**Contribution from the Collaborative on Citizen Data to the “Elements paper” for the Financing for Development (FFD) process**

This submission is made by the [Collaborative on Citizen Data](https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/citizen-data) that has more than 100 members from national statistical offices, civil society organisations, national human rights institutes, academia, regional and international organisations.

Citizen data referenced to in this document are broadly defined as data originating from initiatives where citizens either initiate or are sufficiently engaged at different stages of the data value chain, irrespective of whether these data are integrated into official statistics. ([Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data](https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_55/documents/BG-4c-CGD_Framework-E.pdf))

## A global financing framework (including cross-cutting issues)

Strong national data and statistical systems are essential for advancing the financing for development agenda as they are the building blocks that are needed to understand the state of the economy, including public financial and debt management, investment decisions and in measuring progress of national, regional and global development goals. This includes information on gender, climate and poverty matters that relate to sustainable financing.

Data is also of key importance to tackle the Agenda 2030’s universal pledge to leave no one behind: Without having highly granular data available that is capable of identifying local drivers of exclusion and vulnerability, countries will struggle to provide policies and services that can adequately address the needs of underserved communities, thereby perpetuating inequality. Since the means of national statistical systems to provide such highly granular data are limited, it is key to work with inclusive data sources like Citizen Data, to complement official statistics.

Investments in official statistics and data within the larger national data ecosystem such as citizen data should therefore be integrated into the core action areas of the FFD agenda and the outcome document, as a cross-cutting issue and not just defined as a monitoring issue for implementation of the agenda.

# Action areas

The following articulates actions under specific action areas that the “Elements paper” should take into consideration.

1. **Domestic public resources**

Member States should **engage citizens** in decision-making processes, ensuring that budget allocation and fiscal oversight are **data-driven**, with **citizen participation and citizen data** playing a crucial role.

Although the production of official statistics falls under the government's purview, it is vital to establish innovative funding mechanisms to ensure sustained financial support for citizens, communities, civil society organizations and citizen science communities in producing citizen data; and in fostering partnership between citizen data producers and national statistical offices.

This approach ensures that financial resources are directed toward marginalized communities, addressing their needs more effectively. It promotes transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in the use of public funds. Additionally, involving citizens in this way can help identify spending gaps and improve public trust in financial governance.

**c. International Development Cooperation**

Member States should review the allocation of global funding for data and statistics to **prioritize and incentivize projects that support integrated, cross-system enhancements of national data and statistical systems**. This approach would encourage collaboration and holistic improvements across various data sectors, ensuring that national statistical capacities are developed comprehensively and are capable of supporting multiple policy areas, including financing for development.

International development cooperation should aim to **strengthen collaboration** **between state and non-state institutions** to create integrated data ecosystems, leveraging each other’s expertise, resources, and citizen data to improve data quality, accessibility, and use. Such partnerships ensure that data systems are comprehensive, inclusive, and capable of supporting evidence-based policy and decision-making across sectors, particularly in areas such as sustainable development and financing for development.

**Integrate Citizen Data (CD) with official statistics to enhance real-time monitoring in critical areas such as climate action, conflict, and humanitarian response**. This collaborative approach between state and non-state actors ensures precise resource allocation, directing financial and humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable regions during crises. By harnessing CD effectively, international development cooperation can strengthen resilience, foster data-driven decision-making, and improve the timeliness and relevance of interventions in rapidly changing environments.

**f. Addressing Systemic Issues**

**Citizen Data (CD)** plays a crucial role in **inclusive decision-making** **by actively involving citizens in data production and policy discussions**, especially in fragile states where formal data systems may be weak. CD provides real-time, localized insights that reflect the needs, preferences, and concerns of diverse communities. By incorporating this data into decision-making processes, governments, organizations, and National Statistical Offices (NSOs) can ensure that policies, reforms, and resource allocations are more representative and equitable. Stronger partnerships between CD initiatives and NSOs can improve the accuracy and scope of national statistics, fostering transparency, enhancing trust, and empowering citizens to shape systemic reforms and governance structures directly.

In fragile states, where institutional capacity may be limited, CD can also help identify urgent issues—such as access to services, security, or resources—filling critical data gaps that are often overlooked by traditional methods. By collaborating with NSOs, Citizen Data can complement official statistics, ensuring more robust data collection that better informs policy decisions. Engaging citizens directly through data empowers local communities, making them active participants in both identifying problems and proposing solutions. This not only enhances policy relevance but also contributes to building more resilient and responsive systems.

**g. Science, Technology, Innovation, and Capacity Building**

**Member States should actively engage citizens in data collection and policy development to support driving technological innovation**, such as crowdsourcing data on key issues like urban development, pollution, or healthcare. This inclusive approach contributes to a robust data ecosystem that informs financing priorities, ensuring that development efforts are aligned with the most pressing needs. By integrating CD, governments can enhance decision-making and optimize resource allocation for more effective development outcomes.

**Leverage CDto enhance transparency and promote human-rights-based approaches in science, technology, digital transformation, and innovation.** Integrating CD fosters accountability, ethical governance, and inclusive digital transformation, ensuring that science and technology development benefits all, particularly marginalized groups, while supporting responsible and sustainable innovation.

**III. Data, monitoring and follow up**

**Member States should adopt a whole-of-society approach to follow up on the commitments made in the FfD4 outcome document.** This approach would engage diverse stakeholders—governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, and international organizations—in monitoring and supporting the implementation of agreed recommendations. Part of the follow up could be to explore which national, regional and global initiatives are best suited to support implementation of the agreed upon recommendations.

To strengthen and build on the follow-up processes established by the Addis Agenda, member states should recommend that the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC), which brings together the Chief Statisticians of member states annually, is given the mandate to follow up on the data and statistics-related commitments in the FFD4 outcome. Part of the follow-up could include exploring which national, regional, and global initiatives are best suited to support implementation of the FFD4 commitments, while also making the UNSC more inclusive by ensuring broader participation from diverse stakeholders.