



ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT 2016-17

Empowering a more accountable, effective
and innovative civil society



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Which accountability challenges keep CIVICUS' Secretary General awake at night?



If there was ever a time for civil society to show that we can be held accountable for our actions, now is the time. With trust and confidence in civil society falling in many parts of the world, political attacks on our legitimacy and high-profile shortcomings in our practices, it feels more important than ever that we show leadership when it comes to accountability. This should be done in a dynamic, evolving way, where accountability is not a report, but a constructive relationship with stakeholders that improves the agency and credibility of civil society organisations.

At CIVICUS, accountability means we are transparent about who we are and what we do. It also means we answer to our members, partners, donors, civil society and ourselves on what we have achieved and how we achieved it.

This is underpinned by our new **Accountability Framework** that aims to:

- Position CIVICUS as an adaptive, change-seeking alliance.
- Put people at the centre of our work, enable more iterative and participatory programming and allow faster responses when changes in direction are required.
- Work with mixed-method approaches to measure our contribution to social transformation.

Recent safeguarding scandals, although involving specific organisations, have had ramifications affecting the entire civil society sector. Our [2018 State of Civil Society Report](#) highlights the #MeToo and Time's Up movements, which have positively shone a spotlight on patriarchy and sexual abuse in the entertainment, corporate and political worlds. It is high time that we in civil society correct power imbalances and forge stronger links to our roots and to the people that we profess to serve. This is particularly important in times of shrinking civic space globally – as captured in the [CIVICUS Monitor](#).

2016-17 has been an exciting year for CIVICUS with major achievements in the following areas: *(more details are provided throughout the report)*

- **2017-2022 Strategic Plan:** We listened to thousands of members and partners across the world to shape [our strategic plan for 2017-2022](#). Through the consultation process, we heard people's deep concerns about challenges facing humanity, how civil society can best address these challenges, and how we can best work as a civil society alliance to enact change.
- **CIVICUS Membership:** Our membership increased to 3,826 members by June 2017, coming from over 172 countries. The latest satisfaction survey shows that most of our members are happy with the collaboration and support offered by the Secretariat. *Note: Whilst this report covers our interaction with all CIVICUS members, the individual accountability commitments of our members are beyond the scope of this report.*
- **Annual Budget:** Our annual budget in 2016-2017 increased by ca. 20% from the previous year, up to US\$ 9,697,000; we also succeeded in diversifying our funding sources and acquiring additional core funding.
- **Organisational Re-shaping:** As we prepared to enter our new strategic phase, we also redesigned the structure of the CIVICUS Secretariat. CIVICUS has grown, both in terms of financial and human resources, and, as such, the organisation needed a more streamlined leadership and more effective management forums. While this process proved to be challenging during the transition phase, we can now see that, for

example, CIVICUS' new cluster structure and the management forums have created opportunities for more people to play leadership roles and act as spokespeople for CIVICUS. However, we are still learning how to work and communicate effectively in globally dispersed teams. We also moved into a new office space (25 Owl Street, Auckland Park) in March 2017 which was necessary to accommodate the needs of a growing CIVICUS team in Johannesburg, and to move to more open-plan style working.

- **CIVICUS Workforce:** Our staff numbers grew between 2016-2017 from 49 to 64 employees as of 30 June 2017. The majority of our staff are still based at our global headquarters in Johannesburg, while we have growing numbers in our Geneva, London and New York offices, as well as in eight other countries around the world.

We responded to the most recent recommendations from the Independent Review Panel in detail ([here](#)) but would like to highlight the newest developments: As encouraged by the Independent Review Panel, the CIVICUS Board has approved an external [Feedback Response Policy](#) (January 2018) and is **actively inviting feedback and complaints** via [a new online form](#). It is too early to draw conclusions from this, but we are positive that this will help us to be more accountable to the people we work with. Another recommendation from our 2015-2016 report was to strengthen our **diversity and inclusion efforts**. We have set ourselves targets regarding inclusive hiring and promotion practices and we also conducted an annual gender pay gap analysis.

We also implemented a number of policies such as a new Breastfeeding Policy and Recruitment Policy that will help us put into practice our diversity and inclusion commitments. An Anti-Discrimination Policy will be presented to the Board early in 2018-2019. The Board approved of a **new Environmental Policy** and this report provides an overview of our carbon footprint development over years in a way that depicts changes more clearly. Finally, staff have been regularly reminded of the importance of **CIVICUS' Fraud Prevention Policy and Information Privacy Policy**. The Finance Cluster is also currently exploring options of a new accounting system which is better aligned to a larger CIVICUS.

As **CIVICUS celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2018**, we would like to thank our members, partners, Board members, and colleagues – past and present – who have shaped CIVICUS over the last 25 years. Also thank you to Accountable Now and the Independent Review Panel for being a part of that journey. And here's to many more years of strengthening citizen action across the world.



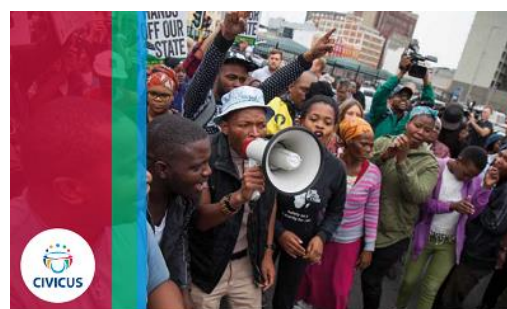
Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah
(Secretary General, CIVICUS)

What drives CIVICUS' work? How does the strategic planning translate into an organisation-wide accountability framework? How does CIVICUS monitor progress against set objectives and what are lessons learnt? (Cluster A, 1.1.-1.4., 2.2.)

CIVICUS' vision is "a worldwide community of informed, inspired, committed citizens engaged in confronting the challenges facing humanity". Our mission is "to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world". Based on these fundamental values, we entered a new strategic planning phase in 2016-2017, listening to thousands of members and partners across the world to co-create our Strategic Plan for 2017-2022. Our goals are:

1. Defending Civic Freedoms & Democratic Freedoms
2. Strengthening the Power of People to Organise, Mobilise and Take Action
3. Empowering a More Accountable, Effective and Innovative Civil Society
4. Building a World-Class Organisation

You can read and download the full Strategic Plan in six languages and watch videos [here](#).



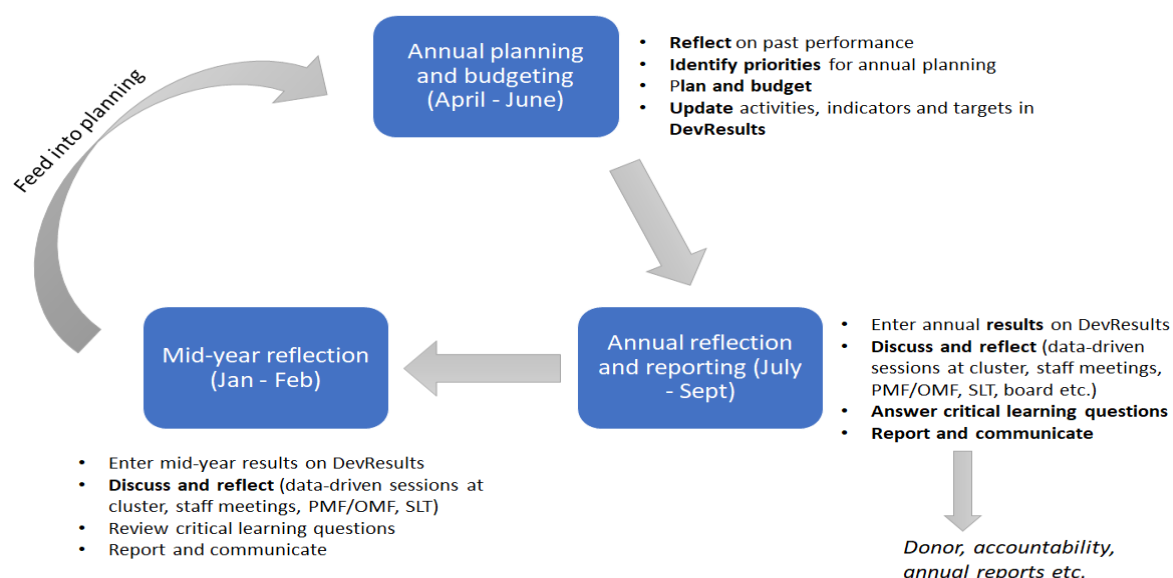
CIVICUS STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022



CIVICUS' new Accountability Framework was developed to help consistently and systematically track the organisation's progress and impact against the new Strategic Plan, meet accountability commitments and enable organisational learning. It is grounded in [Utilisation-focused Evaluation](#), recognising that in complex environments, where social change is difficult to measure and attribute to one single effort, evaluation needs to be purpose-driven.

In order to help understand CIVICUS' contribution in the complex social environments within which the organisation works, CIVICUS' Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Impact & Accountability Cluster have developed a series of long term critical learning questions to help staff understand the impact of its work under each of the Strategic Goals. The intention is to understand, not only whether CIVICUS is progressing according to these plans, but also to understand what activities in which contexts are working well and where CIVICUS may need to change course and adapt.

The Accountability Framework and Performance Story (*submitted to the Panel along with this report*) are the basis for CIVICUS' biannual Impact Reflection Process which will take place for the first time in July 2018:



Since CIVICUS is only ending its first year of the new Strategic Plan while writing this report, it is difficult to share comprehensive successes and learnings at this early stage. CIVICUS' notable wins with regard to innovation and collaboration in 2016-2017 are outlined in the [Annual Report 2016-2017](#) which we suggest reading along with this report.

In addition to our regular monitoring and reporting, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) commissioned an external evaluation of CIVICUS' organisational capacity in relation to the demands posed by the new Strategic Plan, and analysed synergy and complementarity with a particular focus on the Civic Space Initiative (CSpl) and the Innovation for Change programme. Please read their findings and recommendations [here](#) as well as CIVICUS' management response/action plan (*submitted to the Panel along with this report*).

Other evaluations in 2016-2017 included the assessment of our network and membership engagement (please find more details later in the report), an external evaluation of the DataShift initiative, an external evaluation of the governance of the Innovation for Change network, and an organisational mapping tool assessment linked to the [Ford BUILD Grant](#). As for CSpl, CIVICUS and its consortium partners are applying Outcome Harvesting to evaluate and monitor progress against set indicators and objectives. This is in line with CIVICUS' approach to Utilisation-focused Evaluation and the report on 2017-2018 will share insights from this work.

As part of this strategic planning process, CIVICUS consulted members, partners, and a diverse range of civil society colleagues over several months on whether and how the organisation should reorganise in support of the new Strategic Goals. From these consultations, several priorities emerged, including the need for:

- More streamlined, and distributed leadership model
- Smaller, more focused teams for more effective delivery and integration of offsite staff
- Forums for better planning, implementation, coordination and quality control of activities
- Integration of stand-alone projects and a system for incubating new activities within the organisation
- Redeploying consultancy and short-term project staff within the core structure, when appropriate

Now that CIVICUS is one year into the new strategy and nearly one year into the new structure (which was almost fully staffed from September 2017), the organisation will undergo a review of the reshaping process to see if/how the current structure is addressing priorities.

This new plan presented a timely opportunity for CIVICUS to re-organise the Secretariat in support of these new Strategic Goals. The re-structuring focused on creating more streamlined leadership for the organisation which includes a smaller leadership team (Senior Leadership Team) but with opportunities for more colleagues to play management and coordination roles (Programme Management Forum and Operational Management Forum). As is usually the case when implementing new management structures, a lesson learnt for CIVICUS has been the importance to document and clarify the scope and make up of these forums to ensure consistency and transparency around aspects such as membership and decision-making remits. All three of these structures have found it necessary to create terms of reference to provide this clarity both within these structures and to the wider staff. More information about the restructure of the CIVICUS Secretariat can be found later in this report.

LOOKING AHEAD:

As of June 2018, CIVICUS is storing and analysing its data using [DevResults](#), a web-based M&E system that tracks CIVICUS' programme and organisational data. This platform will house the majority of the data that CIVICUS collects in one central place, further enabling data-driven decision making. The next Accountability Report on 2017-2018 will thus be able to provide more data-heavy evidence on our performance.

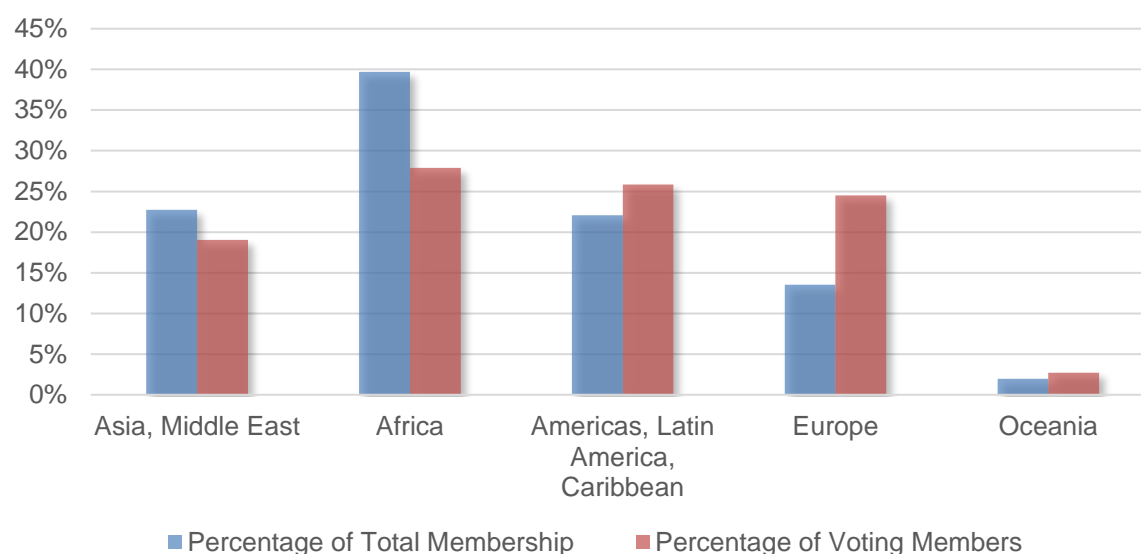
How does CIVICUS identify and prioritise stakeholders? How does CIVICUS ensure its partnerships are effective – maximising coordination and avoiding duplication? *(Cluster A 1.4., Cluster B, 4.1.-4.3.)*

CIVICUS' primary mission is to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world. CIVICUS' definition of civil society is broad, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), activists, civil society coalitions and networks, protest and social movements, voluntary bodies, campaigning organisations, charities, faith-based groups, trade unions, and philanthropic foundations, among others. CIVICUS' membership is diverse, spanning a wide range of issues, sizes and organisation types.

CIVICUS is a membership alliance which continuously grows and stands at 3,826 members in 172 countries as of 30 June 2017. The table below illustrates the current configuration of CIVICUS membership and changes since June 2016. The figures show a modest growth in our membership, with a stable voting membership base.

Membership categories	June 2016	June 2017
Associate Individuals	2,442	2,670
Associate Organisations	903	984
Total Associate:	3,345	3,654
Voting Individuals	40	30
Voting Organisations	177	142
Total Voting:	217	172
Total:	3,562	3,826
Countries covered:	176	172

Most of CIVICUS' membership is based in the Global South, with significant representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Fifty out of the 54 African countries are represented in our membership. Voting members (organisation and individual) come from 66 of the 172 countries represented in the membership. The chart below illustrates the proportions of total membership and voting members drawn from the various geographical regions.



An ongoing challenge remains that voting members are mostly from higher income countries whereas CIVICUS strives to be a truly global network. The new Member Engagement Strategy seeks to address potential power imbalances (see more details later in this report). For example, membership fees for voting members are now (June 2018) optional for individuals and organisations with an income of less than US\$80,000. Forthcoming reports will present how the voting membership will change based on the new strategy.

Members meet once a year at CIVICUS' Annual General Meeting (AGM) which took place from 28th November to 2nd December 2016 (virtually). The virtual AGM format was first tested in 2015 to be more inclusive of members across time zones and geographies who could not physically attend. Over the past few years, CIVICUS has tried to include more opportunities for member participation beyond approving the annual reports. These included Q&A sessions with the Secretary General and the Board's Governance and Membership Committee Chair, recorded video messages, chat groups and polls. While these efforts have enabled CIVICUS to engage more members, the quality of the engagement does not compare to a physical AGM. For this reason, CIVICUS will, for the first time in 2018, utilise a hybrid format that allows both virtual and physical participation in a Board-led AGM.

Members and other stakeholders also convene every 18 months as part of the International Civil Society Week (ISCW) and aligned World Assembly. However, no ISCW or World Assembly took place in the reporting period (but in April 2016 in Colombia and in December 2017 in Fiji).

CIVICUS believes that the organisation and alliance are stronger when working towards the same goal together with other actors, whilst ensuring to not compete with or displace local partners. CIVICUS aims at supporting and complementing the work of local civil society through the organisation's resources and knowledge, regarding itself as a network and knowledge broker. CIVICUS continuously tries to bring local concerns and voices to a global level, as well as to bridge sectors and other differences to identify common goals and opportunities.



In terms of the selection of CIVICUS members, there are membership criteria (outlined in the current [Membership Policy](#)), a [Code of Conduct](#), and a verification process in place which ensure our accountability commitments. The process allows for individuals and registered and non-registered organisations to provide documentation that will help CIVICUS in assessing that they are real and credible actors (i.e. non-profit registration or audited financials) contributing to civic action and civil society strengthening in their respective contexts (i.e. an aligned vision to CIVICUS' Strategic Plan). The verification process also includes a standardised check form with referees and a review of the social media accounts (if applicable). These procedures may be amended in 2018-2019 considering the new Membership Engagement Policy.

In terms of selection of participants and event partners, a checklist is in place which considers CIVICUS values, diversity and inclusion, potential for future collaboration, knowledge sharing, and CIVICUS membership. If CIVICUS offers financial support for participants, priority is given to voting members. Moreover, participants must have agreed to the CIVICUS convening principles and share the organisation's strategic vision. (*The full Participant Selection Process document is shared with the Independent Review Panel along with this report submission.*)

CIVICUS works in partnership with multiple organisations and entities and these details have been published in previous Accountability Reports. This report would like to highlight the following global partnerships in 2016-2017 which are representative of the diversity of CIVICUS' partnerships:

- Accountable Now – Founding member
- Action for Sustainable Development – Founding Member and Secretariat (which was handed over to Global Call to Action Against Poverty, GCAP)
- Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA) – Secretariat
- Community of Democracies – Member, International Steering Committee
- Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations – Board Member
- Fight Inequality Alliance – Founding Member
- Multi-stakeholder Task Team for CSO Development Effectiveness & Enabling Environment –Member
- UNCAC Coalition – Steering Committee Representative
- UN Development Cooperation Forum – Member, Advisory Group
- UN Economic and Social Council – General Consultative Status
- World Economic Forum – Member of various initiatives

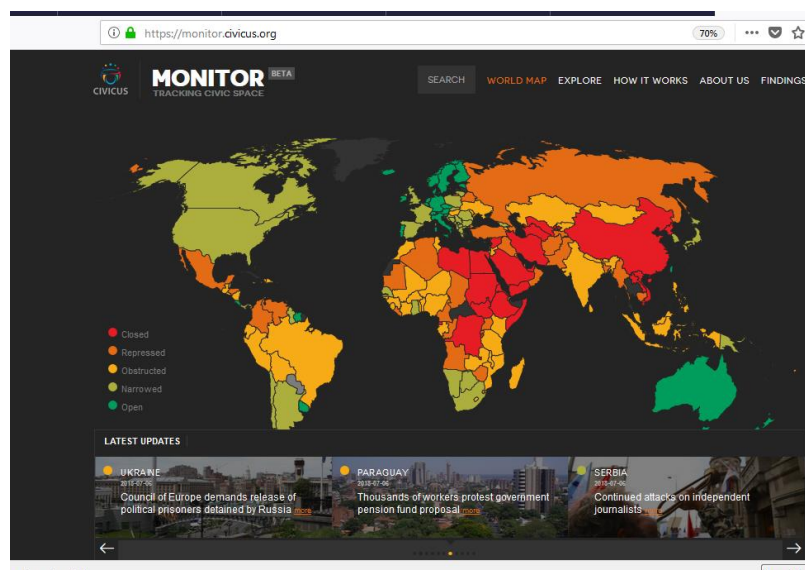
LOOKING AHEAD:

In the beginning of 2017-2018, the Geneva team developed a strategy for Geneva engagement (outside of the United Nations Human Rights Council) for the interaction with CIVICUS members and partners within the framework of the new Strategic Plan. This will allow for more meaningful engagement as it goes beyond just engaging on specific issues but looks at engagement through the lens of all CIVICUS' Strategic Goals.

One innovation example is DataShift, which is a global, multi-stakeholder initiative that leverages the potential of new technologies for innovative, community-grounded and effective social accountability. In 2016-2017, DataShift worked with local partners and decision-makers in the Lanet Umoja community in Kenya to create awareness on SDG 5, i.e. on gender equality at the local level, and develop a system for using citizen-generated data to drive action on this issue. Another example of successful collaboration is the significant increases in opportunities for civil society voices to be heard at the UNHRC in Geneva. These are just two examples that helped CIVICUS to achieve progress on its previous strategic plan and more partnership examples can be found throughout this report.

Throughout 2016-2017 CIVICUS worked to share knowledge, spark dialogue and provide spaces for the organisation's members' and partners' voices to be heard through a range of communication channels, including the e-CIVICUS, thematic newsletters, mailers, media and the CIVICUS website. Social media continues to be a key medium for connecting civil society and sharing information useful to our network.

The new civic space tracking tool, the [CIVICUS Monitor](#), was launched in October 2016. In April 2017, the Monitor expanded to full coverage of UN recognised States, providing an assessment and rating of civic space conditions in 195 countries. By 30 June 2017, the Monitor had published a total of 654 civic space updates on over 150 countries. Updates, provided through a network of [20 regional research partners](#), reveal the current

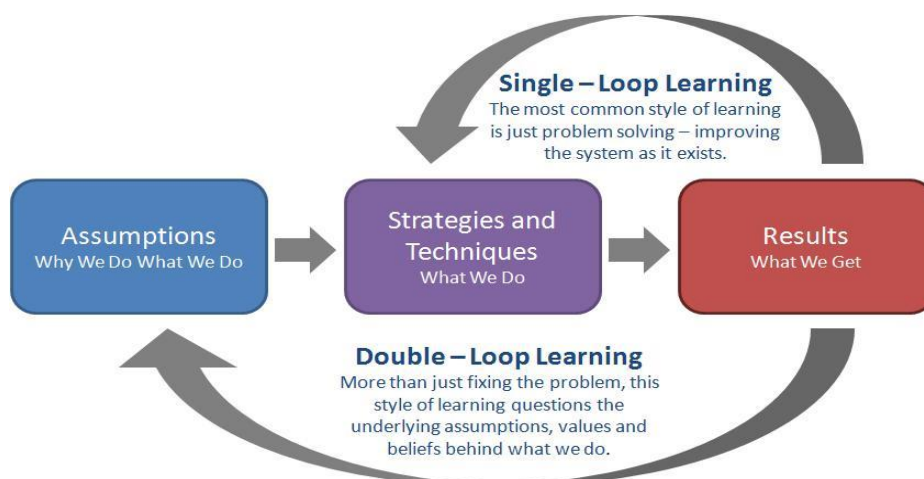


reality of civic space from the perspective of people based in the regions and countries where civic space is being contested. A workshop with these research partners took place in May 2017 in Johannesburg which focused on research skills/methodology, writing skills as well as advocacy opportunities. CIVICUS Monitor data is now routinely included in CIVICUS knowledge and analysis outputs, including the State of Civil Society Report and UPR submissions.

The [2017 State of Civil Society Report](#) was published in June 2017, the sixth such annual report. The report's year in review section included a special focus on the rise of right-wing populism and political extremism as a growing challenge to civil society, while the report's thematic section addressed for the first time the subject of civil society and the private sector. Other reports published on civil society conditions are listed in the Annual Report 2016-2017.

How is stakeholder engagement reflected in CIVICUS' decision-making and how does it contribute to change? (Cluster A, 2.1.; Cluster B, 5.1.-5.2.)

Based on CIVICUS' Utilisation-focused Evaluation approach and the organisation's Accountability Framework, impact reflections upon the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 will include a triple-feedback loop which involves "learning how to learn" by reflecting on how we learn in the first place:



CIVICUS' commitments to closing feedback loops would, of course, not be possible without active stakeholder engagement. Given CIVICUS' unique positioning as a membership association of CSOs and activists, CIVICUS seeks to initiate programmes and interventions that benefit the whole of civil society. Therefore, CIVICUS uses these six core principles to help ensure key stakeholder participation. These are:

- Working as an alliance in everything CIVICUS does
- Working as a network with multiple hubs and connections
- Taking a rights-based approach to citizen participation
- Working in partnership with others
- Connecting the local with the global
- Measuring and demonstrating impact

CIVICUS actively invites feedback from a multitude of stakeholders through various channels and at different moments. Internally, staff can raise concerns or feedback via the Whistle-blower Policy and Grievance Policy which have clearly laid out responsibilities, time frames and escalation steps (both are part of the Staff Handbook and available upon request for Accountable Now). As with all CIVICUS policies, these policies were opened for staff comments before presentation to the CIVICUS Board. In 2018, it is planned to amend both policies to allow for anonymity via submission of complaints on SharePoint (rather than in person or via email). There were no formal grievances or complaints raised in 2016-2017; however, two staff complaints were lodged in 2017-2018, which were thoroughly investigated and dealt with according to the processes outlined in the policies. Finally, staff can also seek advice and talk to members of the staff-led Diversity and Inclusion Group.

LOOKING AHEAD:

The Membership Satisfaction Survey conducted in May 2018 showed a very good Net Promoter Score of 44 out of a representative sample of 423 responses. This points towards a satisfied membership after one year of the new Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

A new [Feedback Response Policy](#) was approved by the CIVICUS Board in January 2018 to facilitate external complaints from members, partners and the general public. Complaints can be filed [online](#) (ensuring anonymity if needed) or via feedback@civicus.org. In addition, external feedback and complaints can be filed via the [Accountable Now mechanism](#). Members and partners are furthermore invited to provide regular inputs via the AGM, Annual Constituency Survey, Membership Survey, event feedback forms and project evaluations. Another internal example of how staff shaped decision-making processes is reflected in the setup of the internal Failures Club which regularly shares lessons learnt among staff to improve CIVICUS' work – for example, applying the Net Promoter Score method among all event participation surveys.

CIVICUS is confident that having well-designed and responsive mechanisms for handling external and internal feedback (including suggestions, complaints, or positive feedback) will improve the quality of its work, enhance trust and confidence of stakeholders, identify areas of work which need strengthening, and ensure that CIVICUS learns from feedback provided through such a process. Please see [Annex I](#) for a visual illustration of CIVICUS' various feedback procedures.

The current strategy was not only based on consultations, but the writing process was Board-led, with an opportunity for CIVICUS' voting membership to co-author before the plan was finalised. In addition to these consultations around the new Strategic Plan, the CIVICUS Membership team commissioned a consultancy on membership and network engagement to help prepare a new Membership and Network Strategy in December 2016. (*The related SWOT analysis is attached to this report for the Independent Review Panel.*) The objective is to enhance engagement, participation and horizontal communications among our constituencies. Consequently, the new Membership Engagement Strategy (*shared with the Panel*) was just approved by the CIVICUS Board in May 2018. Insights from this new strategy and approach will be shared in the next Accountability Report.

LOOKING AHEAD:

The Ford-funded *Resilient Roots* initiative was launched in October 2017. Accountable Now and Keystone Accountability are partners and the initiative supports CIVICUS' intention to be more innovative and radically inclusive in terms of seeking feedback from and responding to the organisation's constituents.

CIVICUS' retention rate for voting members is approximately 80%, but participation at the board elections or at the AGM remain low at approximately 30%, despite being a core responsibility of for voting members. Most of the member benefits CIVICUS provides are accessible to all civil society (i.e. non-members as well). One of the primary motivations behind revisions to the membership structure (see new Membership Engagement Strategy) is to convince long-standing partners to join the alliance as members so that our membership better reflects our mission, vision and strategy – and so that CIVICUS stakeholders have a

greater say in the organisation's decision-making. Moreover, the new Customer Relationship Management system (implemented in the beginning of 2017 and further revisions planned for 2018) will keep track of relationships / engagements per CIVICUS constituent with the Secretariat so that we can draw conclusions and target engagement efforts accordingly.

Other examples of how CIVICUS constituents' feedback is captured during events include: (1) participatory facilitation methodologies that elicit member/partner perspectives, (2) ample time for sharing and reflection, and (3) formal and informal spaces for facilitated networking and knowledge-sharing. CIVICUS' constituents' interests and priorities were also used to shape the organisation's programme activities that took place during the reporting period, as well as the Strategic Plan 2017-2022.

Although CIVICUS has mechanisms and processes in place for stakeholders to engage, the organisation is constantly working to ensure that these mechanisms are accessible to more

diverse stakeholders, e.g. making feedback forms available in different languages or providing not only one communications avenue (i.e. email) for people to engage but also using other safe forums for stakeholders to provide input. CIVICUS continues to strive to ensure that un/underheard voices are amplified through these efforts.

How does CIVICUS respond to stakeholder feedback? Which complaints did CIVICUS receive in 2016-2017 and how were these followed-up? (*Cluster B, 5.3., Cluster C, 10.3.*)

Area for improvement in 2015-2016

As outlined above, the new Feedback Response Policy and online submission form were approved and implemented in early 2018, which means that there was no centralised system for feedback and complaints in place in 2016-2017. However, feedback and complaints received by staff would have been shared with the Head of Partnerships (now called Chief Networks Officer). No external complaints were brought to her attention in 2016-2017.

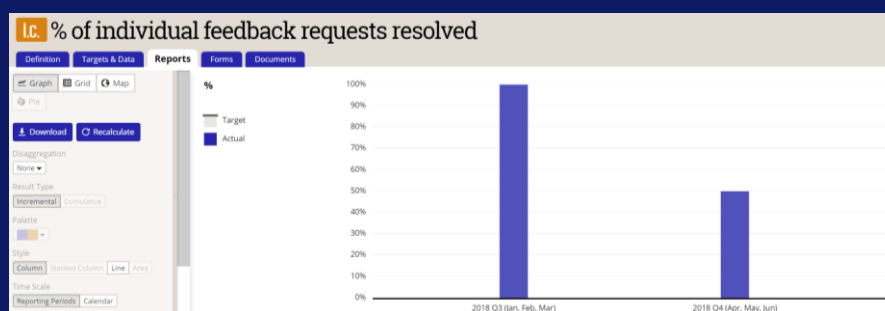
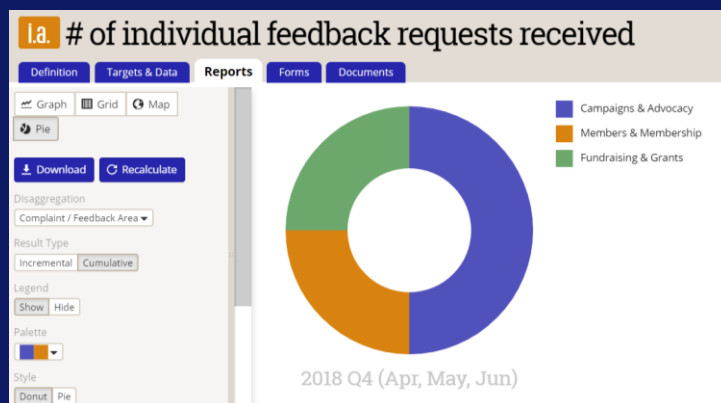


Occasionally, critical comments were posted on Twitter or Facebook where CIVICUS' advocacy work and statements are shared. Those from "internet trolls" were disregarded and in other cases the Communications Cluster and Advocacy & Campaigns Cluster clarified the issue with the respective commentator.

Staff and partners conduct post-evaluation surveys for all CIVICUS events and the post-event report or responses from those surveys and actions taken thereof are shared with participants. An example is the co-evaluation of Regional Capacity Strengthening Coordination Meetings that took place across different regions in May/June 2017. One frequent feedback from the first meetings was concerning the need for stricter time management which was thus improved towards the later meetings of that series. Overall, the majority of participants were "entirely satisfied" and thought that "more than 75%" of the trainings was relevant and could be applied to their organisations' work.

LOOKING AHEAD:

Going forward, this is how CIVICUS will be able to track and report on its external feedback and complaints received – using DevResults. There is a roll-out and outreach plan for June to August 2018 in place to promote awareness about the Feedback Response Policy so that CIVICUS staff and stakeholders know about it and feel comfortable using it.



How is CIVICUS strengthening capacities that last beyond immediate interventions? *(Cluster B, 5.4.)*

CIVICUS' programmatic work at the national and regional levels is primarily implemented by our members and partners, whom we support with financial and technical assistance. From July 2016 to June 2017, CIVICUS provided US\$1,287,719 in sub-grants to around 64 CSOs in 45 countries. The chart below shows the regional distribution of our sub-grant disbursements.

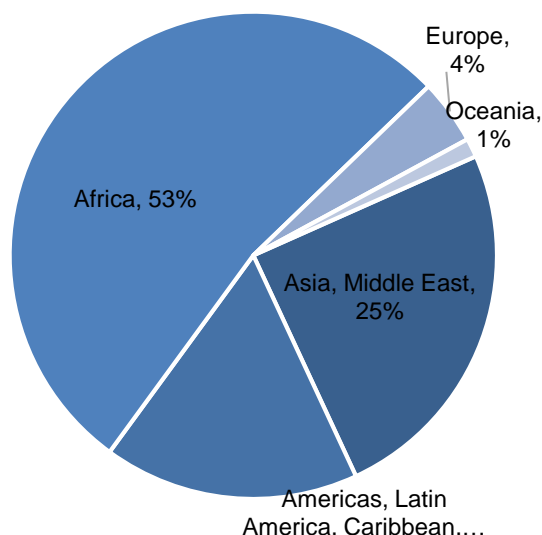


As one can see from this chart, there was an increase in sub-grants to Asia and the Middle East. The change in funding patterns is a result of the changes in the larger environment. For example, CIVICUS' Civic Space Initiative (CSPI) tends to work in situations that are deteriorating but have not yet deteriorated to the point that one could not operate or where CIVICUS would be putting its partners at risk. Moreover, 2016-2017 was the first time

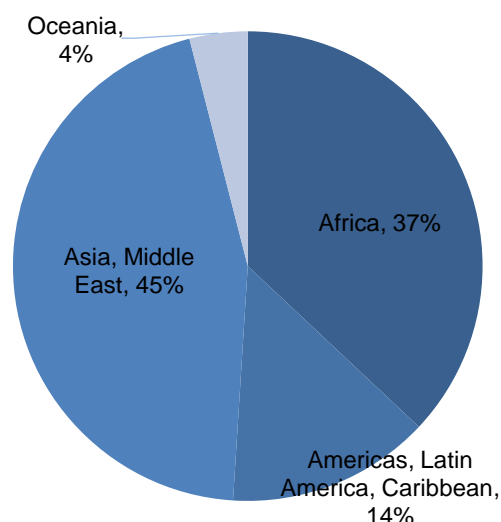
that CIVICUS supported organisations in the Middle East as part of the new European Commission grant. A full-time staff member from the Middle East was hired in 2016 to support increased activities in that region.

Comparative sub-grant distribution by region

2015/16



2016/17



Capacity Strengthening

For CIVICUS, strengthening people and partners capacities means developing self-efficacy and institutional strengths that last beyond an immediate intervention.

A needs assessment by region among CIVICUS members conducted in early 2017 pointed towards different thematic needs in different regions (*the findings of this needs assessment are submitted for the Panel along with this report*). For example, CIVICUS members in the MENA region were particularly interested in media interview techniques, accessing the UN systems, and an adaptive membership policy. Members in Sub-Saharan Africa wanted to focus on website development, digital security, and participatory resource development. Based on these findings, a series of Regional Capacity Strengthening Coordination Meetings was conducted throughout May and June 2017 which was very well received among the CIVICUS membership.

The Local Interventions Group in Nepal has been a partner with CIVICUS' [DataShift](#) initiative to support CSOs to effectively produce and use citizen-generated data to monitor sustainable development progress, demand accountability and campaign for transformative change. This [blog](#) shows how they have continued to strengthen their capacities after CIVICUS' support. Moreover, this blog post helped gaining positive attention for the Local Interventions Group. Another DataShift partner in Morogoro, Tanzania, confirmed that they have continued to build upon the training they took part in in 2017 and are able to use it on their own initiative. They reported that the training had an empowering effect

"The report was very relevant and useful for WACSI. As a capacity building organisation, the capacity assessment session was an opportunity for us to know what are the needs of our constituencies and devise ways and means to respond effectively to those needs." — Regional Capacity Strengthening Coordination Meeting, May 2017

on their staff and increased knowledge around data processes which CIVICUS staff could also observe in a follow-up meeting with them. Also, within the DataShift initiative, and together with Restless Development, a network of youth called – Youth Accountability Advocates (YAA) – was created in Tanzania which still operates on its own now that the programme has ended. A baseline of the key areas of interest and priorities for youth continues to be updated currently and plans at national level are reflecting some of the topics raised by the youth in the project districts. The initiative also supported dialogue with local authorities in Tanzania which are ongoing beyond the end of the programme. Public authorities in certain districts now acknowledge that youth can be responsible actors that contribute towards the formulation and implementation of local development agendas. This change was described by the local team as a shift in the power imbalances that existed previously: ***“Youth is now brought to the table and there’s a space created for their interaction with the local government, to raise concerns and discuss possible actions”***.

Generally, CIVICUS convenes and brings civil society together to learn from each other, network and build capacity. By doing this, CIVICUS does not aim to position itself as the “expert” rather acknowledges the immense knowledge situated within each CSO and the power of bringing diverse sets of knowledge and capacity together to drive change across the sector. To support this approach, a designated Capacity Development Cluster was created in June 2017 as part of the organisational reshaping.

LOOKING AHEAD:

Going forward, CIVICUS will use pre- and post-training tests to track knowledge increases of participants over time. This approach has been tested for a workshop in the Dominican Republic in September 2017 and a training in Armenia in June 2018. In both instances there were substantive knowledge increases. Results will be captured on DevResults and CIVICUS will be able to provide more generalised evidence in the future.

How is CIVICUS ensuring diversity and inclusion in its Secretariat and programmes? (Cluster A, 3.1.-3.2.)

Area for improvement in 2015-2016

Gender equality and diversity is important to CIVICUS. CIVICUS believes that it is the organisation’s duty to strengthen ongoing discussions and recognise overlapping inequalities and discriminations. CIVICUS will use its role to push for greater representation and remedies for the struggles faced by women from excluded groups: impoverished and immigrant women, disabled, indigenous and lesbian and transgender women, among others. CIVICUS plans to take part in movements

that put patriarchy under the spotlight and challenge behaviours and attitudes that enable sexism, gender discrimination and other forms of intersecting discriminations.



In an email to staff in March 2018, CIVICUS' Secretary General made very clear that there is zero tolerance for sexual harassment and gender inequality at CIVICUS:

"This is an important moment of reflection and action around sexual harassment and gender inequality for us all. I hope all of you have read the [statement we made](#) on International Women's Day last week. Let me say again that we have a zero tolerance for any forms of sexual harassment or intimidation within CIVICUS. We have clear policies and procedures for those of us who work at CIVICUS, and we also have codes of conduct for those who take part in the events we convene. As part of our response to recent revelations, we will be looking again at these internal and external policies and I would urge anyone who has ideas for how we can improve these to let HR and/or the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group know. And, of course, if you know of any incident or issue that we should know about or deal with, please get in touch with HR, your manager, or an SLT member."

In addition, CIVICUS implemented a Breastfeeding Policy and ensured a greater focus on diversity and inclusion in its revised Recruitment Policy in March 2018 (*both policies are shared with the Independent Review Panel along with this report*).

LOOKING AHEAD:

Several focus groups took place in early 2018 which actions being undertaken in 2017-2018. CIVICUS' membership-based Gender Working Group is undergoing a renewal process at the moment.

CIVICUS' internal Diversity and Inclusion Group (previously called internal Gender Working Group) collaborates in safe space to share ideas, concerns and recommendations, and brainstorm constructive solutions to pressing challenges around gender, diversity and inclusion. In 2016-2017, the Gender Working Group focused on delivering the commitment made

in CIVICUS' 2016 State of Civil Society Report to undertake a diversity and inclusion audit of CIVICUS policies, practices and ways of working, with the aim of realising CIVICUS' aspiration to serve as a model for diversity, equity and inclusion. The purpose of the audit was to determine the factors that are contributing to or detracting from the fostering of a culture of diversity and inclusion within our organisation. Information and data was analysed around five key thematic areas: vision, leadership and accountability; human resource practices, policies and procedures; organisational culture; monitoring and measurement; and mainstreaming diversity and inclusion across the organisation. Based on the recommendations from that Inclusion Audit, CIVICUS has revised its Recruitment Policy to focus on diverse, accessible and multi-lingual recruitment processes, has created opportunities for more people to play leadership roles and act as spokespeople for CIVICUS, and has created an action plan (*shared with the Panel for further information*) and diversity and inclusion targets which are currently with SLT for approval. This replaced the outdated Gender and Diversity Scorecard.

LOOKING AHEAD:

A specific Harassment Policy (including but not specific to sexual harassment) and a Gender Equality Policy are planned for implementation in 2018-2019.

Beyond gender and age, CIVICUS is currently creating a social inclusion toolkit planned for publication in July 2018. CIVICUS' Events Principles (see more below), moreover, focus on issues such as gender balance, accessibility, awareness of religious holidays, or translations into multiple languages (e.g. via the app Interprefy).

CIVICUS' added programmatic value is the link between civic space and gender equality. As such, CIVICUS always works to strengthen the feminist movements' rights to speak up. In 2016-2017, CIVICUS has coordinated joint statements with LGBTIQ groups at the United

Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) debates and worked with LGBTIQ groups on the severe attacks they face. CIVICUS took part in the Global Women's Marches in January 2017. CIVICUS also provided support to three women human rights defenders to speak about civic space restrictions related to gender at the March 2017 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) meeting.

The CIVICUS [Youth Working Group](#) was launched in August 2016, bringing together CIVICUS members under 30 and youth organisations. During 2016-2017, the Youth Working Group grew to over 900 members, with about 20% being CIVICUS members. The intention of the group is to offer a dedicated space online for members to discuss important issues and to provide opportunities for young activists to strengthen their networks, create possibilities for partnerships and increase their knowledge about civil society. The agenda of this group is steered by the [Youth Action Team](#), a group of eight young, active members from different regions and backgrounds who are mandated to advise CIVICUS on how to mainstream youth voices meaningfully across the organisation's work.

How does CIVICUS improve its environmental footprint? (Cluster A, 3.1.-3.2.)

Area for improvement in 2015-2016

CIVICUS considers respect for the environment central to its ethos and has demonstrated this belief through several simple but practical steps in the Johannesburg office, such as:

- Recycling paper and sorting our waste;
- Using motion detector lights in low traffic parts of the office;
- Using energy efficient bulbs, ensuring that lights are turned off when offices close;
- Purchasing strictly energy efficient appliances (e.g. a new eco-friendly low energy rating dishwasher) and being efficient in our use of water; and
- Using locally manufactured furniture



However, inspired by the latest feedback from the Independent Review Panel, CIVICUS took a further step forward by developing a new Environmental Policy (see [Annex II](#)). We seek to act as role models and lead the way by encouraging greater environmental consciousness amongst our staff. As such, environmental awareness training is a core part of our Environmental Policy which also includes targets for the period of 2018-2019. We will monitor progress on these targets in future reports.

Convening is a central component of CIVICUS' work, arranging for activities that bring together people from all over the world. CIVICUS' commitment to respecting the environment requires that staff and partners understand the impact of these events on the planet and take accompanying mitigating measures. Consequently, CIVICUS tries to hold alternative local and virtual events when possible, to keep meetings paperless (e.g. conference app instead of agendas or participants list, whiteboards instead of flip charts), and to contribute to carbon off-setting programmes, amongst other responses.

In addition, all CIVICUS-led events must adhere to a set of Event Principles, including sustainability, which means being environmentally conscious and minimising harm to the planet. CIVICUS does not carry out rigorous environmental assessments as part of the risk assessment for events and campaigns; however, greenhouse gas emissions related to flights or the availability of local resourcing are taken into consideration when searching for a location or venue.

Inclusion	Ensuring the people we serve are represented in our events
Equality	Reflecting gender equality and non-discrimination in our events
Diversity	Bringing together diverse perspectives to discuss complex problems
Participation	Providing space for event attendees to engage in meaningful dialogue
Transparency	Sharing our successes <i>and</i> failures so that we contribute to mutual learning
Sustainability	Being environmentally conscious and minimising harm to the planet

CO2 Emission Data (in metric tonnes)

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Air Travel ¹	119,400		657,750	2369,015
Electricity consumption ²	39,500		77,630	180,012
Gas consumption	0,212			
Other	41,790			
TOTAL	200,902	526,200	735,380	2549,028

The table above looks like an immense increase; however, CIVICUS is reporting more coherently in 2016-2017 (i.e. air travel including flights booked for partners and participants, not only for staff; electricity consumption in all CIVICUS offices, not only in Johannesburg) which explains the increase over years (*see footnote references for more information*).

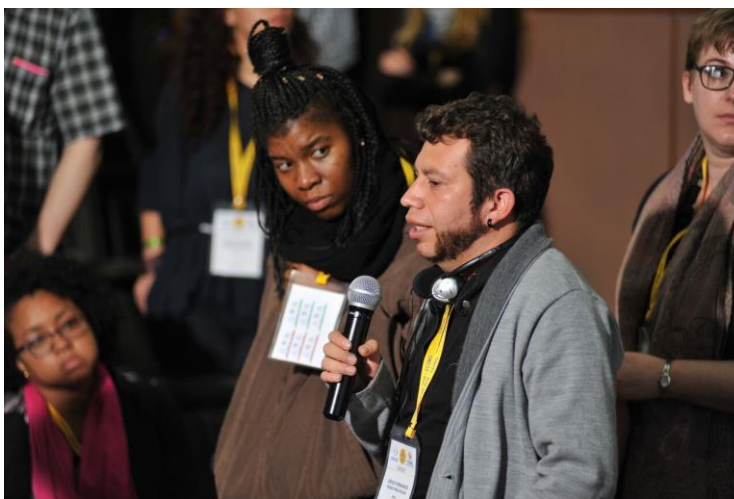
CIVICUS' largest CO2 contributions are related to flights – which have increased in 2016-2017 due to the growth in staff and activities. Although the global nature of CIVICUS' work makes international travel impossible to avoid, while sourcing a new Travel Management System, CIVICUS has included tracking of carbon emissions as one of the key requirements in order to better monitor our environmental footprint.

¹ 2016-17 data also includes air travel CIVICUS booked for its members and partners - not only for staff as in previous years.

² As of 2015-16, CIVICUS calculates an average electricity consumption of 1665.5 kWh of electricity per employee in SA. As of 2016-17, CIVICUS moreover includes data for employees based in the DC, Geneva, London, and NYC offices. The average electricity consumption per employee was sourced from online energy efficiency indicators and based on the maximum number of employees' consumption per year. The electricity consumption per individual (South Africa: 3331) was then halved taking into consideration our use of solar power which compensates for 4 hours per day of energy consumption, i.e. 50% of a full work day. Other figures remain at 100% due to the lack of solar power: USA: 11963, UK: 4373, Switzerland/EU: 5528). Source: <http://g20-energy-efficiency.enerdata.net/indicators/unit-electricity-consumption-of-services-per-employee.html>

How is CIVICUS' advocacy work rooted in human rights and do-no-harm principles? How is it based on the views of the affected people? (Cluster A, 3.1.-3.3.; Cluster B, 6.1.-6.2.)

As a matter of practice, CIVICUS applies rigorous procedures to enable a thorough evidence base, grounded in local voices to inform the organisation's advocacy positions – e.g. meaningful stakeholder consultation and partner feedback, research, situation analyses, management monitoring, bi-annual reporting processes, publications, and corrective adjustments after external critique. All positions taken are grounded in CIVICUS' values. CIVICUS' advocacy work includes statements, papers, interviews as well as submissions as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.



CIVICUS also enables national civil society representatives to participate in discussion at international and regional multilateral institutions. It is integral to CIVICUS' approach that all of this work is done jointly with members and local partners and CIVICUS' positions are always based on a "sense check" with voices on the ground. CIVICUS' advocacy work is thus co-created in partnerships and published with mutual consent. The intention is always to have the national member or partner's voice feature centrally. In addition, CIVICUS does not speak on other people's behalf. Wherever possible, civil society representatives are supported to speak for themselves. For example, when human rights defenders are invited to the UN Human Rights Council sessions or sessions of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, opportunities are enabled for them to have their own voices directly heard using CIVICUS' access.

Findings from CIVICUS' main analysis tools – the annual [State of the Civil Society reports](#) and [CIVICUS Monitor](#) – are developed by seeking inputs from CSOs and networks working on the ground. They include quotes from partners where possible. In many instances, CIVICUS reaches out to national civil societies via umbrella organisations such as the AGNA network.

In developing policy positions, CIVICUS will either proactively seek advice from a local partner on the political context or a partner will contact CIVICUS directly for support on a joint statement. The latter was the case with the Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNGO) who co-created a [joint media statement on the worrying legislation to restrict the Nigerian civil society sector](#) (November 2016). Moreover, CIVICUS conducts interviews with local civil society leaders to amplify their voices. Examples include an interview on the [dire situation for journalists and civil society in Turkey](#) (with Huseyin Hurmali, President of the Journalists and Writers Foundation, May 2017) or on [civil society mobilising protests against Trump in the USA](#) (with activist Nicole Barner, January 2017).

In drafting Universal Periodic Review submissions, CIVICUS partners with local organisations to publish jointly. An example of such is the [Consolidated Joint Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review](#) with Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (Peru) as part of the 28th Session of the UPR Working Group (March 2017). However, sometimes partners do not want their name or logo on the joint paper because this might put them in danger or they prefer an individual parallel submission for strategic reasons. Do-no-harm is a priority within our partnerships and stakeholder engagements as well as advocacy and campaigning which is

why CIVICUS goes to great lengths as elaborated above to seek local inputs. More information on CIVICUS' human rights-based approach (HRBA) checklist and impact assessment for fragile states – which also reflects the organisation's do-no-harm approach – can be found in CIVICUS 2017-2022 proposal package (*which is shared with the Panel along with this report*).

All CIVICUS members are required to abide by the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Notably, CIVICUS uses the international human rights framework as a benchmark, e.g. when commenting on a new law that is not in line with those principles (see also the UPR example on Peru above).

Occasionally, critical comments will be posted on Twitter or Facebook where CIVICUS' advocacy work and statements are shared. Those from "internet trolls" will be disregarded and in other cases the Communications Cluster and Advocacy Cluster will engage in a clarification or dialogue with the respective commentator.

Generally, CIVICUS receives positive feedback on its research and advocacy work. The Dutch Government has used the CIVICUS Monitor data to analyse the context of countries where they have programmes. A variety of national-level, regional and international CSOs, as well as academic institutions and media outlets have referred to the Monitor website. For example, Oxfam has used Monitor data in a [report on Africa](#) (page 11). The Argentina Network for International Cooperation (RACI) has [shared information](#) about the Monitor within their civil society network. Examples of academic institutions referencing the Monitor include Columbia University, St. Francis Xavier University and University of Leicester. CIVICUS is also aware that a number of intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), philanthropic organisations and donors also use the Monitor in their programming.

CIVICUS also works on strengthening advocacy capacities of its partners and members. CIVICUS does this through its [Enabling Environment National Assessment](#) (EENA) initiative which is an action-oriented research tool designed to assess the legal, regulatory and policy environment for civil society. The EENAs are designed to be locally-owned, rooted in primary data collected at the grassroots level, and validated by a consensus based, multi-stakeholder process with the dual purpose of strengthening the capacity of civil society to advocate for an enabling environment and improving CSO-government relations. An advocacy workshop took place in Istanbul in early 2016 with 14 EENA national partners to discuss what partners did in terms of advocacy after the EENA was concluded. A new methodology was developed in 2017-2018 which will link up with the SDG process, leading to a civil society shadow report for SDGs 16.10 and 17.17. An [EENA Advocacy Report](#) was published in November 2016, as was a [summary report for the EENA work between 2013 and 2016](#) in February 2017.

How transparent is CIVICUS regarding its budgets, evaluations, policies, or remunerations? *(Cluster B, 7.1.)*

Transparency is a core value for CIVICUS ("we communicate with openness, honesty and transparency") and it is embedded in the third Strategic Goal 2017-2022. The organisation aims to publish as much information as possible on its website and via social media – while striking the balance with regards to sensitive information and personal data as outlined in CIVICUS' new Privacy Policy (more details in the next section).

CIVICUS' audited financial reports and budgets since 2010 are published along with the Annual Report on the [CIVICUS website](#). The Feedback Response Policy, Environmental Policy and Event Principles are published on the organisation's [accountability page](#); the Membership Policy, Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy are available via the [membership application page](#). However, other policies are currently not published online. The general Policies and Procedures Manual is available upon request.

Project evaluations are shared with respective partners and stakeholders; however, they are usually not published online. CIVICUS aims to publish organisational evaluations (such as the Sida evaluation shared with the Panel) on its [accountability page](#) going forward. The exception would be when these evaluations attribute information or include the personal details of those interviewed or participating in focus group discussions etc.

With regards to remunerations, CIVICUS conducts an annual gender pay gap and periodic salary benchmarking exercises; the most recent benchmarking report is expected for September 2018. The findings and information are shared with staff; however, not published externally. More information on the salary scale for 2016-2017 is included later in this report (but note that this is currently under revision in 2018-2019 as part of the follow-up on the salary benchmarking exercise).

How does CIVICUS guarantee privacy rights and personal data of the people it works with? (Cluster B, 7.2.-7.3.)

CIVICUS' [Privacy Policy](#) explains the collection, use, and disclosure of personal data when people use CIVICUS' services and the choices one has associated with that data. This policy was recently updated in May 2018 to be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Since then, CIVICUS also has a designated email address (privacy@civicus.org) for all matters in this regard, e.g. requests to be removed from any email list that one may have subscribed to. Going forward, event participants must also indicate that they have read this Privacy Policy and whether or not they give their consent to receive emails from us, as well as whether they agree to the terms of our photo release form or not. These are all efforts to enhance CIVICUS' accountability to its event participants.



In 2016-2017, several Crisis Response Fund (CRF) grantees, CIVICUS Monitor partners, and Innovation for Change members have requested anonymity which CIVICUS adheres to. For example, CRF documents were moved to a more secure online cloud service. The protection of members, stakeholders, staff and activists is crucial to CIVICUS' accountability. In this regard, CIVICUS is currently developing a new Data Management Policy and CIVICUS' new CRM is GDPR-compliant and only tracks information that is necessary. Moreover, event participants can state if they do not want to be photographed or publicly shown in the event coverage.

A practical example of how CIVICUS walks the talk is in relation to the Monitor's user data. Having consulted with several data security specialists and website developers during the Monitor's development, CIVICUS decided to capture less specific user data with its analytics software. This is to ensure the safety and anonymity of the Monitor users from around the world (especially if people are interacting with the site and providing information using the "[Get in Touch](#)" form on the main page). CIVICUS still can, however, identify how many users from which countries are accessing the website. This is important to track whether there is a truly global constituency who frequently uses the Monitor.

As part of CIVICUS' capacity development activities, several digital security trainings were conducted with members and partners to help organisations becoming / remaining safe online. As of 2018, CIVICUS partnered with [Access Now](#) and their Digital Security Helpline.

How fair and transparent are CIVICUS' recruitment, employment and staff development processes? (Cluster C, 8.1.-8.2.)

Moving forward, and aligned to the new Strategic Priorities, CIVICUS has changed its structures and invested in capacity to ensure that it comfortably achieves these set goals. CIVICUS has empowered each unique stream with the skills required to maintain and enhance the organisation. The new streamlined structure will also enable more collaboration, synchronised workflows and an engaged, driven workforce ready to move forward with the organisation's vision. CIVICUS continues to benefit from a highly-skilled Secretariat team and continually updates its internal processes and procedures to reflect the organisation's vision of best practice and innovation in all work streams and Clusters.

The Recruitment Policy was revised in 2018 to ensure a fair and transparent process, to focus on local and multiple languages and more diversity in the hiring process. This has been communicated to all staff. SLT and HR are also investigating automated and entrenched probation period reviews in light of the ongoing increase in staff numbers. It is concerning that South African work permits are becoming more difficult to obtain by CIVICUS' workforce. This poses a challenge to the organisation's target to have the majority of staff based in Johannesburg and CIVICUS is working with Deloitte to find solutions for this.

Salaries of senior management and the salary scale 2016-2017 (*shared with the Independent Review Panel along with this report*) are based on the [Paterson grading scale](#). The Secretary General earned US\$146,660 in 2016-2017. As mentioned above, CIVICUS conducts annual gender pay gap analyses (with no noteworthy findings in 2016-2017) and commissioned a salary benchmarking exercise (against similarly sized CSOs) in 2018. The latter is particularly important to allow for equal and fair pay among the different locations with a more global and dispersed workforce that operates in varied living cost standards. Findings from this exercise will be presented in future reports. SLT is currently discussing additional steps to promote good practice around equality in the CSO sector, especially as CIVICUS is playing an active role in the Fight Inequality Alliance. One idea that emerged was a voluntary commitment to internal pay ratios. While pay ratios do have some disadvantages (e.g. driving outsourcing of the lowest-paid jobs), they could show the sector that we are taking pay ratios seriously. The Secretary General had initial discussions with a number of other civil society CEOs who seemed interested and future reports will report progress on this issue.

In addition, an Organisational Health and Safety Committee was set up to evaluate and monitor health and safety standards, procedures and equipment at the new CIVICUS Hub in Johannesburg.

CIVICUS has grown significantly over the past year, both in headcount and in skills. Key staff were appointed to critical positions and steps taken towards transforming the Secretariat into a non-hierarchical learning organisation. In 2016-2017, CIVICUS successfully rolled out and completed the reshaping process in response to the new Strategic Plan. Part of the outcome of this process is a new organogram (see [Annex III](#)).

Learnings include the need for effective internal communication and inclusion of staff throughout the process. This proved to be particular challenging in CIVICUS' globally dispersed set-up with some colleagues working remotely on their own and feeling left out of the process. There were eight internal promotions. Moreover, while every effort was made to ensure that all current staff would find fit in the re-shaped organisation, there were three redundancies. CIVICUS, of course, adhered to labour law commitments in the different countries the organisation works in.

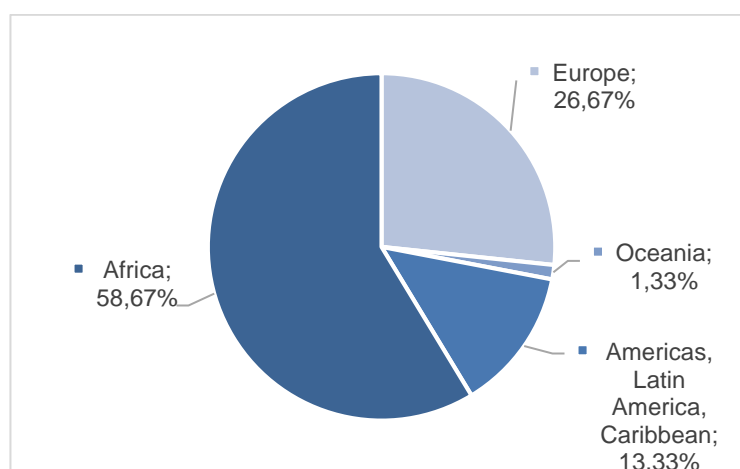
Employee statistics (as of 30 June 2017)

Location	Total	Male	Female
Johannesburg, South Africa	34	6	28
London, UK	6	6	-
New York/Washington, USA	5	3	2
Amsterdam, The Netherlands	4	-	4
Geneva, Switzerland	4	-	4
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	3	1	2
Toronto/Montreal, Canada	2	2	-
Valencia, Spain	2	-	2
Berlin, Germany	1	-	1
Nairobi, Kenya	1	1	-
Dublin, Ireland	1	1	-
Montevideo, Uruguay	1	-	1
Total	64	20	44

CIVICUS does not track the religion of staff or whether they have any physical or mental disabilities. However, CIVICUS acknowledges an underrepresentation with regards to location and nationality from Oceania and the Pacific region and has set targets as part of the Diversity and Inclusion Indicators for 2018 (*the draft document is shared with the Panel for more information; targets are currently being developed*). Future reports will track progress in this regard.

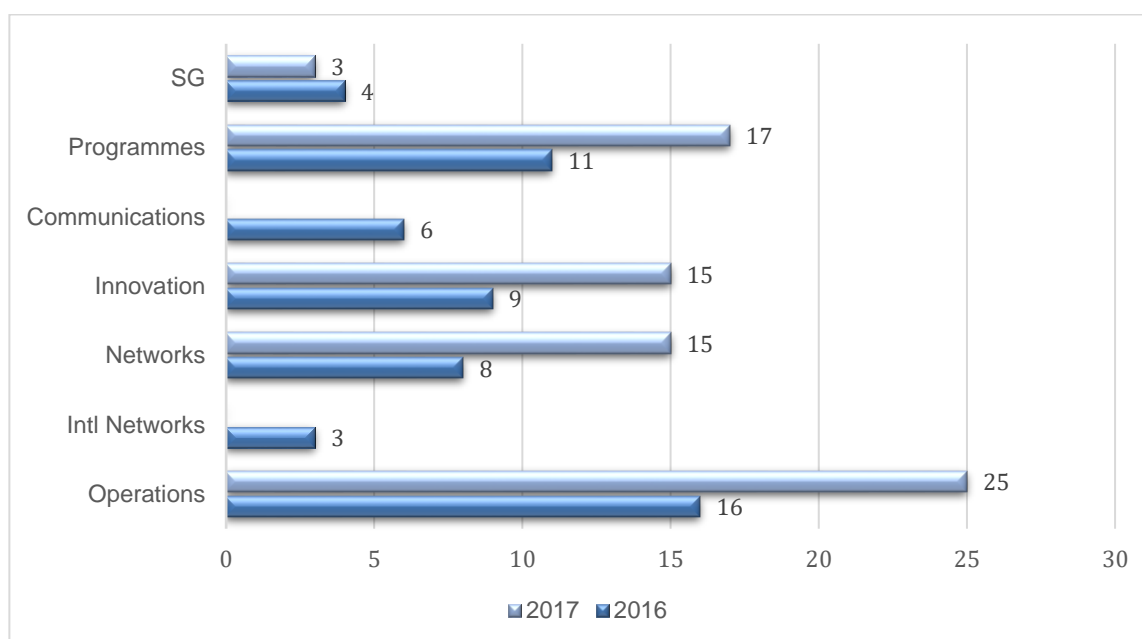
In addition to a fulltime staff complement of 64, CIVICUS had 11 consultants in 2016-2017 performing specialised roles, spread across several countries, as follows: Fiji (1 female), Nigeria (1 male), Poland (1 male), South Africa (3 females and 2 males), UK (1 male) and USA (2 female). CIVICUS had 3 interns and 2 fellows in the reporting period.

Staff breakdown by location (as of 30 June 2017)³



³ The staff figures shown in the figure include 11 consultants.

Year-on-year comparison of unit staff breakdown⁴



As part of its objective of “supporting staff to become leaders” CIVICUS will be rolling out its leadership and staff development plan in 2017-2018 including coaching for management roles. CIVICUS also implemented the new Employee Handbook and facilitated the first supervisory training programme for staff in September 2016, where ten CIVICUS staff (eight on-site in Johannesburg and two off-site) participated in an interactive management training session over a 2.5-day period. Overall, 45 staff members attended trainings in 2016-2017, among other topics on people management, risk management training, customer experience management, communication or language skills:

External Training 2016-2017

	Number of attendees	Courses attended	Hours trained
Manager	14	10	224
Officer	24	11	336
Support	7	3	104
Total	45	24	664

An online learning management system (LMS) was launched in January 2017. As part of the LINGOS community, this allows for a variety of practical training courses – some of them being a mandatory part of the induction process for new staff. However, 18 months after the LMS implementation, uptake from staff is still limited and the Capacity Development Cluster is exploring alternative ways of engaging colleagues in online trainings. Training needs are identified as part of the quarterly performance reviews (either by the employee or the line manager) based on shortcomings in relation to the job description or based on new areas that a staff member would like to grow skills in.

CIVICUS conducts quarterly performance reviews with all staff and 100% of staff participated in these in 2016-2017. As shown in the table below, the average performance review score slightly increased throughout the year. In its earlier days, CIVICUS applied a 360° approach; however, this approach was deemed too cumbersome for a relatively small organisation of

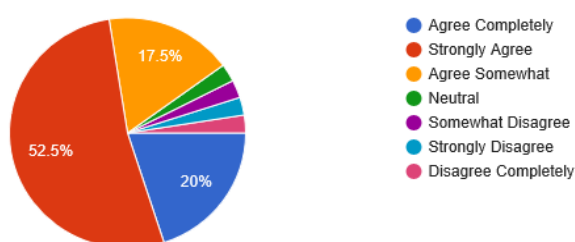
⁴ The reshaping process in 2017 resulted in Communications being incorporated into Operations, while International Networks staff moved into Programmes.

30-plus team members. Considering the recent restructuring, SLT is revisiting its performance management system.

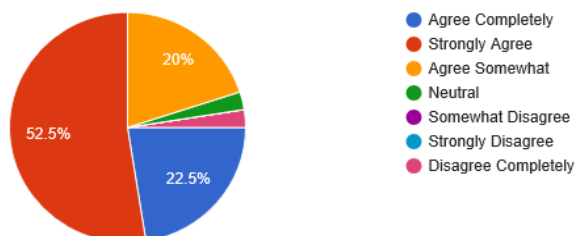
	Jun 16	Sep 16	Dec 16	May 17
Average performance review scores	3,25	3,31	3,56	3,34

A voluntary staff survey conducted in November 2016 (with responses from 40 out of 60 staff members) showed that the majority of staff is satisfied working for CIVICUS and the respective department, sees value in his/her work for the whole organisation and is able to learn and grow. Results of the staff survey were fed back to all staff and a follow-up survey was conducted in May 2018. The restructuring focused even more on supporting staff to become leaders and CIVICUS expects improved satisfaction rates in the future.

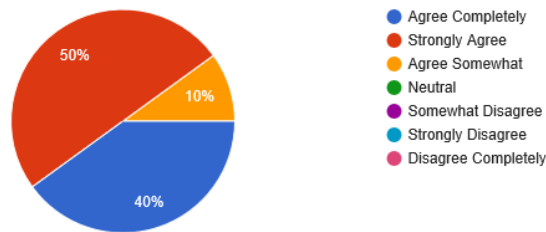
Overall, I am satisfied working within my department (40 responses)



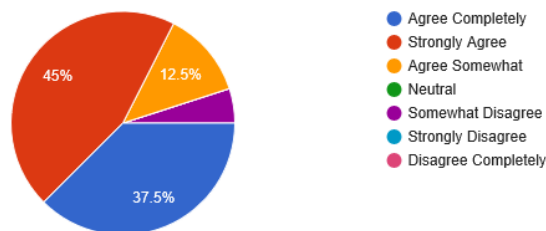
Overall, I am satisfied working for this organisation (40 responses)



My job helps the organisation achieve its goals (40 responses)



My job gives me the opportunity to learn (40 responses)



How does CIVICUS ensure sustainable and diversified resourcing as well as resource allocation in line with strategic objectives? (Cluster C, 9.1.-9.2.)

CIVICUS is now in its fourth consecutive year of growth in funds and growth in the number of funding sources, and specifically in unrestricted resources, which includes yearly additions to unrestricted reserves. In 2016-2017, CIVICUS' income amounted to US\$ 9,697,000 and the organisation achieved a targeted US\$1.2m injection in reserves. The table below shows CIVICUS' donors during 2016-2017 (the five largest highlighted in blue):

Donor	Amount	Contract period	Funding type
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	USD 100,000	01/07/16-30/06/18	Project
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	USD 200,000	01/01/17-31/12/18	Core
Department for International Development, UK	GBP 1,091,750	01/07/16-31/03/17	Project
European Commission	EUR 4,000,000	01/07/16-30/06/20	Project
Ford Foundation	USD 4,000,000	01/10/16-30/09/20	Core
Irish Aid	EUR 360,000	15/10/14-14/10/17	Project
Lifeline Fund	USD 350,000	01/05/16-30/11/17	Project
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland	EUR 800,000	01/12/14-28/02/17	Project
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands	EUR 10,000,000	01/01/16-31/12/20	Core
Open Society Human Rights Initiative	USD 250,000	01/10/16-30/09/17	Core
Open Society Human Rights Initiative	USD 40,000	09/01/17-09/03/17	Project
Swedish International Development Agency	SEK 62,448,800	01/01/14-31/12/17	Core
Wallace Global Fund	USD 60,000	01/11/16-30/04/17	Project
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	USD 625,000	16/11/16-16/03/17	Project

The majority of income in 2016-2017 came from development agencies, followed by private foundations / trusts. Expenditure rose substantially year-on-year and ended which went hand in hand with new projects like Leave No One Behind and BUILD, a substantial upsurge in

activities on the Innovation for Change during its incubation phase as well as growing the CIVICUS Monitor. Salaries (44%) remain the biggest cost contributor throughout the year, followed by Sub-grant (17%) and Partner cost (16%). It is worth noting that the percentage for Partner costs increased from 12% in 2015-2016. Please find more information on CIVICUS' audited financial statements on pages 30-36 in the [Annual Report 2016-2017](#).

"The Netherlands supports CIVICUS, the international alliance for CSOs, to raise awareness and knowledge about the political space for CSOs. CIVICUS has developed a tool to monitor the state of civil society per country, showing restrictions for civic space in 106 countries. Approximately more than 20,000 people consulted this monitor since its launch in October 2016. The monitor data have been used to substantiate news articles in prominent media platforms, international research and human rights analyses."

In 2016-2017, the annual income from membership fees, around US\$ 50,000, amounted to less than 1% of the Secretariat's annual budget. This is consistent with historical membership fee figures, and while minimal in the overall organisational accounting, membership fees are viewed as an indicator of member support, rather than an important income source, which is why fees are kept relatively low. On a yearly basis, the Secretariat grants 15 to 25 fee waivers (valued at +/- US\$ 1,000).

CIVICUS has several procedures in place to ensure that its fundraising and marketing activities are in line with the organisation's five basic principles, South African law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This includes a Resource Mobilisation Policy, reflecting Ethical Fundraising Guidelines and the Accountability Commitments. CIVICUS did not receive any complaints for breaches of fundraising during 2016-2017. However, the new Feedback Response Policy and online form also includes submissions for this specific area, and CIVICUS will be able to track this more systematically.

CIVICUS has standing annual donor coordination meetings where the organisation engages with its donors to discuss CIVICUS' mission and activities, as well as ensures optimal coordination among the differently funded projects and initiatives. In 2016-2017, CIVICUS increased the participants of its donor coordination group to around eight donor agencies, including two 'observers' who were not currently funding CIVICUS. Donor Coordination Guidelines are also in place which outline efforts to harmonise different reporting formats, timelines, expectations etc.

LOOKING AHEAD:
CIVICUS' new annual budgeting and planning process will be structured to allow the organisation to allocate its resources in alignment with the Strategic Goals 2017-2022.

How does CIVICUS deal with anti-corruption and financial controls? *(Cluster C, 9.3.)*

Area for improvement in 2015-2016

An effort to build organisational resilience has benefited all operational functions, including administration, finance, human resource development and recruitment practices, and is expanding to an organisation-wide staff development programme. 2016-2017 also saw a planned division in operational functions, due to organisational and volume growth, with new dedicated resources for risk and compliance and contract management. Procurement was also split from finance, separating sourcing practices from financial transacting as a risk mitigation. The development of a robust grant management system commenced in March 2017 and will be complemented by additional internal expertise in financial grant management.

A review of the accounting system and its suitability for a growing global team and activities driven by the new Strategic Plan started in May 2017, and recommendations will be implemented during 2018.

CIVICUS' Fraud Prevention Policy "recognises the importance of protecting the organisation, its operations, its employees and its assets against financial risks, operational breaches and unethical activities." CIVICUS recognises a zero-tolerance policy regarding fraud and corruption. All matters raised by any source will be taken seriously and properly investigated. Definitions and types of fraud and corruption are outlined in the policy

CIVICUS has developed a Fraud Prevention Plan, consisting of Fraud Prevention, Fraud Response and Fraud Risk assessment are based on the high-risk areas identified through risk assessments. Any concerns should be reported in terms of the CIVICUS Fraud Response Plan. Moreover, all reports will be taken seriously and will be investigated by the SLT or designated investigation team. If deemed necessary, CIVICUS will notify and fully cooperate with the appropriate law enforcement agency. Any investigation resulting in the finding of fraud or corruption will be referred to the SLT for action. Fraudulent or corrupt activities that result in disciplinary action (in accordance with CIVICUS' Disciplinary Code and laws of the country) will be reported to the Board of Directors.

CIVICUS has established internal controls, policies and procedures in an effort to deter, prevent and detect fraud and corruption. All new employees, plus temporary and contract employees, are subject to background investigations including a criminal background check. CIVICUS will also verify all applicants' employment history, education and personal references prior to making an offer of employment. Moreover, new employees receive training as part of orientation at the commencement of employment and all staff are regularly updated on the policy (last time in October 2017 during the monthly staff meeting).

All vendors, contractors and suppliers must be active, in good standing and authorized to transact business in the country which CIVICUS operates from. Vendors, contractors and suppliers are subject to screening, including verification of the individual's or company's status as a debarred party.

CIVICUS' Anti-Bribery Compliance builds upon the U.K. Bribery Act, currently the most comprehensive act on this topic. This procedure focuses on the definition and types of bribery, key risk areas and penalties. CIVICUS' external auditors annually point out the latest fraud, corruption, and phishing schemes as well as discuss where CIVICUS' work might be exposed to corruption.

CIVICUS recognizes the need for and importance of whistleblowing as a means of ensuring that staff can raise issues of concern inside the organisation, and to encourage staff members to raise genuine concerns about malpractice at an early stage. The Whistle-blower Policy aims to create a culture which will facilitate the disclosure of information by CIVICUS staff members relating to criminal conduct or conduct which violates any other CIVICUS Policy, Staff Handbook, or regulatory procedures; and to provide guidelines for the disclosure of such information and protection against any reprisals as a result of such disclosures. Any staff member wishing to raise any concern in a confidential manner should report the matter to the Chairperson of the CIVICUS Executive Board who will serve as the Appointed Officer. Due to the nature and type of concerns that may be raised through whistleblowing it is not possible to set definite time limits for the completion of investigations. However, the Appointed Officer will ensure that an initial investigation will start within five working days of any concern being reported. Feedback on how the matter has been addressed will be provided within five working days of the outcome of the investigation.

There were no reported corruption cases in 2016-2017; however, in case any incidents would ever occur, CIVICUS would strictly adhere to the outlined procedures. All documents

mentioned above are submitted to the Panel along with this report (see Policies and Procedures Handbook).

What does CIVICUS' governance structure look like and how does it work in practice? *(Cluster C, 10.1.-10.2.)*

CIVICUS is a member organisation governed by US law and South African law. It has a two-tier governance structure: the AGM is held once year according to SA law and once every 4 years in accordance with US law. The Bylaws provide for the establishment of a Board of up to 15 members. The current Bylaws also make provision for various Board Committees and specifically require three committees, namely the Executive, Governance and Finance Committees.

The core roles of the Board identified in the Bylaws and adopted by Board members at its previous meetings include:

- a) Strategic oversight and fiduciary responsibility
- b) Policy approvals and reviews
- c) Contributions as volunteers to the mission and purpose of the organisation.

The Board, in its self-assessment of current practice, decided that it needs to play a policy and oversight oriented role which provides space to the Secretary General to lead in the management of work and delivery of programmes. The shared leadership between Board and staff is one which strengthens the focus on mission, effectiveness and accountability.

Physically convening a geographically diverse Board is a challenge but the more interesting challenge is the growing diversity of the Board. For example, as CIVICUS' membership becomes more diverse, so does its Board, which means that there are more disparate perspectives. The current Board includes representatives of social enterprises, youth movements, national platforms, INGOs, private foundations, etc. Another potential challenge is the various 'advisory' and 'steering' committees that CIVICUS utilises for various programmes like the Monitor, AGNA and Innovation for Change, which in some ways create alternative power bases that also provide strategic direction.

CIVICUS Board elections take place when the second term of serving Board members is due to expire - every three years. It is a robust democratic process where the nominations process is open to both CIVICUS members and non-members. Selection criteria include results of the self-evaluation, specifically skills and experience as identified by the existing and outgoing members. Board members are elected by CIVICUS' voting members.

A staggered rotation system for the election of the Board of Directors was introduced in early 2016, whereby two thirds of non-executive directors retire by rotation and are either re-elected if they have not served two consecutive terms, or are replaced by newly elected Directors. This was implemented as a consequence of a previous Board self-evaluation (see more below). As expected, this new governance process is effective so far. It ensures continuity and retention of skills, and decreases delays caused by a complete overhaul of the Board.

The CIVICUS Board consisted of thirteen members in 2016-2017 (see an overview in the [Annual Report 2016-2017](#) on pages 28-29 as well as [online](#)), of which nine are women (including the Board Chair – Anabel Cruz) and four are men. Six members were from the Global South and two were youth representatives, i.e. under the age of 30 years. There were no co-opted Directors in 2016-2017.

CIVICUS' Secretary General is an ex-officio Board member, and the only paid member of the Board. All other Board Directors are unpaid, and work on a voluntary basis. CIVICUS provides

no financial compensation for their Board Directors, but does cover transport and logistics costs for meetings and events within reason (*as outlined in the Board Reimbursement Policy which is shared with the Independent Review Panel along with this report*). Board Directors and CIVICUS staff complete registers of interests at the beginning of each financial year as required by CIVICUS' Conflict of Interest Policy. Often CIVICUS' most active members in terms of programme delivery are nominated/elected to the Board, which makes the Conflict of Interest Policy very important.

LOOKING AHEAD:

As part of the restructuring, as of 2017-2018, all SLT members attend Board meetings where they provide an update of their individual Strategic Goal areas and receive direct feedback from the Board. Some SLT members are directly involved with the Board Committees as required.

New Board Members of CIVICUS receive a Board Induction Manual (the 2016 version is shared with the Panel for further information; it is updated every year) to provide them with information on the Bylaws, 3-year terms, duties, organisational background, the nominations process and so forth. This practice was a result of a previous self-evaluation. Another relevant guideline is on continued Board service after leaving a member organisation (clarifies what happens when a Board member leaves a sponsor member organisation).

The Board meets physically at least twice a year – with ongoing Committee meetings in between. Regular attendance at the two annual Board meetings is of utmost importance – as clarified in the Attendance Policy. The Board met on 4-6 December 2016 (Johannesburg, South Africa) and 4-5 April 2017 (Johannesburg Hub, South Africa). Staff engagement with the Board is considered a priority and CIVICUS staff and the Board had lunch together in Johannesburg at CIVICUS House (6th Dec 2016).

There are three main Board committees, namely Executive Committee, Operations Committee (which includes financial matters), and Governance and Membership Committee. In addition, there are special purpose committees for very specific issues, such as the Nominations Committee and the Search Committee set-up in May 2018 to lead the search and recruitment a new Secretary General.

There are guidelines for an annual self-evaluation process. While the overall Board self-evaluation for the reporting period was very positive – with regards to general attendance and quality of that attendance in Board meetings, the lowest scores were in relation to the recruitment of members and partners for the organisation and the level of advocacy. “Did I recruit members and partners for the organisation?” and “Did I actively work to advocate the organisation?”. This is thus a focus area for 2017-2018.

The Board conducted a full 360° appraisal process of the Secretary General in mid-2015. This was conducted by a small committee of the Board and involved surveys of staff, Board, stakeholders, as well as interviews. The Secretary General's first contract was coming to an end in 2015 and this was part of the process of renewing his contract. A similar process would be conducted in case of another renewal of that contract. There are many other general measures in place to ensure good Secretary General accountability (e.g. clear job descriptions, Board terms of reference, regular chats between the Board Chair and the Secretary General, in-camera sessions with the Board and Secretary General to discuss any sensitive issues etc.).

Please find [here](#) a video message from CIVICUS' Board Chair Anabel Cruz which she gave to CIVICUS staff in May 2018 around why accountability matters for CIVICUS as part of the DevResults roll-out.

How does CIVICUS ensure an independent and effective oversight of its strategic direction, legal compliance, risk, and performance? (Cluster C, 11.1.)

As described above, there is a clear division of responsibilities between CIVICUS' Senior Leadership Team (respectively the extended management team until May 2017) and the Board of Directors – with mutual support. The Secretary General provides an update to the Board at every Executive Committee meeting and at the two Board meetings. The Board provides its views and guidance as necessary. The Operations Committee receives a quarterly Board Health Dashboard with regards to the financial, HR and membership status of the organisation. This dashboard is currently being revised to reflect a quarterly progress update on where CIVICUS stands with regards to its Strategic Goals 2017-2022. In addition, as of May 2017, the SLT (four of them being responsible for one an individual Strategic Goal each while the Secretary General ensures general oversight), meets monthly (plus additional ad hoc meetings when needed) to take decisions related to the structure, programme delivery, organisational resourcing, etc. Minutes of those meetings are shared with all staff.

Another layer of independent oversight and legal compliance is added by external evaluations (mentioned earlier in this report), the financial audit, and Deloitte as CIVICUS' legal advisor in South Africa.

As mentioned, procurement was split from Finance in 2016-2017, separating sourcing practices from financial transacting as a risk mitigation. Moreover, through a robust risk matrix, the following top risks were identified and monitored during 2016-2017:

- **Government legislation:** Laws, including those that affect the ability of CSOs to receive funding, introduce burdensome registration requirements and constrain protests, are among the major pressures on civic space. These laws could have a significant impact on CIVICUS and our members and partners, and hence we could see impact after mitigation.
- **Currency volatility:** Global events and political shifts continue to influence currencies pertinent to CIVICUS with negative implications for currency transactions and the prediction of financial results. Risk mitigation measures here included establishing registered locations in Ireland and Switzerland, with registration pending in the UK, as well as spreading funds in a variety of currencies in which CIVICUS conducts transactions, and investing cash on hand in accordance with a conservative investment policy.

CIVICUS' effective anti-corruption measures are reported upon earlier in this report.

How does CIVICUS Board and SLT take responsibility to meet the 12 Accountability Commitments? (Cluster C, 11.2.)

CIVICUS has been a proud member of Accountable Now since 2007, and reports annually against the Accountability Commitments. Our latest annual report to Accountable Now was submitted in March 2017, then assessed by the Independent Review Panel and published in July 2017. Throughout the years, there have been close ties between the two organisations. Bettie van Straaten (former Chief Operations Officer) served as a Board Director and Treasurer on the Accountable Now Board in 2016-2017 and attended all four Board meetings; in May 2018, Alex Sardar (Chief Innovations Officer) was elected to join the Board.

Accountability is crucial for CIVICUS – as is highlighted in the fact that it constitutes the organisation's third Strategic Goal for 2017 – 2022. As part of the restructuring, a new Cluster was created to deal specifically with CIVICUS' monitoring, evaluation, learning, accountability

“Any organisation that speaks of being constituent-focused, uses human-centred methodologies, and does work for the common good, is essentially in working to facilitate and deliver accountability. At CIVICUS we continue to celebrate civil society’s success, but we have also begun celebrating our forward failures, our teaching and learning moments, and we have learned that without accountability to our own stated objectives and to the ideals and expectations of our Alliance, there is no learning but only missed opportunity.” – Alex Sardar

and reporting issues: The Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Accountability (MELA) Cluster. This was renamed the Impact and Accountability (I&A) Cluster in November 2017. Two new staff members were recruited in 2017 to ensure that CIVICUS adheres to accountability standards and applies coherent monitoring and evaluation approaches throughout the different work streams.

The main mechanism for members to hold the CIVICUS Secretariat accountable is the Annual General Meeting. Moreover, (dis)satisfaction is expressed in annual Membership and Constituents Surveys and there are many more informal ways of regular interaction and sharing feedback.

Additionally, CIVICUS staff openly raises concerns with SLT (respectively the extended management team until May 2017) when they encounter those. Examples are inputs from the Gender Working Group on inclusive recruitment processes or fair representation on the Programme Management Forum (PMF). As of 2018, external partners can hold CIVICUS staff (including SLT) and Board accountable via the [new online feedback form](#).

As the Secretariat of AGNA, CIVICUS is also coordinating the work of AGNA’s Legitimacy Transparency and Accountability (LTA) working group. Many LTA members are also engaged in the [Global Standard for CSO Accountability](#) (i.e. Balkan Civil Society Development Network, CCC Cambodia, Rendir Cuentas, and VANI India) so that good synergies are ensured among the different activities. This overlap also helps in strengthening the accountability agenda within the CIVICUS alliance.



How is CIVICUS promoting the Accountability Commitments among staff and improving performance? *(Cluster C, 11.3.)*

In 2016-2017, the Youth Action Team was part of the [Accountable Now pilot on people-powered and dynamic accountability](#). As of late 2017, CIVICUS and Accountable Now (together with Keystone Accountability) are testing within the [Resilient Roots initiative](#) whether organisations who are more accountable and responsive to their roots - namely, their primary constituencies - are more resilient against external threats.

CIVICUS staff is regularly engaged in Accountable Now issues – mainly via the Impact and Accountability Cluster which leads the organisation’s efforts in ensuring and promoting CIVICUS’ accountability commitments. Regular staff updates (via monthly staff meetings, the annual staff retreat, Gwigwi articles, Workplace posts etc.) ensure that colleagues are aware of current challenges, for examples those identified by the Independent Review Panel, and are engaged in improving the organisation’s performance thereof. An example would be staff follow-up on the Panel recommendations around diversity and inclusion during the annual staff retreat in May 2017. Moreover, this Accountability Report was developed in collaboration with

different Clusters and management levels in order to reflection on CIVICUS Secretariat's overarching efforts in 2016-2017. Beyond staff input and recommendations from the Independent Review Panel, CIVICUS did not receive any input from members or external partners on the content of the Accountability Report. The Secretary General promoted the Accountable Now membership with staff when discussing current civil society challenges and scandals such as the sexual exploitation cases in Haiti and elsewhere.

CIVICUS is a supporter of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability as was consulted in the development of the 12 Accountability Commitments and reporting framework as part of its membership with Accountable Now. The new commitments were shared with all staff in October 2018.

Finally, CIVICUS revamped its [website on accountability](#) to reflect its new Accountability Framework and to be more pro-active in sharing organisational activities and evaluations as well as inviting partners for feedback.

For a sneak preview for CIVICUS' accountability reporting on 2017-2018 (including wins and shortcomings), please have a look at [the presentation on the first year of the Strategic Plan 2017-2022](#) which SLT shared at a donor meeting in June 2018.

Final Conclusions on CIVICUS' Accountability Reporting

CIVICUS continues to prioritise and invest in strengthening its accountability to all its stakeholders. As mentioned previously, accountability is firmly embedded in CIVICUS' new Strategic Plan 2017-2022, together with which our Accountability Framework will help to consistently and systematically track progress and impact against CIVICUS' Strategic Goals, meet accountability commitments and enable organisational learning. The implementation of DevResults will also deepen CIVICUS' culture of evidence based, data-driven decision making and CIVICUS looks forward to sharing these learnings and progress against the first year of the new Strategic Plan in its next Accountability Report 2017-2018.

This report covers the period from 01 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 – with some more current examples where clarified. It was compiled in a participatory process with involvement from all

CIVICUS Clusters and representation from all management levels. In case of any questions or feedback on this report, please get in touch with the Impact & Accountability Cluster (Merle Rutz, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Officer, merle.rutz@civicus.org) or via feedback@civicus.org.



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