

## CIVICUS Midterm Strategy Review – Management Response

The below table outlines CIVICUS’ management response for the recommendations posed in the [Midterm Strategy Review Full Report](#). The response for each of the recommendations considers the relevance to [CIVICUS’ Strategic Plan](#) and expands on actions and timelines for implementation of the recommendations in the short, medium and long term.

Short term actions will be further interrogated and allocated to teams for implementation during our annual planning process for 2020-2021. This can be seen in our annual plan narrative that we will share with stakeholder in the beginning of our next financial year.

### Timeline key\*:

<p><b>Immediate:</b> Actioned in current financial year</p> <p><i>Responsible: Relevant cluster leads and managers</i></p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Actioned as part of annual planning 2020-2021</p> <p><i>Responsible: Relevant cluster leads and managers</i></p>	<p><b>Medium term:</b> To be actioned by the end of the strategy period</p> <p><i>Responsible: Programme Management Forum (or delegated to certain clusters), Operations Management Forum</i></p>	<p><b>Long term:</b> To be considered and incorporated into the next strategy development process</p> <p><i>Responsible: Senior Leadership Team</i></p>
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### Management response to Recommendations:

NO.	RECOMMENDATION <i>From review report (Section 6, pages 37-38)</i>	MT REACTION <i>Agree, partially, disagree</i>	RESPONSE <i>Actions to be taken with timeline* (see key)</i>	RELEVANCE TO <a href="#">CIVICUS STRATEGY 2017-2022</a>
1	<b>Design and articulate CIVICUS’ programmatic model for change, drawing on lessons learned and lived experience, and produce a</b>	<b>Partially agree</b> – PMF reworded this recommendation to directly reflect the gap as: <b>"Update CIVICUS Theory of Change and</b>	<p><b>1) Update Theory of Change (ToC):</b></p> <p><b>Short term:</b> Conduct a rapid review of current ToC and identify key assumptions to test/validate for the remainder of the strategy</p>	This will help us test and validate our programme impact, per Goal, for the remainder of the strategy (especially related to the ‘How we make a difference’ section), and help us answer our critical learning questions (our current learning framework) to continuously/ periodically interrogate how change

	<p><b>manual or tool to help CIVICUS' future design</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Modellers"</i></p>	<p><b>articulate/evolve programmatic approach"</b></p>	<p><b>Medium term:</b> Review periodically for joint learning</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> An assumptions-focused learning process will directly inform our new strategy and ToC, which will thus be more evidence-based.</p> <p><b>2) Programmatic approach</b></p> <p><b>Short term:</b> Work with I&amp;A to develop an action plan (coherent with the reviewed ToC and key assumptions) that continues the evolution of our programmatic approach into a holistic, org-wide planning, implementation and review cycle (i.e. a programme quality framework)</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Regularly review implementation and progress</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Identify and invest in the skills and training needed. Rather than create a 'manual or tool', embed the ToC/assumptions review &amp; periodic learning into the annual planning process</p>	<p>happens, using our impact reflection process to understand what are the mega-trends, and if our assumptions are valid or need to change.</p> <p>Furthermore, we could complement this with assessments of the wider context and systems affecting 'how social change happens', that we operate within; including future trends and foresight processes. To the extent possible we'll leverage on what has been already produced by others, and this will inform strategic direction.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p><b>Review influencing approach, interrogate and test assumptions, and align resources to a clear theory of change</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Builders"</i></p>	<p><b>Agree</b> – This recommendation is linked to the first recommendation in which a clear ToC will support us in identifying CIVICUS' influence</p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Compare resource allocation vis-à-vis proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Define the CIVICUS influencing approach - mechanisms, relationship, partners where and who are we influencing</li> <li>● Review influencing tactics outlined in our strategy and request an influencing mapping from clusters to define how the 10 tactics are used</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Conduct a risk analysis of our influencing approaches to identify priorities and targets</p>	<p>This will help us deepen our understanding of our influencing tactics outlined in our strategy and evaluate their effectiveness in the changing civil society landscape.</p>

			<p><b>Medium term:</b> Develop a strategy of mitigation for our influencing approaches</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Further testing and honing our different approaches and their impact, in relation to our campaigning aims</p>	
3	<p><b>Design and build a prognostic tool or ‘early warning system’ to anticipate changes to civil society</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: “The Fortune Tellers”</i></p>	<p><b>Partially Agree</b> – we are already doing some work on this through SOCS and the Monitor re trends, this could be used to form a conceptual model but not in a position to take this further, and we may not be best placed to take this any further for now. Before any further work on this, understand what our partners and others are doing in this area and explore ways to compliment/contribute.</p>	<p><b>Medium term</b> – Work closely with our partners (e.g. INSPIRES consortium) and contribute to their programmes to further advance this area of work.</p>	
4	<p><b>Increase work to defend digital rights and civic freedoms</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: “The Costume Makers &amp; Gardeners”</i></p>	<p><b>Partially Agree</b> – Digital security and our duty of care to members (leveraging partner expertise) in their engagement with us will remain, however there is a need to determine CIVICUS’ value add and contribution to this agenda</p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Digital rights to be considered a thematic focus area for 2020/2021 annual planning</p> <p><b>Medium term</b> – Work closely with our partners and contribute to their programmes to further advance this area of work. <b>Long term:</b> The larger work around digital rights and freedoms will be explored further in the run up to the new strategy development process</p>	<p>Alongside the implementation of these recommendations, a process is underway to select thematic focus areas (e.g. digital rights, climate etc.) to increase our collective impact in 20/21 and through to the end of the strategy period – these thematic focus areas will be included in our annual plan narrative that will be shared in the beginning of the next financial year.</p>
5	<p><b>Consider placing a ‘cap’ on the number of projects with</b></p>	<p><b>Partially Agree</b> – these two recommendations were</p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Evaluate current “new project” process and understand why it’s not fit for</p>	<p>Rather than focus on the quantity of individual projects that CIVICUS takes on, rather take this</p>

	<p><b>their own identities and ring-fenced funding</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Gardeners"</i></p>	<p>merged and reworded to better describe the focus-</p> <p><b>"Consider implementing a quality control system on new projects to ensure alignment to organisational priorities within financial and HR capacity"</b></p>	<p>purpose. Revisit the current form, potentially expand to consider capacity.</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Based on assessment of gaps, design a new more rigorous system. Apply criteria to existing projects to understand CIVICUS' current portfolio of projects in relation to the Strategic Goals.</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Test/implement process over 6 months and reflect on whether this has had desired outcome</p>	<p>opportunity to look at the quality and alignment to CIVICUS identity and the project's ability to advance our Strategic Goals.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><b>Ensure existing project priorities and identities are aligned and subservient to organisational priorities</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Gardeners"</i></p>			
<p>7</p>	<p><b>Prioritise strengthening of people power and working with new actors in Goal 2 in next annual plan, rather than serving membership</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Builders"</i></p>	<p><b>Agree (with caveat)</b> - We agree that there is a need for us to understand and strengthen our work with people power and new actors. This must however be done as part of and alongside our focus on serving members rather than as a replacement</p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Review our TOC to explicitly articulate why we should, and how we can support people power. This should result in an articulation of our offer to movements and have at least one dedicated initiative that takes us forward in this regard</p> <p><b>Short term:</b> Ensure CIVICUS forums and events consistently include new and diverse actors, reflecting the broad spectrum of membership across the alliance (YAT)</p> <p><b>Short term:</b> Implement improved systems, protocols and guidelines in place for members to know how to connect and work as an alliance with other CIVICUS members (YAT)</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Apply lessons from current and upcoming movement &amp; alliance building initiatives to enhance how we engage our diverse and newly expanded membership</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> Use the outcomes of the above exercises to define and measure membership and</p>	<p>These actions must set us firmly on the path to achieve outcomes we are committed to achieve as part of our current Strategic Plan, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Creating ways for members to engage each other directly and act in solidarity</li> <li>(ii) Amplifying local struggles that resonate globally, thereby contributing to trans-local movement building</li> <li>(iii) Providing support to new and unconventional forms of participation and organising; including connecting disparate sources and forces of citizen action</li> </ul>

			movement building objectives in the next CIVICUS Strategy (2022-2027)	
8	<p><b>Ensure there are sufficient skilled human resources dedicated to building alliances</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: “The Gardeners”</i></p>	<p><b>Partially Agree</b> – To ensure sustained outcomes, we need to grow and connect leaders across our network. This includes investing in network of 'frontline' movement-builders on the ground, thereby allowing us to be rooted in local contexts while growing the skillsets needed to build alliances.</p>	<p><b>Medium to Long term:</b> Integrate the identification and development of diverse capacities into the actions proposed in the previous recommendation</p>	
9	<p><b>Invest substantially in a stronger communications function, including a senior level post</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: “The Gardeners”</i></p>	<p><b>Agree with the need to strengthen our media work, however before</b> investing further, we need a clearer articulation of media vis-à-vis our theory of change and its contribution to strategic</p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Define what impact looks in the context of our recently refreshed Communications Strategy and how this contributes to CIVICUS' overall outcomes is articulated</p> <p><b>Short term:</b> Develop a media strategy with a focus on articulating strategic outcomes and impact related measures</p>	<p>CIVICUS' strategic plan, we say that we will make a difference (p 11-12) by building solidarity, connecting people, advocate for open spaces, amplify voices etc. and our ability to communicate and work with the media is crucial to enable us to do this.</p> <p>We therefore need to rethink the function strategically on the lines of its weight in our strategy and think about how we are better placed to test new pathways and strategic partnerships.</p>
10	<p><b>Step up media work, both in creating meaningful partnerships and in better use of the news cycle</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: “The Builders”</i></p>	<p><b>Agree</b> with the need to strengthen our media work, however before investing further, we need a clearer articulation of media vis-à-vis our theory of change and its contribution to strategic outcomes</p>	<p><b>Medium term:</b> Define what additional capacities are needed to achieve the Comms and Media strategy and related measures of impact, with a focus on drawing on localised opportunities and expertise available through the wider alliance</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> Review our communications in relation to peer organisations and define how we want to engage externally, specifically defining and supporting the external role of the SG</p>	<p>Once our definition of impact for media &amp; comms is clarified we can then develop and test tactics, whether it is a process for 'full cycle story-telling' or an investigative report.</p>
11	<p><b>Make public interventions to build trust in civil society</b></p>	<p><b>Agree</b> – We need to address this issue through opportunities to forge</p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Draw lessons from or amplify existing initiatives that are being implemented either by the Secretariat or led by network partners in this</p>	<p>This aim is better served by better aligning relevant areas of work to achieve measurable impact in relation to our strategy vision of strengthening civil</p>

	<i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Costume Makers"</i>	stronger linkages across our work on civic participation, constituency accountability and building legitimacy for civil society	regard (e.g. VUKA! Speak! I4C Hubs, Resilient Roots)  <b>Medium term:</b> Define opportunities to connect and upscale impact through existing work on civic participation, constituency accountability and building legitimacy for civil society (across Strategic Goals 1, 2 & 3)  <b>Medium term:</b> More crisis response strategies, including convening influential actors to act together towards measurable outcomes <b>(YAT)</b>	society and actions in relation to strengthening our media work.
12	<b>Review and simplify the structure of the OMF and PMF, establish and follow new ways of working, and invest time in strengthening the second tier of management in order to run the day-to-day business of the organisation, free up the Senior Leadership Team, and unlock leadership of non-management/junior staff</b>  <i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Gardeners"</i>	<b>Agree</b> – We have made progress in this period with the development and systematic functioning of existing decision-making forums and a Board-led discussion on delegated authorities. This provides a strong basis to improve efficiencies and outcomes across the groups, and invest in processes that build leadership and engagement across the organisation (i.e. beyond managers)	<b>Immediate:</b> A review of the TORs of the 3 management forums to ensure the groups have distinct but complementary roles and outcomes  <b>Immediate:</b> The review and update of the 'Delegated Authorities' note to define more clearly how staff across levels are engaged in the development and implementation of institutional policies and processes  <b>Short term:</b> The annual impact reflection is extended to all organisational forums (including and beyond management forums) so we can identify lessons and address gaps  <b>Medium term:</b> In keeping with the current HR work plan, a Learning & Development Plan across staff is defined and a Succession Planning process is initiated with all managers	These actions enable us to think more actively about our organisational relevance and impact, in line with objectives outlined in our current strategy which include:  (i) <b>Greater levels of integration of our systems and processes across programmes and operations</b> , supported by a collaborative and principle-based organisational culture  (ii) (ii) <b>Increased ability of CIVICUS to be evidence-based and data-driven</b> to allow for adaptive management and execution of our programmes  (iii) (iii) <b>Increased understanding of CIVICUS' unique value to members and the sector</b> by understanding the needs of stakeholders and impact of our approaches and theory of change in different context, and  (iv) (iv) <b>consideration as a credible, trustworthy and accountable organisation</b> by all our stakeholders
13	<b>Produce a scoping paper for Board discussion on the organisational configuration and identity in an era of people power, including an external perception or 'Identity Analysis' survey.</b>	<b>Agree</b> – We have an opportunity to draw on internal and external conversations related to people power and our org identity in next 1-2 years	<b>Short term:</b> The ICSW plan for 2020/21 includes an opportunity to undertake an 'identity analysis' survey and source lessons and inspirations on organisational configurations (structure and culture) that are relevant in an era of people power	

	<p><b>The paper should help identify options for short-term learning from others; changing organisational configuration in the next strategy; and CIVICUS' positions, beliefs and what it stands for</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Costume Makers"</i></p>		<p><b>Medium to Long term:</b> Reviewing and defining how we can be propositional about a 'leaderful' organisation, which accordingly informs our institutional objectives for the next strategy period</p>	
14	<p><b>Articulate internally the parameters of CIVICUS' position on "inequality, injustice, insecurity and climate change"</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Modellers"</i></p>	Agree	<p><b>Immediate (and ongoing):</b> Position papers on core issues that are updated on a periodic basis, as per our thematic focus process. This should draw on our research initiatives and actively influence how we organise our advocacy and interventions. Our impact reflection process will be used to review the impact achieved as a result (including unintended consequences) must accompany this initiative and help us to determine if we are best placed to work on these issues in the future</p>	<p>These, and other issues, will be articulated in the context of our current priorities and themes (i.e. our strategic goals), set out in our Strategic Plan.</p>
15	<p><b>Develop internally one consolidated, ambitious plan for operational improvements during the remainder of the strategic period, and ensure this plan is resourced and delivered properly</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Gardeners"</i></p>	Agree	<p><b>Immediate:</b> Allocate staff meeting slot for policy updates to improve internal communications - specifically, around confidentiality procedures, safeguarding or Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSEA)</p> <p><b>Immediate:</b> Create policy repository for the organisation to house all necessary policies for ease of access and visibility for staff and other stakeholders</p> <p><b>Short term:</b> A 'change management' task team to develop a plan to define "big" operational improvements and questions that need to be</p>	<p>Use the opportunity of a consolidated operational improvement/change management plan to simplify communications, stay focused on "must have" operational improvements, that are well resourced, and are critical to the success of the strategy and to strengthen for the future that will improve coherence, agility and focus.</p>

			addressed in relation to the mid-term strategy review, noting that several major changes have already been introduced in the first phase of this strategy period	
16	<p><b>Identify a clear way forward to resolve the tension between solidarity and sub-granting</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Modellers &amp; Costume Makers"</i></p>	Agree	<p><b>Short term:</b> Update sub-granting manual, with clear legislative and other requirements (that often result in delays) and ensuring changes, criteria and process clearly communicated to all stakeholders with opportunities to discuss to ensure deeper/mutual understanding.</p> <p><b>Short term:</b> Programme quality framework to connect into agreements details and clarify best support mechanisms</p> <p><b>Short term:</b> Include the updated sub-granting in the finance training for budget holders</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> This issue should be addressed in the work that will be undertaken on pt. 13, i.e. exploration on organisational identity and configuration for the next strategy period</p>	This is a prime example of how complicated internal processes can affect our identify and relationships with stakeholders (refer to D. Simplicity in Mark's report). Sub-granting is the internal process that is most experienced by our constituents, and the process that we have received the most complaints about through our feedback mechanisms, and should be continually improved and refined so that it can be used as an effective tool for solidarity across Strategic Goals 1 to 3.
17	<p><b>Embed a strong culture of simplification, by following a mantra of "Do Less Better", and lead by example wherever possible</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Modellers"</i></p>	Agree – look at how this principle can be applied across above recommendations, including thematic focus areas, project choices, design, internal systems etc. and how this can be embedded as a way or working/culture	<p><b>Short term and ongoing:</b> Utilise thematic focus areas to help prioritisation of programme themes and improve cross-cluster collaboration and strategic budgeting</p> <p><b>Short term and ongoing:</b> Apply the principle of "Do Less Better" to grant management manual to address collaboration and resourcing concerns from project proposal phase to reduce complications</p> <p><b>Short term:</b> OMF to develop "go/no-go" form based on the programme quality framework, to measure capacity for project proposals</p>	<p>Programmatically, this recommendation has the potential to create synergies across the different Strategic Goals and enable us to use our intelligence and research to inform our programmatic focus areas, project choices, communications themes, member engagement etc.</p> <p>Operationally, cross-cluster collaboration will improve the line of sight across projects, systems and processes and help us to simplify and align internally, in order to better serve our stakeholders.</p>

			<b>Short term:</b> Further refine CIVICUS change management approach, utilising lessons learnt from the consolidation of systems change projects -	
<b>18</b>	<p><b>Take action to maintain a strong line of sight between members, staff, and Board</b></p> <p><i>Strategy review workshop action table theme: "The Gardeners"</i></p>	<b>Agree</b> – continue to use the new board reporting process improve line of sight across stakeholder groups	<p><b>Immediate/Short term:</b> Continue to implement and improve new board reporting guidelines and delegation of authorities note</p> <p><b>Short term (and ongoing):</b> Bring feedback from constituency accountability surveys (at both organisational and cluster/project levels) and other mechanisms into OMF &amp; PMF to increase uptake of external feedback within our internal systems and processes</p>	As part of our internal and external accountability commitments to communicate our progress against our Strategic Plan to members, governance and wider civil society.
<b>(19)</b>	<p><b>Mainstreaming youth engagement</b></p> <p><i>Recommendations from the CIVICUS Youth Action Team</i></p>	<b>Agree</b>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Ensure youth inclusion in civic space researching and monitoring efforts, including clear communications and guidelines on how young people can be part of knowledge generation efforts</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Mainstream genuine, meaningful and sustainable engagement of youth across all levels and initiatives of the alliance, which should be an integral part of CIVICUS' next strategy</p>	This helps us to provide more inclusive and meaningful opportunities for youth activists and movements to participate in and influence global governance institutions and processes.

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