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DIGITAL DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMG:	Aid Management Guidelines
CSOs:	Civil Society Organisations
DDD:	Doing Development Differently
DDI:	Digital Democracy Initiative
DKK:	Danish Krone
DDP:	Digital Defender Partnership
ELK:	Department of Evaluation, Learning and Quality
HUMCIV:	Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HRD	Human Rights Defender
HRO	Human Rights Organisation
ISA	International Standards of Auditing
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender +
MFA	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
MTR	Mid-Term Review
PCG:	Project Coordination Group
PMT:	Project Management Team
SC:	Steering Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

1. INTRODUCTION

The present programme document outlines the background, justification, objectives, and management arrangements for the Digital Democracy Initiative 2023-2026 (DDI), funded and managed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The DDI is envisaged to become a global flagship-programme for safeguarding democracy and human rights in the Global South and will respond to global democratic challenges. The DDI derives from the Danish-led multi-stakeholder initiative *Tech for Democracy*. It provides a strategic and consolidated funding framework for new and existing civil society partnerships focused on the **promotion and protection of inclusive democracy in the digital age**.

The programme applies a holistic understanding of democracy as a political system and a culture of participation building on human rights, accountability and the rule of law, gender equality, inclusion and protection of marginalised or vulnerable groups, as well as civic space and the active engagement of civil society. As a digital democracy initiative, the programme focuses on countering negative effects of digital technology and strengthening the capacity of local civil society to utilise digital technology to promote and protect local inclusive democracy both online and offline. The programme works towards its objective through two mutually reinforcing outcome areas. Firstly, the programme will enable and amplify local civil society in utilising digital technologies to promote inclusive democracy. Secondly, the programme will defend and protect local civil society from antidemocratic misuse of digital technologies.

The programme focuses on support to local civil society in the Global South, particularly in countries undergoing democratic regression and where civic space is under pressure. Many local civil society organisations lack the means and capacity to access and utilise digital technologies, leaving them unprotected from digital threats and without critical tools for promoting and protecting democracy in our digital age. The programme will prioritise assistance and support to local civil society organisations to strengthen use and awareness of digital technologies in their work to promote and protect inclusive democracy, including organisations representing women, youth, and marginalised groups as well as informal actors and social movements, often challenged in accessing funding and other resources.

The programme will provide digital support and capacity to local civil society actors, identified as a critical need and often overlooked when major funding flows to organisations already digitally active and capable. Further, the programme will be a significant contribution to local leadership through the establishment of new and direct sub-granting support structures to local change agents, grassroots movements, social movements, and informal actors, promoting democratic development and human rights. Similarly, the programme will work to strengthen more localised structures and responses to protect civil society and online democratic space. The programme will also promote stronger inclusion of local civil society in global policy forums to promote more locally rooted, inclusive, and representative agendas and perspectives.

By combining projects in a common framework, the programme aims at enhancing synergies between partners working to enable and amplify local civil society with low digital technological capacity and engagement (outcome area one), and partners working with civil society already engaged and active in the digital democracy agenda (outcome area two), thereby aiming to localise, connect, and broaden civil society efforts towards the promotion and protection of democracy in a digital age.

The programme design provides a flexible scalability and contains a framework for multi-donor contributions. Defined projects have additional absorption capacity and the programme identifies relevant areas for expansion based on available funding. Access Now, CIVICUS, Digital Defenders Partnership, and Global Focus have been selected as implementing partners. Funds have also been reserved for the continuation of the current MFA-partnership with Witness Africa ending December 2023. Additional partners may be identified during implementation if additional funding is secured to the programme. Additional partners will be identified through calls for proposals aligned with the Theory of Change (ToC) and based on the vetting procedures to be established by the programme.

The initial partners selected have been identified based on an assessment of their established expertise in areas relevant to the programme, the coherence between their strategies and the ambitions of the programme, and their track record of delivering results in cooperation with Denmark.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 Programme context

After more than a decade of global decline in democracy, the number of people living in non-democratic countries today is over 70 percent. Across the globe, the average citizen now enjoys a level of democratic rights as low as that in 1989, and the number of liberal democracies in the world has decreased to 34, the lowest since 1995¹. The effects of rising authoritarianism can be witnessed in steep declines in freedom rights and an increase in the number and severity of authoritarian measures to control public debate and opinion in countries across the globe. Behind the regression of democratic space, several individual trends can be identified including regulation on freedom of expression, administrative obstacles to association, foreign funding restrictions, misinformation acts, the introduction of constraints and liabilities to assembly, increased use of legal cases to harass or deter critical actors from civic participation, and a growing polarisation and distrust between citizens and the state.²

The rise of digital technology is impacting all of these trends. The Internet has become a fundamental part of our societies, opening up new spaces and processes for popular engagement and democratic debate, as well as new arenas for democratic control and restrictions. Democratic debate and civic space have been changed by digital technology, to the extent that boundaries between online and offline are increasingly blurred. The resulting shifts in power between institutions, groups and individual actors are felt far beyond our digital devices. Digital technology has become a central new arena in the struggle for democracy presenting both new opportunities and challenges.

Digital opportunities: Digital technology holds an enormous potential for democracy and democratic debate. It has been a significant tool to support offline civic activism and organising through digital means of mobilisation and the strengthening of civic interconnectedness and opportunities for national and global solidarity and movement building. This includes new opportunities for outreach, advocacy, civic activism, and engagement as well as ways for diaspora or political refugees to remain connected to national activism or networks. It has also opened new online spaces circumventing potential censorship

¹ V DEM Report 2022

² IDEA - The Global State of Democracy

in traditional media, facilitated online protests, and removed the immediate dangers of repercussion associated with physical demonstrations in autocratic regimes.

One of the most significant benefits of the digital technology and the growing reach and power of the Internet, has been the establishment of a global platform for the sharing of information, ideas, and opinions. Digital platforms connect us more than ever and have provided an unprecedented number of people globally with the opportunity to express and exchange their views. In that sense, digital technology has helped to circumvent potential censorship in traditional media and democratise control of who gets to speak, who is heard, and who determines what content matters. Digital technology has also supported mass mobilisation and organising of civil society online and offline. Digital platforms and apps have become increasingly important for civil society to organise protests and keep in touch with members of the diaspora, providing spaces for online discussions and online protest, and removing the immediate dangers of repercussion associated with physical demonstrations in autocratic regimes. The Arab Spring, the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong, and many of the “colour” revolutions around the world, would not have been possible without digital technology.³

Digital challenges: Digital technology not only provides opportunities, but also significant threats to democratic space. Over the past decade a wave of countermeasures have been developed by autocratising regimes to control online civic space. These range from blunt shutdowns of the Internet to censorship of online spaces, new technologies for surveillance, or government orchestrated misinformation campaigns targeting human rights defenders and other government critics.

Online surveillance has become a pervasive feature of autocratising states. Surveillance is much easier and less costly to maintain online than in person and digital technology has provided states with access to areas they previously could not access or control. With few resources, repressive governments can obtain comprehensive insights into activists’ online activities. Information obtained through online surveillance often leads to physical violence, harassment, or other forms of repercussions. We are also witnessing an increasing control and regulation of online content, often in response to security concerns, such as cyber-crime, disinformation, and foreign interventions in national political processes. Even if responding to a legitimate concern, these initiatives are often misused in autocratising countries to stifle flow of information, democratic debate, and political opponents. In the guise of these concerns, censorship and overly broad content regulation measures are being enforced on journalists, human rights activists, and dissenting voices, severely limiting the freedom of expression and democratic space.

There is a rise, not only in censorship, but also in the use of digital technology for active distortion and disinformation by authoritarian states. Disinformation through state-owned media, censorship of private media, and a growing use of “bots” and “trolls” in social media to discredit opponents or non-state narratives, can significantly distort and disrupt democratic processes. The Internet has also given rise to strong anti-democratic communities actively fragmenting and polarising public discourse and debate. This has been especially pronounced in terms of hate speech, cyberbullying and harassment or other forms of abusive content directed towards individuals and groups online. Reflecting their offline dimensions, these forms of content are often directed towards minority, vulnerable, and marginalised groups, such as women, LGBT+ individuals, and religious and ethnic minorities. Online abuse thus

³ Digital Technology and Democratic Theory, edited by Lucy Bernholz, H  l  ne Landemore, Rob Reich. University of Chicago Press, 2021.

threaten both the physical and mental safety of those targeted, and often leads to self-censorship and groups refraining from participating in online debates.

The digital divide: Inequalities that exist in society replicate themselves in the digital realm, leading to a digital divide, signifying the growing inequality in access to digital technologies and the different ways in which the digital transformation is leaving the most vulnerable behind. There is a significant geographical gap in internet usage and developing countries have the largest percentages of populations that remain offline. In addition to the geographic factors, the digital divide reflects and amplifies existing social, cultural and economic inequalities. Differences in digital access, literacy, and proficiency is often linked to gender, ethnicity, age, or other identity markers mirroring and exacerbating existing marginalisation. Women are less likely to own mobile phones and to use data and online services in low- and middle-income countries, and experience a higher risk of discrimination and harassment when participating online.

The digital divide and the unequal online representation is reflected not only in who is able to engage online, but also in who is influencing debates, setting priorities and developing policies of digital technology and digital democratic space. The Global South, in particular representatives of women, ethnic minorities and marginalised communities, are underrepresented in the discourse, knowledge generation, and agenda setting related to digital technology and democracy. Thus, even though the Global South suffers the most from democratic challenges related to digital technology, local actors from the Global South continue to be underrepresented in conversations on priorities and policies.

2.2 Key issues to be addressed

Development issues: The DDI programme responds to the current context in which digital technology is dramatically changing democratic space - presenting new opportunities but also significant disruptions and challenges for civil society efforts to promote and protect democracy.

Digital access and capabilities are unevenly distributed and many local civil society actors in the Global South lack the capacity to use digital technologies to amplify their pro-democratic agendas, as well as the means to protect and defend themselves against digital threats. The inequality in digital access, opportunity, and protection is particularly evident in organisations representing constituencies already democratically marginalised, including women and youth. The inequality also permeates global agenda setting and perspectives on digital democracy, where priorities of local organisations from the Global South are significantly underrepresented.

Within the broader objective of defending and promoting democracy, the DDI programme will work to strengthen the capacity of local civil society in the Global South to utilise digital technology in promoting local inclusive democracy online and offline, respond to digital threats, and promote a more localised and inclusive engagement in global civil society advocacy and policy engagement. The overall development challenge can be understood through a number of associated problems, including:

- The prevalent and growing negative impact of digital technology in autocratising countries;
- The limited capacity of local civil society actors to utilise digital technology to amplify progressive democratic agendas or to defend themselves against or counter digital threats;

- Despite digital technology's pervasive impact on democracy, it remains a relatively specialised field, with few specialised digital democracy organisations and only emerging mainstreaming of the agenda within civil society organisations working on democracy;
- Low level of engagement of local civil society organisations, and representatives of marginalised constituencies in particular, on digital democracy nationally and globally;
- Limited funding available to enable non-equipped local civil society to strengthen digital capacity and engagement, as existing programmes often prioritise those civil society actors already capable and engaged in digital spaces;
- Few initiatives to provide funding and support for civil society's use of digital technology are rooted in the Global South.

2.3 Cross cutting priorities

Reflecting Danish policy priorities, policies, as well as the concrete challenges to be addressed by the programme, the DDI will mainstream a number of priorities to shape the design and implementation. The programme will mainstream a focus on:

Local Leadership: The programme will respond to the significant imbalance between developed and developing countries in relation to digital technology and its impact on democracy and human rights. In the Global South weaker regulation of digital technology coupled with authoritarian trends undermines the ability of civil society to defend the digital democratic space. There are significant gaps in local and Southern-led knowledge generation on the impact of digital technology on inclusive democratic space. Addressing this is critical if global agendas are to be more representative and inclusive of challenges and opportunities as they are perceived and experienced by local actors in developing countries.

Gender Equality: The programme will include a specific focus on threats and opportunities to women's democratic participation online. Gender equality and women's rights continue to be threatened. The long-standing development gaps between men and women are mirrored in the digital gender divide. Barriers and constraints in accessing online spaces impede women's full participation in the social, political, and economic life. Once online, women are also more likely to experience hate speech or discrimination.

Youth Inclusion: The programme will include a specific focus on youth as change agents. In 2019 youth (between ages 15 and 24 years) numbered 1.2 billion persons, or around one in every six persons worldwide⁴. Most of them live in developing countries. In many places youth are leading the struggle for equality, democracy, human rights, and the climate. They are organised in youth organisations, movements, and loosely structured networks, and their civic participation is more digital and individualised than that of previous generations. At the same time, youth as a democratic constituency in many countries remain marginalised. It is more vital than ever before that young people participate in shaping our democratic future.

Working with informal actors: The programme will ensure that informal actors have access to funding and capacity building opportunities. New forms of civic activism are on the rise, not least in online spaces

⁴ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 10 key messages, (2019)

where bloggers, independent journalists, or online activists are often individuals or loosely organised and an important constituency in the struggle for more inclusive democracy. The development sector is increasingly challenged on how to effectively reach and support individual activists and informal movements.

Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA): As democratic space becomes increasingly digitalised, there is an acute need to ensure that established human rights are translated into digital behaviour, and that rights are respected and protected online as well as offline. The DDI will integrate human rights both as a lens for its overall objectives and outcomes, as well as in its implementation through a focus on participation, accountability, non-discrimination, and transparency in the management, partner, and stakeholder relations of the programme.

2.4 Existing engagement, lessons learnt, and how they have informed the programme

The DDI programme builds on and consolidates other Danish initiatives with the broader agenda of supporting democracy and human rights through pro-democratic civil society, in particular the *#DKforCivicSpace* and *Tech for Democracy Initiatives*.

#DKforCivicSpace, was launched in 2019 with four interrelated priorities: 1) Support to Human Rights Defenders; 2) Support to freedom of expression and free media; 3) Support to freedom of assembly and association and 4) Digital resilience for civil society. Through *#DKforCivicSpace*, Denmark is supporting several international organisations, including CIVICUS, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), and World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) towards strengthening legal framework conditions for civil society, promotion and protection of freedom rights, and support to civil societies working in shrinking space. The initiative also provides immediate emergency support and protection for human rights defenders and civil society actors at risk through the mechanism ‘Claim your Space’ managed by Global Focus and through support to Front Line Defenders.

#DKforCivicSpace introduced “digital resilience” as a new area of focus, which led to a number of partnerships specifically focused on digital civic space. The MFA entered into a partnership with Digital Defenders Partnership, that works with emergency and longer-term support to local pro-democracy activists and civil society under digital pressure. The initiative also included a partnership with Access Now supporting their efforts to ensure that digital civic space is strengthened and expanded through policy and advocacy work for digital rights, freedom of expression and against internet shutdowns. Finally, Witness Africa received support for activities focused on countering mis- and disinformation and training human rights defenders in the use of video and digital technology to document human rights abuses.

The partnerships focused on digital resilience initiated under *#DKforCivicSpace* ended in 2022. They have demonstrated positive results and the Digital Democracy Initiative will provide an important framework for their continuation.

Tech for Democracy: The Tech for Democracy Initiative brings together states, multilateral organisations, tech sector representatives, and civil society to strengthen a multi-stakeholder agenda for protecting and promoting democracy and human rights in an era of rapid technological development. The initiative has, among other things, established multi-stakeholder action coalitions

targeting specific issues in the intersection of technology, democracy, and human rights with an explicit focus on both the challenges and opportunities of digital technology for democratic space. Under Tech for Democracy, the *Copenhagen Pledge on Tech for Democracy* was launched at the *Tech for Democracy*-conference in November 2021. Signatories, including Denmark, committed to make use of digital technologies to enhance the digital resilience and mobilisation of civil society, including journalists, pro-democracy activists, and human rights defenders worldwide, by:

- Supporting the development and use of digital technologies by and for civil society actors to help protect against human rights violations and abuses and to strengthen accountability.
- Enhancing capacity-development, awareness raising, and available resources to increase the digital literacy and digital safety of civil society.
- Using digital technologies proactively to narrow digital divides, with a particular focus on marginalised, vulnerable, or disenfranchised groups worldwide.

Finally, Denmark has under the US Summit for Democracy committed to find new ways to empower civil society, independent media, and democracy defenders and further/promote the inclusion of diverse voices, especially from the Global South. Specifically, Denmark expressed its willingness to explore opportunities for a civil society funding mechanism, in response to the lack of funding for local organisations in the Global South.

MFA Studies: In 2021 the Department of Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK) commissioned a study on digital development and human rights – *how to strengthen responsible technological development and digital resilience to enhance democratic governance?*⁵ The study recommended the MFA to continue to expand and, where relevant, scale up existing ‘digital civic space’ initiatives including support for locally relevant digital actors. This study was followed up in 2022 with a scoping study commissioned by the Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement (HUMCIV) with the purpose of mapping relevant actors and identifying potential scenarios for a new initiative to support democracy in the digital age.⁶ The scoping process and report confirmed the relevance of continued support for digital civic space and identified digital impact on civic space as the most critical concern of civil society stakeholders. This included the need to support and amplify local organisations in the Global South, with a focus on the emerging digital divide also within civil society. A specific emphasis was placed on the ability to support smaller and informal actors that are often challenged in accessing development funding, as also confirmed and elaborated in the 2021 MFA Study on *Danish support to informally organised civil society and social movements in developing countries*.⁷

How Lessons Learnt have informed the programme: The DDI is informed by Danish policy priorities and builds on the partnerships, lessons learnt, and commitments from previous initiatives. To strengthen synergies between projects and partnerships, funding relations are consolidated within a single programme and the strategic framework established by the DDI. It builds on established and well performing partnerships on digital resilience within #DKforCivicSpace (ended 2022). Reflecting the

⁵ Digital development & human rights – how to strengthen responsible technological development and digital resilience to enhance democratic governance? MFA, 2021

⁶ Scoping Study – Democracy in the Digital Era. MFA, 2022.

⁷ Study on Danish support to informally organised civil society and social movements in developing countries, MFA, July 2021

lessons learnt and gaps identified in the scoping study, it includes a stronger focus on the proactive agendas and the potential of digital technology to strengthen inclusive democracy, established within the Tech for Democracy initiative. The design of the DDI also responds to the identified need for a stronger localisation focus, both by mainstreaming this in existing partnerships, but also by the inclusion of CIVICUS as partner. CIVICUS has digital civic space as an emerging strategic priority and have established partnerships with local organisations working with civic space. Responding to identified needs, as well as Denmark's commitment to establish a funding mechanism, the partnership with CIVICUS includes a sub-granting mechanism to local civil society, including informal civil society actors. Reflecting Danish policy priorities and the emphasis placed on the digital divide from stakeholders consulted as part of the scoping study, a focus on informal civil society actors and organisations representing women, youth, or marginalised groups has been mainstreamed across the programme, and in the funding mechanism in particular.

2.5 Strategic framework and alignment

The World We Share: The DDI is based on and informed by The Danish Development Cooperation Strategy, *The World We Share*, which identifies democracy and human rights as the underlying principles and goals of all Danish development assistance. The strategy specifically highlights '*democracy, human rights and free civil societies in the era of digitalisation*' as a key priority and highlights the importance of a strong, diverse, and independent civil society in holding those in power to account, enabling access to credible information, facilitating participation, and ultimately contributing to inclusive democracy. The strategy commits Denmark to ensure strong and targeted support for defenders of democracy, including human rights advocates and journalists, who are subject to harassment and attacks – both online and physically. It emphasises the importance of building civil society resilience and capacity to address the challenges that digitalisation pose to democracy. *The World We Share* places a strong emphasis on promoting local leadership, and highlights the significance of empowerment of women and young people, as an important aspect of democratic processes. It also underlines equality, meaningful inclusion of youth, and the rights of women and marginalised groups as strategic priorities for Danish development assistance.

Alignment with global priorities including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The DDI programme and approach is generally aligned with global ambitions concerning human rights. This includes the rights to association, assembly and expression as well as the SDGs. SDG 16 (*Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*) and its recognition of the interdependency between public participation and transparent, responsive, and accountable governance holds particular relevance, but also SDG 5, 10, 9, and 17 reflecting issues of gender equality, reduced inequalities, universal access to digital technology, and strengthened technological capacity of least developed countries. In line with the Danish Development Cooperation Strategy and as underscored by SDG 16, democracy, public participation, and accountable institutions are critically interlinked with addressing fragility and creating a safer, just, resilient and sustainable world. Freedom of expression, assembly and association are intrinsic to inclusive democracy, but also fundamental human rights. The Office of the High Commissioner has underscored that human rights should be respected, protected, and promoted both online and offline and digital space and human rights is an emerging focus within the human rights framework. The development of an independent and

diverse civil society is fundamental to a rights-based approach and has also been identified as essential in delivering on the Danish commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Doing Development Differently: The DDI is designed and will be implemented in the spirit of Doing Development Differently (DDD). A key element in supporting the approach will be frequent dialogue between the MFA and partners focused on identifying learning and providing ongoing spaces for adaptation based on implementation. Windows for dialogue and learning will be mirrored both at project and programme level, to ensure synergies, complementarities and a holistic approach to learning and adaptation. Ongoing dialogue will be combined with more in-depth annual stock-taking to consolidate lessons learnt and related adaptation at programme level. The programme provides for flexibility and opportunities to reallocate funding at project level, as well as unallocated funding at programme level to ensure programme capacity to respond to new priorities, opportunities, or challenges at programme level, including emerging thematic priorities.

Synergies and Complementarity: The programme works towards creating synergies between actors already engaged in digital democracy and local civil society actors not yet engaged. This is intended to strengthen the focus and capacity of existing actors to localise their interventions, but also provide local actors access to established spaces and fora on digital democracy. To support this and other synergies, the programme will include regular coordination between the constituent projects and partners of the programme. The programme will further work to ensure synergies and complementarity with the overall Tech for Democracy initiative by facilitating participation of new local partners. An Advisory Board will also be created for the DDI, with the primary objective of ensuring local stakeholders' influence on programme priorities, but also to provide a space to include and identify synergies and complementarity with other actors engaged in localisation of civil society support on digital democracy. Global Focus will be administering both the Advisory Board to Tech for Democracy and the DDI, intended to ensure identification and follow up on potential synergies, as well as coordination and sharing of information with Danish civil society organisations supported by the MFA and engaged in the agenda.

Donor Coordination and Upscaling: The programme will work actively towards donor coordination and upscaling, by having individual dialogues with like-minded donors to ensure complementarity with existing democracy and human rights programmes as well as efforts underpinning localisation. In recent years, numerous donor-initiatives have been taken to develop digital solutions for development. Investments are made to address the infrastructure gaps surrounding the digital divide, e.g., World Bank's Moonshot Africa, and EU's Global Gateway. Also software solutions for development are created including Digital ID, digital self-defence, e-governance e.g. under EU's Digital 4 Development regional hubs which are supporting a number of good governance tools⁸. Policy initiatives and platforms to exchange knowledge and experience have grown, including the biennial Stockholm Internet Forum (SIDA); Freedom Online Coalition established in 2011 and consisting of 34 governments (including Denmark) committed to advancing internet freedom; RightsCon, the world's leading summit on human rights in the digital age; and most recently the Danish *Tech for Democracy*. UNDP launched its second digital strategy in 2022 further emphasizing the need for a digital ecosystem benefiting all. In addition, countries like the US, Norway and Sweden have specific strategies for digitalisation in development, and the EU has digital technologies as a priority in their 2020-24 action plan on human rights and democracy.

⁸ <https://www.bmz-digital.global/en/topics/good-governance/>

The programme will seek complementarity with these many initiatives and explore how to include other donors, intending to scale up the programme towards a multi-donor initiative. Opportunities to upscale the programme are addressed in later sections and include both capacity for absorption within existing partners and intervention areas, as well as the inclusion of additional partners with thematic capacity corresponding to needs of the target group as identified with ongoing programme learning process.

2.6 Justification and aid effectiveness

Overall, the programme responds to key priorities in “The World We Share” and global development priorities on civic space, human rights, and the SDGs., the programme focuses on the impact of digital technology on democratic space, which is a specific priority in the Danish Development Cooperation Strategy⁹ and also a priority within e.g. UNDP, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, EU, Council of Europe, and a number of other bilateral development agencies.

The DDI also responds to priorities and commitments established under the Tech for Democracy initiative. The programme builds on established Danish positions on civic space, protection of human rights defenders, and support to civil society. It provides a coherent framework to continue well performing partnerships established within the digital democracy agenda. Furthermore, the programme responds to an emerging Danish priority and position on support to informal actors.¹⁰ With its focus on supporting organisations representing youth, women, and marginalised groups, the DDI reflects established Danish priorities of youth inclusion and gender equality. Further, the programme design is informed by the OECD DAC criteria as outlined below.

Relevance: The DDI is relevant in responding to documented contextual challenges and stakeholder prioritisations identified as part of the scoping study undertaken to inform the programme. The programme responds to a specific gap identified in relation to local capacity and engagement in the digital technology and democracy agenda, including a focus on informal actors and organisations representing women, youth, and marginalised communities.

Coherence: The DDI seeks to ensure coherence by building on partners own strategic priorities but also to facilitate synergies and complementarity for added value. The programme will work with both the advisory group of the Tech for Democracy initiative and the Advisory Board established for the DDI, to identify and ensure coherence with other ongoing initiatives within the overall agenda of Digital Democracy. Through donor coordination, and potentially co-funding mechanisms the DDI will work to ensure coherence with other major donor initiatives within the thematic agenda.

Effectiveness: The programme seeks to strengthen effectiveness by providing a strategic framework integrating existing projects and partnerships into a common framework, allowing for an increased focus on common outcomes. This will be supported through ongoing lessons learnt, collective assessment of the validity and assumptions underpinning the theory of change, and relevant adjustment in the programme or its constituent projects.

⁹ And expanded in the MFA How to Notes on “Support to Civil Society” and “Human Rights and Democracy”.

¹⁰ See also” Study on Danish support to informally organised civil society and social movements in developing countries”, MFA, 2021

Efficiency: The programme seeks to ensure efficiency by building on project partners' own management, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and only introducing light programme structures and processes where they are expected to add value. At the same time, it is expected that combining MFA project partnerships under a common framework will contribute to more efficient overall grant management and monitoring processes.

Impact: The programme will work towards tangible changes in the capacities of local civil society to address and engage in digital challenges and opportunities for inclusive democracy. Capacity and engagement of local actors will be an integral aspect of programme impact, but impact will also be traced by concrete changes relevant for inclusive democracy at intervention level, such as increased public participation, inclusion of marginalised actors, and promotion or protection of right to association, assembly, and expression.

Sustainability: At stakeholder level, building organisational capacity will be an integral aspect of ensuring sustainability of results, both at the level of individual partners but also in supporting a more localised ecosystem for civil society engagement in digital democracy. The DDI will seek to ensure long term sustainability of the overall initiative by working towards the establishment of joint donor co-funding mechanisms to secure a long-term funding flow. Finally, the programme has considered sustainability by selecting implementing partners that are well established and have the potential to continue engagement and integrate partners and lessons learnt in their future engagement, also without funding from the DDI.

3. PROGRAMME OBJECTIVE AND THEORY OF CHANGE

3.1 Objective, target group and theory of change

The digital space has become a central arena in the struggle for democracy. Digital technologies present a critical tool for civil society in promoting and protecting democracy and holds immense potential for promoting pluralist democracy, popular participation, and giving a voice to marginalised groups. In many autocratising states, digital technology is, however, also a critical tool to control democracy and restrict civic space through surveillance, restrictions of online activity, mis- and disinformation, or digital attacks and persecution. Responding to this challenge the objective of the Digital Democracy Initiative is to:



Promote and protect local inclusive democratic space in the digital age.

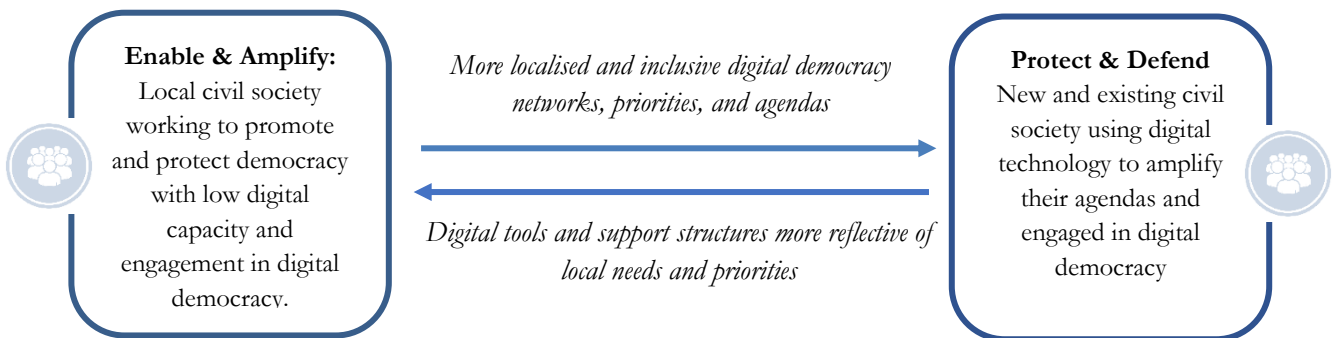
Digital means and capacities are unevenly distributed, and many local organisations do not have the capacity to fully utilise digital technology in their work to promote and protect democracy, nor to protect themselves from digital threats. Despite the pervasive impact of digital technology, digital democracy also remains a relatively specialised field with low level of engagement from local civil society organisations in the Global South and few digital democracy programmes targeting their support to local actors.

The Theory of Change (ToC) of the programme is that if local pro-democratic civil society is **enabled** to utilise digital technology to **amplify** their agendas, and if civil society utilising digital technology are **protected** and **defended** from digital threats, then civil society efforts to promote and protect inclusive democratic space online and offline will be strengthened. Key assumptions include that digital technology

is essential in shaping democratic space, that a stronger local civil society is critical for promoting and protecting democracy, that the use of digital technology can strengthen local civil society, and that civil society can be defended and protected from digital threats and harassment. Further elements relevant for the ToC of the two outcome areas are outlined below in the project summaries and presented in more detail in Annex 3.

The programme will work towards its objective through two outcome areas. The first outcome area will work to **enable** local civil society to utilise digital technology to **amplify** agendas, promoting an inclusive democratic space online and offline. The primary target group is local civil society actors in the Global South with low digital capacity and no engagement in digital democracy, including alternative, underrepresented or marginalised civil society actors, with a specific emphasis on informal civil society movements and actors representing or composed of women and youth. The second outcome area will work to **defend and protect** new and existing civil society actors utilising digital technology to promote democracy. This includes a focus on strengthening emergency responses to civil society actors under threat, building long-term civil society resilience for digital protection, and support to global and national level advocacy efforts promoting rights-based regulation of digital technology and online spaces. The primary target group is civil society utilising digital technology to promote and protect democracy online and offline, both established actors and new local actors engaged through the programme.

Through the selection of **target groups** and synergies between outcomes, the programme works to strengthen and support a more **inclusive, Southern-based and localised constituency** for supporting, engaging in, understanding, and shaping the priorities for civil society engagement in the digital democracy agenda.



Across the two outcome areas, the programme will work to strengthen localisation and leadership in the Global South through sub-granting, networking, Southern-led knowledge development, capacity support, and strengthening of local intermediaries. Similarly, the programme will work towards inclusion and prioritisation of local actors and agendas in existing alliances and initiatives on inclusive digital democracy. A strong focus will be placed on diversity and inclusion, with a specific emphasis on informal actors and organisations representing women and youth.

3.2 Outcome areas and interventions

The two outcome areas and related interventions are outlined below. The outcome areas, including immediate outcomes and elaboration of interventions specific for each project, are further elaborated in the project summaries presented in section 10.



Outcome 1. Enable and Amplify: *Inclusive democracy and civic space are expanded and protected through the improved use of digital technology for civic engagement by local civil society actors operating in restrictive contexts in the global south.*

Outcome 1 focuses on supporting civil society actors to utilise digital technology to promote and protect local inclusive democracy online and offline. It prioritises outreach, financial and capacity support to local civil society actors without means or capacity to fully utilise digital technology to promote their democratic agendas. These include informal actors, and organisations representing women, youth, or marginalised constituencies. A significant element will be financial support and sub-granting to local civil society actors struggling to access development funding. To reach and represent these actors, the outcome includes the piloting and development of a more localised and Southern-facing eco-system for outreach, support, and sub-granting for local civil society engagement with digital technology and the digital democracy agenda. The programme will work to develop capacity of regional intermediaries and a stronger local and Southern-facing constituency for learning, knowledge development, and collective priority setting on the use of digital technology for promotion and protection of local democracy. Interventions towards this outcome will include:



Building a localised and Southern-facing sub-granting and support infrastructure capable of providing funding and capacity to local civil society actors.



Sub-granting to support activities of local civil society actors focused on the use of digital technology to promote inclusive democracy online and offline.



Supporting local civil society capacity to utilise digital technology to strengthen their engagement in the promotion of inclusive democracy online and offline.



Facilitating Southern-led cross-border learning and knowledge generation pertaining to challenges, opportunities, best practices and solutions for local engagement in digital democracy.



Outcome 2. Defend and Protect: *Strengthened digital resilience and security of pro-democracy civil society actors, and more rights-respecting policies and standards safeguarding the use of digital technologies and online spaces.*

The outcome focuses on short-term defence of civil society actors under attack and longer-term protection through strengthening of the digital organisational capacity and resilience of actors at risk. It also includes coalition building and advocacy targeting the policy environment or government and corporate practices placing civil society at risk. The outcome will work to strengthen capacity and networks of regional and national digital security organisations to provide localised responses. It will also seek to establish synergy between partners and civil society working with national level monitoring and advocacy and global policy and dialogue initiatives. A special emphasis will be placed on ensuring that global policy priorities and advocacy for a safe and enabling digital environment includes a stronger and

more diverse representation and leadership of local actors. Interventions towards this outcome will include:



Providing emergency response to civil society actors, including human rights defenders, under threat from digital repression and repercussions.



Supporting civil society capacity for self-protection and strengthening capacity of local intermediate actors in providing digital protection to local civil society.



Supporting global and national policy monitoring and advocacy efforts promoting rights-based regulation of online spaces and the use of digital technology.



Promoting global and national multi-stakeholder dialogue and civil society learning to strengthen knowledge and networks relevant for digital protection and promotion of rights-based use of digital technology.

Geographical Scope: The geographical focus of the programme is developing countries.¹¹ Within this broad scope, a specific focus and priority will be on countries undergoing rapid change in democratic space. This includes prioritising support to local civil society actors in countries undergoing rapid democratic regression, or support to local civil society actors to consolidate bright spots, ongoing public mobilisation on democratic agendas, or other contextual opportunities to expand inclusive democratic space.

Scalability: Outlined interventions have been selected and prioritised based on current and allocated funding. All the intervention areas above have significant absorption capacity for additional funding. Additional funding could contribute to granting mechanisms, organisational level defence and protection initiatives, building a stronger and more localized network of intermediaries and the capacity to proactively support national advocacy and policy initiatives where digital rights or digital democratic space is under threat.

Beyond these, additional funding will be prioritised for strengthening support and sub-granting towards national monitoring and advocacy on rights-based regulation of online spaces and the use of digital democracy, as well as for more thematic partnerships focused on deepening engagement and expertise on thematic areas within the programme, as prioritised by local civil society. Additional funding may also be prioritised towards partnerships focused on acceleration and scaling of best practices identified by ongoing programme learning. Allocation of additional funds will be prioritised by the Steering Committee of the programme and initiated primarily through calls for proposal for additional partners aligned with identified priorities.

¹¹ ODA Eligible

3.3 Programme principles

Reflecting the cross-cutting priorities of local leadership, gender equality, youth inclusion, and digital rights the programme will mainstream the following **programme principles** throughout the initiative:



Localisation and local leadership: As a crosscutting priority, the DDI will focus on local leadership and the inclusion of local actors in programmatic decisions and agenda setting:

- Regionalising and localising programme management mechanisms, and prioritising as well as building capacity of local civil society organisations in developing countries as partners and intermediaries.
- Prioritising local organisations (formal and informal) as recipients of sub-grants.
- Focus on quality funding to local civil society partners including overheads, flexible funding, and technical capacity support.
- Focus on developing Southern-led research and analysis on the impact of digital technology in developing countries.
- Strengthening representation and inclusion of local actors and agendas in global convenings and policy fora.



Working with informal actors: As a crosscutting priority, the Digital Democracy Initiative will focus on working with informal actors through:

- Prioritisation and focus on micro-funding and the establishment of mechanisms to provide support to informal movements and individual activists.
- Strategic partnerships and collective learning with intermediaries with experience and networks relevant for distribution of funds.
- Non-funding support such as capacity development, safe convening spaces, security, etc.
- Representation of movements, activists, and expert intermediaries in advisory positions at project and programme level.



Youth inclusion: As a crosscutting priority, the Digital Democracy Initiative will focus on youth inclusion through:

- Specific focus on youth, their perspectives, opportunities, and challenges in being digitally connected and participating in democratic space online and offline.
- Focus on learning in relation to youth civic activism, engagements, and ways of organising.
- Organisations with strong understanding of youth as intermediaries and recipients of funding.
- Youth inclusion and strategies as an eligibility or assessment criteria in granting and prioritisation of youth organisations and movements as recipients of grant funding.
- Representation of youth and youth organisations in advisory position.



Gender equality: As a crosscutting priority, the Digital Democracy Initiative will focus on gender equality and the promotion of gender inclusive practices in digital spaces through:

- Specific focus on gender barriers in being digitally connected and acting in civic space.
- Focus on gender transformative digital solutions and alternatives.
- Organisations with strong understanding of gender as intermediaries and recipients of funding.
- Gender inclusion as an eligibility or assessment criteria in granting and prioritisation of women organisations and movements as recipients of grant funding.
- Representation of women and other gender organisations in advisory positions at programme and project level.



Learning, Knowledge & Convening: The programme and the individual projects generate localised knowledge and scale or dissemination both within convening spaces generated by the programme and beyond.

- Focus on learning and generating knowledge in all activities.
- Specific focus on and investment in cross-programme learning and documentation. This could be through how to notes, best practice, trend reports and policy notes, both for internal programme stakeholders and external audiences.
- Integrating knowledge and convenings into programme and project structures.
- Specific focus on Southern-led analysis and knowledge generation.
- Supporting Southern leadership in dissemination of knowledge in policy foras, donor society and other convening spaces.



HRBA: As a cross-cutting priority the programme will ensure alignment with the principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, and transparency and actively apply human rights standards in framing policy and advocacy agendas.

- Mainstream participation, accountability, non-discrimination, and transparency as implementation criteria for all programme partners.
- Active targeting of organisations representing or composed of marginalised and discriminated groups.
- Actively work towards freedom of association, assembly, and expression, including right to information as integrated in the promotion of inclusive democracy.
- Prioritise coordination with OHCHR and the UN system, including ongoing efforts to establish a Global Digital Compact.

4. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The results framework below presents the programme objective and the two outcomes with their respective indicators, baselines, and targets. A full outcome level results framework is provided in Annex 3, with further details of output level results in the individual project descriptions of implementing partners. For results-based management, accountability, and reporting purposes the MFA will base the

actual support on progress attained in the implementation of results frameworks described in the project level documentation.

Programme	Digital Democracy Initiative
Programme Objective	Promote and protect local inclusive democratic space in the digital age
Impact Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improved political rights and civil liberties based on Freedom House data. b. Improved freedom country indicators from Freedom House reporting. c. Improved freedom on the net country indicators from Freedom House reporting. d. Improved ability to participate in selecting government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. This is included as a proxy for SDG 16: Peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels - as there is not sufficient data on this SDG.
Baseline	A baseline according to end 2022 indicators has been produced at the end of 2023.

Outcome 1	Enable and Amplify: Inclusive democracy and civic space are expanded and protected through the improved use of digital technology for civic engagement by local civil society actors operating in restrictive contexts in the Global South		
Outcome indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Influence: No. & extent to which local civil society actors in the global south supported by the DDI are influencing changes to policies, practices and processes that expand inclusive democratic space, disaggregated by a) country, b) theme, c) type of influence/change 1b. Engagement: No. & type of organising and advocacy actions supported by the DDI utilising digital technology to amplify inclusive democratic spaces and agendas online and offline, a) disaggregated by country, b) theme, c) type of action 		
Baseline	Year	2023	Baseline set based on cumulative project baselines
Target	Year	2024	Targets set based on cumulative project baselines
Target	Year	2026	Targets set based on cumulative project baselines

Outcome 2	Defend and Protect: Strengthened digital resilience and security of pro-democracy civil society actors, and more rights-respecting policies and standards safeguarding the use of digital technologies and online space		
Outcome indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2a. Protection: Evidence of impact of DDI on resilience and capacity for digital security of HRDs and other actors engaged in promoting inclusive democracy through digital technology. 2b. Influence: Positive changes in local, national, and international law, policies, regulation, and practices for protecting and safeguarding civil society use of digital technologies and online space 		
Baseline	Year	2023	Baseline set based on cumulative project baselines
Target	Year	2024	Targets set based on cumulative project baselines
Target	Year	2026	Targets set based on cumulative project baselines

5. BUDGET

The summary budget is presented below in million Danish Kroner (DKK). The budget is based solely on committed Danish funds. A revised total budget shall be developed if other donors contribute funding to the DDI, based on already identified opportunities for scaling. Budget at immediate outcome level and distributed per implementing partner can be found in Annex 5, including an estimate of percentage of funding sub-granted to local actors.

The Danish grant must be spent solely on activities leading to the expected outputs and outcomes as agreed between the parties. The implementing partner is responsible for ensuring that the funds are spent in compliance with the agreement, Danida guidelines, and with due consideration to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in achieving the results intended. In line with the Doing Development Differently (DDD) approach each partner may reserve up to 10% of the budget as unallocated. Partners may allocate 7% of the budget as administrative overheads. A detailed output-based budget will be prepared annually by the implementing partners as part of programme planning for approval of the programme Steering Committee (SC)¹². Budget re-allocation between outcomes and immediate outcomes, as well as use of unallocated funds, is subject to approval of the SC.

Outcome/Item	Budget (DKK Million)				TOTAL
	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Outcome 1: Enable and Amplify	15	30	36	39	120
Outcome 2: Protect & Defend	10	10	10	10	40
Reserved for Witness Africa		5	5	5	15
Advisory Board	1	1	1	1	4
M&E, Review, Technical Assistance	1,25	1,5	2	1,25	6
Unallocated		30	30	55	115
Total MFA Commitment	42,25	77,5	78	102,25	300

A budget line for thematic partnership is included to cater for partnerships targeting specific priority themes arising from programme learning during the first year of implementation. This may include a continuation of the current partnership with Witness Africa focused on digital resilience and combatting disinformation.

In line with the adaptive approach of the DDI there is a budget line with unallocated funds, allowing the programme to react to emerging opportunities, challenges, or accelerate documented good practices with a potential for scaling. Allocation of funds from this budget line is based on SC priorities and approval.

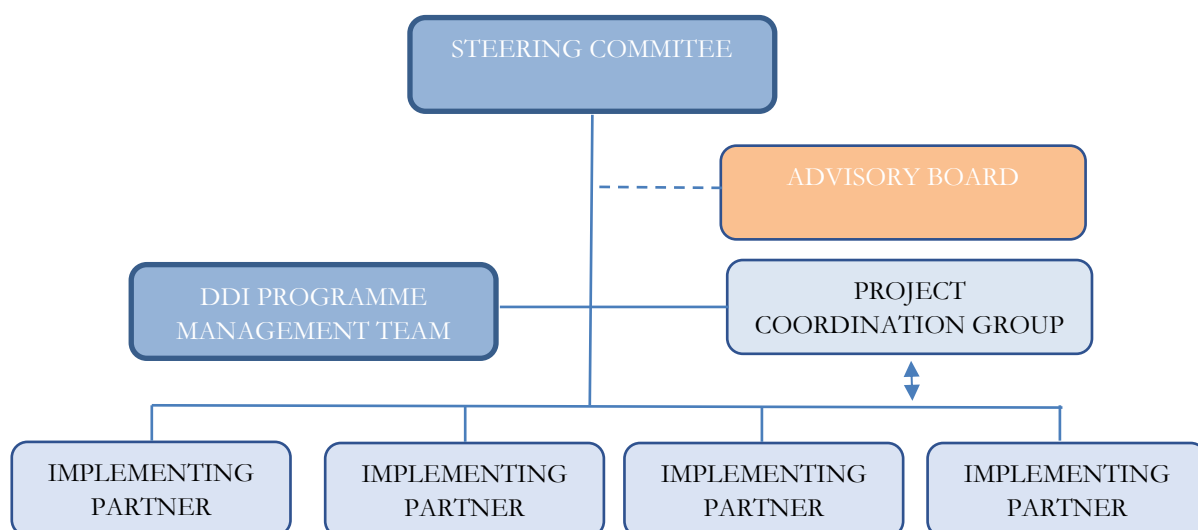
The budget line for M&E, and Review covers MFA management of the programme, including technical assistance, monitoring, costs associated with the SC, and mid-term review of the programme. The funds shall be managed by the PMT/HUMCIV in accordance with the Danida procurement rules and in close consultation with the SC. Additional donors and funding will require additional staff and management resources, and a percentage of new donor contributions shall be allocated towards programme management costs.

¹² Until other donors commit funding towards the DDI there shall be no steering committee established, and the PMT shall report to the head of HUMCIV within the established management and decision-making structures of the MFA.

6. INSTITUTIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENT

Overall, the programme is designed to combine development agreements and monitoring at project level, with programme level structures focused on strategic direction, guidance, and oversight. This provides a lean programme setup with flexibility for implementing partners to detail and adjust approaches and activities based on learning, needs and performance. It also ensures scope for ownership and adaptive management at project level, while ensuring programme level management focused on joint learning, synergies, direction setting and overall oversight.

The DDI is expected to be a multi-donor programme, where the MFA will manage and lead the programme on behalf of the contributing donors. In this light, there are two possible scenarios for the institutional and management arrangements of the DDI depending on whether the programme attracts additional donors. The main difference is that if the DDI becomes a multi-donor programme, a donor steering committee shall act as the highest decision-making level of the programme. *Until other donors commit funding towards the DDI there shall be no steering committee established, and the PMT shall report to the head of HUMCIV within the established management and decision-making structures of the MFA.*



Regardless of whether the programme becomes a multi-donor initiative, the MFA will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the programme according to the strategic guidance of the programme document. The MFA will also be responsible for the monitoring of constituent projects based on existing MFA guidelines and procedures, including Danida Aid Management guidelines and compliance with MFA rules and procedures on e.g. financial management, anti-corruption, safety and safeguarding, SHEA, etc. Project agreements are signed between the implementing partners for the respective projects and the MFA.¹³ Ongoing monitoring of projects, partner dialogue, and project to the programme is vested in a programme management team to be established within the MFA (HUMCIV). A project coordination group composed of partner representatives shall ensure project level synergy and programme level

¹³ The programme document is an annex to the legal bilateral agreements with the implementing partners and constitutes an integral part hereof together with the project document of each implementing partner.

dialogue between partners and the donor steering committee. Reflecting commitments to localisation, an Advisory Board shall be initiated to ensure local stakeholder input from civil society to strategic decision-making at both steering and project coordination level.

Meetings of programme structures shall coincide with the programme planning and reporting cycle outlined in the following section to enable reflection, dialogue, adaptation and approval of programme reporting, planning, and budgets. When possible physical meetings shall be held in conjunction with major programme events where partners are already present.

A programme agreement based on ToRs for individual management structures will be developed at the launch of the programme to formalise cooperation between the participating organisational entities. The agreement shall outline mutual obligations and decision-making structures with the programme and will be included in the contracting material. Outline of the role and responsibilities of each entity is outlined in the below sections.

6.1 Implementing partners and project level management

The implementing partners will undertake the daily management of the projects, with a dedicated project focal point and based on their established project and organisational structures as described in the individual project descriptions. Project agreements are signed between the implementing partners of the respective projects and the MFA. The DDI Programme Management Team shall be responsible for ongoing monitoring and partner dialogue at project level. The management of the projects is expected to ensure adequate dialogue, reporting, learning and timely decision-making regarding the project and its development, including possible adaptations to ensure achievement of agreed outcomes.

Current partners identified for the project include Access Now, CIVICUS, Digital Defenders Partnership and Global Focus. Additional partners may be identified during the implementation as part of the decision-making and vetting procedures instituted by the programme management structures and procedures.

6.2 Organisational set-up at programme level

DDI Steering Committee: A Steering Committee (SC) shall be established when additional donors contribute funding towards the DDI. Until then overall management of the programme shall take place within the established decision and accountability structures of the MFA. The SC is the governing body of the programme and consists of donors contributing to DDI. It provides strategic leadership, guidance, and final decision-making on the DDI programme strategy, direction, budget, and priorities, as well as overall oversight of partnerships and implementation. The SC will be comprised of two representatives from each contributing donor. The SC shall have quorum when each donor is present with one representative. The SC shall be chaired by the MFA (The head of HUMCIV). The SC will meet twice per year and decisions are taken by consensus. The Programme Management Team shall act as secretariat. Depending on agenda the project coordination group and/or representatives of the advisory group may be invited to SC meetings. It shall also be considered to add potential donors or donors strongly invested

in the ambitions of the programme as non-voting members of the SC to allow strategic exchange and policy coordination. Key responsibilities and functions of the SC include:

- Provide strategic direction, including programme level dialogue with partners and the Advisory Board.
- Final decision-making, including changes to programme, approval of annual budgets and plans and allocation of thematic, and unallocated funding (*SC programme level approval, chair project level approval*).
- Overall oversight of implementation including review of biannual programme reports, review reports, and other documentation and learning at programme level.
- Signing partnership and project agreement (*chair*).
- Oversight of the Programme Management Team (*chair*).
- Internal representation and support of synergies with other programmes of the represented donors.
- High level coordination with other related donor initiatives and mobilisation of additional donors and resources.
- External representative of DDI priorities and learning in high level policy forums and processes.

Budgets for steering committee meetings will be drawn from the programme budget line set aside for monitoring, review, technical assistance etc. A detailed ToR for the SC shall be developed by the Management Team to be discussed and adopted at its first constituting meeting, including details guiding participation of representatives of the Advisory Board to ensure its ability to guide and hold the SC accountable to local priorities and agendas.

DDI Programme Management Team: A Programme Management Team (PMT) shall be established within the MFA (HUMCIV) whether or not the programme becomes a multi-donor initiative. Without additional donors, the PMT will consist of the responsible desk officers and CFO of the responsible unit, who will manage the programme. If the DDI becomes a multi-donor programme, the PMT will report to the chair and act as secretariat to the SC. The main responsibility of the PMT is to ensure that the programme is implemented in accordance with the objectives of the programme document and the strategic guidance of the SC. The PMT will be responsible for ongoing monitoring and other obligations at the level of individual partner projects, ensuring programme level monitoring, learning, and review, and coordination with the Project Coordination Group to ensure that agreed strategic direction and decision is implemented by the partners. Key responsibilities and functions of the PMT includes:

- Project monitoring, partnership, and development agreement management at project level.
- Identification and capacity assessment of new potential partners.
- Ensure partners plan using similar minimum formats and compilation of annual plans at programme level
- Ensure that partner monitor and report using similar minimum formats and compilation of programme level reporting.

- Coordinate with project coordination group on implementation of programme level events and activities and represent the DDI at project or external events, fora, conferences or other, as relevant to the programme.
- Liaise, coordinate, and collaborate with project coordination group to facilitate programme level learning, synergy, monitoring and mitigation of risks, and adaptive management.
- Consolidation, documentation, and communication of programme learning to relevant internal and external stakeholders.
- Initiating additional spot or in-depth monitoring, learning and review complementing partner efforts at project level, including mid- and end-term review.
- Financial monitoring and control, in cooperation with relevant units within the MFA.

The budget line for monitoring, review, and technical assistance is set aside to support the function and tasks of the PMT. Function, tasks, composition, and budget of the PMT for each scenario are further outlined in the 'ToR for the PMT' annexed to the programme document.

Project Coordination Group: Before the launch of the programme, partners shall form a project coordination group (PCG), consisting of focal points and senior level representatives from all partners and relevant staff of the PMT. The PCG shall meet as a minimum twice per year. Partner organisations shall chair meetings on a rotating basis. Its main responsibility will be to ensure programme level coordination between projects, including joint events, synergies, and joint review of programme level learning, challenges, and opportunities. The PCG shall also act as the main forum for programme dialogue between the SC and partners, in close dialogue with the PMT. The PCG shall further serve as a forum for cooperation with the PMT in developing programme level plans and reports. Meetings of the PCG shall include representatives of the Advisory Board on agendas related to strategic direction and priorities. Key responsibilities and functions of the PCG includes:

- Reflection on learning, challenges, and opportunities relevant for the programme and individual projects.
- Coordination of joint or interrelated project activities and events.
- Identification of and strengthening programme level synergies.
- Coordination to support harmonisation of planning, M&E data collection, and reporting to support streamlining of programme level planning and reporting.
- Support and coordination with PMT on programme level planning and reporting and other joint programme deliverables.
- Monitoring and identification of programme level risks, challenges, and opportunities relevant to the programme.
- Programme level dialogue with the SC and the PMT on programme priorities, direction, and progress.

Management and coordination of the PCG shall be budgeted as part of the individual projects. A full ToR shall be prepared and adopted by partners prior to the launch of the programme.

Advisory Board: The Advisory Board will function as a consultative group with the purpose of safeguarding and strengthening the voices and perspectives of local civil society actors in the Global South, including formal civil society organisations and informally organised civil society actors. Representation of women, LGBTI+ and youth is a central priority in the composition. The perspectives of the Advisory Board will be key in relation to e.g. identifying contextual challenges and opportunities, programme implementation and direction, programme learning and review, or as sounding board for emerging policy or advocacy priorities. The Advisory Board shall be composed of local actors in the Global South and potential stakeholders of the programme as well as established civil society actors with expertise on localisation and the impact of digital technology on inclusive democracy. Based on agenda, individual experts from academia, the private sector, or other relevant realms, may be invited by the Advisory Board to participate and contribute to board meetings or events related to the initiative. The Advisory Board shall meet as a minimum twice per year, coinciding with the SC meeting, but may also be convened in part or in full to advise the PCG or other relevant platforms, for instance through expert panels at major events or for programme learning support. The Advisory Board shall nominate members to participate in the SC and the PCG meetings to be able to fulfil its mandate to advise and hold programme structures accountable to local priorities and agendas. Key responsibilities and functions of the Advisory Board include:

- Advising, guiding, and supporting reflections of the SC on programme design, priorities, direction, or lessons learnt;
- Advising the PCG on project design;
- Supporting and co-production of learning;
- Representation and expert opinion at programme and project level events;
- Participation in programme review and evaluation.

Global Focus shall act as secretariat to the advisory group. A more detailed ToR is annexed to the programme document.

6.3 Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning and reporting

The programme will be monitored through its constituent projects, and each implementing partner is responsible for project monitoring. Programme level monitoring will be based primarily on consolidation and summarisation of project level reporting. The monitoring will ensure that progress is tracked, implementation standards are met, and results are documented. The monitoring system seeks to support a DDD approach, with adaptive and iterative learning processes and space for adjustment of the intervention logic over time. A specific focus of ongoing monitoring will be on identifying lessons learnt and adapting projects and programme accordingly. Key moments in the annual programme cycle for consolidation of learning, project and programme feedback, and adaptation are presented during SC meetings, coinciding with annual planning as well as annual reporting. Further, more in-depth consolidation and adaptation will take place as part of programme review, stock-taking, and evaluation.

Project level monitoring: The monitoring and evaluation system will build on partners' results framework and monitoring approach as outlined in the individual project documents. Monitoring shall,

however, as a minimum conform with Danida guidelines and MEAL principles¹⁴ as well as with the reporting requirements outlined below.

Partners will undertake continuous monitoring of their projects and develop brief quarterly updates on project progress, issues affecting implementation, emerging learning, and opportunities for communication. The quarterly updates shall serve as input for reflections between partners and the PMT with the objective of assessing and adjusting the implementation of the project where relevant. Further, the updates shall inform PCG meetings and joint partner reflection, and consolidation of lessons learnt. In addition to quarterly updates, partners will ensure comprehensive annual reporting by 30 April, for the concluded year. The PCG shall cooperate with the PMT to ensure sufficient harmonisation to inform coherent monitoring and reporting at programme level. Reports should focus on tracking results at outcome level and lessons learnt, and address the following key issues:

- An assessment of developments in the contextual framework during the past year and how they affect the project;
- Implementation of the work plan and budget based on output targets for the reporting period, including brief explanations of challenges encountered and deviations from targets/milestones and how these have been addressed;
- Immediate outcome level results and progress to date compared with outcome targets for the entire project period as stipulated in the results framework;
- An analysis of risks, including both reflection on the current and the upcoming reporting period.
- Challenges encountered and specification of recommended changes and major adjustments (including budget re-allocations) for approval by the relevant SC (minor and ongoing adjustments are managed through quarterly updates and partner meetings with the PMT);
- Update on implementation of any decisions, direction, or recommendations provided from the SC, monitoring, reviews, etc.

Outcome level monitoring shall take place mid- and end project. Outcome level monitoring is the responsibility of individual partners but will be supported by programme level monitoring processes as outlined below.

Programme level monitoring: The PMT will quality control partner monitoring, and may undertake additional vetting, spot-checks or other in support of overall programme monitoring. Further, the PMT shall have the right to carry out any technical or financial supervision mission that is considered necessary to monitor the implementation of projects. After the termination of the programme and related project support, the MFA reserves the right to carry out evaluations in accordance with this article.

In addition to quality assurance, the PMT shall work with partners and the PCG to identify learning and relevant adjustments as part of quarterly updates and partner meetings, as well as more in depth annual stock-taking coinciding with the development of the annual report, including consolidation at programme level of lessons learnt, emerging challenges and opportunities, thematic priorities, or other.

¹⁴ These five principles include (1) tracking real-time progress, (2) continuous learning and identifying needs for adjustments, (3) ensuring the information exists for adaptive management, (4) documenting unintended effects, both positive and negative, and (5) assessing real impact on the ground.

The PMT will have the overall responsibility of maintaining an overview of project progress and consolidate and submit programme level reporting to the SC no later than 30 June for the previous implementation year. Monitoring and reporting at programme level shall provide sufficient information for the SC to assess if programme performance is as expected, but also to provide input to inform strategic guidance in terms of challenges, opportunities, risks, or other emerging issues relevant to the programme.

MEAL and Management summary table

MEAL activity	Timing	Stakeholders	Output
Annual plans and budgets project level	Annually (November)	Implementing partners/ PCG/	Annual project plans and budgets
Annual plans and budgets programme level	Annually (December)	PMT/SC/Advisory Board	Consolidated programme plan and budget
Activity monitoring	Constant	Partners	Quarterly progress reports
Risk monitoring	Quarterly	Partners	Quarterly progress reports
Collection of lessons learned	Quarterly	Partners	Quarterly progress reports
Project reflection, dialogue and adaptation	Quarterly	PMT/ partners PCG/PMT meeting	Meeting minutes. Quarterly status updates.
Budget monitoring	Bi-annual (Jan/June)	Partners/PMT	Expenditure statement
Narrative and financial reporting project level	Annually (30 April)	Partners, PMT,	Annual narrative and financial project reports
Reporting programme level	Annually (30 June)	PMT, SC	Annual Programme report
Annual stocktaking and strategic review	Annually (June)	PCG/PMT/SC/Advisory Board	PCG and SC Meeting minutes
Project audits	Annual (June)	Implementing partners	Audit reports
Inception	2023	Partners, PCG, PMT, SC	Updated ToC and results framework
Internal mid-term stock taking	2025/2026	PMT/PCG	Stock taking report
External mid-term Review	Mid 2025	External consultants	Mid-term review report
End of programme evaluation (optional)	End 2026	External consultants	Evaluation report

Mid-Term Review:

In addition to ongoing monitoring and learning, a mid-term review shall be planned for mid-2025 to ensure a mid-term status on combined progress towards programme level outcomes, reflection, and dialogue to validate and modify the ToC (including risks and assumptions), consideration of adjustments to existing or relevance of additional intervention areas, and quality of synergies. It shall also consider programme and project performance, including contribution to localisation and Southern leadership. An

end of project evaluation may also be considered to support documentation of results at outcome and impact level. An end of project evaluation may be undertaken end-2026. Mid-term review and end-of project evaluation shall contribute to impact and outcome measurement.

To assist planning and adaptation for the final year of the programme, as well as recommendations towards the formulation of a potential new phase of the DDI or alternatively a responsible exit strategy, an internal stock-taking review shall be managed by the PMT in cooperation with partners during 2025/2026. The stock-taking shall include the Advisory Board and local stakeholders to the programme. If an end of programme evaluation is undertaken, this may be merged with the internal stock-taking.

6.4 Communication of Results

The focus of DDI communication is to enhance visibility as well as dissemination of knowledge and results among key stakeholders and the general public. Communication of results shall take place both at project and programme level. Quarterly progress updates as well as annual reports shall include reflections on potential result narratives or opportunities for communication. Communication will also be managed as an integrated element of programme activities focused on learning, convening, networking, and dialogue, as well as participation and representation of the DDI by partners, the PMT or the SC to national or global events related to digital democracy.

7. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, PLANNING, AND REPORTING

Financial Management of the Danish funds will be undertaken by the partners in accordance with MFA's Financial Management Guidelines for Development Cooperation and any additional guidelines specified in the individual cooperation agreements.¹⁵ Partner will sign a development agreement with the MFA and be responsible for all financial planning and management according to MFA Guidelines including e.g. procurement, work planning, narrative financial progress reporting, accounting, and auditing. The programme will strive to use the procurement procedures of the selected implementing partners if these are found satisfactory in partner assessment. Sub-granting to other partners, can only be undertaken if it is part of the approved work plan and budget.

7.1 Co-funding arrangements

Funding from other donors shall be managed within the existing procedures of the MFA and as outlined in the programme. Additional funding for the programme shall prompt a revision of the overall budget, as well as any current annual plans and budgets of partners, based on the identified scaling opportunities of the programme. Additional funding shall include a contribution to programme management, including the PMT, and shall prompt a reflection and revision of staffing needs and structure.

¹⁵ <https://amg.um.dk/bilateral-cooperation/financial-management>

7.2 Disbursement, accounting, and procurement

Funds will be disbursed twice per year by the MFA to the project partners based on approved annual output level budgets and work plans. The initial transfer shall be made upon signature of contract. Following disbursements will be made January and July. Transfer requests shall be submitted by partners based on a disbursement schedule and in accordance with the MFA guidelines. Initial disbursement shall include the full half-year budget. Subsequent disbursement shall take into account the balance of funds previously received as documented in bi-annual expenditure reports, in order to avoid accumulation of funds for more than the coming six months. July disbursements shall be based on satisfactory narrative and financial reporting on previous periods. A receipt of funds shall be provided in writing within fourteen days following the receipt of funds. Partners shall establish a designated bank account for project funds. Accounts shall be output-based and at least at the same level as approved annual budgets. Procedures regarding cash handling, approval of expenditures, reporting, budget control and other internal control, including control of assets (fixed assets, stores, debtors, and cash) shall be based on sound financial management procedures and International Accepted Accounting Standards. At the end of the project any unspent balance or saving of project funds shall be returned to the MFA together with any interest accrued from Danish funds unless otherwise agreed.

7.3 Financial planning and reporting

Annual plans and budgets shall be submitted by each partner to the DDI PMT and SC no later than 30 November. Each project partner will provide annual financial reporting for the previous budget year to the DDI PMT and SC. Financial reporting shall be submitted by 31 March in the following year of reporting. The reports can be based on the operating formats of the implementing partner, but shall as a minimum correspond to the same level of detail as the approved annual output-based budget. It shall include budget figures, actual spending, and variance for the period under reporting and for the entire engagement period, as well as accumulated funds and funds received during the period. Approved budget reallocations shall be noted and deviations from the last approved budget shall be explained.

7.4 Audits

Partners shall submit annual audits of financial accounts of the previous year no later than 30 June. The audit period follows the calendar year. Audits shall be carried out as a stand-alone or special purpose audit i.e. covering only income and expenditure for the particular activities funded through the DDI. The audits shall be conducted in accordance with International Standards of Auditing (ISA) and shall include elements of compliance and performance audit. The basis for the compliance and performance audit must follow relevant International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAIs). The MFA reserves the right to claim full reimbursement of expenditure regarded ineligible according to the agreement between the parties. The audit report shall include a management letter/report. The accounting documentation shall at any time be available for scrutiny by the MFA and the Danish Auditor General.

7.5 Anti-corruption

All partners in the programme will strive to prevent corruption, including by actively working with risk management, sound financial management, transparency, and value for money while spending and procuring. Any partner will be committed to the highest standards of transparency, probity, and accountability, and will not tolerate fraud, bribery, or corruption. Upon suspicion or awareness of specific cases of corruption involving staff members and/or implementing partners in programmes and projects, the implementing partner is obliged to immediately notify the MFA in accordance with the “Zero Tolerance” Anti-Corruption Policy of the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The following standard corruption clause applies between the parties of this programme and shall be inserted in agreements signed with any recipients of funding under the project: *“No offer, payment, consideration or benefit of any kind, which could be regarded as an illegal or corrupt practice, shall be made, promised, sought or accepted – neither directly nor indirectly – as an inducement or reward in relation to activities funded under this agreement, including tendering, award or execution of contracts. Any such practice will be grounds for the immediate cancellation of entered agreements and for such additional action, civil and/or criminal, as may be appropriate. At the discretion of the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a further consequence of any such practice can be the definite exclusion from any other engagements funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”*

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management of the programme will primarily be based on implementing partners’ individual identification and management of risks. All project partners will actively assess contextual, programmatic and institutional risks and take regular management decisions towards mitigation. The assessment of changes in risks and mitigation strategies will be an integrated part of ongoing management and monitoring arrangements and will be incorporated into partners’ quarterly progress reports and annual reporting and associated dialogue with programme management structures.

The SC and PMT shall ensure dialogue, follow up and oversight of partnership risk management, and risk management shall be a standing item at SC meetings. A collective and consolidated consideration and revision of risks is undertaken at programme level as a part of annual stock taking. The SC may instruct the PMT to monitor programme specific risks identified by the SC and not reflected or captured at project level. The Advisory Board may also support identification of programme level risks.

Examples of project risks include:

- Risks, threats, intimidation, restrictive legislation, or other contextual challenges curtailing civil society stakeholders’ engagement in the programme.
- Differences in capacity, culture, or context limits stakeholders’ interest or ability to connect, network and collaborate.
- Barriers to inclusion limit the ability of the programme to reach out to and include harder-to-reach populations including rural actors, women, youth, LGBT+.
- Mismanagement or misuse of sub granted financial resources.

A full overview of risks, including assessment and mitigation can be found in Annex 4 to the programme.

9. INCEPTION AND CLOSURE

Start up and Inception: An inception period of six months is planned at the start of the programme. The inception period will provide time for stakeholder consultations and consolidation of initial learning. It shall include further reflection on input from the programme appraisal and public consultations and a final revision of the ToC and update of the results frameworks at programme and project level, as needed. It shall be concluded by a follow-up desk appraisal. Key tasks during start-up and inception includes:

- Development of annual work plan and budget for 2023.
- Development of programme baseline at outcome level.
- Consultation, update of ToR, and launch for programme structures.
- Individual ToR and identification and allocation of staff/consultants for the programme management team.
- Financial and narrative reporting workshop, including alignment of project and programme level reporting requirements and development of programme level reporting templates.
- Detailed development of CIVICUS sub-granting procedures, including guidance for partners on sub-granting windows, funding allocation, eligibility criteria, assessment criteria and procedures, as well as financial and administrative guidelines for sub-granting.
- Organisational assessment of CIVICUS and sub-granting partners.
- Learning and reflection workshop consolidating inception learning, including elaboration of target group, shared programme and project approaches, and expected synergies between projects.
- Desk capacity assessment of Witness and support to development of project proposal 2024-2026.
- Call for proposals for additional partners (based on additional funding).
- Update of programme and project description and results-framework as needed.

Closure: The programme is designed so that it can contribute significantly to the capacity of civil society partners and stakeholders to the programme within the existing four-year period (2023-2026) of the programme, but it is the expectation that the programme will be extended. The programme will actively work to ensure a broader and more sustainable funding base by attracting other donors through co-funding arrangements.

A mid-term review is planned for 2025, which will provide input to programme and partner level planning for both extension and potential exit. In the event of exit, the formal closure shall consist of implementing partners' final reports (from the projects) as well as a consolidated programme level report covering the full period of the programme. Final audits, closure of accounts, and return of unspent funds and accrued interest shall be undertaken within the first six months of 2027.

10. SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

10.1 Project One: CIVICUS and Global Focus

The project will enable CIVICUS and Global Focus to support local civil society actors (formally and informally organised civil society activists, organisations, human rights defenders) in the Global South, to use digital technology to strengthen inclusive democracy and civic space. The project will contribute to the first outcome of the DDI:



Enable and Amplify: *Inclusive democracy and civic space are expanded and protected through the improved use of digital technology for civic engagement by local civil society actors operating in restrictive contexts in the global south.*

The project will prioritise a locally-led approach, in which the interventions outlined below will be defined by local actors and support local initiatives. Local civil society actors and leaders – especially from traditionally marginalised groups - are the primary target group of this project and will play a direct role in the project’s governance, further co-designing and delivering its interventions, and assessing progress. This will be achieved through holistic financial and non-financial support to local actors that: 1) enables them to experiment, learn and take action; and 2) strengthens collaboration and local support ecosystems for civil society work on civic space and inclusive democracy.

As a growing global alliance of more than 14,000 members in 175 countries, CIVICUS members and partners work together to expand civic and democratic space, with a focus on promoting excluded voices, particularly from the Global South. CIVICUS’ extensive reach and inclusion of both formal and informal civil society, as well as its prioritisation of groups who are dually affected by structural discrimination and civic space restrictions, makes the organisation well positioned to address challenges related to digital inclusion and contribute to building local support and financing structures addressing existing gaps. The programme builds on existing networks, strengths and strategic commitments of CIVICUS, but also presents a significant expansion of CIVICUS’ engagement in digital democracy and sub-granting. The programme is conscious of inbuilt risks, but reflects that these are necessary in building new and more localised mechanisms for sub-granting and support, and justified in the complementary strengths that CIVICUS brings to the programme. In managing risks, the programme will ensure an in-depth capacity assessment of CIVICUS¹⁶ and potential intermediaries during inception and also cooperate on a piloting and gradual phasing in of budget and activities.

Global Focus has played a central role in the Danish Tech for Democracy initiative, acting as the civil society convener, engaging civil society organisation representatives, activists, and independent experts from more than 25 countries, including from the Global South. Both partners have been central in the #DKforCivicSpace agenda and can draw on expertise and partnerships to support activists – whether operating primarily online or offline – with resources, skills, tools and security to organise and take action for expanded civic and democratic freedoms.

¹⁶ Sida is providing substantial support and has commissioned an Internal Control System Review of CIVICUS, which is performed by KPMG. To the extent possible the organisational capacity assessment will build on finding and data from Sida.

Theory of change, assumptions and risks: The Theory of Change underpinning the DDI is that **IF** the support infrastructure and ecosystem for local civil society is strengthened and made more accessible to diverse actors, **IF** local civil society utilise newly available financial and non-financial resources and technical assistance to strengthen their capacities, and **IF** local pro-democratic civil society are empowered to test, learn and share innovative ways to amplify and protect inclusive democratic space, **THEN** local pro-democratic civil society working in restrictive environments in the Global South, including women, youth and informal civil society, will be better positioned to use digital technology for civic engagement to successfully amplify and advocate for inclusive democratic space online and offline. For this to happen, the key assumptions underpinning the ToC include:

- That access to funding and non-financial resources and knowledge-sharing and collaboration improves the ability of local actors to overcome existing/new forms of repression/anti-democratic power and enhance inclusive democratic space and processes.
- That local actors have interest and can see benefits in engaging in experience sharing and knowledge generation on the use of technology to promote inclusive democracy online and offline.
- That local actors, especially women and youth activists, have the time, readiness and interest to develop digital skills and to face or manage risks related to using digital technology to promote pro-democracy spaces and messaging.

Related to these assumptions, the project recognises the following risks:

- **Contextual risks:** new legislation that restricts civic and democratic space disrupts planned activities; government restrictions (e.g., crackdowns, increased surveillance, travel restrictions, or intimidation) make project participation impossible for target groups.
- **Programme risks:** activities take longer than expected given readiness of and reliance on local actors for coordination or delivery; target groups experience barriers to inclusion (e.g., internet access, language, etc.), differences in culture or context limit participants' ability to connect and collaborate; harder-to-reach populations including rural actors, women, youth, LGBT+ and other marginalised communities will not be equitably represented.
- **Institutional risks** – mismanagement or misuse of financial resources, lack of dynamic accountability mechanisms that are responsive to the project's multiple stakeholders; inability to sustain results due to funding constraints.

Outcomes and Intervention Areas: Reflecting the ToC, the project will contribute to the outcome through three areas of work targeting different levels of change (structural, organisational, and collective), all focused on different aspects of strengthening a localised approach to digital democracy.

1) Structural – Improving the support infrastructure and ecosystem for local civil society.

Indicative outputs for this area of work include: (a) developing and scaling tailored prototypes for *new* financial and non-financial support mechanisms, based on regional co-design exercises in the Global South that engage local actors, including formal and informal civil society representing diverse and traditionally excluded communities; (b) identifying and providing sub-grants to local, national or regional partners who will host financial and non-financial support mechanisms; and (c) targeted policy and

advocacy work at all levels that influences civil society, donors, enablers, and allies to further strengthen the ecosystem in support of local pro-democracy civil society actors.

2) Organisational (formal and informal) - Strengthening capacities of local pro-democratic civil society. Indicative outputs for this area of work include: (a) Local actors are supported to identify their unique needs, interests, opportunities, and risks, to ensure the appropriateness of - and their readiness for - sub-grants and additional support to strengthen their capacities for action on civic space and inclusive democracy; (b) Using new support mechanisms hosted by national and regional partners to distribute grants to local actors to develop digital capacities that strengthen inclusive democracy online and offline; (c) deepening and broadening relevant existing support mechanisms like expanding CIVICUS’ Crisis Response Fund to include resiliency grants for digital advocacy and collaborating with Global Focus’ Building Responses Together network for emergency support coordination; and (d) facilitated learning journeys that connect project participants with technical experts (global and local), provision of context and audience-specific resources and tools that support locally-led and globally distributed campaigns as well as national, regional and global solidarity and coalition-strengthening to build resilience and counterpower of the most affected groups and their movements.

3) Collective - Increasing and diversifying the number and type of local actors engaged in testing, learning, and sharing among peers. Indicative outputs for this area of work could include: (a) digital action lab that supports diverse groups of local civil society actors (particularly those historically excluded such as rural groups, indigenous peoples, women, youth, and LGBT+) to strengthen digital literacy and experiment with new digital approaches and activities. Piloted approaches and lessons learned will be documented and shared to support other local actors organising and campaigning for expanded civic and democratic freedom both online and offline; (b) global digital knowledge hub that curates information and knowledge products – including from other DDI projects and beyond – in localised and accessible formats and enables peer-learning within and across borders about digital technologies’ challenges, opportunities, and impact on civic engagement and inclusive democratic space; and (c) investment in locally-led cross-regional testing, learning, and sharing facilitated through new and existing strategic networks.

Each activity stream works towards a corresponding immediate objective contributing to the long-term outcome as reflected in the below summary of the project results framework.

Outcome	Outcome 1. Enable and Amplify: Inclusive democracy and civic space are expanded and protected through the improved use of digital technology for civic engagement by local civil society actors operating in restrictive contexts in the Global South.
Outcome indicator	<p>1.a. No. and extent to which local civil society actors in the Global South, including women, youth, and other traditionally excluded groups, are influencing changes to policies, practices and processes that expand inclusive democratic space (Mid-term review (MTR) and end of programme evaluation (EPV)).</p> <p>1.b. No. and type of organising and advocacy actions and/or digital campaigns led by local civil society actors in the Global South that amplify inclusive pro-democracy spaces and agendas online and offline (MTR & EPV)</p> <p>1.c. No. and type of local collaborators with strengthened digital capacities (MTR and EPV)</p>

Immediate Outcome 1.1	Responsive support infrastructure and ecosystems that enable increased use of digital technology to promote inclusive democratic spaces by more diverse local civil society actors are strengthened and made more accessible by local (national/regional) partners.
Immediate Outcome Indicator(s)	1.1.a.: No.# of regional, financial and non-financial support mechanisms that contributed to advancing inclusive democratic spaces offline and online 1.1.b.: No. and type of local civil society actors contributing to design and iteration of financial and non-financial support mechanisms for actions that contributed to advancing inclusive democratic spaces offline and online 1.1.c.: Extent to which mechanisms developed for stronger digital support and infrastructure enhance local civil society actors' online and offline organising and mobilising to protect and expand democratic spaces
Immediate Outcome 1.2	Capacities of diverse local civil society actors are strengthened through provision of financial and non-financial resources including locally tailored, gender-responsive, and resilience building technical assistance.
Immediate Outcome Indicator(s)	1.2.a.: No. and type of local civil society actors reporting strengthened capacities to promote and protect democratic freedoms and spaces offline and online, disaggregated by type of actor (e.g., individual, informal group, women's rights organisation, youth group, etc.). 1.2.b.: Cases assessing the extent to which local partners developed and implemented strategies to institutionalise new capacities/skills for more sustained impact. 1.2.c.: Number of programme partners and resourcing mechanism host partners involved in successful project collaborations, disaggregated by partner type.
Immediate Outcome 1.3	Innovative, locally responsive actions that amplify and protect inclusive democratic space are tested, learned, documented, shared, and utilised among diverse local civil society actors, deepening knowledge and enhancing action both online and offline.
Immediate Outcome Indicator(s)	1.3.a.: No. of context and target group-specific tools and resources that are created and/or shared by the project (across all immediate outcomes) promoting peer learning about digital technology, particularly those created by women, youth, and LGBT+-led groups 1.3.b.: Extent to which local civil society actors use knowledge and learnings generated for action to safeguard and create more democratic and civic space (MTR & EPV)

Sub-granting: All three intervention areas rely on sub-granting as a means to support and demonstrate solidarity with local pro-democracy civil society (see budget in Annex 5 for estimated allocations for sub-granting). The management of sub-grants will align with CIVICUS's sub-granting guidelines, in compliance with Danida aid management guidelines (included as an attachment in the annex). Sub-grants will only be made to OECD DAC countries. All sub-grants will be managed by CIVICUS and its dedicated DDI team. However, sub-grants made to resourcing mechanism hosts are to be re-granted to local civil society partners. This re-granting will be subject to the policies and procedures of the mechanism host organisations. These policies and procedures will be assessed by CIVICUS prior to the issuing of any sub-grants. Overall parameters for sub-grants will be defined for the programme during inception in dialogue with stakeholders and will allow sufficient flexibility for more specific parameters decided via regional co-creation processes (for more details on initial consideration on sub-granting see project 1, including sub-granting annex).

Target Group: The target group of the project is local civil society in developing countries. The project will have a specific focus on supporting and connecting civil society that works to expand civic and democratic freedoms, especially underrepresented or marginalised actors, including women, youth, and informal civil society. The project defines "local civil society" as composed of diverse civil society actors (individuals, organisations, human rights defenders) established and operating in their own country, and led by and primarily accountable to the local constituents they serve or represent. For the purposes of this project we will primarily target local civil society actors in countries in the Global South.

Synergies with other projects: The project will work to link local civil society actors engaging in the project with partners and activities under outcome 2, including 1) pre-emptive digital security assessments and support to strengthen their digital resilience and limit their vulnerabilities, and crisis response support when faced with new or emerging civic space threats or risks, 2) opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and networks, as well as share their experiences and lessons learned, as participants in RightsCon, and 3) opportunities to support or participate in coordinated advocacy efforts to protect and expand digital rights. Similarly, this project will expand the reach of other programme partners to include new geographies and constituencies, support knowledge sharing or innovation transfer across the wider programme and facilitate collective action for greater impact.

Implementation Modalities: The project approach aligns with DDI programme priorities and identifies smaller, less formal pro-democracy groups and movements in the Global South as the target group, with an emphasis on those representing traditionally excluded communities, such as women and youth, who are dually affected by structural discrimination and restrictions on civic and democratic freedoms. The project approach also reflects CIVICUS' and Global Focus member organisations' experience engaging with these actors, i.e.:

- Inclusion of an extensive project implementation co-design process during the inception period with an emphasis on shifting power, ownership and decision-making to local actors.
- Creation of inclusive, accessible, safe, trust-building spaces that help to break down barriers to participation for marginalised groups.
- Intersectional and power-sensitive support and solidarity mechanisms that promote cross-issue and cross-movement collaboration so that resourcing reflects the diversity and intersectionality of civil society and its struggles.
- Commitment to project management that is dynamic, experimental, iterative and reflective.
- Adherence to the principle of 'do no harm'.

The project prioritises investment in infrastructure and support ecosystems for locally led action on democracy and civic space. CIVICUS will utilise its strong relationships with Global South civil society working globally (e.g., Vuka! Coalition for Civic Action), regionally (e.g., Innovation for Change regional hubs, CHARM-Africa), and nationally (e.g., Affinity Group of National Associations) to build local infrastructure and provide local leadership for this initiative. By taking this approach, the project prioritises local knowledge and decision-making and centres local actors as responders to capacity needs and as leaders in determining funding priorities and recipients.

Global Focus will have a specific role in supporting work under immediate outcome 3 by ensuring that learning, knowledge, and convening happens in synergy with and drawing upon existing Tech for

Democracy networks. The interventions of this project will be anchored in the working groups of Global Focus, especially the Civic Space Working Group and the Tech for Democracy Working Group, thereby creating synergies with existing civic space activities as well as other relevant thematic areas. The project will be aligned with the management set-up and reporting structures of other grants.

Management, monitoring and reporting: Beyond being situated within the overall governance structures of the DDI, the project will be managed via the CIVICUS secretariat, including representatives of the Senior Leadership Team. Elements of the project will be led by Global Focus as a global implementing partner, along with other regional and national delivery partners (TBC). Partner roles, responsibilities and work plans will be overseen by CIVICUS. Project monitoring, evaluation and learning will be incorporated into the CIVICUS Integrated Results Framework and draw upon capacity and expertise from the CIVICUS Impact & Accountability team.

Budget and financial management: The budget allocated to the project outcome is set at DKK 115 million for CIVICUS and DKK 5 million for Global Focus for the programme period and allocated in four annual tranches. Separate contracts will be established with each of the implementing partners. The project will be managed (a) within the established systems and internal controls of each partner to manage risks and ensure that financial resources are used in an ethical and efficient manner towards the achievement of objectives; and (b) in accordance with the overall programme requirements. Annual plans will clearly distinguish between outputs delivered by each partner.

10.2 Project Two: Digital Defenders Partnership

The project will support the Digital Defenders Partnership (DDP) to provide emergency support to civil society activists, organisations, and human rights defenders (HRDs). DDP supports efforts to ensure that more sustainable and long-term digital protection measures are in place for civil society actors. Together with Access Now, DDP will contribute to the second outcome of the Digital Democracy Initiative:



Defend and Protect: *Strengthened digital resilience and security of pro-democracy civil society actors, and more rights-respecting policies and standards safeguarding the use of digital technologies and online space.*

As an existing and well performing partner of Denmark, DDP is well placed as an implementing partner focused on contributing to the DDI's second outcome to Defend and Protect. DDP is a globally recognized actor in protecting civil society and digital activists, and its holistic and feminist approach to protection is highly regarded by its partners. DDP has an explicit focus on localisation and on Gender Equality and Diversity Inclusion.

Theory of change, assumptions and risks: The project ToC is centred around DDP's current strategy (2020-2023)¹⁷: **IF** civil society activists, organisations, and human rights defenders (HRDs) are provided with timely, flexible and holistic emergency response resources to reduce the impact or risk of digital attacks against them, **IF** their awareness and capacities for sustainable and effective responses to digital

¹⁷ The overarching ToC of DDP in its entirety will be leveraged to contribute to outcome 2 of the DDI (Defend and Protect). Immediate outcomes 1-3 are aligned with the main areas of work of DDP grounded in the current strategic plan for 2020-2023. Beyond this, a new strategy will be developed for the period of 2024-2026, which will build closely on the current plan. Denmark will be actively consulted in this process.

threats are strengthened, and **IF** collaborative, resilient and responsive networks of expertise and support for HRDs are developed, maintained and supported, **THEN** HRDs will remain resilient to closing civic space and can continue to effectively use the Internet and Information and Communications Technology to promote and defend human rights. Key assumptions underpinning the ToC include:

- Attacks against HRDs in the digital sphere have strong negative impact on their capacity as pro-democracy actors
- Civic space and democracy will be sustainably strengthened by protecting HRDs against digital attacks
- The holistic approach offered by DDP is effective in supporting HRDs from a wide range of backgrounds and geographies
- DDP has sufficient resources, reach and access to information and networks to quickly identify and respond to the most urgent needs of HRDs globally

Critical risks to the programme include:

- Conflict, war, political contexts or environmental crises create challenges for the HRDs to keep working on their projects
- DDP receives too many requests for support (not enough capacity to respond or funding to grant)
- Lack of capacity in the execution of the programme.

Outcomes and Intervention Areas: Corresponding to the ToC, DDP works through three mutually reinforcing activity streams:

- 1) Short-term holistic incident emergency response through emergency funding, advice and referrals, and the provision of tools and services.
- 2) Long-term sustainable protection support through Sustainable Protection Funding, long-term organisational accompaniment and strengthened capacities to respond of global and regional partners.
- 3) Field-building through facilitation and community building, through Community Network Funding, holistic security trainings and spaces or resources for exchange, dialogue and learning.

All three activities rely on grant-making as a key intervention strategy, complemented by advice and referral, the provision of tools and services and the facilitation and resourcing of spaces for exchange between other protection providers (see further details in the full project document). Each activity stream works towards a corresponding immediate objective contributing to the long-term outcome as reflected in the below summary of the project results framework.

Outcome 2	DEFEND AND PROTECT: Strengthened digital resilience and security of pro-democracy civil society actors, and more rights-respecting policies and standards safeguarding the use of digital technologies and online space.
Outcome indicator(s)	2a. Positive developments in global context relating to the protection of HRDs 2.b Evidence (case-studies, blogs) of impact of DDP on HRDs long-term capacity and resilience to continue their work, including the impact of gender, youth, and informal actor support.

Immediate Outcome 2.1	HRD organisations, individuals or networks can prevent or recover from digital threats (including threats to digital rights) in high-risk contexts, and indicate an improvement in their security capacities resulting from the DDP support.
Immediate Outcome Indicator(s)	2.1a % and total of HRD individuals (disaggregated by gender), organisations, and networks that are able to continue their human rights work after receiving DDP Incident Emergency Funding (IEF), Sustainable Protection Funding (SPF), Digital Protection Accompaniment, or engaging with resources. 2.1b % and total of HRDs who receive support from DDP directly or DDP-supported Global and Regional Partner projects who indicate an improvement in their security capacities resulting from the support.
Immediate Outcome 2.2	HRDs have access to strengthened global and more localised organisations, networks and individuals providing digital security, protection and digital rights support to civil society and report increased resilience and sustainability.
Immediate Outcome Indicator(s)	2.2a % and total of recipients of DDP Global and Regional Partnership Funding who report that DDP support contributed to their resilience and sustainability. 2.2b % and total of Global and Regional Partnerships who successfully collaborate on projects. 2.2c % and total of HRD organisations/networks and organisational focal points that report increased capacity to respond to digital threats after receiving organisational accompaniment.
Immediate Outcome 2.3	Accessible, collaborative, resilient and responsive networks of expertise and support for HRD organisations, individuals or networks under digital threat are developed and strengthened.
Immediate Outcome Indicator(s)	2.3a Reported improved collaboration on emergency support cases among Rapid Responder Network members. 2.3b % and total of Field Building participants who indicate an improvement of their knowledge and capacities.

Target Group: DDP reaches two main target groups: 1) *Human Rights Defenders under threat*, including activists, bloggers, civil society organisations, journalists, and other users of digital tools and platforms to promote and defend human rights; and 2) *Responders to Digital Emergencies*, including networks of individuals and organisations both formal and informal, community-based, regional and international who provide rapid response, long-term accompaniment, emergency assistance, advice and tools to human rights defenders under digital threat. Particular at-risk groups are prioritized for outreach and access to grants:

- Actors who collect, interpret, and make data available for the broader public.
- Environmental, indigenous, and land rights defenders.
- LGBT+ communities and those who protect and defend their rights.
- Women and gender rights defenders and groups.
- Youth (new priority in line with emerging needs and DDI priorities).

Most of DDP's support and activities are *demand-driven*, which is reflected in its wide and flexible geographic scope. Recent DDP activities have primarily taken place in the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America. Priorities are reviewed annually and may also be aligned with specific donor priorities.

Grantees, capacity-building beneficiaries and partners for emergency incident response, sustainable protection, and field-building activities are selected through a combination of open and restricted calls and active outreach and referrals (see DDP Grant Types and Criteria).

Synergies with other projects: Within the *outcome area 2 (Defend and Protect)*, DDP's contribution is complementary to the activities undertaken by Access Now, which will focus largely on the advocacy dimension. The campaigns that Access Now coordinate, their annual RightsCon gathering, and the daily newsletters are adding value to the DDP team. The beneficiaries of DDP benefit from the work of Access Now through their helpline (in case direct short advice is needed), the RightsCon gathering and the advocacy campaigns that lead to new input to (local) laws.

On *outcome area 1 (Enable and Amplify)*, DDP will closely collaborate and coordinate with the Southern-based partners of CIVICUS and Global Focus to provide advice and access to digital security resources, networks and referral to other funding mechanisms to grantees and team members (also see output 2.1.4). DDP's emergency funding is open to all DDI partners and vetting can be simplified by creating a trusted connection between regional teams of support of the different partners. All public resources and spaces for collaboration will be shared among partners.

Implementation Modalities: A rights-based and people-centred approach are central to DDP's approach, and the core values of DDP are closely aligned with the programme principles of the DDI:

- **Localisation and local leadership:** Localisation is a key priority and on-going process for DDP. As of 2022, DDP has a decentralized decision making and implementation structure within 4 regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America & Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, as well as a coordination team consisting of 8 nationalities from each of those regions.
- **Working with informal actors, youth inclusion and gender equality:** Across all DDP activities, particular attention is paid to the inclusion of informal, marginalized and particularly at-risk actors (see target groups). Gender equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) efforts are grounded in a dedicated GEDI strategy rooted in feminism and intersectionality, an internal GEDI working group and external GEDI advise group.
- **Learning, Knowledge and Convening:** Internal and external learning cuts across all activities, with a particular emphasis on Activity 3 (facilitation and community building). Grantees, local partners and global partners are all key participants in these processes.

Management, monitoring and reporting: The monitoring and evaluation of DDP activities aims to identify progress towards results, promote decisions that would increase the likelihood of achieving results and enhance accountability and learning. DDP has a well-established M&E system that monitors the effectiveness and impact of DDP interventions. Annual narrative, financial and audit reports cover all DDP activities, while leaving room to highlight specific donor contributions or regional priorities.

Budget and financial management: The budget allocated to the project will be DKK 20 million for 4 years of implementation for the DDP project under Outcome 2 Defend and Protect, which will be made available in 4 tranches; in 2023-2025 a tranche of 4,990,704 DKK per year and DKK 5,027,888 in 2026.

On average DDP receives funding from 6 governmental funders, each contributing to (all or specific) DDP activities and a total annual budget of about EUR 3.5 million. DDP is managed by the Dutch INGO Hivos and DDP uses all necessary and relevant Hivos policies (like risk control management, safeguarding) and tools (like grants and accounting AllSolutions). Individual funder contributions are tracked individually in the Hivos accounting system. Each payment for the project is uniquely placed and traceable with a combination of a) the DDP programme number 105, b) the phase number (donor contribution per year), c) the budget line code and d) type of costs (cost component), allowing the DDP Programme Team to report on overall DDP basket fund as well as individual donor contributions. DDP annual reports (annual plan, previous year report and audited financial report) are shared with all donors in March. DDP can contribute to DDI programme reporting needs in between.

DDP uses all Hivos procedures for project implementation and reporting (Hivos general terms and conditions, partner risk control procedures, procurement, fraud and irregularities, time writing, integral fee rates, safeguarding, anti-corruption, partner reminders and blacklisting procedure).

10.3 Project Three: Access Now

The project will support Access Now's strategic convening and its grassroots-to-global advocacy (including comprehensive policy guidance, campaigning and coalition building, programmatic legal advice, and communications and engagement). Together with DDP, Access Now will contribute to the second outcome of the Digital Democracy Initiative:



Defend and Protect: *Strengthened digital resilience and security of pro-democracy civil society actors, and more rights-respecting policies and standards safeguarding the use of digital technologies and online space.*

Access Now plays a critical role as a convenor by bridging the grassroots and the global, and by facilitating collaboration across regions, sectors, and stakeholder groups to help directly connect people and communities at risk with decision-makers in order to build communities of action. As an existing and well performing partner to Denmark, a globally recognised expert and convening organisation on digital rights, and with a strong and growing network in the Global South, Access Now is well placed to succeed as an implementing partner focused on the DDI's policy and advocacy impact area.

Theory of change, assumptions and risks: The ToC of the project is that **IF** there is greater support for protecting and defending civil society and civic space online at the local, regional, and international levels, with a specific focus on supporting Global South civil society, through Access Now's strategic advocacy efforts, and **IF** there is a sustained multi-stakeholder and global network of civil society actors, technologists, policymakers, and business leaders working collectively to strengthen democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in the digital age through the RightsCon Summit Series, **THEN** the digital resilience of pro-democratic civil society actors will be strengthened, and there will be more rights-respecting policies and standards safeguarding the use of digital technologies and online space.

Key assumptions underpinning this ToC include:

- It is possible to safely conduct outreach and engagement with human rights defenders and other members of civil society within the Global South.
- It is possible to build and maintain a strong and diverse network of stakeholders and partners, which helps ensure that the rights of actors for change and users at risk are represented whenever possible.
- It is possible to ensure the physical and digital security of Global South participants leading up to and throughout the convening.
- It is possible to track and keep pace with rapidly changing local contexts.
- It is possible to successfully advocate for accountability within the region despite the widespread lack of processes for ensuring it.

Critical risks to the programme include:

- Access Now and its local civil society partners may struggle to keep up with rapidly changing local contexts.
- Lack of gender balance and representation in critical policy debates or discussions.
- Civil society may be cut out of international or local processes, and may not have a seat at the table where critical decisions related to the protection of human rights in the digital age are made.

Access Now has significantly invested in its efforts to better manage and mitigate risks facing the organisation and its programs. This has resulted in the growth of a dedicated SecOps team responsible for expanding, implementing, and maintaining global risk management structures, procedures, and mechanisms.

Outcomes and Intervention Areas: Corresponding to the ToC Access Now will work through two mutually reinforcing intervention areas.

1) **Building greater support for civil society and civic space online.** Access Now's policy and advocacy efforts will engage, inform, and guide key stakeholders on the most pressing digital rights threats to civil society and civic space. Access Now will deliver timely, reliable, and compelling evidence of digital threats to key decision-makers around the world, as well as specific recommendations for preventing and mitigating those harms. To support Global South civil society in particular, Access Now will also engage in coalitions and partnerships with local civil society, amplifying their voices, perspectives, and experiences to help expand their reach and advocacy power.

2) **Sustaining a multi-stakeholder and global network.** Access Now's RightsCon Summit Series will convene local civil society actors, human rights defenders, technologists, digital security practitioners, policymakers, lawyers, regulators, business leaders, investors and more from around the world on an annual basis. RightsCon is a central focal point for multi-stakeholder coordination and engagement on the most pressing issues affecting the safety and security of civil society, and more broadly, the digital environment as a whole.

These intervention areas work towards two immediate outcomes contributing to the long-term outcome, as reflected in the below summary of the project results framework.

Outcome 2	Strengthened digital resilience and security of pro-democracy civil society actors, and more rights-respecting policies and standards safeguarding the use of digital technologies and online space
Outcome indicator(s)	2c. Material changes in local, national, and international policies, processes, and practices protecting and defending civil society and civic space online.
Immediate Outcome 2.4	Greater support for protecting and defending civil society and civic space online from key stakeholders at the local, regional, and international levels, with a specific focus on supporting Global South civil society.
Immediate Outcome Indicator(s)	2..4a. Commitments from key stakeholders supporting, affirming, and advancing the need to protect and defend civil society and civic space online, especially in the Global South, in response to policy and advocacy efforts.
Immediate Outcome 2.5	A sustained multi-stakeholder and global network of civil society actors, technologists, policymakers, and business leaders working collectively to strengthen democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in the digital age.
Immediate Outcome Indicator(s)	2.5a. Coalitions and partnerships built, campaigns and projects launched, statements made, and actions taken over the course of RightsCon 2.5b. Percentage of participants returning from previous RightsCon events 2.5c. Percentage of participants experiencing that RightsCon advanced their work

Target Groups: Main project beneficiaries span across civil society, from democracy activists and human rights defenders to members of marginalized communities and organisations operating in the Global South. The project’s beneficiaries regularly engage in the defence of fundamental rights, addressing the many unique challenges of at-risk individuals and communities, for example by advocating for freedom of expression, the right to privacy, democracy and rule of law, and LGBT+ and women’s rights. The project also targets the private sector, governments, and multilateral and intergovernmental organisations, to uphold their responsibility to respect, promote, and realize human rights – and to advance democracy at all levels, both online and off.

Synergies with other projects: RightsCon will provide a key space for programme partners and their local grantees and networks to meet, discuss, and share resources about the global and local state of democracy, and the challenges and threats faced by civil society, specifically by the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Additionally, Access Now’s project plan will not only complement DDP’s work to ensure the realisation of Outcome 2, but also coordinate with partners working to achieve Outcome 1, especially on advocacy initiatives of the respective projects. Lastly, the project will work to foster knowledge and expertise sharing across the partnership and beyond, expanding the reach of impact of the programme as a whole.

Implementation Modalities: Access Now is an international civil society organisation that has worked at the intersection of human rights and technology since its founding in 2009 with the mission to **defend and extend the digital rights of people and communities at risk**. Access Now partners with local actors to bring a human rights agenda to the use, development, and governance of digital technologies,

and to intervene where technologies adversely impact human rights. Core values of Access Now are closely aligned with the programme principles of the DDI.

- Access Now shares the Danish DDI's commitment to **support the most vulnerable**, as an integrated understanding of supporting people and communities most at risk. To that end, and in recognition of the heightened challenges that specific groups face, Access Now takes a deliberately intersectional approach across all areas of work.
- Working with **local partner organisations** is core to the mission of Access Now. This work includes continuing to invest in regional capacity and being guided by local team members who are deeply embedded in specific contexts and communities. It also includes a commitment to always work in partnership with and in support of local actors and amplify their expertise and experiences in networks and key multilateral fora.

Management, monitoring and reporting: This project will leverage a number of planning, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms that the organisation uses to track its progress towards planned outcomes, and to ensure the realisation of the project's overall and specific objectives. These mechanisms include **Quarterly Operational and Project Plan Reviews**, which involve an assessment of the specific objectives set out by each individual staff member, programmatic teams, and the organisation as a whole. The reviews will be supported by the **Arc to Outcomes Project Planning Framework**, a unique project planning framework to effectively develop long-term project plans across programmatic areas, providing a robust monitoring over the life of the project. These instruments, along with additional assessments during weekly meetings, biweekly senior management meetings, monthly global team check-ins, and frequent, ad-hoc collaborative sessions across the organisation, will be used to monitor the progress of the project — from the implementation of project activities to the delivery of project outputs and eventually the realisation of project outcomes.

Budget and financial management: A budget of 20,000,000 DKK is allocated toward project outcomes, which will be disbursed in bi-annual tranches. Financial management will be based on established procedures and experiences of managing donor funds. The finance team of Access Now will work to ensure sound fiscal management of all proper funds and is further supported by independent, external accountants as well as an external auditing firm. Oversight processes include monthly time allocation forms, credit card reconciliations, reimbursement requests, and general month-end settlements. Previous independent reviews of Access Now's internal controls have found no significant deficiencies, and the most recent organisational audit resulted in no findings or recommendations from its external auditors.