

# Main Actors in Digitalisation and Governance

## 1. Introduction

**This report first summarises recommendations about potential strategic partners for SDC before providing summaries of the main actors in digitalisation and governance.** Recommendations are organised according to SDCs five pillars in supporting governance in partner countries. In the annex, the actors mentioned in this summary are shortly presented.

The digital and governance landscape has matured over the last decade. Initial hype (and perhaps naivety) among digital evangelists has been slowly replaced with more realism about the potentials and limitations of digitalisation and governance. Those working in the field have become more measured in their claims and expectations about what digital technologies can and cannot achieve and the potential downsides. There is a greater recognition that digital technology solutions are unlikely to be ‘silver bullets’ that will fix governance problems<sup>1</sup>.

The use of digital technologies in governance ranges from their application to improve internal ‘back-office’ efficiencies and the online delivery of public services; to enabling greater openness, transparency and participation for example by supporting citizen voice and organising; civil society oversight and advancing democracy.<sup>2</sup> **This report relies primarily on a desk-based review of published reports and strategy documents, organisational websites,** and the authors’ previous knowledge and experience of the sector.

**It is important therefore to preface this report with caution about the use of terms such as ‘digital governance’ or e-government. In their publications, agencies/organisations use different terms to mean the same things and the same term to mean different things.** There is often a blurring between the use of generic digital in government; digital government (e-government), digital governance (e-governance), and general governance in an increasingly digital world. For example, a local government unit’s public procurement process may involve some digital elements as part of a wider process of building participation and oversight using more traditional infomediation and intermediation processes. As a result, it may be that significant digital use is not explicit in documentation reviewed.

<sup>1</sup> McGee, R. with Edwards, D.; Anderson, C.; Hudson, H. and Feruglio, F. (2018) Appropriating technology for accountability: messages from Making All Voices Count, Making All Voices Count Research Report, Brighton: IDS. World Bank. ‘World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends’. Text/HTML. Accessed 9 December 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2016>.

<sup>2</sup> Not many countries have explored innovation in democracy within digital spheres - although Taiwan is a notable exception with a “*strong collective narrative of digital democracy, and government and civil society work together in online spaces to build public trust*” <https://theconversation.com/hacking-the-pandemic-how-taiwans-digital-democracy-holds-covid-19-at-bay-145023>

## 2. Actors along governance pillars

This next section highlights potential strategic partners organised with relevance to SDC's five governance pillars. All of the possible partners mentioned under the different pillars are described in the annex with further information and links. Switzerland already supports some of these organisations, they are marked with an \*.

- **Pillar 1:** The SDC contributes to the strengthening of democratic institutions and processes to preserve, protect and increase democratic and civic spaces for inclusive participation of all people.
- **Pillar 2:** The SDC contributes to well-functioning multi-level and sub-national governance, leading to more democratic control, greater efficiency and accountability in public service delivery and stronger foundations for inclusive economic development.
- **Pillar 3:** The SDC contributes to the global efforts of combating corruption as a major development obstacle, raises awareness on the negative impacts and leads a dialogue with partner governments and development partners.
- **Pillar 4:** Contribute to improving digital governance by managing the digital transformation for the public good and based on principles of good governance.
- **Pillar 5:** Promote good governance and governance objectives as a strategic lever to achieve effective, transformative and sustainable development results in all sectors and interventions.

**Many of the collaboration opportunities are cross-cutting across these priority areas.** For example, the digitisation of financial systems can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of fiscal governance at different levels whilst at the same time enabling greater transparency and contributing to accountability and anti-corruption efforts. Similarly, the opportunities digital technologies can offer in opening space for participation between citizens and government, between citizens and in citizen mobilisation at multiple levels which can contribute to accountability and anti-corruption. However, these same digital technologies in more authoritarian contexts can contribute to shrinking civic space as they can be exploited through surveillance and intimidation. Similarly, many of the organisations and initiatives listed below offer potential opportunities for partnership with SDC which would respond to multiple governance priorities. For example, partnership with the Open Governance Partnership (OGP) would respond to a range of transparency, participation, accountability, decentralisation and anti-corruption priorities.

### Systems approaches and innovation

More generally, SDC takes a multi-level and systemic approach to its governance work. It is particularly important to ensure it incorporates its work on digital technologies and data within this systems framing. Evidence demonstrates that digital technology and data centric approaches don't work in isolation from more traditional offline governance processes. In the past, many efforts to utilise the potential opportunities of digital technologies have overly focused on digital technology as a quick fix or silver bullet to address governance challenges - and often the organisations and individuals involved have not been connected to and have lacked an understanding of the systemic nature of governance change. SDC should consider the need to **support the building and**

**development of the necessary relationships between existing governance actors in the system and new actors** who have the digital technology expertise.

At the same time, governance **initiatives which look to increase the use of data** should recognise at the outset that many stakeholders neither have the aptitude or interest to engage in sophisticated data analysis, so approaches to building capacity should recognise this in their starting assumptions.<sup>3</sup>

**Using an innovation framework can be a useful way to surface, understand and manage the different interrelated elements of technological and social innovation required for new digital technologies to demonstrate value in governance processes.** As such, these projects should incorporate monitoring, evaluation and learning approaches which can offer ongoing insights into what is working, what is not, and how and why to feed into the ongoing development of digital tech-enabled initiatives. Framing these initiatives as action research offers the opportunity to explore the opportunities for digital technology use without overpromising and raising unreasonable expectations whilst at the same time contributing knowledge and experience to shape future innovation and ultimately contribute to positive governance change.

#### Safe and equitable access to digital rights (Pillar 1, 4)

For use of digital technologies to be effective and not put citizens at risk within governance processes, there needs to be equitable access and citizens need to have rights to privacy and security. Partnerships on these issues would contribute to SDC's strategic orientations 1, 3 and 4. Key organisations working on these issues include **Association for Progressive Communications, Alliance for Accessible Internet, Access Now\***, IDRC, **The Engine Room, Web Foundation, Privacy International, IT for Change, Institute of Development Studies (IDS)\*, Oxford Internet Institute, Data Justice Lab, Data and Society, Citizen Lab, Center on Privacy & Technology, Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), UNICEF\***.

There are a number of foundations such as **Luminate, Reset, and the Foundations Ethics and Governance of Artificial Intelligence Fund** supporting work on privacy and data rights and regulation, which would offer opportunities for partnership, particularly around digital ID.

#### Use of digital tools in elections (Pillar 1, 4)

There are a number of phases in the electoral cycle where ICTs can be used which include voter registration, identification and the tabulation and publication of results. The main organisations identified in this review which SDC might consider partnering with would include **UNDP\*, NDI and International IDEA\*** who have a number of streams of work in which they support and provide guidance on the use of ICTs in elections. Supporting use of digital technology in elections would contribute to SDC's priority 1.

#### Digitalisation of public financial management (Pillar 2, 3, 4)

Digitisation and digitalisation can contribute to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public financial management at and between different levels of government. Organisations SDC should consider partnering to support this include **UNDP\*, World Bank GovTech\*, GIFT, OCP, Development Gateway**. In addition, initiatives such as **OGP and EITI\*** can incentivise commitment and implementation and provide opportunities for shared learning around implementation of digitised PFM at national and decentralised levels of government. The extent of digitisation and capacity of

<sup>3</sup> Hivos Open Up Contracting End of Programme Evaluation Synthesis report  
<https://openupcontracting.org/on-the-evaluation-of-the-open-up-contracting-program/>

public financial management should also be considered in relation to transparency efforts - a common assumption in many transparency initiatives is that governments have the technical systems and capacities to make high value data available publicly. A recent evaluation of Hivos' Open Up Contracting programme found that this assumption failed to hold in many countries particularly at the subnational level, and the programme needed to support government partners with these systems and capacities to progress transparency commitments.<sup>4</sup>

### **Greater transparency, participation, accountability and anti-corruption (Pillar 1, 3, 4)**

Digital technologies provide significant opportunities for increasing transparency of government and contributing to participation, accountability and anti-corruption in terms of providing greater, more timely and more complete access to information about government revenues and spending. Key potential partners for SDC include **GIFT, Open Contracting Partnership, OGP, EITI\*, CoST, TJNA and Open Ownership (Beneficial Ownership)**.

Beneficial ownership transparency in particular could benefit from support to move from interest and commitments by governments to implementation. Key partnerships to do this would include with **OpenOwnership, OGP and EITI\*** including through their respective **multi donor trust funds**.

The opening up of public procurement using “**open contracting**” approaches to increase transparency, participation and accountability present opportunities for harnessing digital technologies for improved governance. Organisations and initiatives such as **GIFT, CoST, World Bank GovTech\*, UNDP\*, Open Contracting Partnership, Hivos, OGP, and Development Gateway** would help to support the SDC's priorities around strengthening the quality of fiscal transparency and participation.

In the extractives sector there is a shift within EITI to digital tech-enabled systematic disclosure where extractives data is made available automatically at source rather than the more traditional and laborious EITI report process. This introduces significant challenges as in many EITI countries there is a significant need to build technical systems and skills capacity of governments and civil society to analyse and understand systematic disclosure data - failure to build these skills and capacities would likely lead to systematic disclosure resulting in less meaningful transparency in extractives sector. To address these concerns, SDC should consider partnering with **EITI, EGPS, Publish What You Pay and NRGI to build the capacity of governments and civil society to make effective use of EITI systematic disclosure**.

There is increased use of digital tools which offer opportunities to create new and innovative ways for people to participate in governance processes. SDC should consider engaging with the **OECD Directorate for Public Governance, Innovative Citizen Participation Network and of the Democracy R&D Network, UNESCO and the IGF**.

Assessing SDC's engagement current engagement, there are specific partners that show similar interests at the bilateral level, but also specific partnerships with research organisations.

### **Engagement with other bilaterals**

There is clear overlap with **SIDA, FCDO, IDRC, BMZ/GIZ and USAID** on strategic objectives and there is potential for collaboration, coordination and shared learning between them. Similarly, SDC should consider engaging with philanthropic donors and foundations working on transparency, participation

<sup>4</sup> Hivos Open Up Contracting End of Programme Evaluation Synthesis report  
<https://openupcontracting.org/on-the-evaluation-of-the-open-up-contracting-program/>

and accountability - a key partnership for doing so would be through the **Transparency and Accountability Initiative (TAI)**.

### **Engagement with research organisations**

**Key research organisations** to consider partnerships with would include **Research ICT Africa, LIRNE Asia, ICTforChange India, MIT Govlab, NYU GovLab, the Data Justice Lab at the University of Cardiff and the Institute of Development Studies**.

In the annex, all the different actors that are mentioned above in the summary along the Governance pillars are shortly described, and links to their homepages are provided.

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### Partners at bilateral level

#### SIDA - Swedish International Development Agency

**Focus Areas:** *Transparency, tax, freedom of expression and media, human rights, inclusion, civil society, privacy and security, free and open internet.*

**Partnerships and initiatives:** *Open Government Partnership (OGP), Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), APC, Access Now, Stockholm Internet Forum*

SIDA sees that the internet plays a crucial role in opening up closed societies, creating innovation and hope for the future, enabling people to communicate across the globe and promoting knowledge flows and collaboration at a global level. However, SIDA recognises how the same digital tools that have increased the democratic space and given people the opportunity to work in repressive environments, are now also used by anti-democratic forces. Political extremists, terror groups and authoritarian states use the same advanced tools to recruit new followers, polarise and undermine democratic debate and attack opponents. People who work to promote and protect human rights, activists, minorities, journalists and LGBTQI people are hit the hardest. SIDA supports a number of organisations that work to ensure that human rights are protected online. One example is the digital helpline of Access Now designed to support activists and organisations strengthening their digital security, which also increases the physical security of people who risk life and health while defending human rights. Access Now's Digital Security Helpline has handled nearly 4,000 individual cases from over 110 countries worldwide since 2015.

SIDA has provided core funding to support the implementation of APC's strategic plan for the periods 2012-2015 and continues to support with core funding in 2016-2019.

SIDA organises the Stockholm Internet Forum (SIF) which is a platform for advancing a free, open, and secure Internet as a driver of development and democracy. The SIF offers an arena for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and collaboration.

Sweden supports a number of international transparency and accountability initiatives including OGP and EITI. SIDA is providing SEK 45,000,000 (approx USD 5.4m) for the 2019-2021 period.

## **IDRC - International Development Research Centre (Canada)**

**Focus areas:** *internet connectivity; economic growth; innovation. big data; AI; sensors; civil rights. transparency and accountability; free expression; inclusion; privacy and surveillance.*

**Partnerships and initiatives:** *OGP; OCP*

IDRC's goal in relation to digital technologies is to harness digital innovations that create inclusive economic opportunities and advance democracy in the developing world. IDRC's **Networked Economies program** supports individuals, civil society, governments, and the private sector to leverage digital technologies to stimulate economic growth and improve democracy. This program has three priorities:

1. Test and scale digital innovations to improve entrepreneurship, education, and democracy.
2. Connect the next billion to economic opportunities.
3. Improve governance of cyberspace.

IDRC's **Open Data for Development (OD4D) program** brings together a network of leading implementing partners to harness open data initiatives to enhance transparency and accountability, and to facilitate public service delivery and citizen participation. The program has five objectives:

1. To help stakeholder harness open data for development
2. To support developing-country governments execute open data initiatives
3. To increase reuse of open data in developing countries
4. To understand the link between open data initiatives and socio-economic development
5. To build the institutional capacity and long-term sustainability of the OD4D network.

A really useful output from IDRC's work includes the book, "[\*The State of Open Data: Histories and Horizons\*](#)" published in 2019 which takes stock of the real progress made to date across sectors and around the world, uncovering the issues that will shape the future of open data in the years to come.

## **BMZ/GIZ Germany**

**Focus areas:** *innovation; inclusion; participation; public financial management; decentralisation; transparency and accountability; anti-corruption; human rights; rule of law; freedom of expression and freedom of the press*

**Partnerships and initiatives:** *OGP; OCP, EITI*

BMZ promotes good governance in all parts of the world and its "Democracy, civil society and governance" theme forms a significant part of BMZ's programs in over half of the countries it cooperates with particular focus on: respect for, protection and guaranteeing of all human rights; democracy, rule of law, freedom of opinion and freedom of the press; gender equality; transparent government actions, administrative reform and decentralisation; good financial governance; anti-corruption measures; and transparency in the national resources sector<sup>5</sup>. BMZ is supporting work across these different areas, from the implementation of ICT systems to improve the efficiency,

<sup>5</sup> The German Government has been a major supporter of the EITI since it was established in 2003, above all as part of the international transparency and developmental agenda providing political, financial and technical support. This includes support for around 25 national EITI processes via bilateral and regional BMZ programmes in West Africa, Central Asia and South America: Afghanistan, Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), Central Asia, DR Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone.



effectiveness and transparency of public financial systems; use of digital technologies to help to build and amplify citizen voice; and mitigating challenges by improving data and digital literacy, access to the internet and protecting privacy.

Of potential interest to SDC in the use of digital technologies and data in governance, BMZ is supporting GIZ's "Citizen Engagement and Innovative Data Use for Africa's Development (Data-Cipation)" programme, which supports African Union Organs in their quest to intensify citizen engagement and the role of data, digital and non-digital approaches in their programmes and initiatives. The programme is implemented in cooperation with the African Union Commission and the AU Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). The programme takes a systems approach, focusing on implementation across three main areas as follows:

- Connecting policymakers with Africa's data and digital innovators for good governance and development by enhancing the collaboration and cooperation of the AU organs and member states with Africa's data and digital innovation ecosystem.
- Improving citizen participation in good governance and development through innovative communications and engagement methodologies; leveraging data, digital and non-digital approaches.
- Advancing digital transformation for good governance and development in Africa through responsible and progressive use of data as well as new and emerging digital technologies for good governance and development.

### **FCDO - UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

**Focus Areas:** *tax, transparency and accountability, anti-corruption, public financial management.*

**Partnerships and initiatives:** *OGP, EITI, OCP, CoST, Open Ownership, Access Now*

As a result of the merger of the UK's Department for International Development and Foreign and Commonwealth Office it is difficult to get clarity on their current position but based on the 2019 DFID Governance position paper<sup>6</sup>, they are engaging in international fora and with international organisations (including through multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the EITI, Open Contracting Partnership, new Beneficial Ownership Transparency Network, Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST), OGP, Open Ownership). FCDO is influencing the monitoring and evolution of regulatory frameworks – e.g. anti-money laundering standards and associated sanctions, financial regulation or international tax transparency.

The joint DFID-FCO Good Governance Fund operates programmes over seven countries in Eastern Europe and Western Balkans that help deliver National Security Council Strategy objectives. In Ukraine, the GGF has sought to take a holistic approach to promoting resilience and stability through mutually reinforcing governance interventions that: support transparent and accountable elections and women's political empowerment; strengthen anti-corruption institutions and sectoral responses to corruption; build the transparency and accountability of the Ukrainian state through e-services, e-procurement and open data; promote independent media; and enhance two-way communication between citizens and government on key reforms.

The Emerging Policy, Innovation and Capability (EPIC) team within FCDO supports other teams in FCDO to incorporate digital technologies into their programming.

<sup>6</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/786751/Governance-Position-Paper2a.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786751/Governance-Position-Paper2a.pdf)



## USAID

**Focus areas:** *digital ecosystems; open governance, public financial management, transparency and accountability, anti-corruption, inclusion/exclusion, elections, digital authoritarianism, data privacy and surveillance, independent media, cross-border interference by Russia*

**Partnerships and initiatives:** *OGP, OCP, EITI*

Similarly to SIDA and DFID, USAID believes that digital technology has the potential to democratize the flow of data and enhance the ability of governments to respond to citizens' needs efficiently and effectively.

They also recognise both state and non-state actors have sought to undermine democracy and poison online discussions and social-media platforms through sophisticated deception and disinformation. Authoritarian regimes use digital technology to monitor, harass, and threaten ethnic and religious minorities and individuals and organizations that seek transparency and accountability or challenge a government's narrative. USAID supports human-rights organisations and independent media through access to secure data and communications platforms, digital-literacy programs, equipment, and state-of-the-art technical assistance in protecting themselves, their families, and their work from cyber-attacks and disinformation.

Interestingly, USAID is supporting work to respond to interference by Russia in democratic processes through its "Countering malign Kremlin Influence Development Framework" which is built around helping to strengthen civil-society organizations, conduct credible elections, institutionalize transparency and accountability in government institutions, and promote the rule of law. For example, in Ukraine, USAID provided approximately \$2.7 million in cybersecurity equipment and training for the Central Election Commission to support free and fair elections.

### Examples in which USAID supported digital-enabled governance

In Ukraine, the pilot of the USAID-funded e-procurement platform, ProZorro, helped the national government cut costs by 12 percent (which amounted to \$1.4 billion by 2018). Perceived Corruption decreased from 59 percent to 29 percent from 2016–2017, and the percentage of suppliers who are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) went from 24 to 80 percent from 2015 to 2018<sup>7</sup>.

Following the highly contested 2014 presidential election in the Republic of Indonesia, a group of volunteers quickly built a website and digitized voting tabulations, many of them handwritten, to enable better monitoring and tracking of the election results and address accusations of vote-rigging<sup>8</sup>.

- **PFM** - The Better Than Cash Alliance reports that the Mexican Government saves \$1.27 billion each year through the use of digital payments<sup>9</sup>.
- **Reducing waste and fraud in the distribution of public benefits.** A trial of smartcard-enabled benefit payments in India found that the leakage of funds decreased by 40% and demands for bribes were 47% lower for card-users than for those in the control group.

<sup>7</sup> USAID Digital Strategy 2020-2024

[https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/15396/USAID\\_Digital\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/15396/USAID_Digital_Strategy.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

Overall, the reductions in leakage for the program were an estimated \$38.7 million per year—nine times the cost of implementation<sup>10</sup>.

- **Strengthening land-tenure systems.** USAID’s Mobile Applications to Secure Tenure (MAST) initiative has combined innovative digital tools with inclusive, community-based methods to document and formalize the use of land and empower youth in countries including Zambia and Tanzania. The source code for MAST’s mobile applications and back-end database systems are free and open-source, so the technology is available for the broadest possible adaptation and use<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> ibid

<sup>11</sup> ibid

## Multilateral organisations and international initiatives

This section covers the digital governance focal areas and objectives of the main multilateral agencies and international partnerships and initiatives. It starts with the OECD, then UN agencies, World Bank activities and goes on to inter/multi-national partnerships and initiatives.

**OECD Directorate for Public Governance** - focuses on a range of issues related to digital government including Open Government Data, Digital Government, Open Data & Anti-corruption and Social Media Use by Governments. The [OECD Digital Government Policy Framework](#) explores how governments can best use digital technologies to embrace good government principles and achieve policy goals. **OECD's** work on [innovative citizen participation and deliberative decision making](#) includes a future stream looking specifically at [digital tools and deliberation](#). OECD convenes the [Innovative Citizen Participation Network](#) and of the [Democracy R&D Network](#) - both of these are international networks of leading practitioners and researchers from governments, civil society and research institutes.

**UNCDF** – the UN Capital Development Fund focuses their efforts towards strengthening public financial management and local revenue, improving the quality of public and private investments and promoting innovations at the local level. Specifically, UNCDF supports local development finance, which capacitates localities through fiscal decentralization, innovative municipal finance, and structured project finance to drive local economic expansion and sustainable development.

**UNDESA** – is the home of the [Internet Governance Forum](#) (IGF). The global IGF links to more than 130 national and regional IGFs. The IGF brings various stakeholder groups to the table as equals to exchange information and share good practice on internet governance. The IGF does not have decision-making power, it informs those who do. The IGF is important in that it gives stakeholders from developing countries and civil society organisations a space to engage in the digital governance debates. The IGF also to their capacity building, allowing these stakeholders to build knowledge and skills that will facilitate their meaningful participation in existing Internet governance institutions and arrangements. In addition to this UNDESA supports Member States in identifying their strengths, challenges and opportunities, as well as informing policies and strategies. In the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) through the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) serves as facilitator for the implementation of and follow-up to the action lines that link ICTs to the SDGs:

- C1 - The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
- C7 - ICT Applications: e-government
- C11 - International and regional cooperation

**UNESCO** – is the host of the Internet Universality Indicators ([aka ROAM Indicators](#)). This is a mechanism to map the extent to which national digital environments conform to a set of standards that SDC values: compliance with human Rights (R), evaluating its Openness (O) and Accessibility (A), and assessing the involvement of Multistakeholder actors (M) in digital governance. This is means for all countries, whether developed or developing, to gain a holistic diagnosis of its Internet policies, digital environment and thereby the structural causes of digital inequalities.

**UNDP** - Supporting governments in the digitalisation and datafication of government - accelerated because of the covid-19 pandemic and public health measures restrictions. UNDP's work includes work to support e-governance, data systems and the use of digital tools in elections. UNDP's digital

capacity building collaboration may be a process worth tracking by SDC. It is part of the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation follow up process and could be a way to support digital literacy building.

**UNICEF** - through a collaboration with United Nations University's Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV), UNICEF are developing frameworks to better understand the opportunities and challenges of digital services to achieve results for children. UNICEF's "Good governance of children's data" project explores issues related to child data rights and sets aspirational goals for good data governance for children. It aims to encourage governments, the private sector, international organizations and bodies to develop data governance frameworks that take full account of children's issues and rights.

**World Bank Global Practice** - in 2019 the World Bank Group launched the **GovTech Global Initiative** which tries to ensure the public sector keeps up and makes the most of digital technology. GovTech is a whole-of-government approach to public sector modernization that promotes simple, accessible, and efficient government. It aims to promote the use of digital technology to transform the public sector, improve service delivery to citizens and businesses, and increase efficiency, transparency and accountability. The [World Bank GovTech projects database](#) documents all digital governance projects the World Bank has invested in since 1995. *\*Switzerland supports the GovTech initiative through the Economic Cooperation and Development division of SECO.*

**World Bank OGP Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF)** - provides resources in creating or implementing national- or local-led OGP commitments with potentially high impact that lead to increasing government transparency, improving accountability, and strengthening citizen engagement and government responsiveness. The MDTF will also enable advancement of OGP's thematic priorities including through peer learning among OGP members, and the expansion and dissemination of knowledge around the effectiveness and impact of open government reforms. The MDTF is funded by Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the UK FCDO. Partly due to the covid-19 pandemic the MDTF is looking for additional financing of \$4.9m<sup>12</sup>.

**The World Bank EGPS Multi-Donor Trust Fund** has 11 donors (including Switzerland, UK, Canada, Germany) that have pledged approximately \$40 million in support. These donors continue to demonstrate their strong commitment to translating the benefits from extractives into sustainable development for all. EGPS also works closely with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to deepen transparency and strengthen natural resource governance.

**International IDEA** - The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. International IDEA develops comparative knowledge; assists in democratic reform; influences policies and politics, focusing in three main impact areas: electoral processes, constitution-building, political participation and representation. They also address issues of gender, diversity, and conflict and security. They provide guidance, data and tools to make use of [ICT for elections](#). *\*Switzerland supports IDEA in core costs through a core contribution of Swiss Development Cooperation.*

**Freedom Online Coalition** – the coalition brings together member countries who are committed to protecting and promoting online freedoms domestically and abroad. Aspiring members' applications are assessed based on their domestic record when it comes to respecting human rights online and

<sup>12</sup> OGP Multi Donor Trust Fund 2020 Annual Report [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/OGP\\_MDTF\\_2020-Annual-Report.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/OGP_MDTF_2020-Annual-Report.pdf)

must sign up to a number of rights-based commitments. The coalition is committed to the multistakeholder model of internet governance in multilateral fora and inclusive engagement with internet stakeholders.

**Open Government Partnership** - founded in 2011, the OGP is a multistakeholder partnership between governments, civil society and private sector to promote and implement accountable, responsive and inclusive governance. Currently there are 78 countries who are part of the OGP with a growing number of local government units joining as part of the **OGP's Local programme**. OGP is funded by a combination of [bilaterals and philanthropic funders](#).

**Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)** - supported by many development partners including UK, Sweden, Canada, Switzerland\* and Germany to build more open, participatory and accountable governance of the extractives sector. A major priority for EITI is increasing "systematic disclosure" which will rely heavily on automatic disclosure of extractives governance data from relevant information systems as opposed to the original multi stakeholder reporting process. There are significant concerns in government and civil society constituencies as to whether the different groups have the technical capacities to access, analyse and make meaningful use of disclosures. EITI has identified open data and digital technology as a funding need to accelerate progress on systematic disclosure. *\*Switzerland supports EITI in core costs and commodity trading transparency through the Economic Cooperation and Development division of SECO.*

**The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST)** is one of the leading global initiatives improving transparency and accountability in the governance of public infrastructure. CoST works with governments, private sector and civil society to promote the disclosure, validation and interpretation of data from infrastructure projects. CoST works on a number of [data standards and digital tools](#) including the CoST Infrastructure Data Standard (CoST IDS), Open Contracting for Infrastructure Data Standard (OC4IDS), CoST Analytical Tool, Infrastructure Transparency Index Manual, SISOCs APP, and the Electronic Infrastructure Monitoring Tool.

**Disclosure to Development (D2D)** - **The International Finance Corporation (IFC)** is an international financial institution that offers investment, advisory, and asset-management services to encourage private-sector development in less developed countries. The IFC is a member of the World Bank Group and is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The D2D programme aims to improve utility of natural resource industry data for development impact. This involves the use of digital data for improving governance of extractives and other natural resources.

**Alliance for Affordable Internet** - **A4AI** brings together businesses, governments, and civil society actors from across the globe to deliver the policies needed to reduce the cost to connect and make universal, affordable internet access a reality for all. The A4AI is hosted by the World Wide Web Foundation and the initiatives partners include: SIDA, FCDO, USAID, UN Women, UN Technology, UNU, World Bank, NEPAD, etc.; Private Sector: Google, GSMA, Facebook, Dataminr, Eriksson, Intel; Huawei, Microsoft; Many developing country governments; Civil society - APC, CIPESA, IREX, Africa ICT Alliance, Internews, Rio Institute for Technology and Society Luminare, Mercy Corps, Web Foundation.

**The Transparency and Accountability Initiative (TAI)** - a donor collaborative working toward a world where citizens are informed and empowered, governments are open and responsive, and collective action advances the public good. The donor members include Luminare (formerly part of Omidyar Network), Hewlett Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, OSF, Ford Foundation and UK FCDO. The TAI provides a platform for learning and collaboration between donors to support greater donor impact.

**Open Contracting Partnership (OCP)** - the OCP collaborates across governments, businesses, civil society, and digital technologists to open up and transform government contracting worldwide. They focus on bringing open data and open government together to make sure public money is spent openly, fairly and effectively. Spun out of the World Bank in 2015, the OCP is now an independent not-for-profit working in over 30 countries.

**Open Data Charter** - a collaboration between over 100 governments and organisations working to open up data based on a shared set of principles. They promote policies and practices that enable governments and CSOs to collect, share, and use well-governed data, to respond effectively and accountably to the following focus areas: anti-corruption, climate action and pay equity.

## Foundations

Philanthropic foundations were not included in the initial outline for this paper, but foundations play a significant and influential role in the landscape of digital and governance particularly in supporting civil society. Although most of the foundations covered in this section are supporting digital tech-enabled transparency work in civil society, many are explicitly prioritising work to understand and minimise the threats and challenges created by digital technology in the form of surveillance, privacy, polarisation and disinformation.

Key foundations in this respect include **Luminate** (formerly part of Omidyar Network), **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation**, **MacArthur Foundation**, **Open Society Foundations** and **Ford Foundation** all of which are members of the TAI donor collaborative described above working towards open, transparent, participatory and accountable governance. Additional foundations include (in alphabetical order):

**Ethics and Governance of Artificial Intelligence Fund** - Launched in 2017, the Ethics and Governance of AI Initiative is a hybrid research effort and philanthropic fund that seeks to ensure that digital technologies of automation and machine learning are researched, developed, and deployed in a way which vindicate social values of fairness, human autonomy, and justice. The Initiative is a joint project of the MIT Media Lab and the Harvard Berkman-Klein Center for Internet and Society. It incubates a range of research, prototyping, and advocacy activities within these two anchor institutions and across the broader ecosystem of civil society.

**Hivos** - a long standing INGO and grantmaker who supports transparent, inclusive and accountable governance. Working primarily with civil society organizations across Africa, South East Asia and Latin America support creative and innovative work to empower citizens and hold their governments accountable. Recent Hivos programmes relevant to digital technology and governance include Open Up Contracting; Voice; Making All Voices Count. Historically, Hivos has been seen as a grantmaker but in recent years it has shifted to dual grantmaking and implementation roles. In their recent Open Up Contracting Programme, Hivos and their partners took an ecosystems approach<sup>13</sup> to implementation and made significant progress<sup>14</sup> in the opening of public procurement in a number of subnational cases.

**Reset** - founded by Luminate and The Sandler Foundation, **Reset** is an initiative engaged in programmatic work on digital technology and democracy. They provide grants and contracts while working alongside partners in different countries with a shared policy, digital technology, and advocacy goal in countries with immediate opportunities for change. Reset operates internationally to ensure that the commercial interests of Big Tech companies are compatible with the values of robust and resilient democracies.

<sup>13</sup> By ecosystem approach we mean the Hivos programme worked to influence the range of actors, policies, practices, socio-cultural norms and behaviours at different levels of governance that may contribute in enabling/preventing change to happen in a given context.

<sup>14</sup> Hivos Open Up Contracting End of Programme Evaluation Synthesis report  
<https://openupcontracting.org/on-the-evaluation-of-the-open-up-contracting-program/>



## Think tanks, universities and research institutes

This section lists relevant think tanks, universities and research institutes focused on digital technology within different governance processes. We focus primarily on international and regional institutes that have an explicit focus on the use of digital technology and digital data in governance but have not attempted to capture the wide range of research organisations focused on governance more broadly. It should be noted that many organisations working in the governance and digital technology field are hybrid “think-do-tank”-type organisations that span research, advocacy and implementation. So some organisations listed as a research organisation could also be listed as a civil society implementer or advocacy organisation and vice versa. The institutes are listed in alphabetical order.

**[Centre for Internet and Society \(CIS\)](#)** in India undertakes interdisciplinary research on internet and digital technologies from policy and academic perspectives. The areas of focus include digital accessibility for persons with disabilities, access to knowledge, intellectual property rights, openness (including open data, free and open source software, open standards, open access, open educational resources, and open video), internet governance, telecommunication reform, digital privacy, and cyber-security. The research at CIS seeks to understand the reconfiguration of social processes and structures through the internet and digital media technologies, and vice versa. Through its diverse initiatives, CIS explores, intervenes in, and advances contemporary discourse and regulatory practices around internet, digital technology, and society in India, and elsewhere.

**[Center on Privacy & Technology, Georgetown University](#)** - is a think tank focused on privacy and surveillance law and policy and the communities they affect.

**[Center for Strategic and International Studies](#)** - funded by the Omidyar Network developed [Data Governance Principles for the Global Digital Economy](#) which aims to empower people and societies to make informed choices about how digital data is generated, used and shared; protect human rights, including the right to privacy, against infringement, and utilize data and digital systems to promote citizens’ rights.

**[Citizen Lab](#)** at the University of Toronto researches digital practices that affect freedom of expression, analysing privacy, security, transparency and accountability mechanisms relevant to the relationship between corporations and government agencies regarding personal data digital surveillance activities.

**[Data & Society](#)** is an independent research organisation that studies the social implications of data and automation to inform the development and governance of new technology. They study the social implications of data and automation, producing original research to ground informed, evidence-based public debate about emerging technology.

**[Data Justice Lab](#)**, hosted at University of Cardiff’s (UK) School of Journalism, Media and Culture. examines the intricate relationship between datafication and social justice, highlighting the politics and impacts of data-driven processes and big data.

**[Digital Governance Lab](#)** is an open-ended platform and initiative by the Ragnar Nurkse Department of Innovation and Governance to develop public governance models and frameworks for the Digital Age.

**[Global Integrity](#)** is an independent organisation tracking governance and corruption trends around the world using local teams of researchers and journalists to monitor openness and accountability. Global Integrity works in partnership with organisations around the world to solve complex

problems and improve governance. They have a specific stream on data to support partner organizations and communities to open data, improve its quality and use it effectively to address challenges relating to corruption and the use of public resources. Working across a range of countries, Global Integrity distills lessons that are applicable beyond specific countries and sectors, and produce resources that can help inform efforts to enhance the effective use of data to improve the use of public resources and enhance service delivery outcomes.

**Global Partners Digital** - focuses on bringing laws and policies relating to the digital environment more in line with international human rights standards. This is a complex undertaking, demanding deep knowledge of the policy environment, strong capacity from all stakeholder groups, and effective collaboration. GPD go about this in four ways: monitoring and analysis, capacity building, building alliances and engaging in advocacy and action.

**Iniciativa Latinoamericana por los Datos Abiertos (ILDA)** - act as innovation and research hub to explore the opportunities and challenges of using open data to prevent and solve development problems. Working in coordination with governments, the private sector and civil society, ILDA explores measures to catalyse demand for, and usage of, open data to achieve development goals across the region.

**ITforChange India** – a well-respected team led by Anita Gurumurthy who consistently produce critically challenging feminist research that deconstructs dominant lenses and models to provide fresh insight and analysis. Recent publications include [Centring Women in India’s Digitalising Economy](#) and [A Digital New Deal: Visions of Justice in a Post-Covid World](#).

**Institute of Development Studies (IDS)**, Sussex University - IDS has a long history working on issues of governance, participation, citizenship and accountability and has a Digital and Technology research team. Between 2013-2018, IDS managed the Making All Voices Count Research and Evidence component which built a [large research portfolio](#) focused on the use of digital technology in governance the lessons of which were captured in the synthesis report, [“Appropriating technology for accountability: messages from Making All Voices Count”](#), and programme design and implementation lessons in, [“Supporting innovation and the use of technologies in accountability initiatives: lessons from Making All Voices Count”](#).

**IDRC** - In addition to IDRC’s role as a donor, IDRC researchers have performed a significant thought leadership and network building role producing influential research which has shaped conceptualisation and narrative across the sector. For example, [Open Development: Networked Innovations in International Development](#).

**IT for Change** is a digital research and advocacy organisation based in Bengaluru, India with a strong social justice, gender and rights-based approach. IT for Change’s [work on internet governance](#) provides a positively challenging critique of current internet governance which aims for a society in which digital technologies contribute to human rights, social justice and equity.

**LIRNE Asia** - LIRNEAsia is an digital policy and regulation think-tank active in the Asia Pacific region based in Sri Lanka. LIRNEAsia’s is a thought leader on digitalisation and public policy who produce critical research and provide technical expertise. LIRNEAsia has a cross-disciplinary team of data scientists, lawyers, and social scientists, we analysis, engaged policy makers and with private, data-heavy organizations.

**Local Development Research Institute** - Launched in April 2015 and based in Kenya, Local Development Research Institute (LDRI) is an action-oriented non-profit think tank whose work

contributes to the efforts of African governments to end extreme poverty, end hunger and reduce inequalities. LDRI's focus includes open government but also works across a number of sectors and themes including agriculture, gender equality, health, education and energy.

**[MIT Govlab](#)** - collaborates with civil society, funders, and governments on research that builds and tests theories about how innovative (and often tech-enabled) governance programs and interventions affect political behavior and make governments more accountable to citizens.

**[NYU Govlab](#)** - aims to strengthen the ability of institutions and people to work more openly, collaboratively, effectively and legitimately to make better decisions and solve public problems. Govlab believes that increased availability and use of data, new ways to leverage the capacity, intelligence, and expertise of people in the problem-solving process, combined with new advances in digital technology and science can transform governance.

**[Oxford Internet Institute](#)**, based at the University of Oxford looks at a range of issues including [internet governance](#) and the challenge of governing social media platforms' facilitation of political disinformation and [computational propaganda](#).

**[Research ICT Africa](#)** - is an African think tank on ICT policy. It has established a strong reputation by building the ICT policy and regulatory research capacity needed to inform effective ICT governance in Africa. It hosts an African network which extends across the continent and further collaborates and leverages its activities through national, regional and continental partnerships.

## Civil society and Advocacy organisations

This section lists a number of prominent civil society and advocacy organisations that are either using or supporting others to use digital technologies and data in governance processes. Most organisations listed are working at an international or regional level or supporting organisations in different countries so this does not include organisations whose work is largely domestically focused - in many countries there are domestic organisations who are utilising digital technology and data in their work. We would recommend that these are identified as part of SDC's country systems analysis.

[Access Now](#) - is a civil society organisation founded in 2009 that defends and extends the digital rights of people around the world through advocacy, policy influence, grant making and legal work. Access Now also provides a real-time helpdesk to support rapid response to digital threats to activists and human rights defenders. *\*Switzerland supports Access Now in its work on internet shutdowns through the Division Peace and Human Rights of the FDFA.*

[Association for Progressive Communications \(APC\)](#) has been a key civil society actor in international policy development fora for digital governance including the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). APC has a strong gender and rights-based ethic making them well aligned to SDC values. APC has been instrumental in making the case for internet and digital rights, for example in the [African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms](#). The APC **Communications and Information Policy Programme** responds to access, governance and rights problems across Asia, Africa and Latin America. It provides research and analysis, facilitates movement building, and develops the capacity of civil society and other stakeholders to engage with internet governance and policy issues. The APC **Women's Rights Programme (WRP)** works to strengthen the capacity of diverse women's movements to have the confidence, skills and resources to influence the usage, development and decision-making of the internet and respond to the barriers that prevent them from benefiting from ICTs. One interesting initiative supported by APC is AfriSIG the [African School on Internet Governance](#) which trains hundreds of participants with the skills that they need to participate in digital governance policy debates and processes. **The School for Internet Governance may be a model worth replicating in other regions.**

[Development Gateway](#) aims to use data, digital technology, and evidence to create effective, open & engaging institutions. Development Gateway works with governments and other organisations to understand data ecosystems to identify incentives and barriers to data use; builds digital tools to support data analysis, visualization, and management; and advises on data strategy and policy to strengthen data-driven decision-making and implementation in different countries around the world.

[The Engine Room](#) helps activists and civil society organisations working on governance make the most of data and digital technology to increase their impact. They provide support to make informed and efficient digital technology choices and the effective use of data for people's empowerment.

[The Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency \(GIFT\)](#) is a global network that facilitates dialogue between governments, civil society organizations, international financial institutions and other stakeholders to find and share solutions to challenges in fiscal transparency and participation. It works through advocacy and high-level dialogue, peer-learning and technical collaboration, research, and digital technology for participation. GIFT is currently hosted by the International Budget Partnership. GIFT has a specific workstream focused on "[Digital Tools for user-centered fiscal transparency](#)", which shares learning, guidance, data schemas, and digital tools for implementing

open data systems; internal financial management information systems; development of transparency portals; and fiscal data for emergency response.

**[MySociety](#)** - mySociety is an organisation pioneering the use of digital technologies to empower citizens to take their first steps towards greater civic participation. They work in over 40 countries to help people be active citizens with digital technology, research and data that individuals, journalists, and civil society can use, openly and for free.

**[Natural Resource Governance Institute \(NRGI\)](#)** - an independent INGO who performs applied research, advocacy and capacity development in the field of extractives governance. NRGI works in-depth in a number of carefully selected priority countries, focusing on critical aspects of the natural resource decision chain, based on country needs and demand. In addition to using data for their own research and advocacy, NRGI maintains a number of extractives data portals, technical assistance and capacity building.

**[National Democratic Institute \(NDI\)](#)** and its local partners work to establish and strengthen political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. NDI's [Democracy and Technology division \(DEMTECH\)](#) works to build democratic digital ecosystems through its [DemTools project](#) and promotes internet norms and principles essential to democratic governance through its [Open Internet for Democracy Initiative](#). [INFO/tegrity](#) is NDI's initiative to defend the digital ecosystem against growing illiberal influences, which seek to use digital technology to undermine democracy through disinformation and other means. By collaborating with partners through the [Design 4 Democracy coalition](#).

**[Open Data Institute](#)** works with companies and governments to build an open, trustworthy data ecosystems, where people can make better decisions using data and manage any negative impacts. The Open Data Institute provides consultancy, resources, technical assistance and tools and conducts research to support the development of open data ecosystems.

**[OpenOil](#)** - small company who conduct sophisticated data modelling and analysis which can help extractives-producing country governments and civil society understand the revenue models in order to negotiate better licensing contracts with extractives companies.

**[Open Ownership](#)** is a small organisation supporting countries implementing beneficial ownership transparency (BOT). Open Ownership provides a [guide to implementing beneficial ownership transparency](#), leads the development of the [beneficial ownership data standard](#), is co-convenor of the Beneficial Ownership Leadership Group, and hosts the OpenOwnership Register which links beneficial ownership data from multiple sources from around the world.

**[Open Knowledge Foundation's School of Data](#)** is a network of digital data literacy practitioners composed of organisations and individuals. They implement an array of digital data literacy programmes in many different countries across Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Members of School of Data network work to support civil society organizations (CSOs), journalists, and citizens to engage with and use data in their efforts to create better, more equitable and more sustainable societies.

**[Publish What You Pay](#)** is a large international network of civil society organizations campaigning for greater transparency, participation and accountability in the extractives sector. PWYP member organisations are often the civil society representatives of EITI multi-stakeholder groups in their respective countries. As EITI prioritises systematic disclosure there is increased responsibility on

these CSOs to be able to access and analyse extractives data directly. Unfortunately, many CSOs don't have sufficient capacity to play this role effectively.

**PODER** is a regional, civil-society, non-profit organization which advocates for corporate transparency and accountability in Latin American countries from a human rights perspective, and empowers civil society actors affected by corporate practices to serve as the main advocates of accountability in the long term. Their **Transparency Technologies program** expands Poder's work in open contracting and beneficial ownership, whistleblowing and whistleblower protection, and digital security.

**Ranking Digital Rights** works to promote freedom of expression and privacy on the internet by creating global standards and incentives for companies to respect and protect users' rights. They do this by ranking the world's most powerful internet, mobile, and telecommunications companies on relevant commitments and policies, based on international human rights standards.

**Privacy International** - advocates for the right to privacy for everyone, everywhere. Privacy International raises awareness about digital technologies and laws that place privacy at risk, to ensure that the public is informed and engaged.

**Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA)** is a pan-African research and advocacy organisation and a member of the Global Alliance for Tax Justice (GATJ). TJNA collaborates closely with its member organisations and other civil society partners across Africa to curb illicit financial flows and promote progressive taxation systems. TJNA advocates for pro-poor tax policies and the strengthening of tax systems to promote domestic resource mobilisation (DRM). TJNA also plays a leading role in global coalitions committed to tackling the phenomena of global tax avoidance and evasion by large digital technology companies and achieving fundamental reforms of the current global financial architecture. One particularly relevant area to this report is TJNA work on the challenges of taxing the digitised economy which shift revenue away from African shores through digital enterprises and virtual means.

**Transparency International (TI)** - the TI's chapters advocate for greater transparency in government and private sector governance and make use of digital disclosure in their work. A particularly interesting stream of work TI-US is doing is looking at election campaign finance spending on political ads on social media platforms. *\*TI is a partner of SDC in several partner countries.*

**World Wide Web Foundation/ Web Foundation** - is an independent, international organisation fighting for digital equality through influencing government and business policies rules and regulations. The Web Foundation does this in partnerships with governments, private sector and civil society to research, experiment and innovate.