

Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

TED Working Group 2 (WG2)

*TED Network Annual Meeting (TEDNAM) WG2 Working Session (17th of June 2026)
Follow-up WG2 Focal Group Discussions (9th of July 2026, 2 discussion slots)*

OUTCOME AND REFERENCE REPORT

Explanatory Note

Rather than revisiting the discussions separately, this report presents a consolidated synthesis of the key takeaways that emerged across both exchanges. The focal groups served to refine the themes identified during the TEDNAM WG2 working session into more operational directions, clarifying where WG2 can provide added value to Team Europe coordination and where future activities should move beyond knowledge exchange towards practical guidance and peer learning for strengthened cooperation.

Contents

Context	1
WG2 Priorities and Direction for 2026–2027	2
1. Civic Space.....	2
Discussion Overview.....	3
Potential WG2 Activities	4
2. Local Democratic Governance.....	4
Discussion Overview.....	5
Potential WG2 Activities	6
3. Electoral and In-Between Elections Support	6
Discussion Overview.....	6
Potential WG2 Activities	7
4. Cross-Working Group Reflections.....	8
WG2 Value Proposition: <i>Why it Matters for Team Europe and Coordination</i>	8
Visualisations.....	10

Context

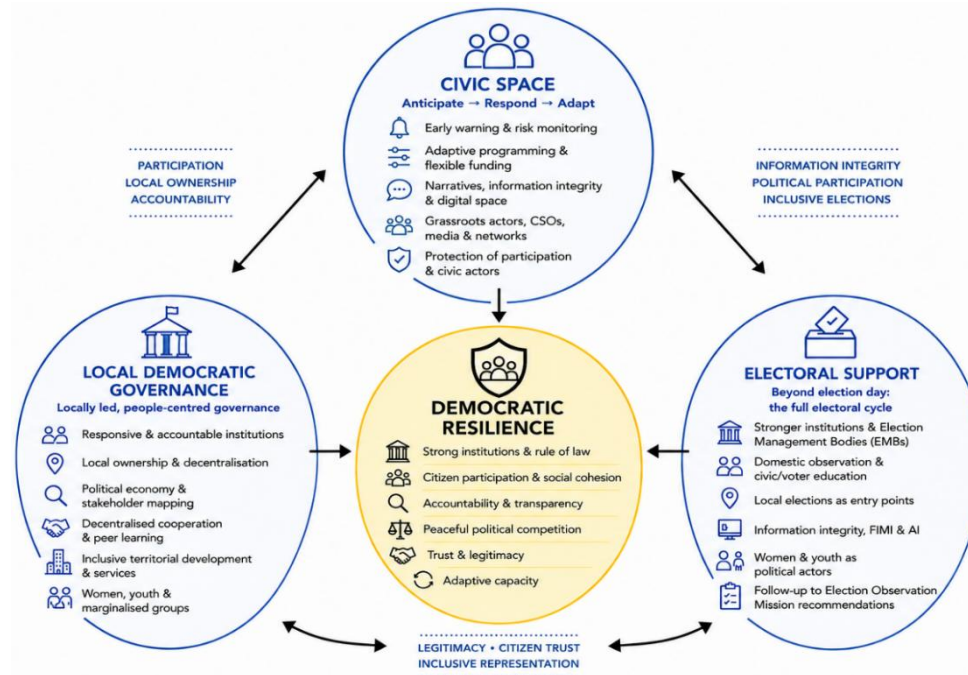
The **TEDNAM WG2 working session (17th of June 2026)** opened with a **"search for common ground"** exercise to establish the shared operating context for democracy support. Members identified a rapidly evolving landscape characterised by increasingly restrictive civic space, declining trust in democratic institutions, disinformation, foreign interference, fragile political transitions and shrinking funding, alongside the need to balance democracy support with broader security ([The Intersection of Democracy, Peace and Security](#)), geopolitical and EU policy priorities, including Global Gateway and preparations for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). At the same time, members highlighted opportunities for locally-led, people-centred approaches to strengthen democratic resilience. Building on this shared assessment, members engaged in facilitated discussions during both the TEDNAM WG2 working session and **subsequent WG2 focal group discussions (9th of July 2026)** across WG2's three thematic priorities of **Civic Space, Local Democratic Governance and Electoral Support**, drawing on concept notes prepared by the WG2 thematic leads ([Oxfam](#) ([Intermon](#)), [ECDPM](#), [EADI](#), [Platforma](#), [ALDA](#) and [ECES](#)) to identify strategic priorities, operational challenges, partnership opportunities and future WG2 activities for the 2026–2027 TED Workplan.



Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

WG2 Priorities and Direction for 2026–2027

WG2's priorities represent complementary dimensions of democratic resilience. Civic space enables participation; good local governance translates participation into accountable and inclusive governance; and electoral support strengthens representative institutions and democratic mobilisation throughout the electoral cycle. Together, they provide an operational framework for Team Europe democracy support.



Members reaffirmed that development cooperation remains WG2's primary entry point for supporting democracy. Rather than analysing democratic challenges in isolation, discussions increasingly focused on how Team Europe can translate knowledge into practical programming, operational coordination and peer learning across diverse political and governance contexts. A common reflection was the need to move from understanding democratic challenges towards identifying practical responses: asking not only why democratic space is shrinking or institutions are under pressure, but also **what Team Europe can (still) do**. This was reflected in members' preference for case study- and scenario-based approaches grounded in experience from EUDs, MS and partner-country practitioners. Future work will build on existing WG2 knowledge and the mapping exercise ([Policy Brief "Democracy Under Pressure: Supporting Civic Space and Local Democratic Governance"](#)) to develop practical outputs that strengthen Team Europe coordination and further inform development programming.

Across all three priorities, Global Gateway was recognised by WG2 as a cross-cutting policy context rather than a separate thematic area. Members highlighted **the need for greater clarity and information on the 360° approach, including how investment-led approaches are expected to interact with participation, accountability, local ownership and democratic governance**.

1. Civic Space

Discussions on civic space started from the recognition that democratic actors increasingly operate under restrictive political, legal and financial conditions. Rather than revisiting these trends, members focused on how Team Europe can continue supporting civic-political participation in increasingly constrained environments and what practical responses development cooperation can offer. Initial exchanges considered three complementary entry points: the [EU System for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society \(EU SEE\)](#), broader EU and MS democracy support, and 360° approach, examining where these frameworks reinforce one another and where



Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

operational challenges remain. The conversation then shifted more towards identifying how and when to better anticipate, adjust and respond to restrictive environments while sustaining democratic participation.

Discussion Overview

Focus Areas	Key Discussion Points	Exploration Areas
Restrictive legislation across the legislative cycle	Members emphasised that restrictive legislation should be understood as a process rather than a single moment. Effective responses require attention/identification and advocacy before restrictions emerge; during legislative adoption and implementation; and after restrictive measures enter into force (adjustment/adaptation). Experiences from the EU SEE highlighted the value of early warning mechanisms, adaptive programming, flexible funding arrangements and rapid response approaches as practical tools. Discussions also recognised the importance of understanding what programming, resources and partnerships remain feasible (can realistically achieve) under different political conditions.	Explore practical approaches and funding mechanisms that help anticipate restrictive environments, strengthen preparedness and support adaptive programming throughout the legislative cycle, drawing on comparative country experience.
Political economy and narratives	Restrictive legislation was discussed within a broader political economy context, recognising that changing government incentives, donor influence as well as funding-cuts and the wider operating environment shape civic space. Members also stressed that restrictive measures are increasingly reinforced through narratives questioning the legitimacy of civil society and participation but also in amplifying anti-rights perceptions and justifying legislative acceptance. Information integrity, mis/disinformation and information manipulation were recognised as increasingly influencing civic participation, particularly in digital environments. Civil Society at a Narrative Crossroads .	Further explore how political economy analysis, narratives and information integrity can inform democracy programming, understand operating space or the limitations and strengthen responses to shrinking civic space.
Diversifying democratic actors and partnerships	Discussions recognised that sustaining civic participation increasingly requires engaging actors beyond established CSOs. Grassroots organisations; informal networks; community initiatives; youth, women and faith-based movements; digital civic actors; philanthropic organisations, foundations and public-private partnerships were identified as important partners where formal civic space becomes more restricted. Flexible funding and longer-term engagement were seen as important enabling conditions. Exploring EU and Member States' Approaches and Options to Addressing the Shrinking Civic Space	Examine (flexible) partnership models and funding approaches that reduce administrative/reporting burdens and broaden engagement across a wider democratic ecosystem while supporting locally owned participation over the longer term.
Global Gateway as a cross-cutting policy context	While Global Gateway featured prominently during the June discussions, focal groups concluded that it should not become a separate thematic pillar of WG2's civic space work. Instead, discussions explored how investment-led approaches interact with participation, accountability and civic engagement, particularly from the design stage of investment programming. Existing	Continue exploring how civic-political participation, accountability and local ownership can be integrated within Global Gateway implementation



Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

	instruments, including CSO-Local Authorities Advisory Platform, CSO Roadmaps and the Human Rights Action Plan, were identified as useful entry points.	without creating separate workstreams.
Private sector engagement	Members noted that businesses are not a homogeneous group and discussed opportunities for engagement with private sector actors and international/development financial institutions whose interests align with transparency, accountability, responsible investment and community participation, alongside local SMEs, trade unions and business associations.	Further consider where partnerships with responsible private sector actors and financial institutions can contribute to inclusive participation and accountable governance.

Potential WG2 Activities

The **primary activity** could focus on practical programming responses in contexts where civic space is under pressure. Rather than examining restrictive legal frameworks as an analytical issue, the activity could use a scenario-based approach and potentially establish a Community of Practice (CoP) centred on operational dilemmas, choices and adaptive responses. It could bring together lessons on anticipating restrictive environments, navigating political and narrative dynamics, adapting partnerships and funding approaches, and sustaining civic-political participation under different political conditions. Comparative country experiences should illustrate what has worked, what has not and under which conditions. The activity could build on existing WG2 work, including the civic space mapping exercise, previous webinars/TEDNAM workshops and lessons emerging from the EU SEE programme (three-years in). Members expressed strong interest in ensuring that this work produces practical resources beyond a standalone webinar, including e.g. a programming guidance; repository of country examples and good practices; and, where relevant, a future TED Partner Country Engagement (PCE) assignment.

Members stressed that the activity should be developed with clear policy links and timing in mind, ensuring it can feed into relevant processes such as the MFF 2028–2034 programming cycle, CSO Roadmaps, the Human Rights Action Plan and upcoming EU-level dialogues with civil society (e.g. Policy Forum on Development (PFD) and OECD-DAC CSO CoP).

A **second activity** could explore Global Gateway and the 360° approach through a cross-WG technical dialogue (possible format: focal group/task force), focussing on gaining clarity and specific questions related to participation, accountability, local ownership and information integrity within investment programming. Consistent with the focal group discussions, this work should complement, rather than define, WG2's civic space agenda.

2. Local Democratic Governance

Local democratic governance discussions focused on the territorial dimension of democratic resilience, examining how democratic practice is sustained through relationships between citizens, local institutions and communities. Local authorities, their associations, civil society, community organisations, local private sector/SMEs and local media were recognised as important actors for maintaining dialogue, accountability and citizen engagement, particularly where national political processes become increasingly constrained. Members emphasised that democracy is experienced locally through the quality of relationships between citizens and institutions: whether people can participate in decisions affecting their lives, whether public authorities are responsive and whether trust can be built through effective and accountable governance. Strengthening local democratic governance therefore goes beyond decentralisation or institutional reform, requiring attention to the partnerships, capacities, governance arrangements and local political dynamics that allow democratic practice to take root over time. ([Local Democracy Rising LAB Series: Empowering Communities and Embedding Good Governance](#)).



Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

While examples discussed related to fragile and conflict-affected contexts, members stressed that these lessons extend beyond countries formally classified as fragile, particularly as rising polarisation, pressures on democratic institutions and restrictions on participation increasingly require attention to local governance dynamics as a preventative dimension of democracy support. Hence fragility was described as multidimensional and context-specific rather than a fixed country label. Also increased attention should be paid to strengthening collaboration and leveraging good local governance as a key enabler of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus. ([Unlocking Resilience: Empowering Local Actors and Partnerships in Fragile Contexts](#)).

Discussion Overview

Focus Areas	Key Discussion Points	Exploration Areas
Local authorities as democratic actors	Members identified local authorities as important actors for maintaining democratic dialogue, public trust and service delivery when national political engagement becomes increasingly difficult. Experiences (municipalities) shared from Burkina Faso, DRC, Tunisia, Libya, South Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Moldova and Nicaragua demonstrated that local governance can provide one of the few remaining spaces for sustaining citizen-state engagement during periods of political instability, conflict or democratic decline.	Further explore how locally anchored governance contributes to democratic resilience (and the HDP nexus) across fragile, conflict-affected and politically constrained settings, while recognising that these lessons are increasingly relevant across a broader range of contexts.
Decentralised cooperation and partnerships	Discussions positioned decentralised cooperation as a practical means of sustaining democratic relationships rather than solely a technical development instrument. City-to-city partnerships, cooperation between local government associations, peer learning between municipalities and exchanges between European and partner-country local authorities were highlighted alongside community-to-community partnerships and solidarity-based cooperation.	Continue exchanging experience on decentralised cooperation and (innovative) partnership models that strengthen institutional capacity, local ownership and democratic engagement.
Analysis of local political and institutional realities; and multilevel governance	Effective programming was seen to depend upon understanding mandates, decision-making authority, power relations and interactions between local, national and regional institutions. Political economy analysis, stakeholder/power mapping and multilevel governance analysis were identified as useful programming tools.	Explore practical approaches for integrating political economy analysis, stakeholder/power mapping and governance analysis into programme design and implementation. Also, as to the HDP nexus.
Inclusive territorial development	Discussions linked local democratic governance with inclusive territorial development, local economic development and responsive public services. Democratic governance becomes tangible when citizens feel the experience of accountable institutions, accessible services and opportunities to influence decisions affecting their communities. Members also highlighted the contributions of local technical staff, community organisations, grassroots initiatives, local media, solidarity networks and local private sector actors, including SMEs, to democratic governance and citizen participation.	Further examine integrated approaches linking democratic governance, territorial development and broader local partnerships. Also extend the range of local actors to engage with beyond public administration.



Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

Global Gateway and territorial governance	Members discussed how local authorities and territorial actors can contribute to investment implementation, strengthen local ownership and reinforce accountability within Global Gateway initiatives. Existing governance tools and local partnerships were recognised as important mechanisms for ensuring investment programmes reflect local priorities.	Continue considering how territorial governance and local partnerships can strengthen democratic ownership within investment programming.
Local elections	Discussions highlighted local elections as an important yet often underutilised entry point for understanding democratic trends cross-country and in strengthening citizen participation, trust building and local-national accountability.	Explore stronger linkages between WG2 priorities local democratic governance and electoral support, particularly through local electoral processes.

Potential WG2 Activities

The discussions converged around a practitioner-focused peer learning activity on local democratic resilience in fragile and politically constrained contexts. The activity could draw on country case studies and experiences from EUDs, MS and local practitioners to identify practical approaches for engaging with local authorities, communities and wider local actors across different political environments. The activity could further contribute to (or develop) a **“Fragile Context Toolbox,”** bringing together comparative practices, country examples, practical guidance and checklists to support Team Europe engagement. Possible areas could include stakeholder and power mapping, understanding institutional mandates and multilevel governance arrangements, decentralised cooperation models, and approaches for working with local authorities, civil society and private sector/SME actors.

3. Electoral and In-Between Elections Support

Discussions on electoral and in-between elections support recognised that the operating environment for elections has changed significantly. Political polarisation, foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), cyber threats, artificial intelligence (AI) and shifting geopolitical, investment (Global Gateway) and security priorities increasingly shape electoral processes. At the same time, budgetary pressures require development partners to maximise impact through stronger coordination and more strategic engagement.

The 20th anniversary of the Electoral Cycle Approach provided an opportunity to reflect on how electoral support can better contribute to institutional legitimacy, democratic governance and with Team Europe coordination. Across the discussions, members emphasised that elections should be understood as part of a wider democratic ecosystem, requiring continued engagement beyond election-day assistance and technical support, and throughout the periods before, during, between and after elections.

Discussion Overview

Focus Areas	Key Discussion Points	Exploration Areas
From electoral assistance to electoral support	Discussions distinguished technical electoral assistance, particularly support to Electoral Management Bodies (EMB) and electoral administration, from broader electoral support addressing the wider political, legal and institutional environment. While technical assistance remains important, members recognised growing emphasis on strengthening democratic resilience, institutional legitimacy, public confidence,	Continue exploring how electoral support can contribute to democratic resilience before, during, between and after elections, building on the Electoral Cycle Approach.



Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

	legal/constitutional reform where appropriate, and preparation throughout the electoral cycle. (Democracy Between the Ballots Webinar: Sustaining Engagement and Integrity Beyond Election Day).	
Strengthening the wider democratic ecosystem	Discussions highlighted the importance of domestic election observation, civic and voter education, media monitoring, judicial and institutional capacity, implementation of Election Observation Mission (EOM) recommendations and stronger cooperation with civil society, universities, regional organisations and other democratic actors. Better connections between election observation, technical assistance and follow-up programming were identified as opportunities to strengthen long-term impact.	Explore practical approaches for connecting electoral assistance, observation, follow-up programming and broader democratic governance support throughout the electoral cycle.
Local elections	Members identified local elections as an important but often underused entry point for understanding democratic trends, citizen participation, institutional performance and public trust. Discussions also highlighted opportunities to strengthen links between electoral support and local democratic governance.	Further consider how local elections can contribute to democratic resilience and complement broader governance programming.
Electoral integrity in a changing environment	Discussions recognised that information integrity, FIMI, cyber threats, AI and online campaigning increasingly shape electoral processes and public confidence. Responses should address these challenges while remaining grounded in democratic governance and human rights objectives rather than becoming primarily technology-driven interventions. (Democratic Resilience in the Age of AI).	Continue examining how emerging technologies and information environments affect electoral integrity and democratic participation.
Inclusive political participation	Building on previous WG2 work on Youth and Women as Political Drivers , discussions emphasised participation beyond representation. This included supporting women throughout the electoral cycle (from structural barriers to candidacy to campaigning to in-office and opposition), addressing political violence and online harassment, and recognising evolving forms of youth political engagement (GenZ), civic mobilisation and digital participation. Participation should be understood not only through access to political institutions, but also through influence, leadership and the ability to shape decisions.	Continue exploring approaches that strengthen inclusive political participation, leadership and democratic influence across the electoral cycle.
Team Europe coordination	Members recognised the value of stronger coordination between MS, EU institutions, EOMs, implementing partners and country-level actors. Electoral calendars, country experience and peer learning were identified as opportunities for programming and joint engagement.	Continue identifying opportunities and mechanisms that facilitate coordination, comparative learning and cooperation across Team Europe.

Potential WG2 Activities

Members broadly supported developing an activity reflecting on electoral support 20 years after the introduction of the Electoral Cycle Approach. However, discussions framed this not as a retrospective review, but as a forward-looking exercise examining how electoral support should respond to changing democratic realities. The



Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

activity should use a country case-study approach, drawing on (recent) experiences from contexts such as Kenya, Bangladesh and Zambia. Discussions should examine the full electoral cycle, the relationship between electoral support and democratic resilience, strengthening domestic institutions, responding to electoral violence including (online) harassment of women politicians and opposition, the role of local elections as entry points for democratic governance, information integrity, implementation of EOM recommendations and practical coordination between Team Europe.

4. Cross-Working Group Reflections

WG1 Accountability and Rule of Law: WG2 can contribute expertise on civic-political participation, particularly of women and youth, local democratic governance and inclusive governance, complementing WG1's work on the rule of law, institutional integrity, transparency, accountability, and transitional and commercial justice. Joint work could explore locally owned transitional justice to restore trust in public institutions, strengthen inclusive participation (truth-seeking, reparations, participatory judicial processes) and promote reconciliation, while further collaboration on commercial justice could improve access to justice, transparent business environments and strengthen economic inclusion of youth, women and local SMEs. Opportunities exist as to co-exchange on experiences with private sector and financial institution engagement in areas such as procurement, infrastructure development and illicit financial flows. WG2 can also support WG1's work on the governance dimensions of the Global Gateway by promoting inclusive participation, local ownership and accountable implementation across investment corridors and sectors.

WG3 Information Integrity: Joint work could focus on participatory approaches to strengthening information integrity through independent local media, inclusive digital access and media literacy, and resilience to disinformation and foreign information manipulation throughout the electoral cycle. Collaboration could also explore digital sovereignty, engagement with technology companies and approaches that embed local ownership, civic participation, human-rights based and democratic accountability in digital governance and media support initiatives. The relationship between AI and participation can be further explored. WG2 can bring in expertise on online civic space, protecting actors within it and engaging with (emerging) social-digital movements, largely youth-led.

WG2 Value Proposition: *Why it Matters for Team Europe and Coordination*



The discussions confirmed that WG2's added value lies not in generating further analysis of democratic challenges, but in enabling Team Europe to collectively identify, exchange, test and apply practical responses to increasingly complex political environments. WG2's comparative advantage should be its ability to connect policy



Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative

priorities with implementation realities, bringing together country-level experience across MS, EU institutions and partners to strengthen adaptive and context-sensitive programming.

The proposed activities on civic space, local democratic governance and electoral support provide practical platforms for Team Europe members to exchange experience, identify common operational challenges and develop more coherent approaches across different contexts. By bringing together lessons from country practice, these activities can help reduce fragmentation, strengthen mutual learning and support greater alignment between EU institutions, MS and implementing partners. They also provide opportunities to connect thematic expertise across areas that are often addressed separately, while reflecting their interdependence: civic space conditions influence participation and electoral processes; local governance provides important entry points for democratic resilience; and electoral support is strengthened when linked to longer-term institutional development and citizen engagement. This integrated approach was also recommended in the WG2 mapping exercise: [Policy Brief “Democracy Under Pressure: Supporting Civic Space and Local Democratic Governance”](#).

A key contribution of WG2 is therefore its ability to transform dispersed operational experience into collective learning. Through peer exchanges, comparative case studies and practical outputs such as guidance, tools, repositories of practice and, where relevant, TED Partner Country Engagement (PCE) activities, WG2 can support practitioners in translating shared lessons into possible coordinated Team Europe programming.

The discussions also highlighted the importance of connecting WG2’s experiences and members’ expertise with wider EU and MS policy processes. Lessons emerging from WG2 activities can inform relevant policy dialogues and exchange platforms, including Civil Society Roadmaps, the Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan, the governance dimension of the Global Gateway (including the CSO–Local Authorities Advisory Platform), the OECD-DAC Community of Practice on Civil Society, the Policy Forum on Development (PFD) and reflections linked to the next MFF. In turn, these forums provide opportunities to increase WG2’s visibility, share operational learning and strengthen exchanges with broader policy and practitioner communities.

Repository of WG2’s Activities from 2022 to present: [Working Group 2: Political and Civic Participation](#)



WHY IT MATTERS



Protects democratic participation

Ensures citizens can organise, participate and express their views.



Safeguards fundamental freedoms

Freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression underpin democratic resilience.



Strengthens trust and accountability

Independent civic actors connect citizens and institutions and hold decision-makers to account.



Creates space for innovation and solutions

Communities identify local solutions and influence public policy.

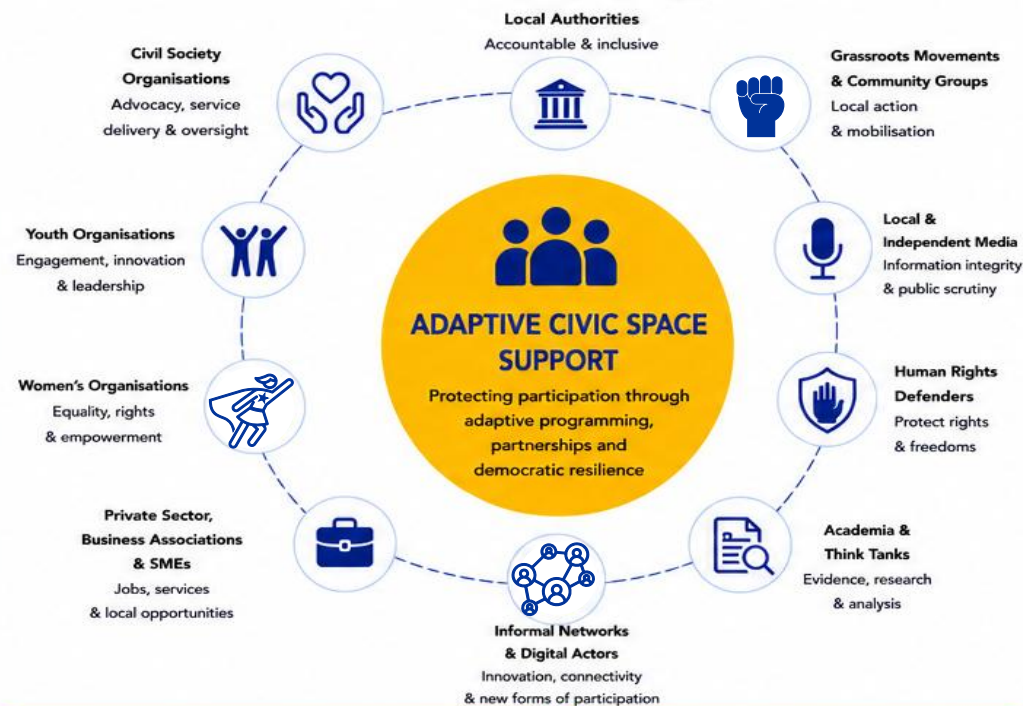


Essential for sustainable Global Gateway investments

Infrastructure and economic investments are stronger when communities participate and social dialogue is embedded.

THE CIVIC SPACE ECOSYSTEM

A broad and diverse ecosystem of actors



CIVIC SPACE IN GLOBAL GATEWAY



Civic space is not a separate investment pillar but a lens through which investment programmes can strengthen democratic participation and local ownership.

Beyond accountability:

Social inclusion • Environmental sustainability • Local economic development
Gender equality • Good governance • Human rights due diligence

POLICY DILEMMA: FINDING BALANCE



RESTRICTIVE LEGISLATION IS A PROCESS, NOT AN EVENT

1

ANTICIPATE

- Emerging narratives
- Political signals
- Draft legislation
- Risk monitoring
- Coalition building

Identify risks early and support advocacy before restrictive measures are adopted.

2

RESPOND

- Political dialogue
- Flexible funding
- Rapid support
- Joint Team Europe action

Coordinate political and operational responses during adoption and implementation.

3

ADAPT

- New partnerships
- Community actors
- Alternative modalities
- Digital engagement

Adjust programmes, partnerships and funding once restrictions are in place.

4

SUSTAIN

- Long-term resilience
- Learning & reflection
- Democratic participation protected

Sustain engagement with local actors and strengthen democratic resilience over time.

FROM EARLY WARNING TO ADAPTIVE RESPONSE: PRACTICAL ENTRY POINTS



EARLY WARNING (EU SEE experiences/ practices)

Monitor trends, political signals, risks and narrative shifts early.



POLITICAL DIALOGUE

Engage with authorities and allies to prevent or mitigate restrictions.



FLEXIBLE FUNDING

Use flexible, rapid and multi-annual funding modalities.



DIVERSE PARTNERSHIPS

Work with a wide range of actors beyond traditional CSOs.



COUNTRY LESSONS

Learn from peer experiences and country case studies.



PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

Develop practical tools, scenarios and operational guidance.

WHY IT MATTERS



Keeps democracy anchored in people's lived realities



Builds trust, cohesion and state legitimacy



Creates space for inclusion and participation for women, youth and marginalised groups



Improves service delivery and socio-economic resilience



Strengthens conflict prevention and stability

Local authorities

Responsive & accountable



A PRACTICAL ENTRY POINT



Works where national space is shrinking
Local spaces often remain more open for engagement



Delivers tangible benefits for people
Services, jobs, green & inclusive development



Builds bridges
Between state and citizens, institutions and communities



Strengthens peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies
From local to national

HOW IT WORKS IN FRAGILE & CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENTS



ADAPTIVE AND CONTEXT-SENSITIVE

Flexible, incremental approaches that work with the realities on the ground



INCLUSIVE

Reaches those left behind – women, youth, rural communities, minorities



PARTICIPATORY

Strengthens local voice, dialogue and accountability



INTEGRATED

Links governance with economic, green and social investments (Global Gateway)

ADDED VALUE FOR TEAM EUROPE



Tangible, people-centred democracy support



Complements civic space and electoral support



Connects development, peace and governance



Accelerates local solutions for democratic resilience



Leaves no one behind



Stronger, more resilient and inclusive societies

WHY IT MATTERS



Elections are part of a wider democratic ecosystem

They shape institutional legitimacy, governance quality and public trust.



Engagement beyond election day

Sustained support throughout the electoral cycle strengthens democratic resilience and accountability.



Strong institutions, confident citizens

Technical support, civic education and legal frameworks build credibility and participation.



New risks, new responses

FIMI, cyber threats and AI are reshaping elections and require adaptive, rights-based responses.



Inclusive participation drives change

Youth, women and marginalised groups must not only participate, but also lead and influence decisions.



Stronger together

Team Europe coordination and local partnerships maximise impact and learning.



Budgetary pressures require impact

Development partners must maximise impact through stronger coordination and more strategic engagement.

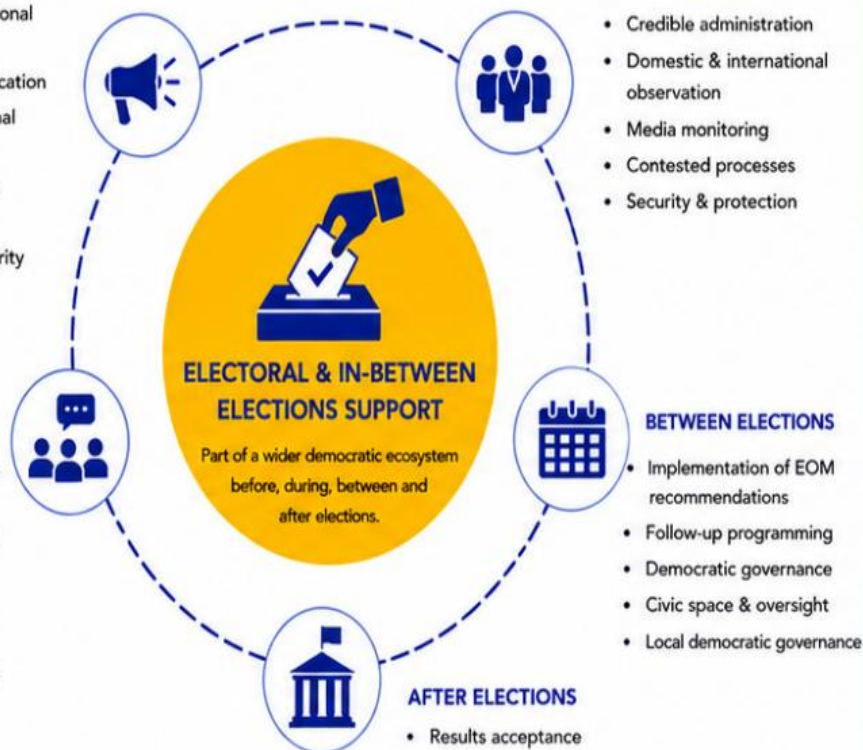
BEFORE ELECTIONS

- Legal & constitutional frameworks
- Civic & voter education
- EMB & institutional strengthening
- Political inclusion
- Media freedom
- Information integrity

THROUGHOUT

- Inclusive participation (women, youth, marginalised groups)
- Preventing violence & harassment
- Digital rights & information integrity

ELECTORAL CYCLE APPROACH



DURING ELECTIONS

- Credible administration
- Domestic & international observation
- Media monitoring
- Contested processes
- Security & protection

BETWEEN ELECTIONS

- Implementation of EOM recommendations
- Follow-up programming
- Democratic governance
- Civic space & oversight
- Local democratic governance

AFTER ELECTIONS

- Results acceptance
- Transition & peaceful handover
- Justice & remedies
- Lessons learned & adaptation

FOCUS AREAS



From assistance to support

Move beyond technical electoral assistance to support the wider political, legal and institutional environment.



Strengthening the ecosystem

Link observation, civic education, institutional capacity, media freedom and follow-up programming for lasting impact.



Local elections matter

Use local elections as entry points to understand trends, build participation and strengthen local governance.



Integrity in a changing environment

Address FIMI, cyber threats, AI and online campaigning while upholding rights, transparency and trust.



Inclusive political participation

Support women and youth across the cycle, address violence & harassment, and enable leadership and influence.



Country & recent election experiences

Learn from (recent) experiences in contexts such as Zambia, Kenya and Bangladesh to inform adaptive and evidence-based support.



Team Europe coordination

Coordinate MS, EU, EOMs, partners and local actors for coherent support and shared learning.