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## Innovation Dialogues Europe Africa D4D Hub Project



# Report on identified civil society topics

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## COVER PAGE

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Work Package 1: Report on identified civil society topics and challenges

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*The IDEA D4D Hub project is funded under the Horizon 2020 Programme. With a duration of 22 months starting in December 2021, it seeks to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations and academia in Africa to participate in a meaningful dialogue around inclusive digital transformation. It is implemented by 5 partners; betterplace lab, Enabel, Expertise France, GIZ and Smart Africa Secretariat.*

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## Overview

The Innovation Dialogues Europe Africa (IDEA) D4D Hub Project officially started on 1st of December 2021, and was officially kicked off by a session on 15th of December 2021. The project is launched in the context of the D4D Hub, which was launched in December 2020 to coordinate the efforts of the EUC, member states, private sector and financing institutions around inclusive and human centred digital transformation. This project specifically focuses on civil society organisations (CSOs) and academia.

The overall objective of the project is to support human-centric digital transformation that advances the use of digital technologies for human needs and public interest. In order to reach this objective, different needs have been identified:

- Empower the stakeholder groups, especially civil society who have been less involved in the digitalisation dialogue nationally, regionally and trans-contientally so far;
- Ensure that different stakeholders are involved in ICT research and innovation to ensure their needs and perspectives can be fully taken into account;
- Ensure that civil society are empowered to address societal challenges arising from the digital transformation and engage in well argued debates around those issues;
- Ensure that civil society can defend the human needs and public interests in society and ensure these are considered in ICT research and innovation.

This report deals with the identification of topics and challenges of civil society organisations that have been mapped in the first phase of the project.

## Introduction to Work Package 1, Task 1.1.

Work Package 1 is dealing with the Workshops and Capacity Building of selected stakeholders, mainly civil society organisations. It has three main activities:

1. gathering the topics and select the most salient challenges to an inclusive digital transformation of the selected stakeholders
2. Hosting a workshop in each country (Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Morocco/Tunisia)
3. Develop Capacity Building approaches to strengthen civil society and academia on the identified challenges and topics.

Rather than identifying stakeholders and selecting topics in all the countries at the same time, the consortium has opted for a more linear approach to start first with the identification of stakeholders and the selection of challenges in Mozambique. Consecutively, the first

workshop of the project will be held in Maputo, Mozambique on July 12th. The innovation day is planned for September in Maputo, in Mozambique. Burkina Faso will be the next country to conduct the stakeholder identification and select the topics of civil society organisations. Similar to a design-thinking method, this approach has been chosen in order to prototype the process of finding challenges for the workshop and reiterate it with the next countries, allowing any feedback to inform the next selection process for Burkina Faso.

## Method of identifying stakeholders and civil society topics in Mozambique

The concept of the stakeholder identification lists the established criteria for organisations to be selected for the workshop. These criterias developed by betterplace lab in accordance with Consortium members will be described in detail in the deliverable Intermediary report on intercontinental ICT stakeholders in M18 ( May 2023). To give an example of the scope, currently identified are:

- Organisations that focus on digital transformation as the main purpose (early adopters)
- Organisations that focus on meeting the SDGs through the use of digital technologies and approaches
- Organisations that are increasingly using digital technologies and approaches in their work but are facing challenges related to the overall aim of the project (late adopters)

These criteria were defined to target organisations that already have access to the digital sphere, in particular because for the success of the work package T3 in WP1, consisting of the network and capacity building, it is necessary to interact on a regular basis through offline and online events and other forms of interactions.

In order to identify civil society organisations in Mozambique and select their most salient challenges to an inclusive digital transformation, betterplace lab has completed the following steps:

- Identifying existing CSOs that fit to the above criteria as well as academic institutions via desk research and with support of GIZ, SAS (Smart Africa Secretariat), Enabel, Expertise France and their country offices and contacts to the European Union Delegation to Mozambique, as well as local embassies
- Reach out to those identified CSOs via mail in which CSOs have been asked to complete a survey to pre-identify existing bottlenecks and challenges that hinder an inclusive digital transformation.
- Select the most salient topics and challenges from the responses with regards to digital transformation
- Additional digital interviews with executive managers of relevant partner organisations within Mozambique, as well as representatives of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Mozambique to further identify stakeholders and challenges.

- A focus group with up to four organisations was planned which could inform us about possible (gender) (data) gaps in our research or other issues seemingly unrelated to the digital transformation. To this date, a focus group interview has not been concluded, but it is still planned to happen either before the workshop in Mozambique or in the next phase of the project in Burkina Faso.

The gathered data from the survey helped to identify the existing ecosystem of CSOs and its challenges towards an inclusive digital transformation. From the responses as well as from the research and through the above mentioned partner networks, a minimum number of 25 and a maximum number of 60 Mozambican CSOs are currently being invited to the workshop on July 12th. The workshop is supposed to have a number of maximum 20 participants, but the Consortium has opted to invite more participants in case of cancellations or participants not showing up. The selection of organisations to participate has been done in close cooperation with Expertise France.

An ongoing desk research by betterplace la is continuously identifying further stakeholders in Mozambique, such as multipliers, networks, umbrella organisations, representations & followers on social media (twitter, facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram) to participate in the Innovation Day in September.

The above described research of and outreach to Mozambican civil society organisations and academic institutions happened throughout March until May. All organisations identified have been collected in a Database. All of them have been contacted and sent a survey to complete (<https://bplacelab.limesurvey.net/813875?lang=en>)<sup>1</sup>.

## Needs and challenges of CSOs

The survey was created to identify topics of priority of the target group (CSOs and academia) that will inform the project about the workshop topics and shape the course of the project up until the innovation days and after. The purpose was to gather as much information as possible about the organisations, their areas of expertise and the challenges they face with regard to participating in the digital transformation process, in the assumption that the IDEA D4D Hub project will allow them to benefit from not only participating in the project to participate in the digital transformation process to greater extent.

To include as many CSOs as possible, it was important that the design of the survey was accessible (language), easy to answer (length) and open (open-ended questions). Further categories of the survey included: organisational size, thematic focus, countries of operation, challenges and organisational constraints, needs in order to participate in the digital transformation process as well as how the IDEA D4D Hub project could support.

It was also considered important that the survey was being sent through known senders and familiar channels. Hence, through direct mailing from the consortium partners betterplace lab, ENABEL, Expertise France, Smart Africa Secretariat and GIZ, as well as through the country

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<sup>1</sup> Please find the survey and its questions under the link.

offices and other affiliated networks (AFD, French Embassy) in the country, Mozambican civil society organisations have been sent the survey to fill in.

After the desktop research and outreaching via partner networks around 85 civil society organisations and academic institutions have been collected. Up to this date, 29 of them completed the survey. 60 organisations started to fill in the survey but didn't finish and thus, relevant information could not be harvested among the latter.

The topics for the workshops are currently being developed from the challenges and needs the civil society organisations have outlined in their responses to the survey. The process of identifying stakeholders in Mozambique is still ongoing according to the updated and amended timeline which foresaw an intermediary report in M7 (June). The idea behind delivering the final report once the gathering of challenges and identifying of topics was complete in all countries was that it would have allowed us to elaborate on the challenges in greater detail, comparing the different challenges in needs per country. We plan to merge this with the report on the topic specific workshops due in June 2023/M in19 (original date: M10).

## Identification of topics through learning about challenges

The objective of identifying the topics through the survey is to gather an overall idea of the overarching challenges that CSOs and academia are facing in engaging with the digital sector. This will inform the preparation of the workshop as well as the capacity building activities in the best way possible.

The survey allowed the identification of the most topics that were mentioned as challenges and constraints, as well as needs for the CSOs to be able to participate in user-centric digital transformation. Additional feedback on the identified challenges and topics was gathered through conversations with Mozambican partner institutions such as the country offices of the GIZ, the European Union Delegation, the AFD and the French Embassy, as well as with expert organisations on the ground (Cowork Lab, Muva, A4AI).

## Difficulties, possible gaps and omissions of topics

Before looking at the topics that emerged from this exercise, it is important to keep a few things in mind. First, desk-research might pose biases in finding and identifying the right stakeholders to send the survey to in order to learn about their challenges. Those organisations that don't have an online presence (website, Social Media Channels) might not have been identified, although their concerns and challenges to participate in the inclusive digital transformation are even greater. As mentioned before, for the concept of the stakeholder identification criteria have been established for the organisation to already have access to the digital sphere, in particular because for the success of the work package T3 in WP1.

Second, our outreach to Mozambican organisations is limited due to the lack of presence the Consortium members have on the ground, and country offices and networks on the ground that have been contacted by us might only know a range of organisations they usually tend to work with. Mozambique was also the first and only of five countries of the project, where no prior knowledge of the context or actors could be relied upon. Through our own research and asking the organisations through the survey we asked for further recommendations enabling us to scout and reach organisations that we have not identified before, like a snowball method.

Third, the process of finding topics through the survey and interviews might have attracted the organisations suffering from challenges we anticipated already, even though we tried to leave the question as open as possible. Consequently, some of the questions might not be relevant enough for other Mozambican CSOs. Hence, a focus group with more organisations has been planned still in this round before the workshop or in the next phase of the project in Burkina Faso to inform us about possible gaps and omissions.

Lastly, we also encountered some CSOs weary of participating when we asked for feedback. Some CSOs were not attracted by the initiative and sceptical about its sustainability due to lack of incentives and funding. Some organisations had trouble seeing the potential benefits such a short project could bring them, especially when weighed against the costs of implication for them. This feedback is an important prompt to create activities that engage the participants throughout the project, from the workshops to the innovation days, and incentivise for the right mixture of stakeholders for the innovation days, so that results of the collaboration on the innovation days are of highest potential.

## Selection of topics addressed by the workshop

*“As an organisation representing persons with disabilities, we notice that our constituency has been facing barriers to participate and benefit from the digital transformation. The design of digital platforms and tools usually fails to consider the specific needs of persons with disabilities.*

*Websites have several accessibility failures limiting its usability for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, being among the most socially disadvantaged groups, persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the unaffordability of digital tools and services. Finally, the lack of conducive legal and policy framework/ mandatory standards supporting accessibility for persons with disabilities is also understood as a barrier for our constituency.”*

Fórum das Associações Moçambicanas de Pessoas com Deficiência

This powerful statement, given by a representative from the organisation Fórum das Associações Moçambicanas de Pessoas com Deficiência is greatly comprehensive and complete when it comes to describing the challenges many organisations face, among those including vulnerable and marginalised groups. Mozambique currently ranks 180th out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index, it remains one of the poorest countries in the



world.<sup>2</sup> The challenges are manifold and bridging the digital divide is perhaps not the most urgent one to many civil society organisations.

Below is a list of challenges identified that were grouped together with needs and clustered among the topics selected for the workshop. The challenges below have been selected out of the survey responses and the interviews. There is no order of priority or ranking in those categories.

Topic	Challenge identified	Needs
Access, infrastructure and affordability	No consistent internet access (connection issues), bandwidth with limited capacities;	Partnerships with internet providers, Financing and Resources;
Hardware	Difficulties in acquiring digital equipment (not just) for students (laptops, data storage, software), lack of devices; the issue of interoperability and availability of software and tools;	Hardware and software - Access to grants and loans; Greater access to devices by project beneficiary communities internet access
Digital Skills	Digital skills development, innovative and critical (not just for university's ICT department)	Partnerships for appropriate curricula and instructors; Access to knowledge bases / databases; Student exchanges; International partnerships; Training in the use of tools for dissemination of action
Digital Literacy	Low digital literacy (not only) of decision makers	Capacity building
Surveillance/ Censorship	Freedom of expression is limited, civic space is shrinking	political leadership
Media & Data Literacy: Debunking Misinformation	Spread of fake news, scams, and identifying them, digital literacy	Capacity building
Policy dialogue	Difficulties interacting with government officials, red tape for projects	Political leadership , safe spaces
Access & Inclusion for people with disabilities	Barriers to participation for people with disabilities, accessibility failures of public platforms, lack of conducive legal/policy framework	Technical capacity for the government to understand challenges - Responsibilisation of the private sector (eg. service providers) - strengthen institutional capacity to engage and support all relevant stakeholder in the digital inclusion of persons with disabilities;
Digital Advocacy	lack of knowledge of how to use digital transformation for the organisation's purpose.	Capacity Building

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.bmz.de/en/countries/mozambique>

Digital Innovations (in agriculture, through intersectoral engagement)	Innovation and Multistakeholder engagement and exchange is limited or not existent; finance & funding is difficult	Partnerships with European organisations working with innovation, Promoting local events that include different stakeholders of the civil society
Data Collection & use	collection of data and evidence with the direct participation of beneficiaries	Need for municipalities to evaluate local projects
Digital Divide	Urban-Rural, Gender Divide, young versus older	Raise awareness, creating conditions for bridging the gaps Capacity building Training the trainers → multipliers
Digital Entrepreneurship and Innovation	E-commerce, entrepreneurship and using digital platforms for local and trade, especially for women;	Innovation financing; capacity building

Despite this extensive list, it is also desired to keep some space for organisations to raise different topics during the workshops. Hence, the conversation needs to remain open and not limited to the pre-identified topics.

Finally, a reflection has been initiated on the best ways to apprehend some of the topics such as infrastructure, affordability, or access, that require solutions that the IDEA project might not be able to bring. This includes approaching the topic through different angles, such as partnerships, public-private dialogues and cooperation projects. However, one feedback that we received on the latest was a cautious one, as we were warned not to raise too many expectations on the possible outcomes of this project - partnerships or funding that might arise from it - that might be difficult to obtain.

## Next steps and outlook

The topics will be evaluated, and those will be selected that promise the most engagement between the workshop and the Innovation Day, the likeliness of possible outcomes and solutions and the possibility of finding stakeholder of other sectors who can tackle these challenges. The workshop is supposed to concretize the already pre-identified topics or even new ones will appear. A good facilitation is needed to ensure the intended outcome of the workshop. Furthermore, the topics should also result in capacity building approaches to mitigate the challenges and create successful and sustainable outcomes of the innovation days and thus, the IDEA D4D Hub project itself.