



## Steps and strategies for **governments** to strengthen civil society engagement at the national level<sup>i</sup>

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)<sup>ii</sup> can play a key role in all aspects of the research process, from developing a research agenda that responds to the needs and concerns of the public, to conducting research and transforming research findings into action.

The goal of research for health is *better health for all*. Reaching this goal is possible with the involvement of the actors in health that represent the rich spectrum of sectors and disciplines, including CSOs.

### BUILDING RECOGNITION

#### CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CSO ENGAGEMENT

##### Develop Commitment

- Advocate for CSO engagement. Target other policy-makers, researchers, funders and CSO
- Engage in dialogue with CSOs about harmonising efforts towards national policies and agendas

##### Lay the Foundations

- Describe the role of CSOs in national policies, plans and strategies
- Include CSOs in national priority setting processes
- Encourage participation of CSOs in conducting research on country priorities

### IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES

#### ENGAGING WITH CSOs

##### Develop Partnerships

- Establish and strengthen research partnerships and networks among CSOs, government and academia, respecting good partnership principles

##### Strengthen Capacity

- Support development of institutional and human capacity of CSOs, ensuring their role in national human resources plans

##### Secure Funding

- Make CSO involvement a criteria for selected calls for proposals
- Increase national funds available to CSOs
- Involve CSOs in research projects and programmes where appropriate

##### Move from Research to Action to Policy

- Create a national web-based platform for information sharing at national level, making research findings available in a language and format useful to the general public
- Build on CSO expertise and networks for research communication
- Create a space where all researchers can present their results

### MONITORING PROGRESS

#### ASSESSING ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

##### Evaluating Success

- Identify and apply indicators that evaluate the impact of CSO engagement
- Document stories, good examples and lessons learnt

<sup>i</sup> This worksheet is based on: A Call for Civil Society Engagement in Research for Health. Input to the Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health, Bamako, November 2008 ([http://www.cohred.org/main/Assests/PDF/Bamako\\_web.pdf](http://www.cohred.org/main/Assests/PDF/Bamako_web.pdf))

<sup>ii</sup> Civil Society Organisations – CSOs – are defined as organisations that are private, not-for-profit, operate between the state and the public, and between the state and the market. These organisations represent or serve groups of people, are guided by a passion to contribute to social justice, have interest in research, science and innovation, and in using these to assess and tackle health determinants, influence health policies and improve health outcomes.