

Donor Principles for Human Rights in the Digital Age

Background Note for Public Consultation, July 2023

Overview

The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) is an intergovernmental coalition of [37 Member States](#) committed to ensuring that the development, use and governance of the Internet and digital technologies reinforce human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. FOC Members coordinate diplomatic efforts, share information about current developments, and collectively voice concerns over measures that threaten human rights in the digital age.

Since its foundation in 2011, the Coalition has played a vital role promoting the values of democracy and human rights online, helping like-minded democracies, powered by civil society, academic, and industry expertise, to raise awareness, empower stakeholders, and advance strategies to promote a human rights respecting digital environment.

In 2023, under the United States' Chairship of the FOC and in line with the activities outlined in the 2023 [Program of Action](#), the FOC aims to increase ties between FOC multilateral policy development and country-level development activities. In pursuit of this effort, the United States and Canada have revitalised the FOC Funding Coordination Group (FCG) - a multinational and multistakeholder coordination, strategic planning, and global norms setting mechanism focused on bridging foreign policymaking and international development.

As part of the FCG's efforts, the FCG co-Chairs, the United States and Canada, are leading negotiation efforts for a set of 'Donor Principles for Human Rights in the Digital Age' (hereafter 'Donor Principles').

Aim

Rooted in an existing set of proposed principles for donor funding drafted by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹, the Donor Principles will seek to establish guardrails and elaborate what rights-respecting, democracy affirming donor investment should look like in the digital space.

Recognising the need for a clear normative framework to guide donors to help ensure that foreign assistance in the digital space advances, rather than undermines, democratic values and respect for human rights, the Donor Principles will fill this gap by establishing the normative basis for foreign assistance in the digital realm.

Submissions

The United States and Canada, the FCG co-Chairs and lead drafters of the Donor Principles, invite Member States, national human rights bodies, and other relevant State institutions, international and regional organisations, civil society, scholars, and other interested individuals and organisations to provide written comments and/ or suggested edits to the Donor Principles draft, which is based on preliminary feedback from an FCG internal multistakeholder drafting group, by **COB Friday, 28 July** by emailing Lisa Poggiali (lpoggiali@usaid.gov) and Sidney Leclercq (sleclercq@idrc.ca) with CC to the FOC Support Unit (Zora Gouhary (zora@gp-digital.org) and Nusa Tomic (nusa@gp-digital.org)). Please find the draft linked [here](#).

¹ https://um.dk/en/danida/results/eval/eval_reports/study-on-digital-development-ogamp-human-rights

