The Big Development DataShift is an ambitious, multi-stakeholder initiative to leverage the potential of new technologies for more creative and effective social accountability. It brings citizen voice to the heart of sustainable development by building a community of people and resources that can foster a people-centred data revolution by scaling up innovative approaches to citizen-generated data. It is a movement and a tool to monitor and shape progress on the new global development agenda by Promoting People-Powered Accountability.

Following a comprehensive Scoping Study, the DataShift launched a two-year pilot implementation phase in December 2014, whereby core project streams will be implemented to provide proof of concept, establish a community of practice and engage a diverse network of partners. To inform the design of this phase, CIVICUS has been working with partners and consulting with civil society and a range experts for over 18 months to ensure the DataShift is a bottom-up, demand-driven initiative that responds to the needs of citizens and their organisations.

This document provides a brief overview of these activities, summarises key lessons from consultations and lays out our ambitious priorities for the initiative going forward. For additional information, we invite you to access linked resources.
The Big Development DataShift seeks to build civil society capacity to generate, leverage and curate citizen-generated data to monitor development progress, demand accountability and campaign for transformative change. Our vision is a world where people and their organisations harness data and utilise technology to bring citizen voice to the heart of sustainable development and monitor and demand progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

We will achieve this by connecting citizens and civil society with the resources, technology and expertise they need to better use citizen-generated data. A key priority is connecting organisations with a strong track record in citizen-generated data with organisations that want to learn how to more effectively use citizen-generated data in their advocacy and programming.

During the pilot implementation phase, the DataShift will run for two years, in three locations, with four priorities and five work streams.

**PILOT LOCATIONS**

The DataShift is a global initiative that draws on the experiences and expertise of civil society organisations (CSOs) and other actors working on the data and development agenda around the world. During its initial phase DataShift implementation activities will primarily occur in three pilot locations: Argentina, Kenya & Tanzania and Nepal.

Pilot locations were chosen to reflect CIVICUS’ strong relationship with data experts and civil society networks, and the identification of ‘shining stars’ on data and development. Furthermore, these countries offer a mix of variables, including: geographic and issue area, development priorities, ICT penetration, CSO engagement, and possible partnerships.

Simultaneously piloting in both Kenya and Tanzania provides a unique opportunity to identify how different countries and contexts can best learn from each other and engage in cross-country capacity development.

**ARGENTINA**

**KENYA & TANZANIA**

**NEPAL**

**PRIORITY AREAS**

The DataShift will build a community of people and resources prepared to harness the data revolution by increasing the **coverage** of citizen-generated data, enhancing the **comparability** of citizen-generated data, building the **credibility** of citizen-generated data and deploying citizen-generated data in **campaigning** to demand transformative change.
Following the two year pilot phase, the ambition for the DataShift is to be scaled up: expanding to more countries, extending the breadth and depth of citizen-generated data initiatives and enabling credible and constructive shadow monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### WORK STREAMS

- **A Global Knowledge Hub** that provides citizens and civil society with user-friendly and accessible information and resources on generating, using and curating citizen-generated data.
- **Thematic Forums** of consultations and online exchanges on citizen-generated data to explore specific issues and facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration.
- **Datashift Ambassadors** who build in-country capacity on citizen-generated data through technical support and collaboration.
- **A DataShift Fund** which enables donors and experts to support innovation in citizen-generated data by providing financial, human and technical resources.
- **A DataShift Dashboard** that uses citizen-generated data to provide shadow monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### CONTEXT

Technological advances in citizen engagement, monitoring and reporting provide us with an unprecedented opportunity to enable more meaningful interaction between citizens and governments. It is also easier than ever before to aggregate multi-sourced data, so that something produced for local use can have global relevance. These twin trends of facilitated citizen voice and data curation hold significant promise for improving development accountability and performance.

- There are great examples of citizens generating new data on important aspects of development, often in areas where official data is patchy. They hint at the power of citizen-generated data but they are still scarce and not comparable.
- In September 2015 world leaders will agree to a new set Sustainable Development Goals. This time around, more attention is being paid to the role data plays in promoting accountability and supporting effective service delivery.
- To close critical data gaps between information-rich and information-poor stakeholders and harness the opportunities technology brings to generate and use data, world leaders are calling for a ‘data revolution’.
- The ‘data revolution’ is currently focused on improving the capacity of national statistical authorities and harnessing the power of ‘big data’ from corporations. But the data revolution must also be about empowering citizens to use data and technology to help drive their own development and hold governments to account.
Our extensive consultation phase has made it clear that the DataShift is as much about collective, collaborative and creative action as it is about data.

To inform the DataShift’s design and development, CIVICUS and partner organisations have invested 18 months in convening a number of consultations with key national, global and thematic partners. These consultations are a direct attempt to ensure that the DataShift is a bottom-up, demand driven initiative.

The “data revolution” aspect of the Post-2015 development goals is a priority for my organization. It would be useful for my org to be able to compare data from different projects. My organisation would benefit from a cross-national capacity building network. Developing unified streams of citizen reporting information might pose risks for the people involved.

• Online Stakeholder Survey (February 2014) served as an initial fact finding mission to assess CSO interests and activities relating to development, data and technology.

• Accountability Workshop (February 2014) convened a broad group of national campaigners, accountability organisations, practitioners and policy makers for a two-day consultation on how to promote people-powered accountability in the Post-2015 agenda and beyond.

• Gender Defenders Data Workshop (February 2014) engaged organisations and activists involved in collecting and reporting evidence on gender-based violence, discrimination and sexual harassment from across the globe to test the practical implications of building thematic coverage.

• Corruption Data Expedition (March 2014) used civil society corruption datasets to explore and analyse the comparability element of the DataShift using the Open Knowledge Foundation’s School of Data model.

• Corruption Comparability Workshop (March 2014) convened a group of technology and data management experts to closely examine comparability potentials and limitations that surfaced during the Data Expedition.

• Strategic Planning Retreat (October 2014) brought together experts and organisations in data and development to clarify the DataShift’s purpose and objectives; begin mapping the global ‘ecosystem’ of relevant initiatives and methodologies; and explore options and priorities for implementing work streams.

• Kenyan Civil Society Consultation (October 2014) saw over 40 CSO representatives from across the country unpack key terms and concepts related to the DataShift; explore how data is being collected and used by CSOs; and map CSO priorities and challenges related to improving data collection and use.

• International Civil Society Week (November 2014) took advantage of over 400 delegates from more than 120 countries to explore data-related strengths and challenges faced by CSOs; define areas where the DataShift could support CSOs; engage potential project partners; and collect feedback from CIVICUS members.

Strategy and Planning

Discussions at the Nairobi retreat emphasised the need for the DataShift to agree on and promote a clearer and more detailed strategy and action plan. Participants called for the DataShift team to develop a Theory of Change and disseminate to strategic partners and experts for comment. This will inform a detailed implementation plan, which will include all activities to be undertaken during 2015, along with key longer-term actions.

• Develop a Theory of Change and mechanism for stakeholder feedback
• Refine key messages
• Develop a detailed workplan for project year one
Beneficiaries of the DataShift

The primary beneficiaries of the DataShift during this initial phase are national level CSOs working in pilot countries, whom we will connect with individuals and organisations from across the globe with a range of technical expertise. We will work with a wide spectrum of organisations at the country level: some that are not leveraging data and technology in their work but are keen to start and some that are data and tech savvy but looking to do more.

Management and Governance

Discussions about governance at the strategic planning retreat recommended the creation of an international advisory group to provide CIVICUS with strategic inputs on key issues and decisions. It is envisaged that this group will comprise representatives from a range of constituencies, including tech and data experts, governments and national statistical authorities, UN and international agencies and CSOs and networks. These include representatives from CIVICUS’ Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA).

Throughout the consultations, a significant number of individuals and organisations expressed a strong interest in becoming involved in the DataShift. Opportunities for secondments between the DataShift and partner organisations, and collaborating with UN Volunteers, were flagged as ways to build capacity. Discussions around partnerships emphasised the clear need to develop a partnership framework, which outlines opportunities, expectations and responsibilities for CIVICUS and partners.

Partnership Framework

The core DataShift team which sits within CIVICUS is responsible for the overall coordination and management of the initiative. But the DataShift is a partnership-driven endeavour that draws on the experience, expertise and capacity of a diverse range of national and global actors. Going forward, we will need to distinguish between different types of partners.

In addition to existing international strategic partner the Engine Room, in each pilot country we are in the process of carefully selecting a lead partner who will support the national implementation of the DataShift. We will also identify a much larger number of organisations who we hope will benefit from and contribute to the activities and efforts of the DataShift. To identify and access organisations to work within pilot countries, we will work closely with national CSO networks and umbrella groups. These include representatives from CIVICUS’ Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA).

The DataShift team is in the process of drafting a terms of reference for this group, along with a shortlist of potential members. It was also recommended that the governance model of the DataShift be finalised and made available on the website.

Mapping and Convening Initiatives, Organisations and Resources

Conversations at the strategic planning retreat and ICSW in particular indicated that there are a vast array of successful data-related methodologies, services and tools already available. What the DataShift’s primary role should be, therefore, is helping organisations to better access and implement these resources, rather than trying to create new ones. The initiative must not re-invent the wheel. Consultation participants suggested that the DataShift should focus on:

- Coordinating efforts and facilitating lesson learning
- Developing and fostering partnerships between CSOs and between CSOs and data experts
- Building capacity on data collection, use and curation
- Creating an enabling environment for CSOs to use data

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Establish a Strategic Advisory Group
- Finalise DataShift governance structure

- Develop a partnership framework to define the range of partnership options
- Engage national CSO associations in each pilot country to develop a breadth of local civil society relationships
The most pressing task, therefore, is to map the ‘ecosystem’ of citizen-generated data initiatives and tools that can support this work. This mapping should be made available on an online and interactive platform and updated regularly.

**Language and Terminology**

The consultations revealed significant discrepancies between data and tech ‘experts’ and civil society organisations on language and terminology. For example, ‘citizen-generated data’ was a term that caused confusion at the Kenyan CSO consultation, while various stakeholders were not aware of the international process on ‘SDGs’. Other discussions highlighted the risk that focussing on ‘citizen-generated data’ promoted an individualistic approach that by-passes collective mobilisation and action driven by organisations and local groups.

In addition, participants at the strategic planning retreat recommended we reduce or explain the use of buzzwords and jargon like ‘people-powered accountability’ and the ‘data revolution’ to language which clearly articulates the objectives and activities of the initiative. Moreover, capacity needs to be dedicated to building a common language between data and technology experts and civil society actors. Inclusion of a glossary of terms was requested.

**Outreach and Communications**

We have undertaken numerous consultations and developed a sizeable group of organisations and individuals interested in following and contributing to the DataShift. We now need a clear communications strategy and accompanying outreach activities to maintain and grow this interest.

**Post-2015 Development Agenda**

The Post-2015 policy process and associated discussions around the ‘data revolution’ will provide excellent opportunities to communicate the initiative’s key messages and publicise its outputs to a wide range of relevant stakeholders. The DataShift plans to actively engage in Post-2015 discussions relating to data, accountability, monitoring and evaluation.

Our consultations to date have revealed, however, that our messaging would benefit from further clarity about how the DataShift fits within the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and what scope exists for work beyond this mandate.

**Work Streams**

**Global Knowledge Hub:**
The Global Knowledge Hub will be online and interactive. Features and functionality will require further thought, but feedback from experts and target CSOs indicate that is should be easily searchable and include resources on privacy, data credibility, using data in communications and advocacy and forming partnerships with data experts.

**PRIORITY ACTIONS**
- Commission mapping of citizen-generated data initiatives and tools to support efforts and avoid duplication
- Establish a CRM database
- Develop comprehensive communications strategy
- Provide regular updates through website and social media and stakeholder outreach
- Refine messaging on Post-2015 agenda, while highlighting need for accountability
- Identify where and how DataShift will engage with Post-2015 policy process
- Provide regular updates through website and social media and stakeholder outreach
- Map out components of Global Knowledge Hub with expert input
- Determine resourcing needs and opportunities
Thematic Forums:
Specific themes the forums address will require further consultations with CSOs and tailoring to pilot country needs. Initial discussions about key thematic areas of focus have emphasised that crosscutting issues such as inequality, governance and climate change would be better choices than more discreet issues such as corruption or education, which could risk reinforcing siloed approaches.

DataShift Ambassadors:
In each pilot country the DataShift will support the establishment of a team of DataShift Ambassadors, who will receive training and capacity development, convene multi-stakeholder dialogues and provide training to other CSOs in respective pilot countries.

DataShift Fund:
CIVICUS will continue to research financing options for the DataShift Fund with a view to submitting formal funding proposals as soon as possible. As the DataShift Fund will offer more than just financial resources, it will be necessary to continue conversations with volunteer organisations to provide human and technical capacity.

DataShift Dashboard:
The DataShift Dashboard remains dependent on a significant increase in the coverage, credibility and comparability of citizen-generated data. It is understood that it will not be produced until the end of the initial two-year implementation phase, and will require further substantial time and resources before it becomes a tool that can be effectively used to influence decision makers.

STAY CONNECTED!

The DataShift team will soon be distributing a Theory of Change to allow partners and stakeholders an additional opportunity to provide feedback. It is our aim to be as inclusive as possible, as this approach underpins the success the DataShift.

To learn more about the DataShift, please visit www.thedatashift.org or contact the project team at datashift@civicus.org.
Who We Are
We are CIVICUS, the only global alliance of civil society organisations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society around the world.

We proudly promote marginalised voices, especially from the Global South, and have members in more than 145 countries throughout the world.

Founded in 1993, we have significant experience and are internationally recognised as a credible, trusted voice on civil society issues.