


















Danish support to CIVICUS 2024-2027

<p>Key results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved public discourse that reflects greater value for civic and democratic space and social and environmental justice, and greater recognition of the relevance and sustained impact of civil society. - Increased and more effective civil society action moves decision makers to safeguard and expand civic and democratic space. - Improved ability of excluded groups to challenge oppressive power and transform policy making. - Locally led public deliberations and context-relevant analyses are provided in diverse locations and languages around the world. - Increased space for CSO demands and positions. <p>Justification for support: The support to CIVICUS is part of Denmark's continuous strategic support to an important global civil society member platform, which has more than 15.000 members.</p> <p>Civic space remains under increased pressure with basic freedoms of assembly, association and expression becoming increasingly restricted in many countries – online and offline.</p> <p>Denmark's strategy for development cooperation - The World We Share – calls for a robust defence of civic space in developing countries. The support to CIVICUS focuses on promotion of respect for the basic freedoms of association and assembly.</p> <p>Major risks and challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key stakeholders are disinterested in connecting with other actors at the national, regional and global levels due to disparate organisational and cultural norms and values - Advocacy actions bring to the surface tensions that worsen the condition for civil society - Legal and regulatory environments that threaten members' ability to exist and operate effectively - The lack of political stability leads to frequent change of decision-makers and policy, and weak institutions that create an environment of uncertainty and social unrest <p>CIVICUS continuously monitors with a view to take mitigating steps where necessary.</p>	File No.	24/35751						
	Country	Interregional						
	Responsible Unit	HUMCIV						
	Sector	15150 Democratic participation and civil society						
	Partner	CIVICUS						
		<i>DKK million</i>	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Tot.
	Commitment		7.5	7.5				
	Projected disbursement		3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75		15
	Duration	01-03-2024 – 31-12-2027						
	Previous grants	Yes, 2020-2023 (15 million DKK)						
	Finance Act code	06.33.01.11						
	Head of unit	Birgitte Markussen						
	Desk officer	Tue Kristoffer Westhoff						
Reviewed by CFO	YES - Kasper Thede Anderskov							
Relevant SDGs								
 1 NO POVERTY	 2 NO HUNGER	 3 GOOD HEALTH, WELLBEING	 4 QUALITY EDUCATION	 5 GENDER EQUALITY	 6 CLEAN WATER, SANITATION			
 7 AFFORDABLE CLEAN ENERGY	 8 DECENT JOBS, ECON. GROWTH	 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, INFRASTRUCTURE	 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES, COMMUNITIES	 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION			
 13 CLIMATE ACTION	 14 LIFE BELOW WATER	 15 LIFE ON LAND	 16 PEACE & JUSTICE, STRONG INST.	 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR GOALS				

Strategic objectives

The development objective for Denmark's engagement with CIVICUS is to promote an enabling environment for civil society in the developing countries.

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
Total green budget (DKK)				

Justification for choice of partner:

CIVICUS is arguably the world's largest network of civil society organisations that works to strengthen civil society and citizen action at large. Its mission is to strengthen citizen action and civil society toward a more just, inclusive and sustainable world. CIVICUS can influence due to its global outreach and strong, diverse membership base across more than 180 countries. This allows it to effectively engage decision makers to encourage the protection and expansion of civic freedoms.

Summary:

CIVICUS is a leading organisation in defending civic freedoms and civic space around the world. In accordance with Denmark's priority of promoting civic space in developing countries, Denmark supports CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027. The support enables CIVICUS to continue its work to research and create awareness about civic space challenges, advocate for stronger global norms, engage in country level campaigns and strengthen civil society accountability.

Budget (engagement as defined in FMI):

Danish support to CIVICUS for the period 2020-23	15.000.000
Total	15.000.000



PROGRAMME DOCUMENT: CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Core Programme

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1. Introduction

The present programme document outlines the background, rationale and justification, objectives and management arrangements for development cooperation concerning CIVICUS as agreed between the parties: **CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation** and the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark**. The programme document is an annex to the legal bilateral agreement with the implementing partner and constitutes an integral part hereof together with the documentation specified below, developed according to Danida Aid Management Guidelines.

“The Documentation” refers to the partner documentation for the supported intervention, which is **CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Core Programme**.

2. Context, strategic considerations, rationale and justification

a. Context:

CIVICUS latest [State of Civil Society](#) and [People Power Under Attack](#) reports highlight needs and constraints of countries and regions relating to the enabling environment for civil society vary depending on the specific social, political, economic and institutional contexts, but broad trends can be observed in civic space in multiple countries and at regional and global levels. In the post-Covid era, amid the ongoing war in Ukraine, the Israel-Palestine conflict, economic downturn, and the climate crisis, **civil society is mobilising on a massive scale** to demand change.

The global cost-of-living crisis has sparked thousands of protests (for most part peaceful) globally, while climate protests persistently keep the crisis at the forefront of political agendas. Unfortunately, a mounting wealth of evidence exists documenting attacks on civic space worldwide, pointing to an overall trend of **democracy worldwide facing serious threats** precisely at a time when it is most needed to address global challenges.

The CIVICUS State of Civil Society Report 2023 highlights **the rise of authoritarianism** in several countries, including *El Salvador, Tunisia* and *the Philippines*. Military governments have taken power in *Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Mali*. Increasingly authoritarian governments are employing various tactics with the objective of repressing their opponents and gaining control over both offline and online civic space. These include the implementation of stricter protest laws, restrictions on media and free speech, obstacles to the establishment, registration, and funding of CSOs, the creation of travel watch lists, online surveillance, content moderation, internet shutdowns, as well as the slander, harassment, arrest, and imprisonment of activists.

The **right to protest is under attack** in multiple regions, as seen in *Sri Lanka*, where protests triggered by the economic crisis were met with violent crackdowns, detentions, and torture of demonstrators, and in *Peru* where security forces have killed dozens of people who were protesting against the ousting of the president. **Disinformation and delegitimization** pose significant challenges to civil society, particularly activists from marginalized and excluded groups (including women, youth, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, as seen in *Uganda*) often become targets of disinformation campaigns, which contribute to a hostile environment and culture towards civil society actors and their work, while narratives opposing the universality of human rights continue to gain ground.

New approaches and partnerships are needed (and those already working need to be strengthened and scaled) to build greater public trust in civil society, while countering misinformation and negative narratives around civil society, especially in the most challenging contexts. There is also a need for larger segments of solidarity with those facing the brunt of repression, exclusion and discrimination as well as to challenge unjust social norms and problematic narratives through more localised narrative work, joined-up strategic advocacy and policy influencing from the local to global levels.

At the same time, civil society *is* expanding and diversifying its tactics to address these global challenges and pressures. Young people are often at the forefront of mass mobilizations, addressing issues like economic inequality and climate change. Civil society's radical energy comes from small grassroots groups, often led by women, young people, and indigenous peoples. These groups organise horizontally, adopt participatory approaches, and cultivate distributed leadership, making connections across traditional societal divides, learning from each other's experiences. Civil society has also sounded the alarm on climate change, with large-scale protests leading to violence against environmental defenders, especially those advocating for climate justice and indigenous rights. This is a critical role that civil society plays to ensure that these actors, in all their diverse forms and functions, can navigate **together** (through coordination, collaboration and coalitions) these worsening environments so that there is a collective realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Refer to Annex 4 for People Power Under Attack report and State of Civil Society reports.

The role of CIVICUS and its approach:

Within this context, CIVICUS's vision of a global community of members and partners in over 180 countries of informed, inspired, committed citizens engaged in confronting the challenges facing humanity assumes greater significance. A vigilant, vibrant and diverse civil society is key to preserving democratic values in societies and to build a greener, more just and inclusive post-covid world. CIVICUS's unique approach and objectives enable the contribution to lasting and transformative change through varied but interconnected dimensions of CIVICUS's work. With 15,000+ members , CIVICUS's global coverage and scale brings unique value with the ability to strategically prioritising countries across the world where civic space is restricted or rapidly deteriorating. The CIVICUS Monitor and CIVICUS's extensive network of members and partners provide almost real time intelligence to deliver on this collective effort to expand civic and democratic space.

CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027, supported by core funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will address the above-described needs and constraints through a range of approaches, through its strategic objectives, that will help strengthen some of CIVICUS's tried and tested flagship civic space initiatives while co-designing and testing new ones aimed at facilitating engagement with wider audiences and at catalysing larger and more responsive ecosystems of solidarity and support.

b. Stakeholders and partners:

Whilst CIVICUS aims to engage civil society in all its diversity, given the context and challenges above, the actions and initiatives in this strategic period have a special emphasis on the following groups and individuals, considered to be key drivers and allies in realising the change that CIVICUS is aiming for. As an

alliance, CIVICUS mobilises collective knowledge, expertise, influence and power to create meaningful partnerships with:

- Individuals and groups most affected by civic and democratic space restriction
- Traditionally excluded communities and their networks
- Smaller, less formal groups on the frontlines of social transformation
- Protest and social movements, including online platforms
- Journalists, media and media development organisations
- Youth activists and other evolving forms of people power
- Public and private institutions that contribute to expanding civic and democratic space

CIVICUS has an explicit focus on these groups as these groups can catalyse change more effectively because they know from personal experience what needs to change and have a deep stake in securing social transformation. Moreover, they are best placed to build collective capacities to mobilize constituencies for effective advocacy, to share culturally-specific messages to address their communities, to identify and engage target stakeholders, including policymakers, to shift and shape relevant political agendas to take into account their visions and needs. In addition to working with these target groups directly in this strategic period, CIVICUS will also leverage relevant networks such as:

- The VUKA! Coalition: a key international coalition hosted by CIVICUS Secretariat and established in response to current and increasing restrictions to civic space with the view of coordinating civil society responses to reclaim civic space and to mobilise solidarity from diverse parts of civil society for greater effectiveness and resilience.
- Building Responses Together network: an international network aimed at promoting cooperation amongst organisations that provide rapid responses to rights defenders, activists and organisations through a coordination and referrals mechanism, which helps us coordinate "rapid response" support with other actors.
- Affinity Group of National Associations: a longstanding network hosted by CIVICUS Secretariat that brings together national associations and regional platforms affiliated to CIVICUS from around the world to foster greater cooperation across national and regional boundaries, including innovating new ways for civil society organisations to collaborate.
- The Youth Action Lab (YAT): an elected group of 11 young activists of voting members of CIVICUS, led by the youth and acting for the youth to be meaningfully represented and engaged in all of the alliance's structures, governance, strategies, and activities. As representatives of the CIVICUS Youth community, the YAT plays a critical role in activating a wider youth community. The Youth Action Team perceives civic space as the final frontier and wants to make sure the youth have the tools to fully engage.

CIVICUS Strategic Plan will enable target groups, partners and the members of these various networks to enhance coordination, collaboration, coalition-building for intelligence, knowledge production, advocacy,

narrative work, readiness and proactiveness in responses to rapidly changing civic space contexts. In other cases this will result in CIVICUS having more and better resources to be a catalyst, convener, connector, incubator of these various networks, some of which are directly hosted by the CIVICUS Secretariat. CIVICUS will support and engage partnerships like these, in all their diversity, to coordinate, collaborate and strengthen for civic influence. Furthermore, CIVICUS' co-design approach is a core element of the programme quality framework, ensuring that CIVICUS conceptualises, designs and delivers its work together with stakeholders, members and partners to ensure relevance and sustainability. CIVICUS' project governance models are also representative of its constituents and partners and the incubation approach has enabled CIVICUS to transition out of hosting key networks such as Innovation for Change, whilst remaining a strategic ally.

c. Summary of CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027:

CIVICUS' [2022-2027 strategic plan](#) builds on the above through the overarching goal of strengthening civil society and citizen action for expanded civic and democratic space. In this strategic period, CIVICUS will undertake five core objectives that support the achievement of CIVICUS's overarching goal:

1. Generate timely knowledge and analyses on civil society actions and civic and democratic space. CIVICUS will continue to produce and disseminate in-depth, strategic and timely information on threats to civic and democratic space while analysing the drivers and enablers of new and emerging attacks. In doing so, CIVICUS will curate and disseminate data and information in relevant, creative and compelling ways to enable their practical application in supporting struggles for justice, equality and sustainability.
2. Coordinate targeted advocacy to defend and expand civic and democratic space. CIVICUS will strengthen its ability to coordinate and sustain targeted advocacy for civic and democratic space across all levels. Efforts will aim to catalyse and connect civil society efforts and civic action for greater advocacy impact across borders and at scale. CIVICUS will do this by exploring and championing new and emerging ways for citizens and civil society to influence relevant decision-making processes at local, national, regional and global levels.
3. Contribute to stronger emergency and sustained support ecosystems for civil society. CIVICUS will find new and innovative ways to provide activists and organisations targeted for their activism or operating in restricted contexts with emergency support, while also working to better understand how to support and sustain civil society experiencing digital and offline attacks, and how to leverage digital spaces and technologies for civic action. Efforts will give particular attention to supporting activists and organisations facing persecution in challenging and dangerous environments with a view to amplifying their voices, sustaining their struggles and ensuring their safety and autonomy.
4. Strengthen public discourse on civic space and reinforce civil society narratives. CIVICUS will work more purposefully to shape and influence public discourse on civic and democratic space through more innovative and emphatic ways of demonstrating the relevance and sustained impact of civil society. CIVICUS will harness the power of emerging technologies, new and traditional media and innovative communications platforms to develop and amplify people-centred narratives of change to key stakeholders including change makers and global publics. In doing so, efforts will focus on the

significant contributions of activists, peaceful protests and social movements, online and offline platforms led by groups most affected by civic and democratic space restrictions, young people and other emerging forms of power.

5. Build counter power with the most affected groups and their movements. CIVICUS will actively forge alliances with groups that are most affected by the combined impact of civic and democratic space restrictions and structural forms of discrimination. This includes working closely with networks and movements of young people, women, workers, LGBTQI+ people, Indigenous and environmental groups and broader social justice movements. Through these efforts, CIVICUS will aim to connect struggles for justice, equality and sustainability at all levels while seeking opportunities to catalyse and nurture citizen action and find new and more dynamic ways to support and expand the civic and democratic space of excluded groups through all aspects of CIVICUS's work.

In addition to the above, CIVICUS will continue to build on ongoing efforts for institutional strengthening that were initiated in the previous strategic period. Key initiatives in this regard include areas of Human Resources workplan that advance CIVICUS's commitment to constituent accountability, diversity, and inclusion (e.g., learning and development framework, which will be a critical tool to ensure staff are supported to grow within and beyond CIVICUS), and systems strengthening that enhances the efficiency and effectiveness, as well as the innovation and accountability of the organisation. CIVICUS will also have a dedicated focus on progressing the CIVICUS Resourcing and Sustainability strategy in this period. Activities to grow and diversify its supporter base will be accordingly prioritised, with an emphasis on creating a more diverse pool of institutional donors and encouraging more actors to invest in the long-term changes needed to protect and expand civic and democratic space.

d. Past results and lessons learned from the review of CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2017-2022:

At the close of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan period, CIVICUS committed to review the most significant outcomes achieved and lessons learnt from its implementation. The review was undertaken through a 2-stage process which included an in-depth, external review of key strategic documents and fifty interviews with selected CIVICUS staff, alliance members and external partners to corroborate the information collected and assess the most impactful stories. While the full review report is available [here](#) a summary of achievements and recommendations are as follows:

Achievements:

- CIVICUS has shifted from a retrospective analysis to an up-to-date timely analysis of global events through CIVICUS Lens which has been well-received and widely utilised and CIVICUS continues to be a trusted partner in civic space, referenced by media, academics, activists and decision-makers around the world.
- CIVICUS has made significant progress in advocating for open civic space and systemic change, securing key wins at the global level with the adoption of General Comment 37 and key campaigns like #StandAsMyWitness to defend human rights defenders around the world.
- CIVICUS has successfully built solidarity, fostering a sense of community and collaboration even in the face of challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and crises in places like Afghanistan or Ukraine.
- CIVICUS has been leading the way in sponsoring solidarity mechanisms within the alliance and

re-shaping programming and grant-making initiatives to better reach the people most exposed in the frontline.

- CIVICUS has made a significant impact through its efforts to connect civil society, providing opportunities for networking and learning through online and in-person initiatives that have brought partners closer together, building connections across civil society that transcend issues, geographies and organisation types.

The ‘Start, Stop and Continue’ recommendations:

In addition to a range of specific examples of impact, the review also offered specific suggestions for how the findings that emerged can be integrated into the implementation of CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027 (full learnings document can be found [here](#)).

- **Start** – Reviewing how CIVICUS engages with groups at a sub-national level, investing more strongly in processes that enable trust and co-creation, and accessing and activating mechanisms for compensation of participants of marginalised groups.
- **Stop:** Engaging with short term partnerships, underestimating the investment of partnership building, delinking the Integrated Results Framework from the work of the alliance, and underestimating the role of informal networks.
- **Continue:** to be mentioned throughout the meeting due time constraints.

e. Synergies with Danish development cooperation and cross-cutting interests:

Strategy alignment: In Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation “The World We Share”, similar contextual themes arise. The strategy highlights the inequality and unbalance across the globe, the increased pressure on democracy and human rights and makes reference to CIVICUS Monitor ratings on the state of civic space. Amongst other cross-cutting issues that Danida and CIVICUS share, the Danish strategy, particularly working with those hardest affected by inequality and injustice is in line with CIVICUS’ strategic focus to work with those dually affected by civic space restrictions and structural discrimination.

Existing projects and interests: Danish cooperation has forged a strong alliance with CIVICUS through institutional core support and, more recently, support to the **Digital Democracy Initiative (DDI)**, a multiyear, multistakeholder initiative that aims to promote and protect local inclusive democratic space in the digital age. The initial round of the project is 4 years with a grant of DKK 115 million

There are two projects currently underway for DDI:

- **Enable and Amplify** led by CIVICUS and Global Focus: 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.
- **Defend and Protect** led by Access Now and Digital Defenders Partnership: Strengthened digital resilience and security of pro-democracy civil society actors, and more rights-respecting policies and standards safeguarding the use of digital technologies and online spaces.

CIVICUS will oversee two tracks of work within this initiative. One is being delivered by CIVICUS and the other will be delivered by partners. It is anticipated that 70% of the funds will be disbursed via sub-grants.

The Danish government has also been a trusted ally for CIVICUS through the [Unmute Civil Society initiative](#) which is supported by [52 states and over three hundred civil society organisations](#) in an effort to ensure the UN is more people-centred in the spirit of ‘We the Peoples.’

Key aspects include:

- Maximise the opportunities and advantages of information communications tools (ICT) and digitalisation in UN meetings
- Bridge narrow digital divides that exist across the global North and South to open up civic space and participation.
- Ensure meaningful participation at all stages of UN processes to allow for ample time and opportunity for civil society representatives to provide inputs on outcomes documents, attend key meetings and participate as equal stakeholders in crucial negotiations.
- Celebrate the value of civil society participation through the adoption of a Civil Society Action Day as an occasion to affirm the UN’s commitment to enabling civil society participation and drive meaningful debate on improvements.
- Urgently appoint a People’s or Civil Society Envoy at the UN to drive best practices on civil society participation across the UN, drive the UN’s outreach to civil society across the world and promote best practices on civil society participation.

3. Programme objective

CIVICUS’ overarching goal is to strengthen civil society and citizen action for expanded civic and democratic space. CIVICUS expects that civil society will build counter power and ultimately succeed in reversing the restriction of civic and democratic space. As a result of CIVICUS efforts, groups most affected by the combined impact of structural discrimination and civic space restrictions are better supported in their efforts to mobilise change, which causes decision makers and institutions to act more responsibly to uphold civic and democratic freedoms. Public trust in civil society improves significantly and is reflected through increased solidarity with the work and priorities of civil society.

In order to meet this goal, interventions in this Strategic Plan 2022-2027 period will be organised around **five strategic objectives (SO) as outlined in section 1c.**

4. Theory of change and key assumptions

In line with the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, CIVICUS developed a new Theory of Change that allows for testing of assumptions, approaches, and pathways to advance systemic change towards expanded civic and democratic space.

The core assumption is that progressive and collective action is a critical pathway to initiate this change. This assumption is rooted in the understanding that power is at the heart of the injustices experienced by groups most affected by the combined impacts of civic space restrictions and structural forms of

discrimination. CIVICUS believes that when target groups, their movements and allies are supported with the relevant networks, resources, and platforms they need, civil society ecosystems are strengthened to catalyse effective action. This is reflected in the Theory of Change as follows:

Overall (Programme) Goal

Through the implementation of the strategic objectives, the alliance will continue strengthening change pathways for progressive civil society to build counter-power and contribute to the overall goal of **Strengthened civil society and citizen action for expanded civic and democratic space.**

This core programme supports CIVICUS to scale the impact of combined approaches of **generating knowledge** and timely analysis, **amplifying civil society** narratives, **influencing policy** making, **enabling activism** in challenging contexts, and **strengthening solidarity action** through strategic, alliances and innovative partnerships.

Assumptions: The following underlying assumptions are considered to scale the impact of CIVICUS' 2022-2027 Strategic Plan:

- CIVICUS members and allies will have **greater access to resources and networks** to facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge to inform the development of strategies, narratives, and practice for greater civic influence.
- Through strategic convening and engagement spaces, **CIVICUS will better connect local responses and actions to civic space restrictions to the relevant regional and international mechanisms.** Here, CIVICUS members and allies will specifically test and scale new solidarity action approaches.
- CIVICUS will **accompany target groups and explore support modalities to strengthen** civil society ecosystems.
- **The extent of sustained and progressive solidarity action is determined by civic space conditions.** Through ongoing work with coalitions, networks and partners, CIVICUS will advocate for an enabling environment for civil society and will support target groups to respond in windows of opportunity to mobilise against civic space restrictions.

The CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Theory of Change diagram depicts the overarching goal and long-term, intermediate, and immediate outcomes (see below). CIVICUS's contributions to systemic change are captured in four outcome statements that connect and consolidate the impact of the work across all levels.

Through the Results Framework, CIVICUS collects evidence towards immediate outcomes of improved capacity, practice and strategies of civil society actors and citizens to drive effective action towards transformation change. CIVICUS's qualitative monitoring, evaluation and narrative form and support its collection of intermediate outcomes of strengthened credibility, legitimacy and influence of citizens and civil society action to claim fundamental civic rights and resist oppressive power. The Results Framework is further supported by the validation of three changes by an external consultant with consultation of stakeholders as markers of progress towards the four long-term outcomes

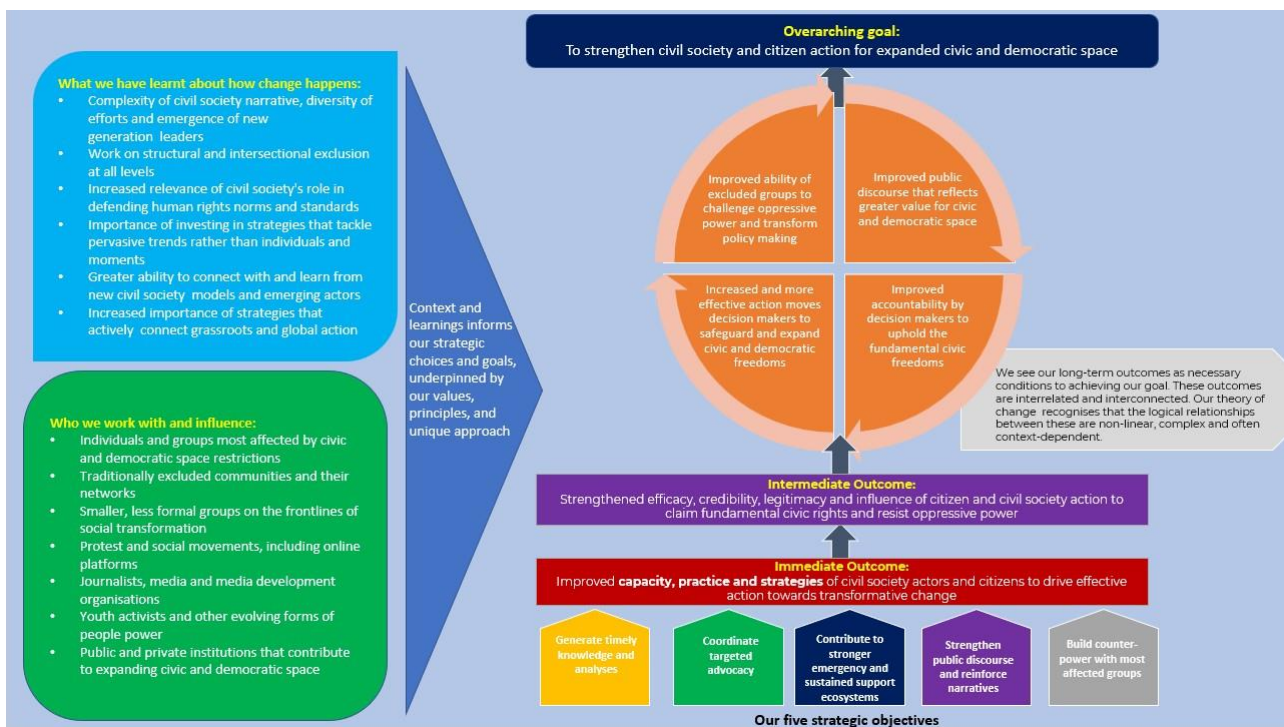
Progress towards each strategic objective is measured by year-on-year proxy quantitative output and

outcome indicators. In addition, each strategic objective is complemented by a learning question to help CIVICUS assess the relevance and efficacy of influencing, organising and solidarity interventions with CIVICUS’s target groups. CIVICUS publishes an annual report that provides an account of how the work and initiatives are influencing change in the external context using evidenced change stories for each objective. The quantitative and qualitative indicators are triangulated across all objectives to share an account of its contribution to systemic change. CIVICUS’s mid-term and end-of-year strategy review provide an additional way of triangulating and validating the evidence by an external evaluation and additional feedback from CIVICUS’s members, partners and stakeholders.

CIVICUS’s four long-term outcome statements:

- Improved ability of excluded groups to challenge oppressive power and transform policy making
- Improved public discourse that reflects the greater value for civic and democratic space
- Increased and more effective action moves decision makers to safeguard and expand civic and democratic freedoms.
- Improved accountability by decision makers to uphold fundamental civic freedoms.

For more details, including strategic objective evidence chains, long term sub-outcomes, institutional measurement framework, please refer to the CIVICUS [Integrated Results Framework](#)



5. Summary of the results framework

For results measurement, learning and reporting, Denmark will receive progress against the below results framework, as well as qualitative analysis of progress against each Strategic Objective within CIVICUS’ annual report.

Strategic Objective 1		Generate timely knowledge and analyses on civil society actions in relation to civic and democratic space	
Outcome		Improved public discourse that reflects greater value for civic and democratic space and social and environmental justice, and greater recognition of the relevance and sustained impact of civil society	
Outcome indicator		Instances where CIVICUS knowledge and analysis have been used to influence discourse, debate, and civil society narratives. Verification/data source will be by number of CIVICUS Monitor Citations	
Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	316

Target	Year	01 JUL 2026 – 30 JUN 2027	1148 cumulative total (Target is 10% increase a year.) Baseline 316 + year one 347 + year two 381 + year three 420
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Output		Timely local accessible knowledge*	
Output indicator		Number of CIVICUS Lens articles	
Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	154
Target	Year 1	01 JUL 2023 – 30 JUN 2024	304 (Target is 150 a year. Baseline + 150 in year one = 304)
Target	Year 2	01 JUL 2024 – 30 JUN 2025	454 (Target is 150 a year. Baseline + 150 in year one + 150 in year two = 454)
Target	Year 3	01 JUL 2025 – 30 JUN 2026	604 (Target is 150 a year. Baseline + 150 in year one + 150 in year two + 150 in year three = 604)

Strategic Objective 2		Continue targeted advocacy to defend and expand civic and democratic space	
Outcome		Increased and more effective civil society action moves decision makers to safeguard and expand civic and democratic space	
Outcome indicator		Number of International agreements blocked, adopted, or improved due or partly due to CIVICUS and/or its networks and/or members	
Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	8
Target	Year	01 JUL 2026 – 30 JUN 2027	23 (Target is 5 a year. Baseline + 5 in year one + 5 in year two and +5 in year three = 23)

Output		Coordinated advocacy successful in creating space for civil society	
Output indicator		Number of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Submissions because they are integral to how CIVICUS connect HRDs and national advocacy to international mechanisms.	
Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	22
Target	Year 1	01 JUL 2023 – 30 JUN 2024	42 (Target is 20 a year. Baseline + 20 in year one = 42)
Target	Year 2	01 JUL 2024 – 30 JUN 2025	62 (Target is 20 a year. Baseline + 20 in year one + 20 in year two = 62)
Target	Year 3	01 JUL 2025 – 30 JUN 2026	82 (Target is 20 a year. Baseline + 20 in year one + 20 in year two + 20 in year three = 82)

Strategic Objective 3		Contributing to stronger emergency and sustained support ecosystems for activists and organisations at risk	
Outcome		Improved ability of excluded groups to challenge oppressive power and transform policy making	
Outcome indicator		Number of policy changes towards stronger emergency and sustained support ecosystem due or partly due to CIVICUS and/or its networks and/or members	

Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	1
Target	Year	01 JUL 2026 – 30 JUN 2027	4 (one each year for three years + baseline)

Output		Subgrants	
Output indicator		Amount of subgrants in USD	
Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	\$3,618,785
Target	Year 1	01 JUL 2023 – 30 JUN 2024	\$6,310,355 (baseline + year one amount of \$2,691,550)
Target	Year 2	01 JUL 2024 – 30 JUN 2025	\$10,213,083 (baseline + year one and year two amount of \$3,902,748)
Target	Year 3	01 JUL 2025 – 30 JUN 2026	\$15,051,144 (baseline + year one + year two + year three amount of \$4,838,061)

Strategic Objective 4		Strengthen public discourse on civic space and reinforce civil society narratives	
Outcome		Locally led public deliberations and context-relevant analyses are provided in diverse locations and languages around the world	
Outcome indicator		Number of unique media outlet mentions	
Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	1176
Target	Year	01 JUL 2026 – 30 JUN 2027	5455 cumulative total (Target is 10% increase a year.) Target 1293 for year one for cumulative total of 2469 Target 1422 for year two for cumulative total of 3891 Target 1564 for year three for cumulative total of 5455

Output		Opinion pieces published	
Output indicator		Number of CIVICUS Op-eds	
Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	26
Target	Year 1	01 JUL 2023 – 30 JUN 2024	51 (Target is 25 a year. Baseline + 25 in year one = 51)
Target	Year 2	01 JUL 2024 – 30 JUN 2025	76 (Target is 25 a year. Baseline + 25 in year one + 25 in year two = 76)
Target	Year 3	01 JUL 2025 – 30 JUN 2026	101 (Target is 25 a year. Baseline + 25 in year one + 25 in year two + 25 in year three = 101)

Strategic Objective 5		Building counterpower with the most affected groups and their movements	
Outcome		Succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions	
Outcome indicator		Number of statements, letters, and resolutions negotiated in Geneva with UN bodies	
Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	64
Target	Year	01 JUL 2026 – 30 JUN 2027	244 (Target is 60 a year. Target for year three is 244 = 64 at baseline plus 3*60)

Output		Thematic reports on most affected groups	
Output indicator		Number of thematic reports produced by CIVICUS on most affected groups	
Baseline	Year	01 JUL 2022 – 30 JUN 2023	4
Target	Year 1	01 JUL 2023 – 30 JUN 2024	6 (baseline plus 2 for year one)
Target	Year 2	01 JUL 2024 – 30 JUN 2025	8 (baseline plus 2 for year one and plus 2 for year two)
Target	Year 3	01 JUL 2025 – 30 JUN 2026	10 (baseline plus 2 for year one and plus 2 for year two plus 2 for year three)

6. Budget

a. CIVICUS Annual projected budget over the grant period:

CIVICUS applies activity-based budgeting in which resources are allocated to the mission and support activities of the organization (programs, management, and fundraising) in line with strategic objectives. Revenue is dedicated to full expenses for each activity including each activity's share of direct and indirect costs that are fundamental to the activities concerned. Donor Project Budgets are prepared in line with donor requirements - in terms of activity lines and reporting periods. Budget holders ensure activities budgets are realistic and that all assumptions used to create the budget.

CIVICUS BUDGET USD YEAR 2023 - 2026

	YEAR 1 Budget 2024 (current, approved)	YEAR 2 Forecast 2025	YEAR 3 Forecast 2026	TOTAL PERIOD
Salaries	\$5,698,002	\$6,780,623	\$7,393,158	\$19,871,783
Equipment	\$56,945	\$70,175	\$65,000	\$192,120
Office Costs	\$499,813	\$549,794	\$554,792	\$1,604,400
Communication	\$195,998	\$235,198	\$219,518	\$650,713
Partner Travel and Meetings	\$1,143,208	\$1,737,676	\$1,421,236	\$4,302,120
Staff Travel and Meetings	\$264,999	\$397,499	\$304,749	\$967,246
Professional Services	\$950,859	\$1,426,289	\$1,203,486	\$3,580,633
Subgrants & Awards	\$2,691,550	\$3,902,748	\$4,838,061	\$11,432,359
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	\$11,501,374	\$15,100,000	\$16,000,000	\$42,601,374

How the budget is prepared

The annual budget process is prepared by the planning team, made up of Finance and Impact and Accountability. The team agree on the timelines, set up budget templates and organize communication channels to properly guide, advise and assist the budget holders where need be. The budget is made up of income, primarily from committed income, thus, agreements already signed by the donor. Individual budgets for each project/cluster are prepared following the process and timelines as outlined by the

planning team. Once done, individual budgets are consolidated by the planning team who later prepare the annual organisation wide budget for the new financial year.

The Senior Leadership Team review and approve the consolidated budget before submission to the Operations Committee of the Board (OPS). The OPS committee makes a recommendation to the Board to approve the annual budget. Once approved by the Board, the individual budgets are made accessible for use by the budget holders and becomes a “management tool” used to monitor spend with regular updates provided to the Operations Committee.

Un-allocated funds

Unallocated funds also referred to unused funds, usually restricted funds, in one period are set aside for the next period as deferred income.

Budget margin

CIVICUS does not aim to generate profits through its operations. Budgets are approved on a breakeven basis based on planned activities, available funds and incorporates planning for funding in future periods.

b. Costed targets for CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027:

Further to the annual budget, CIVICUS utilises costed targets across its five strategic objectives (SOs 1 – 5 in the table below) to inform investment and resourcing allocations in the current strategic period.

It is clear that in order to upscale the work and respond to the greater demand for civic space and civil society strengthening across regions, CIVICUS will need to systematically augment the current resources. In keeping with the steer of the CIVICUS Board, a set of resourcing targets for the 2022-27 strategy was agreed. This note provides an overview of the costed targets for the 5-year period, and in relation to each objectives of the strategic plan. It is clear that in order to upscale the work and respond to the greater demand for civic space and civil society strengthening across regions, CIVICUS needs to systematically augment its current resources to ensure the delivery of the Strategic Plan in its entirety. As such CIVICUS, in agreement with the Board, set the following resourcing targets for the strategic period:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>SO1</i>	<i>SO2</i>	<i>SO3</i>	<i>SO4</i>	<i>SO5</i>	<i>P&O*</i>
2022-2023	Jul-22	Jun-23	USD 12,07M	2.77	2.03	2.41	0.96	3.24	0.66
2023-2024	Jul-23	Jun-24	USD 11.50M	2.80	2.0	2.15	0.98	3.28	0.29
2024 - 2025	Jul-24	Jun-25	USD 13.40M	3.25	2.50	2.50	1.25	3.50	0.40
2025-2026	Jul-25	Jun-26	USD 14.35M	3.50	2.50	2.50	1.50	3.75	0.60
2026 - 2027	Jul-26	Jun-27	USD 15.30M	3.50	2.75	2.75	1.50	4.00	0.80

Total 5-Year Period (2022-27):	USD 66.62M	15.82	11.78	12.31	5.94	17.52	2.75
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(Figures in USD million) | * People & Organisation strengthening | Obj. targets for Y1 are not actuals and reflect baseline available in Year 2.

The full costed strategy, including a more detailed breakdown of the costed targets in accordance with the strategic objectives of the 2022-2027 is provided in the annex.

c. Current active funding agreements:

CIVICUS is currently supported by the following funding partners:

Relationship start date	Donor	Purpose	Agreement start date	Agreement end date	Agreement amount
2018	Dutch MFA	Core Funding	January 2021	June 2026	USD 11,200,000
2022	Porticus	Core Funding	November 2022	October 2024	USD 283,200.00
2018	Ford Foundation	Build	July 2022	June 2027	USD 6,000,000
		Freedom of Peaceful Assembly	January 2021	June 2026	USD 4,500,000.00
2017	CS Mott	Core Operating support	July 2023	June 2025	USD 300,000
		AGNA	July 2022	June 2025	USD 150,000.00
2018	Open Society Foundations	Human Rights Initiative	March 2020	December 2023	USD 435,000
		Global Resource Hub	January 2023	February 2024	USD 200,000
		Freedom to Protest	November 2020	December 2023	USD 450,000
2018	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Digital Democracy Initiative	April 2023	December 2026	DKK 115,000,000
		Core Funding	January 1, 2020	December 2023	DKK 15,000,000
2023	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs NORAD	Youth/CS Resourcing	September 2019	September 2023	NOK 26,315,000
2022	The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	Core Funding	November 2022	October 2024	USD 100,000
2016	Freedom House	Crisis Response Fund	February 2020	September 2024	USD 1,795,000

2022	Conrad H. Foundation	Local Leaderships Labs	January 2023	March 2026	USD 1,500,000.00
2023	Fund for Shared Insights	Core Funding	January 2023	September 2025	USD 200,000.00
2023	European Commission	Ensured Grant	January 2023	November 2026	EUR 158,750.00

As a non-profit organization CIVICUS, does not accept funds that could compromise its legitimacy. This principle has guided internal decision-making on fundraising. To strengthen the alliance, CIVICUS does not compete with members for funding or respond to proposals that would put them in direct competition with us. CIVICUS supports consortium arrangements to deliver better coordinated and holistic support to constituencies, adhering to development effectiveness principles.

Note: Since this grant agreement is core support to the CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027, all Danish funds will be spent on activities supporting the strategic objectives and outcomes outlined in this project document. CIVICUS will be responsible for ensuring that the funds are spent in compliance with the agreement and with due consideration to economy, efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the results intended.

7. Institutional and management arrangement

a. Overall management structures:

CIVICUS is currently implementing its Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027, which includes structural and programmatic refinements to the ways of working. CIVICUS has deepened its programmatic focus through three cross-cutting workstreams: Evidence & Engagement, Advocacy & Solidarity Action, and Innovation & Sustainability, each led by a Chief Officer increasing the Senior Leadership Team strength from four to five people. The Secretary General, currently Lysa John, is appointed by the CIVICUS board of directors. The CIVICUS Board provides strategic direction and is elected by members. As of 30 June 2023, CIVICUS has 70+ staff located in 20+ countries.

Financial and operational management: CIVICUS has a finance department consisting of approximately 8 members. Within the department there are two finance managers who are responsible for the planning, organizing, directing and/or controlling the financial activities of the organisation. This includes a collaborative annual budgeting process, monthly review of budget to expenses, projections of cash outlays and inlays and monthly review of donor allocations among other things. The finance managers are also responsible for the annual audit performed by an independent certified public accountant. The finance department is structured in a way to allow for segregation of duties. Different members of finance have abilities based on their position. This includes segregation in the cash outflows cycle to ensure commitments and outlays are appropriately reviewed and approved prior to the transactions and/or commitments being undertaken. CIVICUS has an operations department as well that oversees procurement and contracting. CIVICUS maintains a procurement policy that aligns with donor requirements and best practice. Systems are put in place transparent and competitive bidding processes as well as guidelines for review and approval of the bidding process.

People Practices: CIVICUS's organisation has been implementing its racial justice action plan since 2021, which includes a new learning and development framework, furthering diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and accountability practices. The framework incorporates concepts and leadership practices that foster a culture of shared identity and advance distributed leadership. CIVICUS also remains an active Accountable Now member, reporting on its internal and external accountability practices annually.

Management Systems: CIVICUS is investing in resilient systems and processes for financial, security, and knowledge management, aligning with its new strategic plan. The organization has made progress in real-time, collaborative planning and implementation through PowerBI reports, enabling budget holders to access more timely data on spending. Data security has been strengthened through a new data retention policy and multi-factor authorization compliance. Contract Works has been implemented, reducing delays in signing agreements and increasing efficiency during audits. Smartsheet dashboards have increased visibility in planning processes. The organisation has developed a new programme, quality, and innovation (PQI) framework, aligning monitoring and evaluation with its new strategy. The CIVICUS board has approved an integrated results framework in December 2022, strengthening outcomes reporting and allowing more time to focus on qualitative content. Outcomes are now shared internally during monthly outcome calls with staff and externally.

Policies: CIVICUS has an anti-corruption strategy that distinctly covers fraud and bribery. The strategy is outlined in the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy. A robust procurement policy as well as a CIVICUS financial management handbook support the implementation of these policies. CIVICUS also has a Whistleblowing Policy that provides staff with a way to vocalise their issues and confidentially report serious concerns. In addition to these policies all partner agreements used by CIVICUS include principles on preventing sexual exploitation and ensuring respect for gender equality, and all service provider agreements include an outline of ethical principles. As a learning organisation CIVICUS continuously looks at ways of improving the policies already in place and how they are implemented. CIVICUS is currently investing in a unified code of ethics to strengthen and align related policies.

b. Annual work planning:

CIVICUS conducts a robust annual planning process where each team submits their expected activities for the year, alongside with their budget. This is informed by overarching priorities and initiatives set of the year, the plan is approved, alongside the budget by the CIVICUS Executive Committee of the Board and published on the website annually and monitored accordingly alongside team expenditure.

c. Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL):

CIVICUS' [Integrated Results Framework](#) (IRF) enables the alliance to track progress against CIVICUS's Strategic Plan 2022-2027 whilst navigating the changing context. Using both quantitative and qualitative indicators, the IRF helps CIVICUS understand and learn, based on evidence and feedback from CIVICUS's stakeholders, how to make the most significant difference in the next five years. CIVICUS's quantitative and qualitative indicators help both in measuring the progress and support CIVICUS's learning along the five-year strategy; each strategic objective has a year-on-year quantitative output and outcome proxy indicator. Furthermore, the annual report publishes both the quantitative proxy indicators but goes further by providing qualitative evidence of the progress and learnings.

A mid-term strategic review and an end-of-strategy review provide further qualitative evidence (stories of change) and learnings by an external evaluator.

The IRF measures progress in relation to

- **Reach:** Are initiatives, programmes, resourcing reaching the target groups articulated in CIVICUS’s strategy? *This helps CIVICUS understand the accessibility, and awareness with target groups.*
- **Relevance/Influence:** If CIVICUS’s interventions are reaching the target groups, do the target groups find CIVICUS’s interventions relevant/valuable in achieving their own or collective goals. Is CIVICUS’s work both reaching decision makers and influencing agendas? *Evidence of relevance will be drawn directly from stakeholders, members, and partners.*
- **Significance:** If CIVICUS’s interventions are reaching the target groups and do they find the interventions relevant and meaningful – This helps CIVICUS to evaluate whether it’s *seeing the work translate into measurable change.*

The key elements of the IRF, building the annual CIVICUS Performance Story include:

Evidence of Change Element	Description	Timing
Strategic Objectives	CIVICUS defined areas of work and commitments to new initiatives	Set in the Strategic Plan – remains as is during strategic period
Annual Initiatives	Defined in annual plan, unpacks initiatives/areas of work per strategic objectives	May change from year to year, responsive to context
Short term outcomes (planned)	Defined during the development of this IRF and used as reference in the planning and reporting	Set for the first two years and revised during midterm strategy review
Evidence of emerging change (observed)	Observable changes we would expect to see given the implementation of annual initiatives	Identified through narrative reporting and consolidated on Outcomes Inventory
Evidence of systemic change (observed)	Observable changes that we would like to see signaling progress against long term outcomes	Identified through narrative reporting and consolidated on Outcomes Inventory
Measurement (reach, relevance, significance)	Qualitative and quantitative indicators to help CIVICUS understand the contribution to change	Captured through in-house MEL system quarterly, supported by bi-annual narrative analysis and reflection
Proxy indicators	Ten proxy outcomes indicators for change and influence	Aggregated year on year for annual reporting and other mandatory reporting
Long term outcome and sub-outcomes (planned)	Overarching outcomes for the Strategic Plan	Set in the Strategic Plan – remains as is during strategic period
Critical Learning Questions	Drives areas of programmatic investigation	Set for the first two years and revised during midterm strategy review

MEL System: CIVICUS has revised its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system to drive an intentional practice of learning and accountability. The revised system decentralises CIVICUS’s M&E work

and prioritises the collection of qualitative information directly from teams. CIVICUS's system enhances the ability to capture and reflect on outcomes more systematically on an ongoing basis. Based on learnings from the previous strategy, quantitative data has been streamlined and when possible automated, so more time can be committed to documenting the qualitative changes we are seeing. It is important to note that quantitative data remains a priority in aggregating CIVICUS's year-on-year proxy indicators for measuring progress on CIVICUS's five objectives. Quantitative data provokes discussions by providing points of reflection such as *why have the media mentions increased more in a particular month than another? What else can CIVICUS deduce from the trends we are seeing from those who engage with CIVICUS's research and analysis?* Quantitative data also triangulates the qualitative changes we have captured. Teams use their individual monitoring folders to capture indicator data and submit bi-annual narrative forms where they make sense of progress, outcomes, and learnings as input into organisational reflection processes. With the information documented through CIVICUS's MEL system, most significant outcomes are identified and further verified for incorporation into CIVICUS's reporting and for external dissemination.

Evidencing and tracking CIVICUS contribution to change: CIVICUS structures its evidence and tracking per strategic objective and maps the collective progress of CIVICUS's work to the long-term outcomes using quantitative and qualitative data, i.e., the CIVICUS Performance Story. The evidence chains identify examples of observable change that provide a signal that CIVICUS's initiatives, approaches, and engagement are resulting in the desired outcomes. CIVICUS's measurement approach (as noted above) across all of the evidence chains measures progress in relation to reach, relevance and significance. In addition, the information captured onto CIVICUS's MEL system is further assessed through the lens of Policy Change, Influencing and Solidarity, i.e., the extent to which CIVICUS has contributed, influenced and supported groups to drive progressive change towards expanded democratic freedoms and civic space. Further, verification is done through external consultants interviewing and surveying internal and external stakeholders to document CIVICUS's contribution to change. Once outcomes are verified, they become part of CIVICUS's outcomes inventory. The outcomes inventory is a way to create and share stories of the change we are seeing towards CIVICUS's intermediate and long-term outcomes. CIVICUS also has both a mid-term and endline strategy evaluation conducted by an external consultant. These provide additional spaces to collected qualitative evidence towards CIVICUS's intermediate and long-term outcomes.

CIVICUS accountability approach: In the CIVICUS Strategic Plan, CIVICUS commits to: (1) ensure stakeholders and allies understand decisions made in relation to the CIVICUS strategic plan, what they want to achieve and how they will go about doing it (giving account); (2) collect and address feedback from members and networks on how they are delivering on CIVICUS's strategy (taking account); and (3) enable those who are part of and affected by CIVICUS' strategic efforts to inform and review decisions about the way they progress their strategy (being held to account).

CIVICUS values all feedback from stakeholders, as it enables the organisation to spot areas that need work. The Feedback and Response policy describes the complaint and resolution processes, which are applicable to the whole CIVICUS Secretariat and Board. These processes are also backed by the CIVICUS Membership Policy and Code of Conduct, to which everyone is held accountable. Links to the feedback form have been added at the bottom of each page in both the CIVICUS website and in the CIVICUS Online Community platform to make it simple for members and stakeholders to utilize and to serve as a reminder.

Additionally, processes such as CIVICUS's annual reporting and annual general meetings serve as

important accountability mechanisms, as well as collecting and responding to feedback received via programmatic and other channels. CIVICUS also reports to Accountable Now global platform annually on CIVICUS's internal and external accountability commitments.

<https://www.civicus.org/documents/CIVICUS-feedback-response-policy.pdf>

d. Programmatic and financial reporting:

Programmatic Reporting: CIVICUS' annual plan and annual report are the core primary annual accountability documents where CIVICUS communicates their plans, progress, wins and learnings across the strategic period. CIVICUS uses its Outcomes Inventory to document observable changes in relation to CIVICUS's long-term outcomes, to curate and verify these to provide ongoing evidence for various uses such as other reporting requirements, external communications and as input into CIVICUS's reflection processes – this forms the basis of CIVICUS's mid-term and end term strategy reviews. The Annual Plan is approved by the CIVICUS Board and the Annual Report is discussed and approved at the Annual General Meeting to allow for wide reengagement in relation to the progress and impact.

Financial Reporting and Audits: CIVICUS conducts annual financial audits for each individual entity South Africa, Geneva and the United States in line with statutory requirements of those countries. US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) is applicable in the US entity and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in RSA and Geneva entities. An Aggregated Financial statement is also prepared, reviewed, and approved by the Board Operations Committee and later summarised in the Annual Report. Donor reports are prepared in accordance with donor specific requirements.

Both parties will strive for full alignment of the Danish support to the implementing partner rules and procedures, while respecting sound international principles for financial management and reporting.

Annual Programmatic and Financial Reporting Calendar:

- CIVICUS Financial Year – 1st July to 30th June
- CIVICUS Annual Plan and Budget available annually – 30th June
- Annual report, aggregate proxy indicators, audit reports and aggregated financials available annually – 31st October

Strategic Period 2022-2027 Calendar (indicative):

- CIVICUS Strategic Period – July 2022 – June 2027
- Mid-term strategy review – January to June 2025
- Strategy development process – July 2026 to April 2027
- End-term strategy review – July 2027 to January 2028

Note: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark shall have the right to carry out any technical or financial supervision mission that is considered necessary to monitor the implementation of the project.

After the termination of the project support, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark reserves the right to carry out evaluations in accordance with this article.

8. Financial Management, planning and reporting (third party)

Procedures and minimum requirements pertaining to partnerships and disbursements:

a. CIVICUS subgranting and disbursements

According to the annual report 2022/23 CIVICUS granted USD 3.6 million to members and partners and 121 subgrants agreements were signed, funds were distributed to 108 unique partners in 56 countries, which is approx. USD 30,000 on average per subgrant. 34% of CIVICUS annual revenue was used towards sub-grants. 62% was allocated to Africa. CIVICUS's Subgrant Management Manual (updated July 2023), governs all CIVICUS's subgranting processes and procedures.

CIVICUS in some cases works with partners who disburse grants to other partners. The contract format used by CIVICUS highlights that this type of sub-granting is only permitted after strict approval by CIVICUS. This approval can be provided to the programmatic colleague managing the subgrant in writing.

b. Partner procedures pertaining to financial management

The specific financial support allocated to each third-party entity is contingent upon several key considerations and following the CIVICUS Subgrants Management manual. Additionally, the budgetary requisites essential for realising these objectives and outcomes will be taken into account, alongside any matching funds that the partner or an alternate source can contribute to the proposed action. The financial capabilities as indicated by the organisational budget of the partner are also factored. Both CIVICUS' Partner Checklist and an assessment of the partner's risk profile (dependent on subgranting amount threshold) are utilised in this determination process. These comprehensive evaluations facilitate determination of the amount of funding to be disbursed, and the percentage that is disbursed alongside each project milestone.

Organisations lacking the capacity to implement the project or to manage the funds do not qualify for subgrants unless arrangements are put in place to address such capacity gaps before the subgrant is given.

c. Contract management

CIVICUS maintains signed contracts with the selected partners or projects. The contracts stipulate the rights and obligations of the parties. CIVICUS is using the system ContractWorks, a cloud-based document repository system recently implemented. The system is designed to upload, organize, and maintain donor and partner related documents and allow electronic signatures throughout the process.

d. Procurement

The CIVICUS Operations team oversees procurement and contracting. CIVICUS maintains a procurement policy (available in the annexure) that aligns with donor requirements and best practice. Systems are put in place for transparent and competitive bidding processes, as well as guidelines for review and approval of the bidding process.

e. Narrative and financial reporting for subgranting

CIVICUS has established formats for narrative and financial reporting. For grants up to USD 50,000 partners are required to submit electronic copies of all vouchers and for grants above USD 50,000 audit reports are required. Financial reports are submitted in the developed formats which enable monitoring of spending.

CIVICUS adopts a sustained accompaniment and robust monitoring approach with grantee partners which encompasses monitoring plans tailored to each project/initiative, mechanisms for grantees' feedback or complaints, as well as monitoring methods and sources, which form the foundation of the monitoring of

individual grants. CIVICUS monitoring systems are designed to collect as much relevant information as possible while minimising the burden placed on grantees in terms of data collection and reporting requirements. Grantee partners are required to submit narrative reports to report on their activities, and inapplicable cases financial reports to provide evidence that funds have been used for the purpose and in line with the contract.

In line with CIVICUS’s commitments to minimising the administrative burden on grantees, narrative reports are simple and focused on collecting only the data that is essential to assess the results achieved, monitor risks and cross-cutting issues, and ensure that the money is spent in compliance with laws and donor standards. CIVICUS staff closely follows up with grantees to jointly analyse progress, risk management and capture key information and lesson learned for management and for reporting purposes.

9. Risk Management

The CIVICUS Board of Directors retains strategic oversight over the organisation’s risk management framework, while CIVICUS management is responsible for overseeing functional execution of the Risk Management Policy in line with the Delegated and Financial Authorities Policy. Given CIVICUS’ wide-ranging programme/project portfolio, primary risk identification is assigned to risk owners at the Cluster and Project levels, a process that entrenches staff participation in overall risk management. Senior management is responsible for identifying and mitigating risks that are deemed to be of a strategic nature and with significant implications to the organisation. The Board reviews and approves the organisation’s risk register at least once a year.

Risk Factor	Likelihood	Impact	Consequence/Background assessment	Risk-reducing measures (Risk response)
Overall				
Global disruptions including from conflicts, climate induced natural disasters & pandemics	Likely	Major	Disruption to operations & the possibility of severe injury to staff & others at CIVICUS convenings, events, offices & during CIVICUS sponsored travel	Established cross-organisational Duty of Care Team is authorised to act/respond quickly & decisively to emergencies to safeguard staff, third parties & institutional assets. The CIVICUS senior leadership team are also stewarding the creation of an organisational culture whereby supervisors regularly check with staff in at risk locations.
Calculated negative press & social media attacks & politically charged trolling	Likely	Major	A skewed and inaccurate impression of CIVICUS may lead to reduced trust by stakeholders. Negative press and social media trolling can lead to increased attacks from governments and restrictions for CIVICUS to operate or work with members and partners in certain contexts	Strengthened external accountability - improving constituent accountability, transparency, meeting donor/partner requirements, clean audits etc. Proactive media monitoring & outreach. Effective communications, including of ethics, values & commitments. CIVICUS’s counter-narrative programming. Relationship management, including with funders & partners.
Financial resilience & sustainability	Unlikely	Major	Loss of core donors could compromise operations, & crucially, undermine the organisation’s liquidity. Potential direct impact on	Using the costed strategy as the primary vehicle to identify & resource the long-term strategic objectives. Continued implementation of the updated resourcing strategy which has resulted in a

			effective implementation of the strategic plan.	diversified pool of core donors. Strengthen the organisation's resource mobilisation capacity. Continuous review of internal financial planning & management practices as well as resource mapping across core funded positions.
Increased civil society funding restrictions - foreign funding or increasingly hostile civic space environment in countries where we have partners & subgrantees	Likely	Minor	Inability to transfer funds to partners in risk countries	Adapt finances requirements to deal with these situations. Donor influencing to continue to provide support to advocate for resources in restricted contexts.
Currency factors - Exchange rate fluctuations between US Dollar and funder currencies causing relative exchange losses.	Likely	Minor	CIVICUS receives funds in multiple currencies but the actual transfers could differ, negatively impacting USD\$ equivalent receipts.	CIVICUS monitors the receipts and compares to anticipated amounts. Identifying differences immediately allows CIVICUS to adjust and re-evaluate budget/activities based on actual funds received.
Safety & security of staff, members & partners travelling for and engaged with CIVICUS related activities	Likely	Major	Harassment (online and offline surveillance, arrests & detention etc.) & potential physical harm to individuals & associated emotional/psychological trauma. Reputational risk to CIVICUS depending on nature of response & could potentially lead to loss of trust. Possible litigation.	Limiting exposure through deliberate measures e.g., controlled access to confidential information, appraisal of events/hosts. Aligning criteria of host locations & countries, & travel plans to CIVICUS Monitor & up to date country analysis. Emphasising adherence by members partners, hosts, and staff on CIVICUS' code of conduct. Management agility.
Programme quality and donor compliance risks, non-compliance with donor requirements leading to loss of donor trust.	Unlikely	Major	Damaged reputation, reduction in membership, reduced ability to attract funding, audit queries	Investment in capacity through the Innovation and Programme Quality team, investment in dedicated capacity to oversee donor requirements monitoring, compliance and training, implementing feedback loops with partners in line with the Accountability Reporting requirements.
Safeguarding, governance & other issues involving CIVICUS & it's members/ partners	Unlikely	Major	Reputational harm leading to loss of trust & engagement with key partners, donors, members & the public	CIVICUS's ethics/values/commitments to safeguarding are clearly published, including how CIVICUS responds to any instances, a mechanism in place for informing communications & organisational leadership, decision-making tree/process on issuing reactive statements.

Human resource capacity to deliver the Strategic Plan	Unlikely	Major	Staffing gaps due to transition and/or project closures, leading to pressure on colleagues, delays in recruitment leading to sustained increase in workload negative effects on physical and mental health of individuals as well as the health and performance of the collective	Increased attention to recruitment and transition plans. Mechanisms to strengthen institutional knowledge (documentation) of processes and outcomes. Emphasis on leadership training and development across levels to enable transfer of knowledge and upskilling. Creating opportunities for collective care across the organisation.
Risks related to working with CIVICUS's target groups				
Surveillance of activists working closely with CIVICUS when they communicate with external actors	Likely	Major	CIVICUS communication could potentially be monitored placing the systems, and those that use the systems, at risk	CIVICUS limits communications with partners who are subjected to surveillance are substantially to secure channels and reduce frequency.
Threats to Human rights defenders and activists working closely with CIVICUS in countries with repressed and closed civic space	Likely	Major	CIVICUS activities could cause instances of personal risk to HRDs, including arrest & execution of activists found communicating with "foreign actors", which includes organisations such as CIVICUS in countries such as Iran	CIVICUS implements security protocols to ensure the safety of the activists CIVICUS will work with to ensure no increased risks. For example, using more secure means of communication like signal to communicate with partners and no paper or online trails left after communicating with partners.
Data security of personal details of human rights defenders	Likely	Major	Disclosing personal details of embattled activists operating in restricted & dangerous conditions can put activists at severe risk	Ensuring an intentional consent process before publishing personal details for interviews, quotes, joint statements

10. Programme Sustainability

As this programme will support CIVICUS core work, there is inherent sustainability after project completion. More specifically, CIVICUS has the following mechanisms in place to ensure the sustainability of its work:

- **Financial sustainability:** CIVICUS' Strategic Plan is financed through a wide range of donors, both private and public, it is also supported by a resourcing strategy to ensure CIVICUS is able to meet its strategic goals. Additionally, CIVICUS continues to advocate for more and more relevant investments, as well as enabling and resourcing conditions for the sector through initiatives like Rebuilding for Good.
- **Institutional sustainability:** Skills-building, institution-building and coalition-building initiatives are designed to have a multiplier effect that results in improvements to the local ecosystem of support, so that the initial transfer of skills supported by CIVICUS continues long after the grant period.
- **Policy level sustainability:** CIVICUS research and advocacy activities aim to support CIVICUS members and key stakeholders in advancing agendas that expand civic and democratic space; while the creation/reinforcement of connections at all levels seek to improve civil society's ability to push-

back against new restrictions or negative changes in policy.

- **Environmental sustainability**: In conjunction with the CIVICUS Environmental Policy and the strategies outlined therein, CIVICUS teams track their carbon footprint and, when possible, plan reduced related travel while also utilising environmentally sound procurement practices.
- **Distributed ownership**: CIVICUS' co-design approach is a core element of the programme quality framework, ensuring that CIVICUS conceptualises, design and deliver the projects together with CIVICUS's stakeholders to ensure relevance and sustainability. CIVICUS's project governance models are also representative of the constituents and partners and the incubation approach has enabled us to transition out of hosting key networks such as Innovation for Change, whilst remaining a strategic ally. The support and accompaniment envisioned in this project is largely aimed at locally-led and locally-owned initiatives and infrastructure, which also allows sustainability - where relevant- afterproject completion
- **Strategy review**: Lessons and learnings are captured through the implementation of the strategic plan and integrated into workplans accordingly. Each year CIVICUS produces annual reports as well as conducts financial audits which will be submitted accordingly. More formally mid-term and end-term strategy reviews will take place to ensure feedback from partners, successes and learnings are integrated into the next strategic plan.

Supplementary material (available upon request):

1 – CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027Annex

2 - CIVICUS Costed Strategy

3 - Integrated Results Framework Annex

4 – People Power Under Attack Annex 5

5 – Annual Report 2022-2023 PackAnnex

6 – CIVICUS Procurement Policy

ANNEX 2: PARTNER ASSESSMENT



CIVICUS

Organisational Bio: CIVICUS is a global civil society alliance with more than 15,000 members in more than 180 countries¹ dedicated to defending civic space and strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. It was established in 1993 and has since 2002 been headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, with additional hubs across the globe. CIVICUS has an annual turnover of USD 11,3 million CIVICUS has a broad definition of civil society that covers non-governmental organisations, activists, civil society coalitions and networks, protest and social movements, voluntary bodies, campaigning organisations, charities, faith-based groups, trade unions and philanthropic foundations. CIVICUS overarching goal is to strengthen civil society and citizen action for expanded civic and democratic space. To this end CIVICUS defines the following impact areas²:

- Improved ability of excluded groups to challenge oppressive power and transform policy making.
- Improved public discourse that reflects greater value for civic and democratic space and social and environmental justice, and greater recognition of the relevance and sustained impact of civil society.
- Improved accountability by decision makers to uphold the fundamental civic freedoms of association, peaceful assembly, and expression.
- Increased and more effective civil society action moves decision makers to safeguard and expand civic and democratic space.

In contributing to this change, the work of CIVICUS works towards five core objectives 1. Generate timely knowledge and analyses, 2. Coordinate targeted advocacy, 3. Contribute to stronger emergency and sustained support ecosystems, 4. Strengthen public discourse on civic space and reinforce civil society narratives, 5. Build counter-power with the most affected groups and their movements. While CIVICUS aims to represent the diversity of civil society, the current strategy places an emphasis on the following groups and individuals:

- Most affected by civic and democratic space restrictions.
- Traditionally excluded communities and their networks.
- Smaller, less formal groups on the frontlines of social transformation.
- Protest and social movements, including online platforms.
- Journalists, media, and media development organisations.
- Youth activists and other evolving forms of people power.
- Public and private institutions that contribute to expanding civic and democratic space.

Current engagement & capacity assessment: In the current partnership with Denmark, CIVICUS has been well performing. CIVICUS highlights key achievements as improved solidarity that resulted in the release of human rights defenders and changed policy and legislation in support of civil society;

¹ For more on membership see: [Become a member \(civicus.org\)](https://www.civicus.org)

² CIVICUS Strategic Plan 2022-2027

increased recognition and uptake of research and analysis on civil society; and greater engagement in the alliance, including a significant increase in members. Key learning areas for CIVICUS has been related to networking and connecting actors and partners for greater impact; utilising new media formats that contribute to the narrative for civil society and civic space; converting work to digital in ways that are safe, relevant, inclusive, and effective; improving resourcing and sub-granting practices; and redefining influencing approaches that build counter-power with traditionally excluded communities.

The latest mid-term review of CIVICUS recognised the organisation as a convener, thought leader, influencer, and support-provider on civic space. The main challenges pointed out by the review related to CIVICUS rapid growth in terms of members, funding, and projects, as well as the need to maintain focus, coherence, and agility. The review also pointed out that CIVICUS has successfully taken on an increasing and important role as a facilitator of grants, but also pointed out the importance of balancing or integrating this role so it does not undermine the organisation's primary strength in established peer to peer relationships. Responding to the mid-term review, CIVICUS has worked to review their theory of change and strengthening their understanding of people-powered movements and making operations fit for purpose, while also identifying strategic amendments needed to better reflect and respond to the current context.

Role, justification, and strategic value: With a growing and very diverse membership of more than 15,000 organisations, CIVICUS is arguably the world's largest network of civil society organisations that works to strengthen civil society and citizen action. CIVICUS is recognised as a field leader on civic freedoms. As a network headquartered in South Africa and with a strong southern membership base, CIVICUS' work is strongly rooted, and the organisation has an explicit local leadership approach and is recognised for its ability to place member at the centre of everything that it does. CIVICUS has an established track-record of working with a diverse range of civil society actors, including informal actors. In the current strategic period CIVICUS has further strengthened its focus on youth.

Assessment report:

CIVICUS procedures for sub-granting
and
CIVICUS absorption capacity

Report commissioned by Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DMFA)

12 December 2023

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Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS review the sub-grant manual and – depending on a risk assessment of each partner - make provisions to include financial capacity assessments of partners before first disbursement on large/major contracts.

Recommendation 2: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS and the PMT agree on a format in order to discuss status of DDI subgrant contracts during quarterly PMT/CIVICUS meetings. This could include a detailed list for each contract, including amount granted, amount spent and remaining balance. Also number of contracts open, and number of contracts closed should be included.

Recommendation 3: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS presents a risk-based financial and programme monitoring plan for the DDI programme for approval in the next PMT/CIVICUS meeting early 2024. Once approved, it is recommended that the PMT participates in selected monitoring visits to promote mutual learning and knowledge-sharing.

Recommendation 4: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS updates the subgrant manual and includes a section relating to assessments of partners, who will be subgranting to other partners (sub-sub-granting procedures). The consultant recommends that for these partners, a physical monitoring visit is compulsory prior to ‘first disbursement’ – potentially together with the PMT.

Recommendation 5: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS 1) further develops internal capacity to identify cases of corruption and 2) initiates an information campaign internally and among their members in relation to their anti-corruption policy and procedures.

Recommendation 6: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS presents and discusses regular updates on risks relating to DDI partners during PMT/CIVICUS meetings.

Recommendation 7: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS carries out an internal assessment in order to determine the specific HR, monitoring/evaluation needs for an adequate implementation of the DDI sub-granting taking into account the risks with new/existing partners. The analysis should be presented and discussed at the next quarterly PMT/CIVICUS meeting.

Recommendation 8: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS and PMT discuss and agree on the issue relating to smaller grants and ensure that the CIVICUS-DDI-team has the necessary staff to manage the potential extended number of subgrants.

Recommendation 9: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS undertakes an internal review of assessment reports by donors with the aim to ensure full implementation and compliance on the recommendations. The internal review report should be presented at the next quarterly PMT/CIVICUS meeting.

Introduction

The **Digital Democracy Initiative (DDI)** is a programme that emerged from Denmark's Tech for Democracy initiative in response to the shrinking democratic and civic space. Its objective is *“to promote and protect local inclusive democratic space in the digital era”*. The programme will be implemented in the period 2023-26 and has a total budget of DKK 300 million.

One of the partners of DDI is CIVICUS, a global alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society around the world. CIVICUS is an existing DMFA partner and has received approx. DKK 7 million per year in funding. The programme document from Feb 2023 highlights that “in the current partnership with Denmark, CIVICUS has been well performing”.

In April 2023, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DMFA) expanded the partnership and signed an agreement of DKK 115 million for the period 2023-26. As this represents a substantial increase of the annual Danish grant, the programme document highlighted the need to conduct a capacity assessment of CIVICUS. This report is a response to this need and DMFA have requested Krone Controlling¹. (“the consultant”) to undertake the assignment.

Methodology

In keeping with the ToR, the consultant is requested to assess:

- CIVICUS' guidelines for management and realized management of sub-granting under DDI and other projects; and
- the absorptive capacity of CIVICUS and its capability to manage the DDI grant, while complying with DMFA guidelines.

In relation to sub-granting, the consultant has reviewed existing CIVICUS sub-granting guidelines in relation to due diligence, financial reporting, monitoring and audit requirements. Furthermore, the consultant reviewed contract formats between partners and CIVICUS and assessed scope and compliance issues. Quality and frequency of narrative and financial reports (incl documentation needs) from partners has been assessed as well as monitoring efforts by CIVICUS. The consultant has looked at the sub-granting planning processes under DDI including expected number of sub-partners, their location and expected amount of sub-grant.

In relation to assess absorption capacity, the consultant has looked specifically at what steps CIVICUS has taken to ensure the organisation can adjust to match new levels of partner- and grant management. The assessment includes operational issues and programme issues.

The methodology included review of documents, approx. 15 interviews (of which the PMT attended in 5) with CIVICUS staff and sub-grantees in South Africa to learn about the interaction with and monitoring by CIVICUS. Further, the bilateral donor, SIDA, has

¹ www.krone-controlling.com

been interviewed to learn about working-relations with CIVICUS. SIDA is a long-standing donor to CIVICUS for the last decade.

A total of 12 consultancy days has been allocated for this assignment. ToR can be found as annex 1.

Assessment of CIVICUS procedures for sub-granting

According to the annual report 2022/23 CIVICUS granted USD 3.6 million to members and partners and 121 subgrants were distributed to 108 unique partners in 56 countries, which is approx. USD 30.000 on average per subgrant. 34% of CIVICUS annual revenue was used towards sub-grants. 62% was allocated to Africa.

CIVICUS has drafted procedures for sub-granting, detailed in a “Subgrant Management Manual” (dated July 2023). The consultant has reviewed the below elements of the manual.

Partner selection and assessments

Different assessments/pre-appraisal systems are needed depending on the size of the contract. The below table shows how CIVICUS works with different contract thresholds. For mini contracts (below USD 2,500) a standard checklist is used as well as a need to review legal status, governance and confirmation of banking details. For major contracts (above USD 100,000) a self-assessment form, a standard check list is completed by CIVICUS, and an external, third-party organization (typically a CIVICUS member organization in the same country of the applicant) is required to complete a checklist to ‘vouch’ for the organization applying for a CIVICUS grant. In the view of the consultant this adds a layer of compliance.

The standard check list also includes a subjective assessment of the partner, both using a 1-5 scale as well as a short, written assessment. This adds to the risk assessment of the partner and may potentially influence the payment schedule.

Amount	Type	Pre-appraisal	Review required	Approval	Reporting
Up to \$2,499 // ZAR39,999	Mini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard checklist*, minus previous engagement section and governance section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal status and governance (if relevant) Confirmation of banking facilities 	COO or SG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard programmatic reporting indicating how money has been spent Partner review form
\$2,500-\$9,999 // ZAR40k-R149,999 \$10,000-\$24,999 // ZAR150k-ZAR374,999	Small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard checklist*, minus previous engagement section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal status and governance Accounting systems and books of accounts Procedures of authorisation, payments, procurements, banking facilities, budgeting and reporting Qualifications and experience of leadership team Latest management and statutory accounts 	COO or SG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard programmatic and financial reporting Partner review form
\$25,000-\$49,999 // ZAR375k-ZAR749,999	Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard 1st or 3rd party checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal status and governance Accounting systems and books of accounts Procedures of authorisation, payments, procurements, banking facilities, budgeting and reporting Qualifications and experience of finance staff and senior leadership team Latest management and statutory accounts 	COO or SG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard programmatic and financial reporting requirements Partner review form
\$50,000-\$99,999 // ZAR750k-ZAR1,499m	Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-assessment form (to be completed by partner) Standard 1st or 3rd party checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal status and governance Accounting systems and books of accounts Procedures of authorisation, payments, procurements, banking facilities, budgeting and reporting Qualifications and experience of finance staff and senior leadership team Latest management and statutory accounts 	COO or SG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard programmatic and financial reporting requirements Partner review form Provision of audited accounts if required by donor
\$100,000-\$249,999 // ZAR1.5m-ZAR3,749m \$249,999+ // ZAR3,750m+	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-assessment form (to be completed by partner) Standard 1st or 3rd party checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal status and governance Accounting systems and books of accounts Procedures of authorisation, payments, procurements, banking facilities, budgeting and reporting Qualifications and experience of finance staff and senior leadership team Latest management and statutory accounts 	Full SLT, with sign-off by COO or SG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard programmatic and financial reporting requirements Partner assessment form Provision of project-specific audited accounts

* Documents requested under the “Governance and Registration” section of the checklist (both 1st and 3rd party versions) do not contribute to the weighting of the risk rating, as it is understood that not all partners will have the same capacity, structure, and resources. However, it should be noted that such governance documents are also used to measure potential areas where CIVICUS can provide capacity-building skills to support further development. It would therefore be beneficial for project coordinators to discuss such documents (or lack thereof) with all partners to gain context on possible capacity gaps.

The consultant has reviewed filled-in formats and discussed procedures with staff and finds that the pre-assessment applied by CIVICUS overall seems well-established and structured. However, in the view of the consultant there is a need to consider risk, especially for new partners, and carry out additional measures. Also, the issue about financial capacity assessment prior to granting funds is missing.

Recommendation 1: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS review the sub-grant manual and – depending on a risk assessment of each partner - make provisions to include financial capacity assessments of partners before first disbursement on large/major contracts.

Contract management

Contract management is a key element when it comes to sub-granting as this relates to how agreements are made and managed. To learn about established procedures at CIVICUS, the consultant was given a thorough and in-depth presentation about the structures and systems in place. The sub-grant manual is not specific on the contract management but separate procedures are in place.

CIVICUS has developed a SharePoint site relating to contracting and provides the necessary overview, guidance and formats for the programme section, who is responsible for downloading and filling in details in relation to the respective partner contracts. CIVICUS has contract formats for all types of agreements and a flow chart has been established to guide staff on how to develop a contract. Training on contract management is facilitated by HR and “brown(?) bag” refresher courses are undertaken on an ongoing basis.

“ContractWorks” is a cloud-based database which stores contracts, manages the workflows for signatories and has built-in reminders if any in the workflow have not signed. The system also sends reminders to relevant users about the ending of the contract as well as reporting deadlines.

The consultant reviewed the contract template used by CIVICUS. This is a 16-page document which includes necessary details on i.e. budget formats, banking details, narrative and financial reporting, documentation needs, procurement procedures, handling of assets, access to/inspection of information, clauses on compliance and corruption, rules for termination, etc. The consultant did not get access to filled-in contracts due to confidentiality issues.

The assessment by the consultant is that CIVICUS has well-established and sound procedures in relation to contract management but in relation to the DDI grant it is necessary for transparency and monitoring purposes that CIVICUS share information about status of DDI contracts.

The formats for reporting to PMT on number of contracts was discussed but no formats have yet been developed.

Recommendation 2: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS and PMT during Q1 2024 agree on a format in order to discuss status of DDI contracts at quarterly PMT/CIVICUS meetings. This could include a detailed list for each contract, including amount granted, amount spent and remaining balance. Also number of contracts open, and number of contracts closed should be included.

Subgrant monitoring and onwards transfer by subgrantees

Due to the global scope of CIVICUS operations, monitoring of partners mainly takes place using online methods, i.e. online meetings, review of reports and documents submitted by partners. Some physical monitoring visits have taken place and CIVICUS staff explained about the findings, especially on the financial monitoring visits. The visit revealed lack of reconciliations, lack of segregation of duties, etc. In the view of the consultant this is a good example of how physical financial monitoring provides further insights into partner procedures and working methods.

The consultant *suggests* that CIVICUS review their sub-granting manual and expands on the issue relating to physical, hybrid and online monitoring of partners.

During discussions, it was clarified that CIVICUS in some cases work with partners who disburse grants to other partners. The contract format used by CIVICUS highlights that this type of sub-granting is only permitted after strict approval by CIVICUS. During discussions with CIVICUS staff it was not clear what procedures were in place in order to appraise organisations who did sub-subgranting.

Recommendation 3: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS develops a costed and risk-based financial and programme monitoring plan for the DDI programme for approval in the next PMT/CIVICUS meeting early 2024. Once approved, it is recommended that PMT participates in selected monitoring visits to promote mutual learning and knowledge-sharing.

Recommendation 4: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS updates the subgrant manual and includes a section relating to assessments of partners, who will be subgranting to other partners (sub-sub-granting procedures). The consultant recommends that for these partners, a physical monitoring visit is compulsory prior to 'first disbursement'.

Reporting and audit

CIVICUS has established formats for narrative and financial reporting. For grants up to USD 50,000 partners are required to submit electronic copies of all vouchers and for grants above USD 50,000 audit reports are required. Financial reports are submitted in the developed formats which enable monitoring of spending.

The consultant did not get access to actual spending reports due to confidentiality issues.

In relation to another project (CHARM), CIVICUS shared an overview of how the organization consolidates audit findings and actions taken. In this case, the project worked with partner contracts above USD 50,000 and hence received audit reports from them. In order to follow up on findings from management letters, CIVICUS monitored progress on findings using this tool. The consultant suggests that for the DDI project a similar tracking tool is applied.

Anti-corruption, fraud and complaints mechanism

The CIVICUS Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption policy is from 2021 and highlights policy statements, definitions, the dilemmas involved, and importantly also which actions to take in case issues are identified. A review of the contract formats with partners demonstrated that they include specific clauses on the requirements for an anti-corruption policy. Furthermore, the subgrant manual includes specific actions to be taken, e.g. if possible fraud at partner level is suspected, the details should be reported immediately by the employee to the manager.

The consultant asked about recent corruption cases in the past couple of years but CIVICUS could not present actual cases.

There is a complaints mechanism in place on the website, but nothing mentioned about fraud, complaints or corruption cases in the 2022/23 annual report.

It is the assessment by the consultant that CIVICUS has adequate anti-corruption policies and procedures in place but needs to work further with issues in relation to identifying and communicating openly on corruption cases.

Recommendation 5: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS 1) further develops internal capacity to identify cases of corruption and 2) initiates an information campaign internally and among their members in relation to their anti-corruption policy and procedures.

Risk management

Risk management is highlighted in the programme document of DDI and specifies that it will primarily be based on the implementing partners' identification and management of risks. The PMT will ensure dialogue, follow up and oversight of CIVICUS' risk management, and will be a standing item at the quarterly meetings between CIVICUS and PMT.

CIVICUS has developed a risk management policy, which describes the framework and how CIVICUS works with risks. The Governance, Risk and Compliance Coordinator is coordinating quarterly risk for a where risk owners identify risks and undertake assessments of the risks. Cluster and project leads are operationally responsible for the identification and mitigation of risks and for updating an internal risk register.

On a quarterly basis risks are tracked and reviewed in the risk forum and the board are informed about the overall risks in the organization, including what steps management intends to take to mitigate risks.

For partners, there is an internal risk list, which is an internal partner measurement. The list is used internally to monitor performance. Examples of mitigating factors in case of high risk could be an increase in reporting frequency (and breaking contract value up in several tranches).

During an interview with the consultant, CIVICUS explained that working with risks was initiated based on a recommendation from SIDA and that CIVICUS started the focus since 2019. Currently, CIVICUS is interacting with other big NGOs such as Amnesty International and Action Aid and learning from their experiences in relation to risk.

It is the assessment by the consultant that CIVICUS has established good procedures in relation to risks.

Recommendation 6: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS presents and discusses regular updates on risks relating to DDI partners during PMT/CIVICUS meetings.

Absorption capacity

In the partner assessment made by MFA as part of the programme document from Feb 2023, a weakness highlighted concerning CIVICUS, was that their systems and processes for sub-granting were more geared toward donor compliance than accessibility for smaller, less formal groups and movements, which was a programme priority.

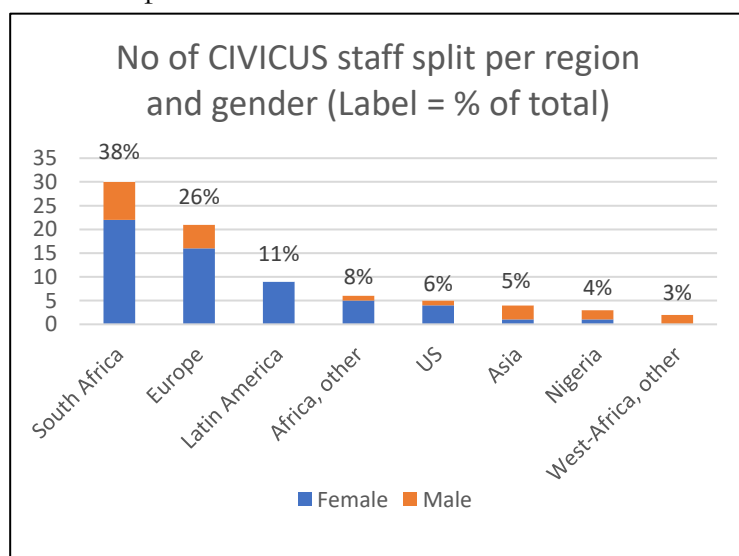
Below, the consultant has reviewed information relating to HR and the planned DDI subgrant setup.

HR and subgranting plans

The management of the DDI project will be done by “people” so an important consideration is how CIVICUS has made plans in relation to HR.

As per Nov 2023 there are a total of 80 staff members 73% women and 27% men. As per the structure of CIVICUS, staff are located in 26 different countries, the majority being in South Africa (38%), followed by Europe, Latin America and other African countries. See figure below.

The challenges and benefits with staffing placed in



different parts of the world was discussed and CIVICUS overall sees this as a benefit, although HR issues such as duty of care, sense of belonging are issues of focus.

Turning to the DDI, and as demonstrated in the graph below, the project will be staffed with 8.5 Full Time Employees (FTE). In addition, the back office at CIVICUS will support with contract and finance management, which is foreseen to be covered by the overhead/ core funding from other donors.

DDI Staff	Work load	FTE	Hired?
Finance and Compliance Coordinator	100%	1	Yes
Project Coordinator	100%	1	Yes
Digital Action Lab Officer	100%	1	Yes
Data and Accountability Programme Coordinator	50%	0,5	Yes
I & A Officer	100%	1	Yes
Programme Officer	100%	1	No
Project learning Coordinator	100%	1	No
2 project officers/Host Liasion	100%	2	No
Total		8,5	

As can be seen, not all staff are hired.

In relation to subgrants, CIVICUS have shared a tentative overview of planned sub-granting to partners under the DDI for the first two years. According to the overview, a total of DKK 21 million has been planned to be distributed among 67 participants for sub-grants. This is on average approx. DKK 314.000 or USD 45.000 per recipient. This would then fall in the CIVICUS category “standard grant”.

Both the DDI programme document and the CIVICUS project document under DDI indicate that a high proportion of subgrants to be provided by CIVICUS should target smaller, less formal and informal groups, and movements. However, the received overview of expected subgrants in year 1 and year 2 – in the opinion of the consultant - does not reflect this proportion and focus on smaller actors.

The total number of current active contracts within CIVICUS – it was explained – is around 80, so the additional 67 contracts represent a substantial increase.

In comparison, the CHARM project was a SEK 75 million project funded by SIDA which ended in July 2023.

For this project CIVICUS hired 7 FTE but the project did not include as many subgrants as the DDI intends to engage. In total there were 7 large

CHARM staff	Workload	FTE
Advocacy & Campaigning Lead	100%	1
Finance and Compliance Coordinator	100%	1
Networks and Engagement Coordinator	100%	1
Advocacy and Campaigns Officer	100%	1
Quality Assurance and Reporting Coordinator	100%	1
Programme Assistant: CHARM	100%	1
Communications Project Officer (SIDA)	100%	1
Total		7

partnerships, but several of them provided sub-subgranting (e.g. Defend Defenders and others). In total there were 9 subgrants. Some grants were as low as USD 2000 and others around USD 20.000. Another key finding is that the finance and compliance coordinator will be the same, i.e. with relevant experience from (more or less) similar project setup.

Analysis element	CIVICUS	CHARM	DDI
Total annual budget (USD)	10 million	2 million	6 million
Staff	80	7	8.5
Number of subgrants*	121	9	67+
Approx. size per subgrant (USD)	30.000	6-700.000	45.000

* CIVICUS: for 2022/23 financial year. CHARM and DDI: for the project period

It is the assessment by the consultant that the DDI project represents a substantial increase in number of subgrants to be managed by CIVICUS and additional analysis is needed.

Recommendation 7: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS carries out an internal assessment in order to determine the specific HR, monitoring/evaluation needs for an adequate implementation of the DDI sub-granting taking into account the risks with new/existing partners. The outcome of the analysis should be presented and discussed at the next quarterly PMT/CIVICUS meeting.

Recommendation 8: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS and PMT discuss and agree on the issue relating to smaller grants and ensure that the CIVICUS-DDI-team has the necessary staff to manage the potential extended number of subgrants. To be agreed at the next PMT/CIVICUS meeting in early 2024.

Capacity assessments by other donors

The consultant has reviewed the assessments done by SIDA and the EU consultant. While the elements in those assessments fall outside the scope of this assessment report, they are to some degree linked to the performance of CIVICUS and hence therefore relating to DDI performance. There may be other assessments done by other donors that the consultant has not received/looked into.

Issues reviewed by SIDA	Issues reviewed by EU consultant
Organisational structure	Internal audit function
Funds flow management	Risk and performance management
Accounting policies and procedures	Staff expenditure and allocation methods
Risk management	Salaries and tax issues
Fraud and corruption management	Per diems
Oversight from HQ vs field offices	Grant contracts
Audits, reporting and monitoring	Right of defence
Procurement	
Sub-granting	

The above assessments identified risks and weaknesses within CIVICUS. A management response has been prepared by management but it is unclear to the consultant if all recommendations have been implemented.

Recommendation 9: The consultant recommends that CIVICUS undertakes an internal review of assessment reports by donors with the aim to ensure full implementation and compliance on the recommendations. The internal review report should be presented at the next donor meeting.

Conclusions

The consultant was requested to assess: 1) CIVICUS' guidelines for management and realized management of sub-granting under DDI and other projects; and 2) the absorptive capacity of CIVICUS and its capability to manage the DDI grant, while complying with DMFA guidelines.

During the financial year 2022/23, CIVICUS granted USD 3.6 million to members and partners and 121 subgrants were distributed to 108 unique partners in 56 countries, which is approx. USD 30,000 on average per subgrant. 34% of CIVICUS annual revenue was used towards sub-grants. 62% was allocated to Africa.

In relation to partner selection/assessments, CIVICUS apply different assessments/pre-appraisal systems depending on the size of the contract. The consultant has reviewed filled-in formats and discussed procedures with staff and finds that the pre-assessment applied by CIVICUS overall seems well-established and structured. However, in the view of the consultant there is a need to consider risk and carry out additional measures. Also, the issue about financial capacity assessment prior to granting funds is missing.

In relation to contract management, CIVICUS has developed a SharePoint site relating to contracting and provides the necessary overview. Also, CIVICUS applies "ContractWorks", a cloud-based database which stores contracts, manages the workflows for signatories and has built-in reminders. The assessment by the consultant is that CIVICUS has well-established and sound procedures in relation to contract management but in relation to the DDI grant it is necessary for transparency and monitoring purposes that CIVICUS share information about status of DDI contracts.

In relation to subgrant monitoring and onwards transfer by subgrantees, the consultant *suggests* that CIVICUS review their sub-granting manual and expands on the issue relating to physical, hybrid and online monitoring of partners.

In relation to reporting and audit, CIVICUS has established formats for narrative and financial reporting. For grants up to USD 50,000 partners are required to submit electronic copies of all vouchers and for grants above USD 50,000 audit reports are required. Financial reports are submitted in the developed formats which enable monitoring of spending.

In relation to anti-corruption, the CIVICUS Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption policy is from 2021 and highlights policy statements, definitions, the dilemmas involved, and importantly also which actions to take in case issues are identified. A review of the contract formats with partners demonstrated that they include specific clauses on the requirements

for an anti-corruption policy. It is the assessment by the consultant that CIVICUS has adequate anti-corruption policies and procedures in place but needs to work further with issues in relation to identifying and communicating openly on corruption cases.

In relation to risk management, is highlighted in the programme document of DDI and specifies that it will primarily be based on the implementing partners' identification and management of risks. PMT and CIVICUS will ensure dialogue, follow up and oversight of CIVICUS' risk management, as part of the quarterly meetings. CIVICUS initiated risk work in 2019 and is currently interacting with other big NGOs to share knowledge and learn from their experiences. It is the assessment by the consultant that CIVICUS has established good procedures in relation to risks but it is important to maintain regular updates on the topic.

Regarding absorption capacity, this was also highlighted in the partner assessment made by MFA in Feb 2023. A weakness highlighted was that their systems and processes for sub-granting were more geared toward donor compliance than accessibility for smaller, less formal groups and movements, which was a programme priority. The consultant made comparative assessments of a similar programme and found that the DDI project represents a substantial increase in number of subgrants to be managed by CIVICUS and additional analysis is needed. Also in the light of the fact that a high proportion of subgrants to be provided by CIVICUS should target smaller, less formal and informal groups, and movements.

The report contains a total of 9 recommendations, which can be found in the section "recommendations".

Annex 1: Terms of Reference for the assignment

Consultancy Support – Absorptive Capacity Assessment of CIVICUS

F2 ref: 2022-32406

1. Background and context

Digital Democracy Initiative (DDI) is a programme that emerged from Denmark's Tech for Democracy initiative in response to the shrinking democratic and civic space. Its objective is *“to promote and protect local inclusive democratic space in the digital era”*. Two key outcomes are foreseen to 1) *“Enable and Amplify”* local civil society actors via increased use of digital technology for enhanced civic engagement and 2) to *“Defend and Protect”* local civil society actors who are users of digital technology via enhanced digital resilience, security and safeguard of the online civic space. One of the implementing partners under DDI outcome 1 is CIVICUS.

During the internal grant approval process for DDI, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DMFA) conducted an internal appraisal report on DDI and its implementing partners. The appraisal found that the main part of the budget for Outcome 1 went to one partner, CIVICUS, increasing the previous Danish contribution to CIVICUS by eight folds and funding CIVICUS' activities related to the digital dimension of the civic space, which is an emerging area of work for CIVICUS. The appraisal also found that CIVICUS' systems and processes for sub-granting are more geared towards donor compliance than accessibility for smaller, less formal groups and movements, which are the main target groups of DDI. Moreover and given the change in the nature of the partnership between DMFA and CIVICUS, going from a core-funding to an earmarked funding, the appraisal recommended the DMFA to undertake an absorptive capacity assessment of CIVICUS in line with the Ministry's Aid Management Guidelines.

2. Objective

The primary objective of this assessment is to evaluate the absorptive capacity of CIVICUS. Moreover the objective of this assignment is two-fold:

- 1) To assess the absorptive capacity of CIVICUS and its capability to manage its grant (115 m DKK) under DDI, while complying with the Aid Management Guidelines under the DMFA.

Specifically, the assessment aims to:

- Identify the current level of absorptive capacity within the organization.
- Determine strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in absorptive capacity.
- Assess what steps CIVICUS has taken in recent years to modify and strengthen its absorptive and financial management capacity.

- 2) To assess CIVICUS' guidelines for management and realized management of sub-granting (third party partners) under DDI and other projects.

Specifically, the assessment aims to:

- Evaluate CIVICUS' guidelines describing expectations to the third party management of the activities.
- Evaluate agreements between CIVICUS and third party partners.
- Evaluate reporting from third party partners to CIVICUS.
- Evaluate CIVICUS' plan and mechanisms for monitoring of third party partners.

3. Scope of work

The scope of work is as follows:

- Desk review: Review of organizational documents, including strategic plans, policies, and reports. Analysis of previous capacity assessment reports and other relevant documents. DMFA will upload list of files and files to an online shared folder. CIVICUS will quality assure the list and add to the list if any relevant documents are missing or need update.
- Online meetings between Programme Management Team (PMT), the consultant and relevant staff of CIVICUS. And visit by external consultant to CIVICUS' Head-Quarter in Johannesburg, South Africa:
 - Financial review of the administrative setup of the programme.
 - Conduct interviews (in-person, online or hybrid) with key staff members, specially staff members responsible for finance management.
 - Assessment of any upscaling in administrative and management set-up since the agreement under DDI. Evaluate the effectiveness of these measures and their impact on the organization's financial management capacity.
 - Evaluate agreements between CIVICUS and third party partners – including assessment of the agreements' purpose and financing of each activity, division of responsibilities and tasks, accounting and audit requirements, anti-corruption clause, procedures for informing the donor about irregularities / suspicion of fraud or corruption.
 - Conduct interviews (in-person, online or hybrid) with a selected number of sub-grantees, review their internal financial setup, meet with their auditor(s), etc.
 - Review of relevant financial management guidelines
- Final report on and evaluation of financial and administrative set-up and capacity, potentially including recommendations for improvement.

4. Method of work

The capacity assessment will use a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The assessment will employ a participatory approach to engage all relevant stakeholders. A Process Action Plan (PAP) will be drafted and shared

with CIVICUS shortly after finalization of this ToR. CIVICUS has provided (see annex) a proposal on CIVICUS' engagements during week of 13th November.

In the process, background documentation will be drawn from the DMFA's relevant IT-systems and online-sources intranet, F2, PMI, FMI, and CIVICUS' accounting and archiving system. etc. and interviews with relevant staff will be carried out.

It is expected that relevant staff will be available for (in-person, online or hybrid) discussions during the visit to Johannesburg.

5. Output

Before the Consultant's visit, the Consultant will prepare and present a mission preparation note (MPN). The MPN will outline the key issues to be addressed based on documents reviewed and ToR.

Following the Consultant's visit, a report will be drafted and shared with PMT. After quality assurance by the PMT a final draft will be shared with CIVICUS for commenting and potential adjustments.

Final output: A report outlining the findings, including strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations on absorptive capacity of CIVICUS, where special attention is given to sub-granting. The Consultant finalizes the report **no later than 30 November 2023**.

If suitable, a findings presentation meeting will be held between the consultant, CIVICUS and PMT during drafting or finalization process.

6. Composition of the team

CFO of DDI-PMT, Saeid Imani Lasaki

External Consultant: **TBD**

7. Timing

Desk work will be carried out during October and November 2023. The Consultant's visit to CIVICUS HQ in Johannesburg is scheduled during week of 13th November 2023. The Consultant finalizes the report **no later than 30 November 2023**.

Saeid Imani Lasaki

CFO for The Digital Democracy Initiative

25 October 2023

Annex 9 - Quality Assurance checklist for appraisal of programmes and projects¹

File number/F2 reference: 23/35751

Programme/Project name: Danish support to CIVICUS 2024-2027

Programme/Project period: 2024-2027 (Commitment in Feb. 2024)

Budget: 15m. DKK. (3.75 annually based on project document)

Presentation of quality assurance process:

Comments: Quality assurance by HUMCIV. Appraisal conducted by Chief Advisor Marie Groth Kruse and CFO Kasper Thede Anderskov.

The design of the programme/project has been appraised by someone independent who has not been involved in the development of the programme/project.

Comments: Quality assurance by HUMCIV, in agreement with LÆRING and TILSKUD.

The recommendations of the appraisal has been reflected upon in the final design of the programme/project.

Comments: Yes. Outstanding financial matters are being followed up on in parallel.

The programme/project complies with Danida policies and Aid Management Guidelines.

Comments: Project document is in accordance with guidelines for bilateral and programmatic support.

The programme/project addresses relevant challenges and provides adequate responses.

Comments: Yes.

Issues related to HRBA, LNOB, Gender, Youth, Climate Change, Green Growth and Environment have been addressed sufficiently in relation to content of the project/programme.

Comments: Yes. HRBA, Gender and Youth are a cross-cutting issue in the project proposal.

Comments from the Danida Programme Committee have been addressed (if applicable).

Comments: N.a.

The programme/project outcome(s) are found to be sustainable and is in line with the partner's development policies and strategies. Implementation modalities are well described and justified.

Comments: Yes. Project is composed of support to ODA-eligible activities within CIVICUS Strategic Plan.

¹ This Quality Assurance Checklist should be used by the responsible MFA unit to document the quality assurance process of appropriations where TQS is not involved. The checklist does not replace an appraisal, but aims to help the responsible MFA unit ensure that key questions regarding the quality of the programme/project are asked and that the answers to these questions are properly documented and communicated to the approving authority.

- The results framework, indicators and monitoring framework of the programme/project provide an adequate basis for monitoring results and outcome.

Comments: Yes.

- The programme/project is found sound budget-wise.

Comments: Yes.

- The agreed budget and financial reporting procedures provide an adequate basis for financial monitoring of funds.

Comments: Yes.

- The programme/project is found realistic in its time-schedule.

Comments: Yes.

- Other donors involved in the same programme/project have been consulted, and possible harmonised common procedures for funding and monitoring have been explored.

Comments: Good continuous dialogue with SIDA, Netherlands and NORAD.

- Key programme/project stakeholders have been identified, the choice of partner has been justified and criteria for selection have been documented.

Comments: Yes.

- The executing partner(s) is/are found to have the capacity to properly manage, implement and report on the funds for the programme/project and lines of management responsibility are clear.

Comments: Yes.

- Risks involved have been considered and risk management integrated in the programme/project document.

Comments: Yes.

- In conclusion, the programme/project can be recommended for approval: yes

Date and signature of desk officer 08/03/2024 Tue Kristoffer Westhoff

Date and signature of management 08/03/2024



Birgitte Markussen