OVERVIEW

This document makes proposals for the 2023-2024 OECD DevCom work programme. It includes ideas shared by DevCom members at the 2022 Annual Meeting, held in Paris on 6-7 October.

The work programme will be finalised in December 2022, based on feedback from DevCom Co-Chairs and members.

The first part of this document sets out the context, challenges and opportunities for development communicators today.

The second section outlines goals and 3 work streams for DevCom in 2023-2024:

A. Learning from Others: What can we learn from communicators in other countries, and from leading experts on public attitudes and media?

B. Going Global: How can we communicate more effectively and collectively in different regions and partner countries?

C. Campaigning for People and Planet: How can we join, support and contribute our content to the big global campaigns?

Highlight: in late 2024, DevCom proposes to organise a Global Communicators Forum, bringing together communicators from across continents and policy sectors (e.g. biodiversity / climate change / migration / health / human rights).

The final section provides an overview of DevCom’s membership and financial situation. It proposes ways for members and partners to support the network. The second draft of this document will include a provisional budget for 2023-2024.

The Secretariat kindly requests current and prospective members to ensure that the administrative and financial procedures for their DevCom membership in 2023-2024 are in place.

For feedback, requests and further information, please contact DevCom Co-ordinator Felix Zimmermann (Felix.Zimmermann@oecd.org).
I. Communicating on Sustainable Development in 2023-2024: Challenges and Opportunities

Development communicators have always played fundamental roles in their organisations: raising awareness about pressing policy challenges; building public support and trust in international co-operation; and mobilising citizens and stakeholders into action and dialogue. Today, these roles are more important than ever.

Multiple crises have thrown the world off track in achieving our shared Sustainable Development Goals. The pandemic, Russia’s war on Ukraine and the environmental emergencies are redefining the world’s policy priorities. They are exacerbating poverty and inequality, hitting the world’s poorest and most vulnerable countries the hardest. They have caused geo-political rifts and fuelled populism, raising concerns about the future of development co-operation, international partnerships and multilateralism.

Meanwhile, media use continues to fragment across platforms. Audiences have become more polarised, suffering from content overload and subjected to growing levels of mis- and disinformation. While people are very concerned about global issues, this concern does not appear to translate into positive engagement and global solidarity.

In this new context, development communicators thus face major challenges:

1. **Updating their narratives and campaigns to today’s development policy priorities**
   - After decades of progress, poverty and hunger are on the rise again. How can we “ring the alarm bells” without falling into old tropes and stereotypes?
   - As COP-27 showed, there are tensions and trade-offs between climate action and development policies. How can we best communicate about and promote both?
   - Debt relief, climate finance, ODA eligibility: how can we make the jargon around finance for sustainable development more accessible for our audiences?

2. **Mastering the new media landscape to promote international solidarity**
   - Media behaviours are changing fast. Where can we find our diverse audiences and how do they consume information? How can we best partner with media outlets? How can we modernise our digital strategies to engage with younger generations?
   - People’s concerns differ and fluctuate greatly. What can we learn from public attitudes analysis and other forms of data? What messaging frames work best in the context of political polarisation and nationalist rhetoric?

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1 This list draws on discussions among DevCom members at their 2022 Annual Meeting on 6-7 October. In the speed-dating session, they identified challenges and assets in communications; in the closing session, they proposed ideas for the 2023-2024 DevCom work programme.
• In times of economic hardship, citizens may be concerned about global issues, but feel less willing to support global action. How can concern turn into positive engagement for sustainable development? What can we learn from experts in environmental, human rights or health advocacy, or from marketing experts in the private sector?

3. **Building trust and support not just at home, but also in partner countries**

• Communicating “globally” requires complex coordination. How can we set up our organisations to communicate better in partner countries? What can we do to promote more coordinated communications among different actors?

• In many partner countries, public perceptions are shaped by mis- and disinformation. How do citizens in different regions perceive development cooperation? What can communicators do to help tackle fake news campaigns?

• Media habits vary across regions and countries. How can we adapt our approaches to different contexts in Africa, Latin America, the Asia-Pacific and Middle East? With whom can we best partner at local level?

• Amid geo-political tensions, there is also a competition of values. How can we best promote values like human rights, democracy, multilateralism and gender equality?

As they face these challenges, development communicators also have **reasons for hope**. Whether driven by the pandemic, the climate crisis or Russia’s war: citizens and their political leaders have become acutely aware of how interconnected the world is, and how important international cooperation is in solving global challenges. Sustainable development issues today feature strongly in the media headlines.

Another opportunity raised by participants at the 2022 DevCom Annual Meeting lies in the strength of their **partnerships**. To reach audiences, they can draw on:

✓ the knowledge of policy makers;
✓ the networks of their organisation’s country offices & local teams;
✓ the experiences and success stories of their project partners;
✓ the reach and advocacy skills of partners in media, civil society & the private sector;
✓ the advice and collaboration of peers in other countries and organisations.

Communicators also have **resources** to work with. Collectively, development cooperation providers spent at least **USD 430 million on the “promotion of development awareness”** in 2020. Their communication teams include highly skilled professionals with deep experience in digital campaigning, global education, public engagement and media relations.

They also have a network of international peers who are driven by shared values, and are ready to collaborate and share lessons with one another: the OECD Development Communication Network.
II.  DevCom Goals & Activities in 2023-2024

The OECD Development Communication Network (DevCom) aims to help its members address the above challenges, providing them with inspiration, ideas and access to expertise from a growing community of partners across countries and sectors. Members receive:

- **Practical recommendations**, based on the experience of international peers.
- Cutting-edge **insights and analysis** on public attitudes, media relations and advocacy.
- **Content and partners** to help amplify their campaigns on global issues.

In 2023-2024, DevCom will pursue these goals through **events and publications**, and by promoting more joint campaigns.

**EVENTS.** **Annual Meetings** will be key occasions for members to connect at senior level. They will be complemented by **diverse online events**, ranging from informal get-togethers to larger multi-stakeholder workshops and seminars. We will also seize further opportunities to meet in person, for example at the **European Development Days**.

**Special highlight:** in late 2024, the Annual Meeting will be held back-to-back with a **Global Communicators Forum**. To prepare the Forum, we will organise **5-6 regional workshops** and a seminar on global perceptions of development cooperation. The output of the event would be a **policy note on global development communications**.

**PUBLICATIONS.** The SDG Communicator ([www.sdg-communicator.org](http://www.sdg-communicator.org)) will continue to be the main platform to share analysis and recommendations, through **blogposts, slide decks, policy notes** and updates to the **DevCom Toolkit**. We will also promote information-sharing through DevCom’s **LinkedIn Group**.

**Special highlights:**
- A short explainer on **complex terms in international development finance**.
- **Guest blogs by 5-6 DevCom members**, connected with their virtual presentations. Topics can include: campaign ideas; internal communications; media partnerships; measuring impact; corporate magazines; results reporting.

**CAMPAIGNS.** The SDG Communicator and monthly **“DevCom Round-Up”** will bring together background information and content for major global campaigns. Together with OECD and UN partners, we will organise briefings and propose joint campaigns ahead of report launches and international days. We will also connect social media managers in the DevCom’s Twitter chat.

**Campaign themes:** Gender equality & International Women’s Day; annual OECD launch of aid data; Climate & biodiversity & COP-27; SDG progress reports.
### DEVCOM WORK STREAMS IN 2023-2024

In 2023-2024, DevCom’s activities will be grouped into three work streams. This table provides an overview of aims, proposed activities and key partners.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. LEARNING FROM OTHERS</th>
<th>B. GOING GLOBAL</th>
<th>C. CAMPAIGNING FOR PEOPLE &amp; PLANET</th>
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<td><strong>AIM</strong></td>
<td><strong>SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>JOINT CAMPAIGNS</strong></td>
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<td>To promote peer learning among DevCom members and from experts in the DevCom community, and to grow DevCom’s knowledge base on good practices.</td>
<td>PEAR LEARNING SESSIONS ON PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS 3-4 one-hour virtual sessions per year, each led by a DevCom member. Members will share experiences and tools, and network more generally.</td>
<td>Each year, the OECD Secretariat will invite members to co-create campaigns on:</td>
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<td>MEET THE EXPERTS SESSIONS ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES &amp; THE MEDIA 3-4 one-hour virtual sessions per year, featuring presentations by experts on public attitudes, media trends and more.</td>
<td>- International Women’s Day</td>
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<td>SDG COMMUNICATOR BLOG Insights from each session will be captured in an SDG Communicator blogpost.</td>
<td>- Launch of ODA statistics</td>
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<td><strong>SPECFIC ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>2024 GLOBAL COMMUNICATORS FORUM</strong> This senior-level event will be held back-to-back with the 2024 DevCom Annual Meeting. The Forum will be the culmination of a series of events in 2023-2024: 5-6 REGIONAL WORKSHOPS 2 THEMATIC SEMINARS on: Global Perceptions on Development Cooperation; Managing Global Comms</td>
<td>- COP &amp; biodiversity summits</td>
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<td>POLICY NOTE ON GOING GLOBAL To be published in late 2024, this 15-20 page note will include recommendations on new narratives; breaking comms siloes &amp; adapting to different regions.</td>
<td><strong>UPDATE FROM PARTNERS</strong> Briefing sessions, newsletter items &amp; twitter/linkedin updates on major upcoming reports, events &amp; international days. Special focus in 2023: the UN SDG Summit; Food Security summit</td>
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<td><strong>GLOSSARY / ADVICE</strong> Short note on how to explain complex terms in development finance</td>
<td><strong>OTHER HIGHLIGHTS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>OTHER HIGHLIGHTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 DEVCOM ANNUAL MEETINGS in 2023 and 2024</strong></td>
<td>- DevCom members</td>
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<td>2 meet-ups at the EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS On demand: COUNTRY-SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS for DevCom members Monthly DevCom ROUND-UP newsletter DevCom LINKEDIN GROUP and TWITTER Chat Group</td>
<td>- Development Engagement Lab</td>
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<td><strong>MAIN PARTNERS</strong></td>
<td>- Journalist &amp; media partners</td>
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<td>- Social media campaigners &amp; private sector communications experts</td>
<td>- DevCom country offices</td>
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<td>- DevCom country offices</td>
<td>- Africa Communications Week</td>
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<td>- SEGIB communicators network</td>
<td>- Global polling organisations</td>
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<td>- UN Department for Global Communications</td>
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<td>- OECD DAC &amp; Development Centre Secretariats</td>
<td>- Public development banks</td>
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Membership & Funding

Interest in DevCom continues growing. In the 2013-2014 biennium, the network counted nine funders. By 2021-2022, this number has grown to eighteen.

This increase in funders has brought a wealth of new ideas and perspectives into the network, and has helped stabilise DevCom’s funding base. In 2015-2016, DevCom received a total of EUR 415,000 in voluntary contributions from 12 members. In 2021-2022, DevCom is projected to receive EUR 496,700, allowing the Secretariat to deliver on a large range of activities (see “Overview of DevCom Activities and Deliverables in 2021-2022”).

The increase in members has not brought a corresponding increase in the network’s operating budget. The average contribution of members has fallen from EUR 18,000 per member per year in 2015-2016 to below EUR 14,000 in 2021-2022. Several members with lower budgets are unable to provide the indicative annual contribution of EUR 23,500 per year (i.e. EUR 47,000 per biennium).

At the same time, the growth in membership has increased demands on the Secretariat to increase its thematic and geographic scope. It has also increased transaction costs. The Secretariat dedicates considerable time to following up on pledges, rather than delivering on the work programme.

Unlike other OECD-hosted initiatives, DevCom operates on a cost-recovery basis. It is funded entirely through the provision of voluntary contributions from members. It does not receive funding from the core budgets of the OECD Development Centre or Development Assistance Committee. Moreover, the overhead costs borne by the Secretariat have risen in recent years.

For 2023-2024, the Secretariat invites members to DevCom in the following ways:

- Where possible, increase the volume of their annual contributions to EUR 25,000.
- Follow up on pledges as quickly as possible, and provide advance funding for the two-year work programme, rather than in two annual instalments.
- Provide in-kind support, for example by hosting network events or contributing to knowledge production.
- Fund specific DevCom projects beyond the standard network activities.
- Contribute to the health of the network by participating actively and promoting its activities.

The standard procedure to confirm financial support for DevCom is as follows: (1) The member sends the OECD Development Centre an official “offer letter”, using a template provided by the DevCom Secretariat. (2) Upon receipt of the letter, the OECD issues an invoice with details on payment. (3) The DevCom member disburses the funds to the specified account.

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2 This assumes that all remaining pledges from current members are fulfilled. As of 22 November 2022, total receipts are EUR 473,000.