Faim</i> (French NGO)
AFD	<i>Agence française de développement</i> (the Agency)
AML-CFT	Anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism
ARB	Agriculture, Rural Development and Biodiversity (AFD technical division)
AVSF	<i>Agronomes et vétérinaires sans frontières</i> (Agronomists and Veterinarians without Borders)
C2A	<i>Commission Agriculture et alimentation</i> (Coordination SUD)
CAR	Central African Republic
CfP	Call for projects
CFSI	French Committee for International Solidarity (French association)
CIS	Sectoral Intervention Framework (AFD)
CIT	Cross-cutting Intervention Framework (AFD)
CIV	Delegation for Civil Society, Citizen Engagement and Youth (MEAE/DGM)
CMSP	Concerted Multi-stakeholder Programme (AFD's I-OSC mechanism)
CNDSI	National Council for Development and International Solidarity (French government forum)
COMEX	Executive committee (AFD)
COPAR	Partnership Committee (AFD)
CRF	<i>Croix-Rouge française</i> (French Red Cross)
CRID	<i>Centre de recherche et d'information pour le développement</i> (Collective of international solidarity associations)
CSO	Civil society organisation
DGM	Directorate-General for Global Affairs, Culture, Education and International Development (MEAE)
DOE	Operations (former AFD department)
DPA	Partnerships (former AFD department)
ECIS	Education for Citizenship and International Solidarity
EDU	Education, Training and Employment (AFD technical division)
EF	Expertise France (part of AFD Group)
EU	European Union
EUR (or €)	Euro
F3E	Fund for the Promotion of Preliminary Studies, Cross-Cutting Studies and Evaluations
FFEM	French Facility for Global Environment (secretariat hosted by AFD)
FICOL	French Local Authority Financing Facility (AFD instrument)
FID	Fund for Innovation in Development (secretariat hosted by AFD)
FISONG	Sectoral Innovation Facility for NGOs (AFD mechanism)
FORIM	Forum of International Solidarity Organisations for Migration

FRIO	Institutional and Organisational Support Fund (Coordination SUD)
FSOF	Support Fund for Feminist Organisations (MEAE-AFD)
FSPI	Solidarity Fund for Innovative Projects, supporting civil society, Francophonie and human development (French embassies)
GEO	Geographies (AFD department)
GTAE	<i>Groupe de travail sur les transitions agroécologiques</i> (Agroecological Transitions Working Group)
I-OSC	CSO Initiatives (AFD mechanism)
IECD	<i>Institut européen de coopération et de développement</i> (European Institute for Cooperation and Development)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
M	Million
MDM	<i>Médecins du Monde</i>
MEAE	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
MPN	Mobilisation and National Partnerships (AFD division)
MYPA	Multi-year Partnership Agreement (AFD's I-OSC mechanism)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCP	Ocean & Climate Platform (association)
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSC	Civil Society (AFD division)
PA	Programme Agreement (AFD's I-OSC mechanism)
PDH	<i>Plateforme Droits de l'Homme</i> (Human Rights Platform, NGO collective)
PFA	Programmed Food Assistance (MEAE)
PISCCA	Innovative Projects of Civil Society and Coalitions of Actors (French embassy funds)
pS-Eau	<i>Programme Solidarité-Eau</i> (Water solidarity programme)
REF	<i>Réseau Euromed France</i>
RO	Regional office (AFD network)
SAN	Health and Social Protection (AFD technical division)
SDD	Sustainable Development Solutions (AFD department)
SDGs	Sustainable development goals (United Nations)
SMA	Structuring associations
SSE	Social and Solidarity Economy
TD	Technical Division (AFD)

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Agence Française de Développement (AFD) Group implements France's policy on development and international solidarity. Comprised of AFD, which finances the public sector and NGOs; Proparco, which finances the private sector; and soon, Expertise France for technical cooperation, the Group finances, supports and accelerates transitions towards a more resilient and sustainable world.

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