development initiatives

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DI's Africa Hub: Delivering our strategy

2023–2025

report

Contents

Introduction

This document tells you how Development Initiatives (DI) is delivering its strategy through its hubs until 2025. You can find out how the hubs make unique contributions to our impact, what their priorities are, and how you can be involved.

If you'd like to learn more about DI's operating model and principles, you will find this in our 2021–2030 strategy.

Why DI exists

Data has the power to unlock insights, shine a light on progress and empower people to increase accountability. Robust, comprehensive and timely data is a key component of success.

DI's 2021–2030 strategy sets out our ambition for how the organisation will create impact:

- Our **mission** is to work closely with partners to ensure data-driven evidence and analysis are used effectively in policy and practice to end poverty, reduce inequality and increase resilience.
- Our **purpose** is to apply the power of data and evidence to build sustainable solutions that create an equitable and resilient world.

All our work and partnerships are centred on our three **core values**:

1. **Purpose driven.** We are motivated by our shared desire to contribute to positive change in the world.
2. **People centred.** We are supportive, friendly and considerate, with mutual respect for how people think, work, live and identify so that together we thrive.
3. **Transparent.** Openness and honesty are at the heart of how we work, driving high levels of trust, as well as fair and ethical practice.

We are guided by our foundational principles. These inform organisational culture and shape the services we provide:

- **People.** DI puts people at the heart of its agenda. We serve the world's poorest and most marginalised communities. We aim to bring about change in their lives and increase opportunities for all through improvements to systems, structures and resource allocation.
- **Simplicity.** DI believes less is more. By making data and evidence simple, visually appealing and clear we can reach people who would otherwise be excluded from accessing information that could empower them.
- **Partnerships.** DI encourages collaboration, connection and community. We bring people together from different places, with different experiences, ideas and perceptions so we can come up with better ideas and solutions to achieve our purpose.

- **Perseverance.** DI believes anything is possible. Through hard work, focus and commitment, change is possible. But change takes time and requires dedication. Our organisation embodies perseverance, focus and resilience in the face of obstacles.
- **Transformation.** DI does not believe in standing still. We are always learning, developing and changing. We believe it is important to constantly seek out new ideas and ways of working; explore innovations and technological advances; and develop projects to achieve transformation and unlock change for all.
- **High performance.** DI is thriving because it consists of (and is informed by) high performing individuals, who challenge and encourage each other to do better. We are all committed to being the best we can be. As an organisation, we value quality, rigour and attention to detail.

Realising our vision

Our hubs

Our operating model – a network of teams across different locations – is key to delivering on our mission and purpose. The teams in these hubs collaborate and complement one another to deliver on our strategy. This enables us to be closer to partners who we want to work with, at all levels: from global institutions to regional, national and subnational organisations and governments.

The Africa Hub plays a unique role in delivering DI's strategy. Its strategic three-year plan is shaped by the specific context of the continent, and DI's foundation principles.[1]

This resource sets out the key goals the Africa Hub will deliver by 2025, contributing to the implementation and delivery of DI's 2030 strategy in Africa.

The role of DI's Africa Delivery Hub

The situation in Africa

Mounting public debt, the Covid-19 pandemic, the impacts of climate change on humanitarian crises and the worst drought in 40 years (particularly in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel regions) coupled with conflict, and the fuel and food crisis because of the war in Ukraine have slowed, halted and even reversed hard-won regional and national development gains in Africa. The recovery of countries, particularly for many countries south of the Sahara will likely be slower, uneven and incomplete with a varying rate of speed.[2] Such shocks also increase the cost of meeting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

More than at any other time, many in Africa are at greater risk of economic and social exclusion. Particularly those that are likely to be left behind – such as people with disabilities and marginalised groups – increasingly experience growing inequalities, and their resilience is diminished by recurrent and also emerging shocks. The effects of growing inequality are exacerbated by climate change, acute food insecurity and the historic rise in global commodity prices. The situation has reignited debate around aid ownership, localisation and the restructuring of development cooperation architecture.

Fragility and vulnerability to crises particularly from natural hazards, mainly as a result of climate change and resulting human conflict, will remain a major challenge across many African countries. Increasing competition for essential resources such as water, land and energy are known to lead to conflict, exacerbating poverty and inequality, and weaking the capacities and resources of national governments.

The lack of data available in fragile and conflict-affected states is a major obstacle in assessing progress being made towards the SDGs. All actors in the development arena need to understand the extent of the challenges people in these states face for targeted programme interventions. Also, policies must be designed that can effectively target people in need and allow for monitoring of impact.

Changing aid landscape and emerging narratives

Our recent studies on external financing reveal that the aid landscape in the region is increasingly leaning more towards loans than grants.[3] Donor countries are also struggling with the impact of the pandemic and economic recession that will likely lead to significant reductions in official development assistance (ODA).[4] International public and private finances –concessional or non-concessional grants – should respond to these crises and support resilient and sustained recoveries, which are all critical for inclusive growth in most vulnerable countries in Africa that face already eroded national resources and rising debt.

A progressive and powerful decolonisation movement of the aid mechanism is emerging. This is driven chiefly by stakeholders in low and middle-income countries. For instance,

the Global Public Investments (GPI) pushes back on the current global public financing architecture, which perpetuates donor/recipient power imbalances. It also highlights how the architecture's lack of consultation of aid recipient countries in financing decision-making reinforces growing inequality of outcomes and disincentivises financing for common goals and global public goods.

Emerging opportunities in Africa

The African Union's Agenda 2063 sets the aspiration and direction of travel for the continent. It has led to the establishment of several pan-African initiatives, including the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This presents an opportunity to provide data and evidence to trade negotiators and domestic policymakers to inform effective and efficient implementation at national and regional level.

Agenda 2063 and most African governments have prioritised digital transformation. While digital transformation, data use, data protection and the application of frontier data technologies are still embryonic in the majority of African countries, there is an opportunity for data actors to provide data package services including strengthening the data ecosystems, building data literacy and promoting the need for accessible disaggregated data. In Africa, data and data analytics are essential to guide decision-making. They are needed to track funding flows in sectors that disproportionately favour the poor, to monitor progress and prepare for emerging challenges, as well as measure the impact of investments being made to tackle poverty, address inequalities and increase resilience.

Improving data systems, digital transformation, data governance, and data collection, access and storage technology are critical. Therefore, a great deal of investment is required to improve data systems and quality in Africa.

The Africa Hub as a catalyst of change

The Hub's history

DI's presence in Africa dates back to 2009, which started as a partnership with a Uganda-based research organisation. The first dedicated Kenya-based team was recruited in 2011, and by 2012 the Hub established its physical presence and finalised its registered in Nairobi, Kenya. Over time, the Hub has grown remarkably, both in staff size and the range of issues and countries covered by our work.

Today, DI's Africa Hub has staff, consultants and fellows across the continent. The Africa Hub has a network of local experts, partners and consultants. Our staff with background in economics, law, policy analysis, project management and data science deliver on our growing development projects. Our staff has a range of expertise including trade, public finance, aid, disability inclusion, disaster and climate financing, poverty and development.

Our first ever deliverable at the Africa Hub in 2011 was the work we did on budget analysis in Uganda. Under the project, our team focused on community resource tracking and improving accountability and effectiveness and feedback loops. This later led to the

training of resource trackers in five districts in northern Uganda, a region affected by conflict until 2011 and characterised by high poverty levels.

A brief glance at our work so far

Since the first project the Hub continues to establish track record and credibility in several key development areas.

The Hub legitimately occupied a space in financial tracking across various issues. In collaboration with budget stakeholders in Kenya and Uganda, we have been assessing tabled budgets in parliament and preparing joint memorandum with key national stakeholders for better and targeted allocation on pro-poor programmes. We have tracked country budgets across the region including free education, free maternal services, WASH, nutrition, social protection, disaster risk management, climate change, disability inclusion, among other pro-poor programmes and sectors.

Tracking external finance flows, including Chinese loans to East Africa, has also been the focus of the Hub. Through this stream, we have been able to establish the increasing tendency to replace grants by loans and bilateral donors by international institutions in East Africa.

Apart from quantitative analysis, the Hub has also been using qualitative analysis to document matters relevant to African actors. For instance, in partnership with local and international actors, we assessed the great strides made in the localisation agenda. In the northern arid and semi-arid parts of Kenya, we documented partnership modalities between local humanitarian actors and their international counterparts by assessing the power dynamics as well as quality of funding local actors during crisis. With a feminist lens, we also assessed localisation during the Covid-19 pandemic and how this affected funding and power relations between local women-rights organisations and international organisations in Kenya. Adding a complex layer to the localisation agenda, we also managed to assess the associated challenges and opportunities that come with working and being funded by international organisations in relation to local organisations of persons with disabilities.

Over the last 10 years, we have also been assessing resilience, crisis, vulnerability and chronic poverty in the region, particularly during humanitarian emergencies. Our work in Somalia, for instance, contributed to the improved understanding of vulnerability and resilience by comparing how different people responded and survived the recurrent shocks between 2011 and 2016. Our work in Somalia also extended to assessing registration and identification of assistance recipients in emergencies with practical and actionable recommendations for harmonised approaches by international humanitarian implementing organisations.

In terms of data systems and data products, we pride ourselves for joining up different data sets. Spotlight on Kenya and Spotlight on Uganda, for instance, are our online tools that bring together publicly available official data on socio-economic indicators and financial resources at subnational level. For years, we also provided data support services through data helpdesk. Under this service, we provided support to stakeholders' development data queries with the aim to facilitate evidence-informed decision-making,

increase access and confidence in data by our clients and their audiences and improve data literacy.

Closely related to our data package services is the demand driven data literacy training programme we run at the Africa Hub. The programme has training modules on the whole data life cycle including – types and sources of data, using excel, data storage and sharing, and data standards and harmonisation. So far, we delivered this to grassroots organisations of people with disabilities at district level in Uganda, Social Protection department of the Government of Kenya and its field officers, and national organisations of persons with disabilities in Kenya.

Thematic priorities for the next three years

For the first time, the Africa Hub has prepared a strategic plan that is context specific to the region. Building on and contributing to DI's overall 10-year vision, the three-year strategic plan outlines three broad strategic priorities programmatic approaches. These are:

1. Financing for Development in Africa. This strategic priority focuses on: resources and revenue; public expenditure, spending and development outcomes; and financing mechanisms and modalities.
2. Poverty, inequality and resilience. This strategic priority focuses on: data for inclusion; trade and inequalities; and disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.
3. Digital transformation, data products and services. This strategic priority focuses on: digital transformation and data ecosystem strengthening at national and subnational levels; data analytics, data quality assessment and impact evaluation services; data products; and Data capacity building and storytelling.

These three strategic priorities have been selected carefully by considering DI's proximity to decision-makers, strategic partners and influential stakeholders, lessons learnt from years of gathering data and evidence to establish global and regional trends, and demand from national and subnational governments, development partners and regional economic communities.

The Africa hub in numbers

In-country research:

Somalia (key informant interview and qualitative data analysis), South Sudan (SDGs tracking), Ethiopia (financial tracking), Kenya (all), Uganda (all).

- Desktop financial tracking – Tanzania, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Sudan, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Malawi, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso
- Data landscaping: South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Uganda

Some recent achievements:

Continental reports: We produced the Africa status report on disaster risk management 2015 and 2019. We synthesised 16 countries financial tracking reports on disaster risk management, of which we did three.

Direct support to a national government: Mentioned in the acknowledgement of the Government of Kenya's Inclusive Data Charter Action Plan.

Provide baseline evidence: The Hub has been providing evidence that never existed before. This includes: tracking domestic spending on disability inclusion at national level and counties in Kenya; and financial tracking on disaster risk management in Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Rwanda.

People centred: In doing what we say of being inclusive and people centred, the Hub accepted two interns living with disabilities from local universities in Kenya and Uganda to train them on data literacy and financial tracking. The two interns with disabilities contributed to ongoing projects.

"At DI we believe that data and evidence – in the right hands and minds, at the right time – can make a difference in ending poverty, addressing inequalities, and building resilience. We work collaboratively with our partners to design and produce high-quality, user-centred resources." Mokeira Nyagaka, Senior Analyst, DI

The Africa Hub's strategic priorities, 2023–2025

To help DI deliver our strategy, the Africa Hub will focus on the following three strategic priorities:

1 Financing for development in Africa

The overall strategic goal is to provide data-driven evidence to inform financing decisions to help achieve SDGs in Africa.

Financing is critical to achieving DI's mission to end poverty, reduce inequality and increase resilience. The Africa Hub aims to focus on how data-driven evidence can inform the alignment of financing priorities to have a positive impact on those experiencing poverty, inequality and vulnerability.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the inequality among and within high, middle and low-income countries has become more apparent. Particularly lower-income countries have been forced to reprioritise their expenditure amid declining tax revenues.[5] Many people experiencing poverty in Africa are either at a high risk of or already in debt distress. The prospect of economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic is further threatened by emerging global crises, such as the war in Ukraine, which is estimated to push a 1.8 million Africans into extreme poverty in 2022 that will likely increase to 2.1 million in 2023.[6]

The Africa Hub engages with key stakeholders and partners to ensure it generates evidence at critical junctures in financing decision-making. For example, prior to cross-sectoral budget hearings at national and subnational levels to set medium-term priorities and determine expenditure ceilings and floors, DI can publish resources on development outcomes and financial and non-financial performance to ensure our data and evidence influence decisions on resource allocation.

With our research and engagement on financing, we also aim to strengthen the existing financing data ecosystem. We do this by holistically gathering and availing financial data – from sectoral plans, budget allocation, actual spending, and the outcomes of using various channels of financing. From now until 2025, our work will focus on financing for pro-poor sectors and drivers of inequalities and marginalisation.

In particular, the financing programme will focus on providing data and evidence on public resources and revenue mobilisation at the international, national and subnational levels; and link public finance analysis to development outcomes.

2 Poverty, inequality and resilience

Our overall strategic goal is to provide data and evidence on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, inclusion and trade.

Under this programme, DI will promote availability, accessibility and use of timely, high-quality, joined-up and disaggregated data and analysis on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, inclusion and African trade.

Leaving no-one behind

Climate change, disaster risk reduction, trade and the need for inclusion of those farther behind are among the top development priorities for sustainable development. With less than a decade before the Agenda 2030 deadline for the SDGs, there is global acknowledgement of the interconnectedness among these particular issues and of the need for a holistic response to maximise implementation at the national and local level, to ensure that no-one is left behind. We also know that the poorest people are disproportionately impacted by these development challenges because death and the risk of economic losses are heavily concentrated in low-income countries and those living in poverty.[7]

A key challenge facing the leave no-one behind agenda is the lack of inclusive and disaggregated data to monitor the progress of people left behind. Even in countries where data is available, the culture of data use is often limited and does not inform the design and implementation of programmes or policies. We want to collaborate with likeminded civil society organisations and governments to advance the availability, accessibility and use of inclusive and disaggregated data so that the progress of the most vulnerable people can be monitored, and impactful investments, policies and programmes can be provided.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

A key emerging opportunity in Africa is the AfCFTA. No other time has provided such a meaningful opportunity for integration of smaller fragmented markets in the continent as AfCFTA. Poised as a pathway to inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development through better organised infrastructure systems, accelerated industrial development, well-integrated regional value chains and structural transformation, the AfCFTA is the culmination of the vision of the Lagos Plan of Action (1980–2000) and currently a flagship project of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

AfCFTA is gaining momentum. Under the AfCFTA Initiative on Guided Trade,[8] eight countries – Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania and Tunisia – have been selected to start trading under the AfCFTA framework pilot phase. The initiative is expected to allow commercially meaningful trading under AfCFTA, test the operational, institutional, legal and trade policy environment, and send a message to business operators. For example, by September 2022, Kenya and Ghana started trading under the preferential AfCFTA trading.

As African countries progress in implementing AfCFTA by liberalising their economies, trade data and data evidence will need to be provided from various sources. Currently, there is **no central repository** for African trade data on, inter alia, tariffs, non-tariff barriers, import and export values and volumes, trade policies and strategies, and preference utilisation.

As implementation progresses, there will also be a need for data and **evidence on who is being left behind** across countries and sections of societies within nations' borders, losers and gainers across countries, and associated adjustment costs. There are expected gainers and losers from AfCFTA. The programme will have a direct contribution to DI's global objective of reducing inequalities and to a larger extent implications to changes in poverty. According to IMF's projections, for instance, impacts of AfCFTA on income inequality differ across economies whereby in agriculture-oriented and, to some extent, natural resource-exporting economies, liberalisation under AfCFTA will decrease income inequality slightly. Meanwhile inequality will increase in manufacturing exporters as manufacturing exports tend to benefit firms that hire higher-skilled and better-paid workers, thus increasing income inequality.[9]

Policymakers and trade negotiators will benefit from data and data-driven evidence to attenuate the negative impacts of AfCFTA and capitalise on direct impacts. Data will be required, inter alia, to prepare country positions on the pace of liberalisation; to pace the speed of liberalisation (sectors for immediate or gradual liberalisation); and to design appropriate domestic policies to support disadvantaged groups to transition to sectors poised to gain from the regional integration.

3 Digital transformation, data products and services

The overall strategic goal is to contribute to digital transformation, strengthen data ecosystems, build data literacy, and promote timely access to quality and disaggregated data in Africa by leveraging on data revolution, technological developments and partnerships.

The developments in information and communication technologies have led to data and digital revolutions and emergence of frontier data technologies. These are giving an edge to countries, organisations and institutions that have managed to harness their potential.

Africa is familiar with, and increasingly embracing, the data revolution for digital economy and digital transformation in public service delivery. However, this desire is not accompanied by a growing data and digital divide, poor data ecosystems, low data literacy and technical capacity, and weak data standards, quality and governance.

The need for digital transformation

African governments need to transform their existing analogue processes within the public administration to digital. The lack of interconnectivity of the various government ministries, departments and agencies has created data silos that restrict service delivery and cause inefficiency to persist at all government levels.

Apart from connecting all admin services at local level to the internet, there is a need to build national and subnational e-government infrastructure. Governments across the region do not have in place systems that are cost-effective to share technical and human resources across public institutions. Digital data capture at the point of service delivery, particularly in civil registry offices, health facilities and schools is a huge challenge in the continent.

DI will continue to position itself with meeting the needs of local governments as a digital transformation partner. Starting from mapping digital needs at the local level through data landscaping, we will support our local partners on their digital transformation journey by building and facilitating access to user-centred data tools and building the capacity of local partners to not only embrace but also champion digital transformation.

The DI Africa Hub will also continue to strengthen data ecosystems, build data literacy, skills and capacities of our partners, build a culture of data use through development of continental-wide data products and services. Furthermore, it will contribute in shaping both the data revolution and digital transformation in Africa and globally.

Priority 1: Financing for development in Africa

Context

Public debt burden, the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and the Ukraine crisis have slowed, halted and even reversed hard-won regional and national development gains in Africa.

Opportunity

There is growing demand for data-driven evidence and analysis on development financing and its impact, and to support the in-depth understanding of financing in developing countries and innovation opportunities. There is also a new discourse emerging in the continent to push back on existing international cooperation mechanisms.

What we will deliver

DI Africa Hub seeks to provide data-driven evidence to inform financing decisions for competing priorities in achieving the development goals in Africa. Through:

- Data-driven evidence on revenue and resources to support equitable and efficient resource mobilisation
- Data-driven evidence on the outcomes of development expenditure
- Initiatives that are aimed at improving international cooperation financing mechanisms and modalities

Our partnership approach

We work with partners to respond better to people's needs through improved quality and use of data and evidence in policymaking. We also aim to improve the quantity, quality and coherence of public finance and private investment; and to create a more equitable world by challenging systemic and structural barriers to progress; and by supporting the reform of existing systems.

Key partnerships

- National governments: The National Treasury/Ministry of Finance and ministries responsible for target sectors
- Non-state actors working on issues of budgets, debt sustainability and decolonisation of the aid narrative mechanisms
- Development partners including donors, UN agencies and intergovernmental organisations
- Champions and signatories of the Grand Bargain on localisation

Outcomes/impact

- Increase in the use of data-driven evidence on development finance in Africa
- Strengthened culture of data use among development finance stakeholders in Africa
- Partnerships on initiatives that are aimed at improving financing mechanisms and modalities in Africa

Samples of our work

Domestic financial flows in Kenya before and during Covid-19 tracked public revenue and spending in Kenya before Covid-19 (2016/17–2018/19) and during Covid-19 (2019/20–2021/22). The analysis provided insights on budgetary allocations to key sectors that support poverty reduction and early childhood development. These sectors included water and sanitation, basic education, social protection, agriculture (crop development and livestock) and health.

Chinese lending to East Africa: what the numbers tell us focused on the loan commitments made by China to Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda between 2015 and 2020. It drills explores the sectoral funding to understand which sectors have had the most commitments and from which sources these commitments are drawn. It examines the Chinese terms of lending to East Africa and the type of financing they offer. In the latter sections, using data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and SAIS-CARI, we compare the trends between Chinese creditors and some other top donors to East Africa.

Global Public Investment and Africa: A better approach to financing the SDGs and Creating, not fixing: A new financing paradigm for Africa both argue for a better international cooperation that leads to better and more money but also with dignified power relations between donors and African countries.

Visit our website for more work from the last decade.

Priority 2: Poverty, inequality and resilience

Context

Growing inequalities in vulnerability and capacity to cope with recurrent shocks mainly associated with natural hazards triggered by climate change are the greatest challenge the continent is facing currently. As a result, people farthest behind continue to experience poverty and socio-economic exclusion. Because of the all-time high food and fuel prices as a result of the Ukraine–Russia war, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as extreme weather events, millions of people are pushed to extreme poverty.

On a positive note, African nations are coming together under the largest economic bloc – AfCFTA – that has potential for industrialisation and better infrastructure and market connectivity.

Opportunity

There are siloed data and gaps in data-driven evidence to support policy, decision-making, climate and trade negotiators and programme interventions.

Our partnership approach

To respond better to our partners' needs and demands, we will offer high-quality analytical reports on disaster risk management, climate justice for climate adaptation, 'leave no-one behind', the localisation agenda and tracking the outcomes of AfCFTA.

Particularly with AfCFTA, we will work closely with their Secretariat where we plan for the Africa trade data portal to be hosted by the Secretariat while DI continuously updates the data.

What we will deliver

- Promote access, use and availability of timely, quality, joined-up data, disaggregated data, and analysis of inclusive data
- Increase the availability of data and evidence on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction that will increase in policy coherence and resilience
- Provide data in a central repository and evidence on the processes and outcomes within and among AfCFTA implementing countries

Key partnerships

- National governments' representatives for trade and climate negotiators
- Regional economic blocs
- The AfCFTA Secretariat

- UN agencies (including UNEP, UNFCCC and UNDRR)
- Climate justice champions
- National and regional leave no-one behind partners

Outcomes/impact

- Evidence-informed policies and resource allocation on disaster risk management and climate adaptation; as well as strengthened linkages and policy coherence in the implementations of disaster risk reduction, climate change agreements, and SDGs frameworks
- Culture of data use in both government and civil society organisations to promote development and effective and efficient implementation of **social protection policies** and programmes at the regional, national and subnational levels, which are seen as central to reducing poverty
- Evidence-informed investments, programmes and policies on people with disabilities at the regional, national and subnational levels through provision of granular **disability data**
- Reduce the dearth in data in regional trade with easily accessible, available and continuously updated African trade data portal for policymakers
- Evidence-based trade negotiations positions and policy decision-making in the implementations of AfCFTA.

Samples of our work

Disaster risk reduction in Africa: status report (2015) and the Africa regional assessment report (2020) analysed the status of disaster risk in Africa and systemic risk. The reports also assessed progress towards disaster risk management in relation to the Sendai Framework.

As part of DI's work on data to support inclusion in Kenya and Uganda, and with a synthesis report, we analysed how existing social protection programmes benefit persons with disabilities and their associated challenges in the two countries. These products were peer reviewed by Bridge CRPD-SDGs Alumni and members of the International Disability Alliance's Community of Practice from Uganda and Kenya.

'Localisation is here to stay: lessons from Kenya', is a reflection on what we heard from over 30 humanitarian actors working in Kenya. The write-up draws lessons from our work with Oxfam-Kenya and the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Humanitarian Platform of Kenya. We made actionable recommendations based on participatory interviews and series of workshops for development partners, international organisations and local humanitarian actors.

Visit our website for more work from the last decade.

Priority 3: Digital transformation, data products and services

Context

Africa is familiar with and increasingly embracing the data revolution for digital economy and digital transformation in public service delivery.

There is a growing data and digital divide, poor data ecosystems, low data literacy and technical capacity, and weak data standards, quality and governance.

What we will deliver

DI positions itself as the trusted digital transformation partner to local governments. We will strengthen data ecosystems, build data literacy, and promote timely access to quality and disaggregated data in Africa by leveraging on data revolution, technological developments and partnerships.

Our partnership approach

On digital transformation, our main approach would be to partner with local government authorities to give support on data collection, access and storage. The tools we will build and facilitate access to will allow local authorities and admin-level stakeholders to capture digital data at the point of service delivery. We will also work with partners that have data literacy needs.

Key partnerships

- National Statistics Offices
- Local authorities at subnational level up to admin level
- The Africa Centre for Statistics
- The stat divisions of regional economic communities
- Academia (particularly data, data systems and data science departments)
- Local and international data champions
- Private sector

Outcomes/impact

- Strengthened capacity of local authorities up to admin level in the use and promotion of user-centred data tools
- Champions of digital transformation and use of data starting from the lowest admin level to national governments

- High-quality insights from data using conventional and cutting-edge analysis, visualisation, and data storytelling tools, techniques and technologies
- Sustainable continental, regional and national data products and services that leverage DI's deep contextual knowledge and global experience
- Strengthened data ecosystems that promote data generation, sharing and use
- Use of our data landscaping products by policy and programme decisions-makers

Read more

Uganda's disability data landscape and the economic inclusion of persons with disabilities. This report looks at the landscape of data on disability in Uganda – summarising what data is available on persons with disabilities, who produces and uses it, and how – as well as what this means for the economic inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The data side of leaving no one behind. We developed an approach that we call data landscaping. Its scope covers the political economy of data within a country; the structures and standards that govern the collection, production and sharing of data; the information systems themselves; and the culture that drives the demand for, and use of, data.

Data landscaping: strengthening national data ecosystems. We discuss our data landscaping methodology in detail, which is based on a systematic assessment of existing data and the coordination, infrastructure, governance and use of that data.

Visit our website for more work from the last decade.

How we will work

Our approach

To implement and realise the Africa Hub Strategic Plan, we are going to leverage and strengthen existing and new partnerships and enhance our responsiveness to the needs and realities of the region.

We will build on our work at subnational, national, regional and continental level to inform DI's global priorities and programmes.

We are going to continue prioritising context-informed and demand-driven data and analytical reports that influence decisions, dialogues and practices that bring about positive change for people living in poverty and experience inequality and marginalisation.

We will contribute in building data literacy and capacities, strengthening data ecosystems, creating the culture of data use at different levels, supporting the adoption and usage of frontier data technologies (while maintaining our position as technology and solution provider agnostic), and addressing data governance, protection and privacy challenges in the continent.

Our skills

Financial resources tracking

We are experienced in tracking financing at the international, national and subnational levels. We have developed methodology and conducted multisectoral and thematic budget analysis. We have conducted and published analysis of investments to specific areas such as debt, climate adaptation and mitigation financing at national and subnational levels, risk-sensitive budget tracking on disaster risk management, social protection, disability inclusion, nutrition, food security, and pro-poor sectors and programmes. Our analysis is anchored on a good understanding of the fiscal space in the region. We also partner with other non-state actors to provide data-driven joint budget analysis and budget briefs to duty bearers such as the legislature. We also train specific stakeholders, such as organisations of persons with disabilities on public finance cycles and budget tracking. We have expertise in conducting public expenditure reviews and budget and policy analysis. We compliment public expenditure reviews with institutional reviews to identify administrative bottlenecks and provide recommendations to improve efficiency in government spending.

Recently, we have developed methodology on analysis of financing outcomes based on non-financial reporting of public financing at the national level. Our approach looks beyond expenditure to generate evidence and analysis that can improve the results of governments' expenditure. Using qualitative analysis and deliberations with relevant stakeholders, we seek to understand the drivers of poor budget implementation performance or barriers to achieving the outcomes expected from financing to specific sectors and demographics.

Data landscaping and data ecosystem building

Our several years of working in Africa's data ecosystem has taught us that understanding data ecosystems needs a thorough diagnostic to identify what the challenges are, both at national and subnational levels.

Data landscaping is a systematic, rigorous examination of entire data ecosystems that identify major needs, existing initiatives, challenges and new opportunities in the data ecosystem. It considers all current and potential data actors (both producers and users), existing data systems and capacities (both government and major government partners), etc.

Specifically, our data landscaping approach examines the legal and policy frameworks relevant to data production and use, and how the different policies interlink; political economy analysis of the country's data ecosystem; a stakeholder analysis of the key players in the national data ecosystem; the state of domestic and international financing for the national data ecosystem; the state of national ICT infrastructure; HR capacity; and data quality using a checklist of indicators to examine the metadata of key datasets to gauge their openness, machine readability, interoperability, timeliness and completeness.

Since 2011, we have continually tested, improved and adapted this methodology to meet the needs of different audiences, from multilateral organisations seeking to invest in data systems to local actors trying to better understand data that can be used to plan, manage and monitor service delivery.

Data analysis

We use a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques to produce high-quality evidence/insights to inform resource and policy decisions in the region. Our approach involves combining and triangulating evidence from literature reviews, quantitative and qualitative data to gain a more complete picture, and to put findings into context in order to generate robust conclusions and actionable recommendations. Our presence in the East Africa region has enabled us to gain an understanding of local context and development issues to strengthen our skills and expertise in data analysis. We prioritise participatory approaches that ensure involvement of the users of our evidence in the research design, data collection and analysis to create ownership and ensure that our evidence/research products are aligned to the needs of decision-makers/duty bearers.

Analytical report writing

We communicate the findings of our analysis through a wide range of research products, targeted at different audiences. These include research reports, policy briefs, factsheets and blogs.

Data visualisation and storytelling

At DI, we strive to make data and evidence available and accessible in ways and forms that can be consumed and easily understood by the target audience in both digital and non-digital forms.

Our data visualisation and storytelling expertise includes creating data portals, dashboards, factsheets, reports, data blogs and data podcasts, making use of available tools to tell compelling data stories.

Our technical expertise includes the use of both proprietary and open-source data visualisation software like d3, PowerBI, Tableau and Leaflet Maps to create rich visualisations.

Our policy on inclusion has seen our data storytelling products built with accessibility that ensures the message reaches as many people as possible.

Our approach for the above is threefold:

1. Our analysts mine, clean and make sense of the data, drawing vital insights and conclusions that are the basis of any report, blog, dashboard or podcast.
2. Our communications team collates and structures the content into the best format to reach and be consumed by the right audience.
3. Our technical team ensures that the technical needs are met to deliver the product in its highest quality form.

Resourcing our ambition

To resource the implementation of DI's 2030 strategy, and to ensure growth and sustainability in the continent through the Africa Hub Strategic Plan, we will leverage on existing and new funding, influence, impact and knowledge partnerships.

Funding partners

The Africa Hub seeks to build a diverse network of funders who will support our work in both short and long terms. These partners include global donors, regional donors, philanthropic foundations, social impact investors and the private sector. We also provide consultancy services that are short term but aligned with our strategic priorities.

Influence partners

We seek to collaborate with influence partners who will amplify our influence through data and data-driven evidence. The range of partners include governments, intergovernmental organisations, regional economic communities, academic institutions, advocacy organisations and civil society organisations.

Impact partners

Some partners are better positioned to have direct impact, be it policy action, resource allocations or direct programmes implementation. The Africa Hub seeks to sustain, diversify and grow the network of impact partners, to amplify its products and services including strategic global and regional organisations, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, community-based organisations, local government authorities and African innovation hubs.

Knowledge partners

The Africa Hub has functional partnership with select universities in the countries it has presence. The Hub seeks to sustain, diversify and grow the network of knowledge partners including academic institutions, think-tanks, research institutions, data labs and the private sector in Africa.

Organisational capacity building

To ensure we deliver on our purpose and mission, we will continue to position ourselves as a learning, developing and changing Hub. We will constantly consult, seek out new ideas and ways of working; explore innovations and technological advances; and develop projects to achieve transformation and unlock change for all.

Internally, we will sustain the culture of learning and development through personal and professional development plans that enable us to deliver strategic outcomes in line with staff's personal development plans.

Our budget

Strategic Plan Summary Budget: 1 July 2023–30 June 2026

	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Core operational costs					
Core Africa Hub operations	350,000	550,000	600,000	325,000	**$1,825,000**
Linking sub-national, regional, and continental efforts to global engagements through DI Global and International Hubs	175,000	200,000	200,000	175,000	**$750,000**
Sub-total	*$525,000*	*$750,000*	*$800,000*	*$500,000*	*$2,575,000*
Strategic priority areas					
Financing for development	415556.25	675,944	675,944	395,944	**$2,163,725**
Poverty, inequality and resilience	292,550	483,550	475,550	298,550	**$1,550,200**
Digital transformation	251,425	414,425	414,425	214,425	**$1,294,700**
Sub-total	*$959,531*	*$1,573,919*	*$1,565,919*	*$908,919*	*$5,008,625*
Total budget					**$7,583,625**

Breakdown by core activity area under our strategic themes[10]

	Total $	% contribution
Core Africa Hub operations	1,825,000	24%
Linking sub-national, regional and continental efforts to global engagement through DI Global and International Hub	750,000	10%
Knowledge product development: Demand-driven data, analysis and evidence	1,425,000	19%
Partnership co-creation response and partnership framework support	620,000	8%
Enabling innovative environments: Engagement, dissemination and communications	510,000	7%
National, regional, continental convenings and collaboration	490,000	6%
Monitoring, evaluation, impact and learning	211,500	3%
Cross-cutting activities: Capacity building, knowledge development and training	447,500	6%
Global influencing and agenda setting	602,125	8%
Data, analysis and evidence activities	417,500	6%
Dissemination, engagement and communications	285,000	4%
Total	**$7,583,625**	

Stay updated

If you would like to receive updates about our work, please sign up here.

Find out more

If you would like to learn more or provide feedback on the Africa Hub's strategic plan, please contact stephen.chacha@devinit.org

Collaborate with us

If you would like to explore a potential partnership or collaboration, please contact us: Funding partners: mariam.ibrahim@devinit.org. Technical or implementing partners, including consultancy work martha.bekele@devinit.org

Notes

[1] Our six foundational principles are people, simplicity, perseverance, partnerships, transformation and high performance. Read more here: devinit.org/documents/906/DI_2021-2030-Strategy.pdf

[2] World Bank (2022). Sub-Saharan African growth slows amid ongoing and new economic shocks. Available at worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/04/13/sub-saharan-african-growth-slows-amid-ongoing-and-new-economic-shocks

[3] Aid flows to Kenya: devinit.org/documents/1054/Analysis_of_aid_flows_to_Kenya_before_and_during_Covid-19_UXnc3y6.pdf; Aid flows to Uganda. Available at devinit.org/documents/1055/Analysis_of_aid_flows_to_Uganda_before_and_during_Covid-19_tcgH7kb.pdf

[4] Covid-19 and financing projections for developing countries. Available at devinit.org/resources/covid-19-and-financing-projections-developing-countries/

[5] OECD (2021). Policy responses to coronavirus (Covid-19) Tax and fiscal policies after the Covid-19 crisis. Available at www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/tax-and-fiscal-policies-after-the-covid-19-crisis-5a8f24c3/

[6] AfDB (2022). African economic outlook 2022: Africa's 2021 economic rebound impacted by lingering Covid-19 pandemic and Russia–Ukraine war. Available at afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/african-economic-outlook-2022-africas-2021-economic-rebound-impacted-lingering-covid-19-pandemic-and-russia-ukraine-war-51865

[7] UNDRR (2022). The global assessment report on disaster risk reduction. Available at undrr.org/publication/global-assessment-report-disaster-risk-reduction-2022

[8] The AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative

[9] IMF (2019). Is the African continental free trade area as a game changer for the continent? Chapter 3 in Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa]

[10] Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding

Development Initiatives (DI) applies the power of data and evidence to build sustainable solutions.

Our mission is to work closely with partners to ensure data-driven evidence and analysis are used effectively in policy and practice to end poverty, reduce inequality and increase resilience.

While data alone cannot bring about a better world, it is a vital part of achieving it. Data has the power to unlock insight, shine a light on progress and empower people to increase accountability.

To find out more about our work visit:
www.devinit.org
Twitter: @devinitorg
Email: info@devinit.org