

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark


















2022-32406

DIGITAL DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE

Final Programme Document

November 2022

Digital Democracy Initiative

<p>Key results:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Justification for support:</p> <p>The overall programme focuses on inclusive democracy, civic space, support to civil society, and localisation responds to key priorities in “The World We Share”</p> <p>The programme focus on the impact of digital technology on democratic space, is a specific priority in the Danish Development strategy and the Danish Tech for Democracy Initiative.</p> <p>The programme builds on lessons learnt and partnerships within the #DKforCivicSpace, responds to Danish commitment made within the Danish Tech for Democracy Initiative, and corresponds to stakeholder priorities and recommendations formulated as part of the MFA scoping study on Democracy in the Digital Age.</p> <p>Major risks and challenges:</p> <p>Risks, threats, intimidation, of civil society stakeholders engaging in the programme.</p> <p>Capacity, culture, or context limits stakeholders’ interest or ability to connect, network and collaborate.</p> <p>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+.</p> <p>Mismanagement or misuse of sub granted financial resources.</p>	File No.	2022-32406				
	Country	Interregional				
	Responsible Unit	HCE				
	Sector	15150 Democratic participation and civil society				
	<i>DKK million</i>	2023	2024	2025	2026	Tot.
	Commitment	50	50	50	50	
	Projected Disbursement	35,43	51,52	54,52	58,53	200
	Duration	48 months				
	Finance Act code.	06.32.08.70				
	Head of unit	Fenja Yamaguchi-Fasting				
	Desk officer	Tue K. Westhoff / Rasmus G. Dorph				
	Reviewed by CFO	NO / YES:				
Relevant SDGs <i>[Maximum 5 – highlight with grey]</i>						
 No Poverty	 No Hunger	 Good Health, Wellbeing	 Quality Education	 Gender Equality	 Clean Water, Sanitation	
 Affordable Clean Energy	 Decent Jobs, Econ. Growth	 Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure	 Reduced Inequalities	 Sustainable Cities, Communities	 Responsible Consumption & Production	
 Climate Action	 Life below Water	 Life on Land	 Peace & Justice, strong Inst.	 Partnerships for Goals		

Objectives for stand-alone programme:

Promote & protect digital democracy in the digital age

Environment and climate targeting - Principal objective (100%); Significant objective (50%)

	Climate adaptation	Climate mitigation	Biodiversity	Other green/environment
Indicate 0, 50% or 100%	0	0	0	0
Project 1	0	0	0	0
Project 2	0	0	0	0
Project 3	0	0	0	0
Total green budget (DKK)	0	0	0	0

Project 1: Enable & Amplify	Partner	Total thematic budget: [million]
Engagement 1 - the development project	CIVICUS & Global Focus	102.021.496
Engagement 2 – M&E, indirect costs, or other		9.452.699
Engagement 3 – contingencies/un-allocated funds		8.525.805
Total		120.000.000

Project 2: Protect & Defend	Partner	Total thematic budget: [mill.]
Engagement 1 - the development project	Digital Defenders Partnership	19.646.528
Engagement 2 – M&E, indirect costs, or other		117.712
Engagement 3 – contingencies/un-allocated funds		235.760
Total		20.000.000

Project 3: Protect & Defend	Partner	Total thematic budget: [mill.]
Engagement 1 - the development project	Access Now	18.600.000
Engagement 2 – M&E, indirect costs, or other		1.400.000
Engagement 3 – contingencies/un-allocated funds		0
Total		20.000.000

MFA Allocation	Managed by MFA/HCE	Total thematic budget: [mill.]
Programme Structures, M&E, Review, etc		10.000.000
Reserved for thematic partnerships		15.000.000
Un-allocated funds		15.000.000
Total		40.000.000
	Programme support	0
	Total	200.000.000

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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
HCE:	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 Danish flagship for safeguarding democracy and human rights in the Global South and will respond to global democratic challenges. The objective of the DDI is to promote and protect local inclusive democratic space in the digital age through two mutually reinforcing outcome areas. Firstly, the Programme will enable local civil society to utilise digital technology in order to amplify efforts to promote inclusive democracy. Secondly, the Programme will work to defend and protect local civil society from antidemocratic misuse of digital technology.

The DDI is a significant contribution to the agenda for localisation and local leadership through direct sub-granting support to local change agents, grassroots movements, social movements and informal actors fighting for democratic development and human rights. Specifically, the Programme seeks to contribute to building an ecosystem underpinning local civil society in the Global South, particularly in countries where democratic trends are sliding backwards, and civic space is under pressure. The Programme will extend assistance to women, youth and marginalised groups as well as informal actors and social movements, often challenged in accessing funding and other resources.

The DDI is part of and complements the Danish-led multi-stakeholder initiative, Tech for Democracy and responds to key priorities in the Danish Development Strategy, “The World We Share”. 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. By combining projects in a common framework, the Programme will work to enhance synergies between partners and actors working with digital democracy as an established agenda and local civil society actors not yet engaged, thereby aiming to broaden, connect and localise civil society efforts towards the promotion and protection of democracy in a digital age.

The Programme design provides a flexible scalability and is expected to establish 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, but additional partners may be identified during implementation based on the decision and vetting procedure established by the Programme and in alignment with its Theory of Change (ToC). The 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 track record of delivering results in cooperation with Denmark (see Annex 2, partner assessment, for further details).

The term *digital democracy* is applied to outline a broad thematic focus on how digital technology and online spaces can hinder or facilitate inclusive democratic participation and civic engagement, online and offline, at the local level in the Global South. The Programme applies a holistic understanding of *democracy*, which refers to a political system as well as a culture of participation. The Programme focuses especially on equal democratic participation, civic space and the active role of formal and informal civil society, as well as the protection and promotion of rights to freedom of expression, thought, belief and religion, association, and peaceful assembly.

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 is down 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 legislation and regulation on freedom of expression, administrative obstacles to association, foreign funding restrictions, security and mis-information acts, 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 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 to determine 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, keep in touch with members and diaspora, providing spaces for online discussions and online protest, or remove the immediate dangers

¹ V DEM Report 2022

² IDEA - The Global State of Democracy

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 has been developed by autocratising regimes to control online civic space. These range from blunt shutdowns of 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 given state access to areas it 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 introduction of control and regulation for online content, often in the form of responses to security concerns, such as cyber-crime, dis-information, and foreign interventions in national political processes. Even if responding to legitimate agenda, 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 the emergence of 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 can thus 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 what 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 can thus also be linked to gender, ethnicity, age, or other identity markers mirroring and exacerbating existing marginalisation. Women are thus less likely to own mobile phones and to use data and online services in

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

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 are 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 also 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 and primary stakeholders

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. Many local civil society actors in developing countries lack the capacity to use digital technology to amplify their pro-democratic agendas, as well as the means to protect and defend themselves against digital threats. The inequality in digital access and opportunity is particularly evident in organisations representing constituencies already democratically marginalised, including women and youth. With digital technology and online spaces becoming a defining factor in shaping democratic space, these actors become further marginalised and pro-democratic civil society as a collective force are weakened from the inability to fully utilise digital technology towards their progressive agenda. Within the broader objective of defending and promoting democracy, the DDI Programme will address the impact of digital technology on democratic space and the limited capacity of local pro-democratic civil society to respond to digital opportunities and threats. The overall development challenge can be understood through a number of associated problems, including:

- The limited capacity of local civil society to utilise digital technology to amplify progressive democratic agendas.
- The limited digital resilience of local civil society actors to defend themselves against or counter digital threats.
- Few specialised digital democracy organisations and only emerging mainstreaming of the agenda within civil society organisations working on democracy.
- Digital divide and marginalisation of organisations representing women or other democratically marginalised constituencies.
- Limited funding available to enable local civil society to strengthen digital capacity and engagement.
- Significant underrepresentation of civil society organisations from the Global South, and marginalised constituencies in particular, in global knowledge generation and agenda setting related to digital democracy and the impact of digital technology.

The critical challenge to be addressed by the Programme is thus to **enable** and strengthen the capacity of local pro-democratic civil society actors in autocratising countries to use digital technology to **amplify** their efforts towards promoting inclusive democratic space, while ensuring their ability to **protect** and

defend themselves from digital threats. Furthermore, the Programme will work to ensure more **localised and southern based** voices and leadership in defining the challenges and shaping the priorities for civil society engagement in the digital democracy agenda.

Primary stakeholders: Reflecting these challenges the Programme and its constituent projects will focus on supporting local civil society actors in developing countries, especially countries undergoing rapid democratic regression or progression. Within this context the Programme will have a specific focus on informal actors and organisations representing women and youth.

A secondary target group of the Programme will be established civil society actors, networks and spaces focused on digital democracy and supporting increased participation of local actors from developing countries and strengthening agendas based on inclusive locally led knowledge production and priorities.

Finally, through choice of implementing partners, the Programme will support established global digital actors in strengthening their localisation efforts and support localised actors to strengthen their engagement in digital democracy, with the aim of increase synergies and exchanges between these partners and their respective constituencies.

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

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

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 where individual bloggers, independent journalists, or online activists are often individuals or loosely organised and are 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 #DK4CivicSpace, 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 society working in shrinking space. The initiative also provides immediate emergency support and protection for human rights defenders and civil society actors at risk through ‘Claim your Space’ managed by Global Focus and 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* are ending 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, commit 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 as well as 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 & 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 (HCE) 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 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

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

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 (ending 2022). Reflecting the 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 in general, and 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, enable access to credible information, facilitate participation, and ultimately contribute 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 attack – both online and physically. It emphasises the importance of building civil society resilience and capacity to address the challenges of digitalisation to democracy. *The World We Share* places a strong emphasis on promoting local leadership, and also highlights the significance of empowerment of women and young people, as an important aspect of democratic processes. It also underlines meaningful inclusion of youth, rights of marginalised groups and equality and women's rights 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 as they pertain to 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 LDCs. In line with the Danish Development Strategy and as underscored by SDG 16, democracy, public participation, and accountable institutions are also critically interlinked to 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 so to ensure complementarity with existing democracy and human rights programmes as well as efforts underpinning localisation. Especially 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 around 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

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

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. 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. Specifically the Programme focuses on the impact of digital technology on democratic space, which is a specific priority in the Danish Development 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 increased focus on

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

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.

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 process 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 impact in showing tangible changes in the capacities of local civil society in addressing and engaging in digital challenges and opportunities to inclusive democracy. Capacity and engagement of local actors will be an integral aspect of programme impact, but impact will also be traced to 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 organisational capacity building 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. In terms of the sustainability of the overall initiative, the DDI will work to ensure longer term sustainability by working towards establishing joint donor co-funding mechanisms to secure 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 and theory of change

Digital space has become a central arena in the struggle for democracy. The initial democratic optimism that once surrounded digital technology has today been substituted by caution as we witness how it has become a central tool for autocratising countries and an intrinsic part of the current democratic backslide. Responding to this challenge the objective of the Digital Democracy Initiative is to:



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

Corresponding to identified challenges, the Programme will work towards this objective through two outcome areas. The first outcome area will work to **enable** local civil society to utilise digital technology to **amplify** agendas promoting inclusive democratic space. The second outcome area will work to **defend and protect** local civil society utilising digital technology. This includes organisational support to local civil society actors and by advocacy efforts focused on ensuring digital rights and safety. Through the selection of partners and identification of target groups and synergies between projects, the Programme works to strengthen and support a more **southern-based and localised constituency** for engaging in, understanding, and shaping the impact of digital technology on inclusive democracy.

The overall Theory of Change (ToC) of the Programme is thus that **if** local pro-democratic civil society is enabled, amplified, defended, and protected, **then** they will be able to promote and protect inclusive democratic space. Key assumptions include that digital technology is essential in shaping democratic space, that an amplified and strengthened civil society can change democratic space, and that the Programme can build a strong local constituency. 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.

3.3 Outcome areas and interventions

Corresponding to the two outcome areas, outcomes and related interventions are outlined below. The outcome areas, including immediate outcomes and elaboration of interventions specific for each project, is 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.*

The outcome includes both support to the capacity of individual actors or organisations, addressing structural conditions for localisation, as well as a stronger local constituency for learning, knowledge development, and collective priority setting. Across interventions towards this outcome, a special emphasis will be placed on sub-granting to local organisations. A specific focus will be ensured on needs, challenges, and opportunities of informal actors, women, youth, or marginalised constituencies. Interventions towards this outcome will include:



Strengthening local pro-democratic civil society through the provision of infrastructure, technical capacity support, and other non-funding mechanisms.



Sub-granting and empowering local actors, including informal actors and organisations representing women and youth.



Piloting and documenting innovative ways of using digital technology to strengthen local civil society capacity to amplify and protect inclusive democratic space



Facilitating southern-led cross-border learning and knowledge generation pertaining to challenges, opportunities, and the digital impact on civic engagement and inclusive democratic space in a global south context.



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.*

The outcome focuses on short-term defence of civil society actors under attack and longer-term protection through strengthening the digital 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. Across the interventions relevant for this outcome, a special emphasis will be

placed on strengthening the capacity of local intermediaries to provide support to local civil society. In support of localisation, emphasis is also 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 democracy and human rights defenders under threat from digital repression and repercussions.



Supporting organisational digital literacy and capacity for protection and strengthening capacity of local intermediate actors in providing digital protection support focused on needs and priorities of local actors.



Southern-led learning and knowledge generation on digital threats and challenges.



National and global advocacy and policy efforts in support of protecting and defending human rights and an inclusive democratic space online, with a specific focus on supporting inclusion of southern actors and priorities.

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, including granting mechanisms, organisational level defence and protection initiatives, building a stronger and more localised network of intermediaries, as well as strengthened 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 thematic partnerships focused on deepening engagement and expertise on thematic areas within the Programme, as prioritised by local civil society. Similar additional funding will be prioritised towards partnerships focused on acceleration and scaling of best practices identified by ongoing programme learning. Additional interventions may be identified and initiated by the management structures of the Programme based on additional funding and ongoing learning and stock taking.

Target group and synergies: By connecting the stakeholders engaged in each outcome, the Programme will work to strengthen, broaden, and diversify the constituency involved in addressing the opportunities and challenges of digital technology for inclusive democracy - potentially catalysing results within both outcome areas.



The first outcome focuses on **local civil society actors in the Global South**, 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 works with **existing actors working to defend and protect digital democracy** and creating linkages to *strengthen inclusion of local actors and their priorities and agendas*.

Across the two outcome areas, the Programme will 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.

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.

3.4 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 and 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 country.
- 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 establishment of mechanisms to provide support to informal movements and individual activists.
- Strategic partnerships and learning collective 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.

¹¹ ODA Eligible



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 young people's 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 contribution to 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, 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 civic space, democracy and freedom country rating based on CIVICUS Civic Monitor, Freedom House, and IDEA data and reports b. Improved freedom on the net country indicators from Freedom House reporting c. SDG Indicator 16.7.2: Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group d. SDG Indicator 16.10.1: Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months e. Indicator 16.b.1: Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law
Baseline	A baseline according to end 2022 indicators will be established during 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. 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 (MTR & EPV). 1b. No. & 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. 1c. No. and type of local collaborators with strengthened digital capacities. 		
Baseline	Year	2022	1.a.: 0

			1.b.: 0 1.c.: 0
Target	Year	2026	1.a.: (target to be set based on result of baseline study and inception) 1.b.: (target to be set based on result of baseline study and inception) 1.c.: (target to be set based on result of baseline study and inception)

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		2a. Positive developments in global context relating to the protection of HRDs 2b. Evidence (case-studies, blogs) of impact of DDP on HRDs long-term capacity and resilience of HRDs to continue their work, including gender, youth, and informal actor support. 2c. Material changes in local, national, and international policies, processes, and practices protecting and defending civil society and civic space online	
Baseline	Year	2022	2a. <i>To be determined at start of programme</i> 2b. <i>To be determined at start of programme</i> 2c. 0
Target	Year	2026	2a. <i>To be determined at start of programme</i> 2b. <i>To be determined at start of programme</i> 2c. At least 8 changes in local, national and international policies and practices protecting and defending civil society and civic space online.

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 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.

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 HCE within the established management and decision-making structures of the MFA.

Outcome/Item	Budget (DKK Million)				
	2023	2024	2025	2026	TOTAL
Outcome 1: Enable and Amplify	23	29	32	36	120
Outcome 2: Protect & Defend	10	10	10	10	40
Reserved for thematic partnerships		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		5	5	5	15
Total MFA Commitment	42,25	52,5	53	52,25	200

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 focused on digital resilience and combatting dis-information.

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/HCE 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.

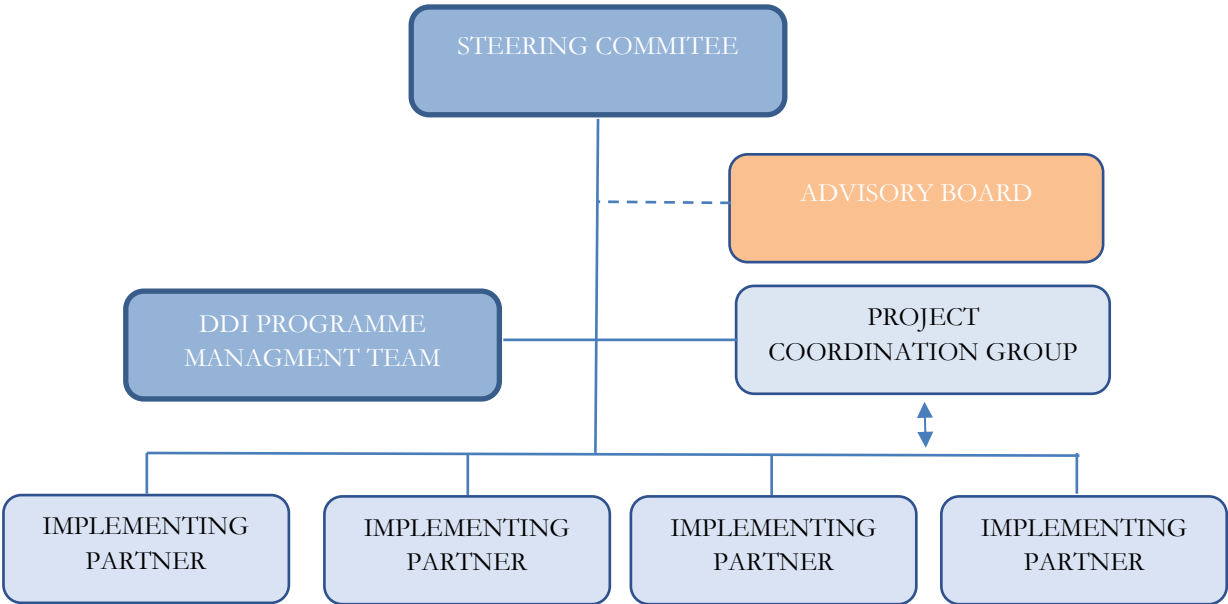
6. INSTITUTIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENT

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. The MFA will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Programme according to the strategic guidance of the Programme Document, contribution agreements with other donors, and Steering Committee decisions. The MFA will be responsible for 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 programme is vested in a programme management team to be established within the MFA (HCE). A project coordination group composed of partner representatives shall ensure project level synergy and programme level 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. 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 HCE within the established management and decision-making structures of the MFA.*

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. Where possible physical meetings shall be held in conjunction with major programme events where partners are already present.



A Programme Agreement based on ToR 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.

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.

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 includes Access Now, CIVICUS, Digital Defenders Partnership and Global Focus. Additional partners may be identified during the implementation group 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 HCE). 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. Key responsibilities and functions of the SC include:

- Provide strategic direction, including programme level dialogue with partners and 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 advisor 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 (HCE). The PMT will report to the chair and act as secretariat to the SC. Its main responsibility 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 coordinating 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 against similar minimum formats and compilation of annual plans at programme level
- Ensure that partner monitor and report against 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 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, 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 voice and perspective 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 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 by a mix of local actors in the Global South and potential stakeholders of the Programme and established civil society actors with expertise on localisation and the impact of digital technology on inclusive democracy. Based on agenda, individual experts from academia, private sector, or other, 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 for advice of the PCG or support and co-creation of programme learning, expert panels at major events, etc. The advisory board shall nominate members to participate in SC and PCG meetings to be able to fulfil its mandate to advice and holds 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 to 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 and 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 and conform with 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. Quarterly updates shall serve as input for status meetings and reflections between partners and the PMT with the aim of assessing and adjusting the implementation of the project where relevant. Further they shall inform PCG meetings and joint partner reflection, and consolidation of lessons learnt. In addition to quarterly updates partners will ensure comprehensive annual reporting, including tracking of results at outcome level and lessons learnt. The PCG shall cooperate with the PMT to ensure sufficient harmonisation to inform coherent monitoring and reporting at programme level. The following shall be addressed in the narrative reporting:

- 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 outcome targets for the entire project period as stipulated in the results framework.

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.

- 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. The PMT will have the overall responsibility of maintaining an overview of project progress and consolidate and submit programme level reporting the SC. 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.

In addition to ongoing monitoring and learning, a mid-term review shall be planned for end-2024 to ensure a midterm 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.

MEAL and Management summary table

MEAL activity	Timing	Stakeholders	Output
Activity monitoring	Constant	Implementing partners	Quarterly progress reports
Risk monitoring	Quarterly	Implementing partners	Quarterly progress reports
Collection of lessons learned	Quarterly	Implementing partners	Quarterly progress reports
Project reflection, dialogue and adaptation	Quarterly	PMT/individual partners PCG/PMT meeting	Meeting minutes.
Results monitoring	Annually	Partners, PCT, PMT, SC	Annual project reports and programme report, SC Minutes
Annual stocktaking	Annually	PCG/PMT/SC	PCG and SC Meeting minutes
Strategic Review and revision		SC/Advisory Board (PCG/PMT)	SC Minutes
Annual Plans	Annually	Implementing Partners PCG/PMT/SC	Annual project plans and budgets & consolidated programme plan and budget
Annual financial report and audit	Bi-Annual	Implementing Partners	SC Minutes.
Internal Mid Term stock taking	2025/2026	PMT/PCG	Stock taking report
External Mid-Term Review	End 2024	External consultants	Mid-term review report
End of programme evaluation (optional)	End 2026	External consultants	Evaluation Report

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 reports 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

Management of the Danish funds will be undertaken by the partners in accordance with MFA's Financial Management Guidelines for Development Cooperation.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 workplan 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.

7.2 Disbursement, accounting, and procurement

Funds will be disbursed twice per year by MFA to the project partners based on approved annual output level budgets and work plans. The initial transfer shall be made upon signatory 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 be take into account the balance of funds previously received 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 receipt. 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.

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 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-

¹⁵ <https://amg.um.dk/en/tools/financial-management/accounting-and-auditing/>

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 hold shall be noted and deviations to 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 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 meeting. 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. CLOSURE

The Programme is designed so that it can contribute significantly to 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 it well positioned to address challenges related to digital inclusion.

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.

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 young women 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/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 & 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 trans-local campaigns, and national, regional and global solidarity and coalition-strengthening that builds resilience and counter power with 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 enabling 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. 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).

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	1.a. No. & 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) & end of programme evaluation (EPV)). 1.b. No. & 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) 1.c. No. and type of local collaborators with strengthened digital capacities (MTR & EPV)
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.: # of regional, financial and non-financial support mechanisms that contributed to advancing inclusive democratic spaces offline and online 1.1.b.: # 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. & 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.: Percentage and number of global and regional 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.: # of context and target group-specific tools and resources that are created and/or shared by the Project (across all immediate outcomes) promote 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)

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, led by and primarily accountable to the local constituents they serve or represent. For the purposes of this project we will be primarily looking at local civil society actors in global south countries.

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, 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 and support knowledge sharing or innovation transference across the wider programme and facilitate collective actions 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 its 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 further 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 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)¹⁶: **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 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 project
- DDP receives too many requests to support (not enough capacity to respond or funding to grant)
- Lack of capacity in the execution of the Programme.

¹⁶ 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.

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 2b. Evidence (case-studies, blogs) of impact of DDP on HRDs long-term capacity and resilience of HRDs to continue their work, including 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 orgs, 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 Partnership, 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 their knowledge and capacities improved.

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.
- LGBTQI+ 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 DDPs 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, precipitate 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.

DDP receives on average funding from 6 governmental funders, each contributing to (all or specific) DDP activities and a total annual budget of about 3,5 million EUR. DDP is managed by the Dutch INGO Hivos and DDP uses all necessarily 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, 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 from key stakeholders 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 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 our 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 finding 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 LGBTI+ 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 DDIs 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**. This review involves an assessment of the specific objectives set out by each individual staff member, programmatic teams, and the organisation as a whole and **Arc to Outcomes Project Planning Framework**, a unique project planning framework to effectively develop long-term project plans across programmatic areas and 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 eventual 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 annual tranches of DKK 5,000,000 per year. Financial management will be based on established procedures and experience 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.