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Main Actors in Digitalisation and Governance

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A report for the Governance Network of SDC. Other documents in this series on digitalisation and governance are:

- *Key Issues in Digitalisation and Governance* highlights key opportunities and challenges arising from digitalisation. A shorter *Policy Note* with the same title summarises its findings.
- *Main Actors in Digitalisation and Governance* makes specific proposals about potential partners which are most aligned with Swiss strengths and strategic priorities.
- *Mapping of SDC's Projects in Digitalisation and Governance* maps out existing SDC projects.
- A Practice Note, *Ways Forward, Assessment Tools and Possible Partners in Digitalisation and Governance*, introduces practical tools to help navigate SDC's support in this field.

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1 Introduction

This report is the second in a series of five documents. It begins by summarising its recommendations regarding potential strategic partners for SDC, before going on to list and discuss the relevant key actors working in the field of digitalisation and governance. Recommendations are organised according to SDC's five governance pillars, before listing and discussing the relevant key actors working in the field of digitalisation and governance. Fuller details of the potential strategic partners identified are provided in the annex.

The other documents in the series are: *Key Issues in Digitalisation and Governance*, which highlights the key opportunities and challenges arising from digitalisation and a shorter *Policy Brief* with the same title that summarises its findings. A third report, *Mapping of SDC's Projects in Digitalisation and Governance*, maps out existing SDC projects SDC and a fourth document, a Practice Note titled *Ways Forward, Assessment Tools and Possible Partners in Digitalisation and Governance*, introduces practical tools to help navigate SDC's support in this field.

The digital and governance landscape has matured over the past decade. Initial hype (and perhaps naivety) among digital evangelists has been slowly replaced with greater 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 achieve and the potential downsides arising. Overall, there is increased recognition that

digital technology solutions are unlikely to provide 'silver bullets' with which to fix governance problems (McGee *et al.* 2018; World Bank 2016).

The application of digital technologies in governance ranges from improving internal 'back office' efficiencies and the online delivery of public services to enabling greater openness, transparency and participation – for example, by supporting citizen organising and voice, civil society oversight, and the advancement of democracy.¹ **This report relies primarily on a desk-based review of published reports and strategy documents, organisational websites, and the authors' knowledge and experience of the sector.**

It is important to preface this report with a note of caution regarding the use of terms such as 'digital governance' or 'e-government'. Different agencies/organisations often use different terms to mean the same things, or the same term to mean different things. Here, lines are frequently blurred 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, with more traditional infomediation and intermediation processes used for oversight. As a result, it may be that significant digital use is not explicit in the documentation reviewed.

2 Actors by governance pillar

This section highlights potential strategic partners, organised according to their relevance to SDC's five governance pillars (Table 1). All these possible partners are described in further detail in the annex, with relevant links provided. Organisations already supported by Switzerland are marked with an asterisk (*).

Many of the identified collaboration opportunities are cross-cutting across these priority areas. For example, the digitisation of financial systems can improve the effectiveness of fiscal governance at various levels, while also enabling greater transparency and contributing to accountability and anti-corruption efforts. Similarly, the opportunities digital technologies offer in opening space for participation between citizens and government, as well as for citizen mobilisation at multiple levels, can

also contribute to accountability and anti-corruption. In more authoritarian contexts, however, these same digital technologies can be exploited for surveillance and intimidation, thereby contributing to shrinking civic space. Many of the organisations and initiatives listed below offer potential partnership opportunities that would respond to multiple governance priorities. For example, partnership with the Open Governance Partnership (OGP) would address a range of transparency, participation, accountability, decentralisation and anti-corruption priorities.

Systems approaches and innovation

Broadly speaking, SDC takes a multi-level and systemic approach to its governance work. It is

¹ 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' (Johnson Lai/AP 2020).

Box 1. SDC's five governance pillars

SDC aims to:

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

therefore crucial that SDC incorporates its work on digital technologies and data within this systems framing. Evidence shows that digital technology and data-centric approaches do not work in isolation from more traditional offline governance processes. In the past, many efforts aimed at utilising digital technologies to address governance challenges have been overly focused on these technologies providing a quick fix or 'silver bullet'. Moreover, the organisations and individuals involved have often lacked a connection to, or understanding of, the systemic nature of governance change. SDC should consider **supporting the building and development of relationships between existing governance actors and new actors with digital technology expertise.**

At the same time, governance **initiatives that look to increase the use of data should recognise that many stakeholders have neither the aptitude nor the interest to engage in sophisticated data analysis** – a factor that must be taken into account in any assumptions about building capacity (Edwards, Lopez Franco and Shutt 2020).

An innovation framework can offer a useful way of understanding and managing the various interrelated technological and social innovation elements required for new digital technologies to demonstrate value in governance processes. As such, these projects should incorporate monitoring, evaluation and learning approaches, which can provide ongoing insights into what is working, what is not, and how best to feed into the ongoing development of digital tech-enabled initiatives. Framing these initiatives as action research allows the opportunities provided by digital technology used to be explored without overpromising or raising unreasonable expectations, in the process contributing knowledge and experience that can shape future innovation and ultimately lead to positive governance change.

In assessing SDC's current engagement, there are several potential partners at the bilateral level that show similar interests. The same holds true for potential partnerships with research organisations.

Engagement with other bilaterals

There is clear overlap with the **Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development/ German Corporation for International Cooperation (BMZ/GIZ) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** on strategic objectives, offering the potential for collaboration, coordination and shared learning. Similarly, SDC should consider engaging with philanthropic donors and foundations working on transparency, participation and accountability, and a key partnership for doing so would be the **Transparency and Accountability Initiative (TAI).**

Engagement with research organisations

Key research organisations to consider partnerships with include the **Data Justice Lab at the University of Cardiff, The GovLab at NYU, IT for Change India, LIRNEasia, MIT GOV/LAB, Research ICT Africa, and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).**

The annex provides brief descriptions of the key actors mentioned throughout this report, as well as links to their homepages.

Table 1. Potential strategic partners for SDC framed by SDC's five governance pillars

Safe and equitable access to digital rights (Pillars 1, 3 and 4)

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

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

Use of digital tools in elections (Pillars 1, 4)

There are a number of phases in the electoral cycle where information and communication technologies (ICTs) can be used, including voter registration and identification, and the tabulation and publication of results. The main organisations identified that SDC may consider partnering with include **International IDEA***, **National Democratic Institute (NDI)** and **the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)***, all of which have a number of work streams supporting and providing guidance on the use of ICTs in elections. Supporting use of digital technology in elections would contribute to SDC's strategic priorities 1 and 4.

Digitalisation of public financial management (Pillars 2, 3 and 4)

Digitisation and digitalisation can contribute to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public financial management (PFM) at and between different levels of government. Organisations that SDC should consider partnering with to support this include **Development Gateway**, **Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)***, **Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT)**, **Open Contracting Partnership (OCP)**, **UNDP*** and **World Bank GovTech***. In addition, initiatives such as the **OGP** can incentivise commitment and implementation, as well as provide opportunities for shared learning around digitised PFM implementation at national and decentralised levels of government. Digitisation and PFM capacity should also be considered in relation to transparency efforts – a common assumption in many transparency initiatives is that governments have the technical systems and capacity to make high-value data publicly available. 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 that the programme needed to support government partners in implementing these systems and capacities in order to progress transparency commitments (Edwards et al. 2020).

Greater transparency, participation, accountability and anti-corruption (Pillars 1, 3 and 4)

Digital technologies provide significant opportunities for increasing government transparency and – through providing more timely and complete access to information about government revenues and spending – contributing to participation, accountability and anti-corruption. Key potential partners for SDC include **EITI***, **GIFT**, **Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST)**, **OCP**, **OGP**, **Open Ownership and Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA)**.

Beneficial ownership transparency in particular could benefit from support aimed at moving government interest and commitments to actual implementation. Key partners in this regard would include **EITI***, **OGP** and **Open Ownership**, including through their respective **multi-donor trust funds**.

‘Open contracting’ approaches to public procurement, which aim at increasing transparency, participation and accountability, present opportunities for harnessing digital technologies for improved governance. Organisations and initiatives such as **CoST**, **Development Gateway**, **GIFT**, **Hivos**, **OCP**, **OGP**, **UNDP*** and **World Bank GovTech*** could help in supporting the SDC’s priorities around strengthening the quality of fiscal transparency and participation.

In the extractives sector, there is a shift within EITI towards digital tech-enabled systematic disclosure, whereby extractives data are 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 need to build technical systems and the skills capacity of governments and civil society in order to analyse and understand systematic disclosure data – failure to build these skills and capacities would likely lead to shortfalls in systematic disclosure, resulting in less meaningful transparency in the extractives sector. To address these concerns, SDC should consider partnering with **EITI**, **Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI)**, **Publish What You Pay (PWYP)** and the **World Bank Extractives Global Programmatic Support (EGPS) Multi-Donor Trust Fund** to build government and civil society’s capacity to make effective use of EITI systematic disclosure.

Increased use of digital tools offers opportunities to create new and innovative ways for people to participate in governance processes. SDC should consider engaging with the **Democracy R&D Network**, **Innovative Citizen Participation Network**, **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**, **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Directorate for Public Governance**, and **UNESCO**.

Source: Author’s own.

Annex 1: Key actor summaries

Partners at the bilateral level

Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) – Sweden

Focus areas: transparency; tax; freedom of expression and media; human rights; inclusion; civil society; privacy and security; free and open internet

Partnerships and initiatives: Access Now; Association for Progressive Communications (APC); Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI); Open Government Partnership (OGP); Stockholm Internet Forum (SIF)

SIDA sees the internet as playing 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 that the same digital tools that have increased democratic space and given people the opportunity to work in repressive environments are now also being used by anti-democratic forces. Political extremists, terror groups and authoritarian states utilise these advanced tools to recruit new followers, polarise and undermine democratic debate, and attack opponents – with activists, minorities, journalists, LGBTQI people and those working to promote and protect human rights among the hardest hit. SIDA supports a number of organisations that work to ensure human rights are protected online. One example is Access Now's **Digital Security Helpline**, designed to support activists and organisations strengthen their digital security, which in turn increases the physical security of those risking their life and health while defending human rights. Since 2015, the Helpline has handled nearly 4,000 individual cases from over 110 countries.

SIDA has provided core funding to support implementation of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC)'s strategic plan for the periods 2012–15 and 2016–19.

SIDA organises the **Stockholm Internet Forum (SIF)**, a platform for advancing a free, open and secure internet in order to drive development and democracy. SIF offers an arena for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and collaboration.

Sweden supports a number of international transparency and accountability initiatives, including the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), with SIDA providing SEK 45,000,000 (approx. US\$5.4m) for the 2019–21 period.

International Development Research Centre (IDRC) – Canada

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

Partnerships and initiatives: Open Contract Partnership (OCP); OGP

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

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

IDRC's **Open Data for Development (OD4D) programme** brings together a network of leading implementing partners to harness open data initiatives aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability, as well as facilitating public service delivery and citizen participation. The programme has five objectives:

- Help stakeholders harness open data for development.
- Support developing country governments execute open data initiatives.
- Increase reuse of open data in developing countries.
- Understand the link between open data initiatives and socioeconomic development.
- Build the institutional capacity and long-term sustainability of the OD4D network.

A really useful output from IDRC's work is the 2019 book, *The State of Open Data: Histories and Horizons*, which both takes stock of the progress made to date across sectors and around the world and uncovers the issues that will shape the future of open data.

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development/ German Corporation for International Cooperation (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: OCP; OGP; EITI

BMZ promotes good governance in all parts of the world, with 'democracy, civil society and governance' as a priority theme it has agreed on with half of its partner countries. This includes a particular focus on: respecting, protecting and guaranteeing 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.² BMZ is supporting work across these areas, including implementing ICT systems to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of public financial systems; using digital technologies to build and amplify citizen voice; and mitigating challenges through improving data and digital literacy, access to the internet and the protection of privacy.

Of potential interest to SDC in terms of 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 assists African Union (AU) organs to intensify citizen engagement and strengthen the role of data, and digital and non-digital approaches in their programmes and initiatives. The programme is implemented in cooperation with the AU Commission and the AU Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). The programme takes a systems approach, focusing on implementation across three main areas:

- Enhancing collaboration and cooperation between policymakers and Africa's data/digital innovators in order to facilitate good governance and development – this is done by connecting AU organs/member states with Africa's data/digital innovation ecosystem.
- Improving citizen participation in good governance and development through innovative communications and engagement methodologies; leveraging data, and digital and non-digital approaches.

- Advancing digital transformation for good governance and development in Africa through the responsible, progressive use of both data and new and emerging digital technologies.

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) – UK

Focus Areas: tax; transparency and accountability; anti-corruption; public financial management

Partnerships and initiatives: Access Now; EITI; Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST); Open Ownership; OCP; OGP

Due to the merger of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), announced in 2020, it is difficult to get clarity on the FCDO's current position. Based on the 2019 DFID governance position paper (DFID 2019), however, it appears that the FCDO is engaging in international fora and with international organisations (including through multistakeholder initiatives such as EITI, OCP, Network of Experts on Beneficial Ownership Transparency (NEBOT), Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST), OGP and Open Ownership). The FCDO is influencing the monitoring and evolution of regulatory frameworks – for example, anti-money laundering standards and associated sanctions, financial regulation and international tax transparency.

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

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

² The German government has been a major supporter of EITI since it was established in 2003 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, including: Afghanistan, Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), Central Asia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – US

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: EITI; OCP; OGP

Like SIDA and FCDO, USAID believes that digital technology has the potential to democratise the flow of data and enhance the ability of governments to effectively respond to citizens' needs.

USAID also recognises that both state and non-state actors have, through sophisticated deception and disinformation, sought to undermine democracy by poisoning online discussion and social media platforms. Authoritarian regimes use digital technology to monitor, harass and threaten ethnic and religious minorities, as well as individuals and organisations seeking transparency and accountability or to challenge a government's narrative. USAID supports human rights organisations and independent media through access to secure data and communications platforms, digital literacy programmes, equipment, and state-of-the-art technical assistance aimed at helping individuals protect themselves, their families and their work from cyber-attacks and disinformation.

Interestingly, USAID is supporting work that aims to respond to Russian interference in democratic processes. This is being done through its **Countering Malign Kremlin Influence Development Framework**, which is built around strengthening civil society organisations (CSOs), conducting credible elections, institutionalising transparency and accountability in government institutions, and promoting the rule of law. In Ukraine, for example, USAID provided approximately US\$2.7m in cybersecurity equipment and training for the Central Election Commission to support free and fair elections.

Examples of USAID-supported digital-enabled governance:

- **Public financial management:** In Ukraine, the pilot of the USAID-funded e-procurement platform, ProZorro, helped the national government cut costs by 12 per cent (which amounted to US\$1.4bn by 2018). Between 2016 and 2017, perceived corruption decreased from 59 to 29 per cent, while the percentage of suppliers that are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) went from 24 to 80 per cent between 2015 and 2018 (USAID 2020). Meanwhile, the Better Than Cash Alliance reports that the Mexican government saves US\$1.27bn each year through the use of digital payments (*ibid.*).
- **Election transparency:** Following the highly contested 2014 presidential election in Indonesia, a group of volunteers quickly built a website and digitised voting tabulations – many of them handwritten – to enable better monitoring and tracking of the election results, and address accusations of vote-rigging (*ibid.*).
- **Reducing waste and fraud in the distribution of public benefits:** A trial of smartcard-enabled benefit payments in India found that leakage of funds decreased by 40 per cent and demands for bribes were 47 per cent lower among card-users compared to those in the control group. Overall, the reductions in leakage constituted an estimated US\$38.7m per year – nine times the cost of implementation (*ibid.*).
- **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 formalise land use and empower youth in countries such as Zambia and Tanzania. The source code for MAST's mobile applications and back-end database systems is free and open source, meaning the technology is available for the broadest possible adaptation and use (*ibid.*).

Multilateral organisations and international initiatives

This section covers the digital governance focus areas and objectives of the main multilateral agencies and other key international partnerships and initiatives. It starts with the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, before moving on to **United Nations (UN)** agencies, **World Bank** activities, and finally inter/multi-national partnerships and initiatives.

OECD

The **OECD Directorate for Public Governance** focuses on a range of issues related to digital government, including open government data, digital government, open data and 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 the **Democracy R&D Network**, both of which are international networks bringing together leading practitioners and researchers from governments, civil society and research institutes.

UN

The **United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)** focuses its efforts on 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, by capacitating localities through fiscal decentralisation, innovative municipal finance and structured project finance, helps drive local economic expansion and sustainable development.

The **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)** is the home of the **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**, with the global IGF linking 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. Though 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 CSOs a space to engage in digital governance debates. The IGF also contributes 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, UNDESA supports UN member states in identifying their strengths, challenges and opportunities, as well as helping inform policies and strategies. In the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), UNDESA – through the Division for Public Institutions and

Digital Government (DPIDG) – serves as facilitator for implementation and follow-up of the action lines linking ICTs to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically:

- **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.

The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** is the host of the Internet Universality Indicators (aka **ROAM Indicators**), a mechanism that maps out the extent to which national digital environments conform to the following standards: compliance with human rights (R); openness (O); accessibility (A); and involvement of multistakeholder actors in digital governance (M). This offers a means for any country – whether developed or developing – to gain a holistic overview of its internet policies and digital environment, and in turn the structural causes of digital inequalities.

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** supports governments in the digitalisation and datafication of government – work that has been accelerated due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions imposed by public health measures. UNDP's work includes support for e-governance, data systems and the use of digital tools in elections. In particular, 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 may offer a way of supporting digital literacy building.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), through a collaboration with the United Nations University's Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV), is developing frameworks aimed at better understanding the opportunities and challenges of digital services in achieving results for children. UNICEF's Good Governance of Children's Data project explores issues related to child data rights and sets aspirational goals regarding good data governance for children. Its objective is to encourage governments, the private sector, international organisations and bodies to develop data governance frameworks that take full account of children's issues and rights.

World Bank

World Bank Global Practice: In 2019, the World Bank Group launched the **GovTech Global Initiative**, which aims at ensuring the public sector makes the most of digital technology. GovTech takes a whole-of-government approach to public sector modernisation and promotes simple, accessible and efficient government. In doing so, it encourages 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 the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).*

The **World Bank Open Government Partnership (OGP) Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF)** provides resources to create or implement potentially high-impact national- or local-led OGP commitments leading to increased government transparency, improved accountability, and strengthened 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 OGP MDTF is funded by Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the UK FCDO. Partly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the MDTF is seeking additional financing of US\$4.9m (OGP 2020).

The **World Bank Extractives Global Programmatic Support (EGPS) Multi-Donor Trust Fund** has 11 donors – including Switzerland, UK, Canada and Germany – which have pledged approximately US\$40m in support. These donors continue to demonstrate their strong commitment to translating the benefits accruing from extractives into sustainable development for all. EGPS also works closely with EITI to deepen transparency and strengthen natural resource governance.

Other partnerships and initiatives

The **Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI)** is hosted by the World Wide Web Foundation and brings together businesses, governments and civil society actors from across the globe to deliver the policies needed to make universal, affordable internet access a reality for all. A4AI's partners include national and multinational agencies (e.g. SIDA, FCDO, USAID, UN Women, UN Technology, UN University, World Bank, NEPAD); private sector corporations (e.g. Google, GSMA, Facebook, Dataminr, Eriksson, Intel; Huawei, Microsoft); many developing country governments; and civil society (e.g. APC, CIPESA, IREX, Africa ICT Alliance, Internews, Rio Institute for Technology and Society Luminare, Mercy Corps, Web Foundation).

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

The **Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)** is supported by many development partners – including the UK, Sweden, Canada, Switzerland and Germany – and aims to build more open, participatory and accountable governance of the extractives sector. One of EITI's major priorities is increasing 'systematic disclosure', which, in contrast to the original multistakeholder reporting process, will rely heavily on the automatic disclosure of extractives governance data from relevant information systems. There are significant concerns in government and civil society constituencies as to whether the relevant 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 **Freedom Online Coalition** brings together countries committed to protecting and promoting online freedoms both domestically and abroad. Aspiring members' applications are assessed based on their domestic record in respecting human rights online, with applicants having to sign up to a number of rights-based commitments. The coalition is committed to the multistakeholder model of internet governance in multilateral fora, as well as inclusive engagement with internet stakeholders.

The **Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST)** is one of the leading global initiatives to improve transparency and accountability in the governance of public infrastructure. CoST works with governments, the 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.

The **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)** is an intergovernmental organisation that supports sustainable democracy worldwide though

developing comparative knowledge, assisting in democratic reform, and influencing policies and politics. Its work focuses on three main impact areas – electoral processes; constitution-building; and political participation and representation – and also addresses issues of gender, diversity, and conflict and security. The organisation provides guidance, data and tools to assist in making use of ICT for elections. *Switzerland supports IDEA in core costs through a core contribution by SDC.

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

The **Open Data Charter (ODC)** is a collaboration between over 100 governments and organisations to open up data based on a shared set of principles. ODC promotes policies and practices that enable governments and CSOs to collect, share and use

well-governed data, in order to respond effectively and accountably to anti-corruption, climate action and pay equity.

The **Open Government Partnership (OGP)** was founded in 2011 and is a multistakeholder partnership between governments, civil society and the private sector aimed at promoting and implementing accountable, responsive and inclusive governance. Currently, 78 countries are part of 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 bilateral and philanthropic funders.

The **Transparency and Accountability Initiative (TAI)** is 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. Donor members include Luminare (formerly part of Omidyar Network), William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Ford Foundation and UK FCDO. TAI provides a platform for learning and collaboration between donors to support greater donor impact.

Foundations

While philanthropic foundations were not included in the initial outline for this paper, they play a significant and influential role in the digital and governance landscape, particularly when it comes to supporting civil society. Most of the foundations covered in this section are supporting digital tech-enabled transparency work in civil society, with many explicitly prioritising work aimed at understanding and minimising the threats/challenges – such as surveillance, privacy, polarisation and disinformation – posed by digital technology.

Key foundations in this respect include **Luminare** (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 the following:

The **Ethics and Governance of Artificial Intelligence Fund**, launched in 2017, is a hybrid research effort and philanthropic fund that seeks to ensure automation and machine learning digital technologies are researched, developed and deployed in ways which vindicate the 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, and incubates a range of research, prototyping and advocacy activities within

these two anchor institutions, as well as across the broader ecosystem of civil society.

Hivos, a long-standing international non-governmental organisation (INGO) and grantmaker, supports transparent, inclusive and accountable governance. Working primarily with CSOs across Africa, South East Asia and Latin America, Hivos assists in 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; and Making All Voices Count**. Historically, Hivos has been regarded as a grantmaker, but in recent years it has shifted to a dual grantmaking and implementation role. In its recent Open Up Contracting programme, Hivos and its partners took an ecosystems approach³ to implementation and made significant progress in the opening of public procurement in a number of subnational cases (Edwards *et al.* 2020).

³ By ecosystems 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 potentially enable/prevent change in a given context.

Reset, founded by Luminate and the Sandler Foundation, is an initiative engaged in programmatic work on digital technology and democracy. It provides grants and contracts while working alongside partners in various countries with a shared policy;

digital technology; and advocacy goals 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.

Think tanks, universities and research institutes

This section lists relevant think tanks, universities and research institutes focused on digital technology in governance processes. We focus primarily on international and regional institutes with an explicit focus on the use of digital technology and digital data in governance, rather than attempting to capture the multitude 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, which span research, advocacy and implementation. Thus, some organisations listed as a research organisation could also be listed as a civil society implementer or advocacy organisation, and vice versa.

The **Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law** is a think tank focused on privacy and surveillance law and policy, as well as the communities affected.

The **Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)**, funded by the Omidyar Network, developed **Data Governance Principles for the Global Digital Economy**. These principles aim to empower people and societies to make informed choices about how digital data are generated, used and shared; how to protect against the infringement of human rights, including the right to privacy; and how to utilise data and digital systems to promote citizens’ rights.

The **Centre for Internet and Society (CIS)**, based in India, undertakes interdisciplinary policy and academic research on internet and digital technologies. 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 cybersecurity. CIS’ research seeks to understand how social processes and structures are being reconfigured by the internet and digital media technologies, and vice versa. Through its diverse initiatives, CIS explores, intervenes in, and advances contemporary discourse and regulatory practice around the internet, digital technology and society in India and elsewhere.

Citizen Lab, based at the University of Toronto, researches digital practices affecting freedom of expression. In pursuit of this, it analyses privacy, security, transparency and accountability mechanisms and personal data digital surveillance activities relevant to the relationship between corporations and government agencies.

Data & Society is an independent research organisation that studies the social implications of data and automation, with the aim of informing the development and governance of new technology. In doing so, it produces original research that can help ground informed, evidence-based public debate about emerging technology.

Data Justice Lab, hosted at University of Cardiff’s 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 aimed at developing 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. Working in partnership with organisations worldwide to solve complex problems and improve governance, Global Integrity has a specific stream aimed at supporting partner organisations and communities to open data, improve its quality, and use it effectively to address challenges relating to corruption and the use of public resources. Through its work, Global Integrity distils lessons that are applicable beyond specific countries and sectors, and produces resources that can inform efforts to make more effective use of data in public resource and service delivery outcomes.

Global Partners Digital (GPD) is focused on bringing laws and policies relating to the digital environment 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.

The GovLab at NYU aims to strengthen the ability of institutions and people to work more openly, collaboratively, effectively and legitimately, thereby helping to make better decisions and solve public problems. The Govlab believes that governance can be transformed through combining the increased availability and use of data; new ways of leveraging the capacity, intelligence and expertise of people in the problem-solving process; and new advances in digital technology and science.

Iniciativa Latinoamericana por los Datos Abiertos (ILDA) is an innovation and research hub exploring the opportunities and challenges of using open data to prevent or solve development problems. Working in coordination with governments, the private sector and civil society, ILDA explores measures aimed at catalysing demand for, and usage of, open data to achieve development goals across Latin America.

The **Institute of Development Studies (IDS)**, based at the University of Sussex, has a long history of working on issues of governance, participation, citizenship and accountability, and currently has a Digital and Technology research team. Between 2013 and 2018, IDS managed Making All Voices Count's Research and Evidence component, which built a *large research portfolio* focused on the use of digital technology in governance. Lessons learned were captured in the synthesis report, *Appropriating Technology for Accountability: Messages from Making All Voices Count*, while programme design and implementation lessons were explored in *Supporting Innovation and the Use of Technologies in Accountability Initiatives: Lessons from Making All Voices Count*.

The **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)** has, in addition to its role as donor, performed a significant thought leadership and network-building role, producing influential research that has shaped conceptualisations and narratives across the sector. See, for example, the book *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 constructive critique of current internet governance, with the aim of enabling a society in which digital technologies contribute to human rights, social justice and equity. Recent projects include *Centering Women in India's Digitalizing Economy* and *A Digital New Deal: Visions of Justice in a Post-Covid World*.

LIRNEasia, based in Sri Lanka, is a digital policy and regulation think tank active in the Asia Pacific region. Drawing on a cross-disciplinary team of data scientists, lawyers and social scientists, LIRNEasia is a thought leader on digitalisation and public policy, producing critical research and providing technical expertise.

The **Local Development Research Institute (LDRI)**, launched in April 2015 and based in Kenya, 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. While LDRI's focus includes open government, it works across a number of sectors and themes, including agriculture, gender equality, health, education and energy.

MIT GOV/LAB collaborates with civil society, funders and governments on research that builds and tests theories about how innovative (and often tech-enabled) governance programmes and interventions affect political behaviour, potentially making governments more accountable to citizens.

The **Oxford Internet Institute**, based at the University of Oxford, looks at a range of issues related to *internet governance*, including the challenge of governing social media platforms' facilitation of political disinformation and *computational propaganda*.

Research ICT Africa is an African think tank focused 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 leverages its activities through national, regional and continental partnerships and collaborations.

Civil society and advocacy organisations

This section lists a number of prominent civil society and advocacy organisations that are using – or supporting others to use – digital technologies and data in governance processes. Most organisations listed work at an international or regional level, or support organisations in different countries, meaning organisations whose work is largely domestically focused are not included. Despite this, it should be noted that in many countries there are domestic organisations utilising digital technology and data in their work, and we would recommend that these are identified as part of SDC’s country systems analysis.

Access Now, founded in 2009, defends and extends the digital rights of people around the world through advocacy, policy influence, grantmaking and legal work. Access Now also provides a real-time helpdesk to support rapid responses to digital threats facing activists and human rights defenders.

*Switzerland supports Access Now in its work on internet shutdowns through the Division Peace and Human Rights of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

The **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’s **Communications and Information Policy Programme (CIPP)** responds to access, governance and rights problems across Asia, Africa and Latin America. The programme 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’s **Women’s Rights Programme (WRP)** works to strengthen the capacity of diverse women’s movements, providing them with 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 enjoying the benefits of ICTs. One interesting initiative supported by APC that may prove to be a model worth replicating in other regions is the **African School on Internet Governance (AfriSIG)**, which trains hundreds of participants in the skills that they need to participate in digital governance policy debates and processes.

Development Gateway aims to use data, digital technology and evidence to create effective, open and engaging institutions. Development Gateway works with governments and other organisations to understand data ecosystems, thereby allowing it to identify incentives and barriers to data use; build digital tools to support data analysis, visualisation and management; and advise on data strategy and policy with the aim of strengthening data-driven decision-making and implementation in countries across the world.

The Engine Room helps activists and CSOs working on governance increase their impact, providing support that allows them to make informed and efficient digital technology choices and effective use of data for people’s empowerment.

The **Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT)**, currently hosted by the International Budget Partnership, is a global network that facilitates dialogue between governments, CSOs, international financial institutions and other stakeholders, with the aim of finding and sharing solutions to fiscal transparency and participation challenges. It works through advocacy and high-level dialogue, peer learning and technical collaboration, research, and digital technology for participation. GIFT has a specific workstream focused on **Digital Tools For User-Centered Fiscal Transparency**, which shares learning, guidance, data schemas and digital tools enabling the development and implementation of open data systems; internal financial management information systems; transparency portals; and fiscal data for emergency response.

mySociety is an organisation pioneering the use of digital technologies to empower citizens in taking their first steps towards greater civic participation. It works in over 40 countries to help people become active citizens, providing open and free digital technology, research and data that individuals, journalists and civil society can make use of.

The **National Democratic Institute (NDI)** and its local partners work to establish and strengthen political and civic organisations, 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 seeking to use digital technology to undermine democracy through disinformation and other means, and involves collaboration with partners through the **Design 4 Democracy (D4D) coalition**.

The **Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI)** is an independent INGO producing applied research, advocacy and capacity development in the field of extractives governance. NRGI performs

in-depth work 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 its own research and advocacy, NRGi maintains a number of extractives data portals, technical assistance and capacity-building resources.

The **Open Data Institute (ODI)** works with companies and governments to build open, trustworthy data ecosystems, thereby allowing people to make better decisions using data and manage any negative impacts. ODI provides consultancy, resources, technical assistance and tools, and conducts research supporting the development of open data ecosystems.

Open Knowledge Foundation's School of Data – a network of digital data literacy practitioners, composed of both organisations and individuals – implements an array of digital data literacy programmes in various countries across Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Members of the network work to support CSOs, journalists and citizens in engaging with and using data to create better, more equitable and more sustainable societies.

OpenOil is a small company conducting sophisticated data modelling and analysis that can help governments and civil society in extractive-producing countries understand the revenue models involved, thereby allowing them 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 BOT](#), leads development of the [Beneficial Ownership Data Standard](#), is co-convenor of the Beneficial Ownership Leadership Group, and hosts the Open Ownership Register, which links beneficial ownership data from multiple sources from around the world.

PODER is a regional, civil society, non-profit organisation advocating for corporate transparency and accountability in Latin American countries from a human rights perspective. It empowers civil society actors affected by corporate practices to serve as the main advocates of accountability in the long term. PODER's [Transparency Technologies](#) programme expands the organisation's work in open contracting and beneficial ownership, whistleblowing and whistleblower protection, and digital security.

Privacy International advocates for the right to privacy for everyone, everywhere, raising awareness about digital technologies and laws that place such privacy at risk, and ensuring the public is informed and engaged.

Publish What You Pay (PWYP) is a large international network of CSOs campaigning for greater transparency, participation and accountability in the extractives sector. PWYP member organisations are often the civil society representatives of EITI multistakeholder groups in their respective countries. As EITI prioritises systematic disclosure, there is increased responsibility on these CSOs to access and analyse extractives data directly. Unfortunately, many CSOs do not have the capacity to play this role effectively.

Ranking Digital Rights (RDR) 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. This is done by ranking the world's most powerful internet, mobile and telecommunications companies on relevant commitments and policies, based on international human rights standards.

Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA) is a pan-African research and advocacy organisation and 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 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 global tax avoidance and evasion by large digital technology companies, and to achieving fundamental reforms of the current global financial architecture. Of particular relevance to this report is TJNA's work on the challenges of taxing the digitised economy, which shifts revenue away from African shores through digital enterprises and virtual means.

Transparency International (TI) has various chapters across the world, all of which 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 currently being conducted by TI-US involves investigating election campaign spending on social media platform political ads. ***TI is a partner of SDC in several partner countries.**

The **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 by forming partnerships with governments, private sector and civil society in order to research, experiment and innovate.

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