

# Effectively countering authoritarian playbooks: **Research process**

**Authors:** Karoline Helbig, Senior Researcher; Sam Hilton, Senior Research Fellow  
**Reviewer:** Samantha Sekar, Head of Knowledge & Research  
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**Registered office:**

c/o UES – Gemeinnützige GmbH für Effektives  
Spenden  
Müllerstrasse 138D  
13353 Berlin, Germany  
hello@powerfordemocracies.org  
www.powerfordemocracies.org  
+49 30 12144574

Responsible: Markus N. Beeko

## Introduction

The goal of Power for Democracies' first research initiative, Effectively Countering Authoritarian Playbooks (ECAPB), is to produce credible recommendations for donors of evidence-based effective initiatives that counter the effects of the authoritarian playbook and thus protect democracy.

Globally, we are seeing a trend of democratic backsliding, that is the erosion of democratic norms, institutions, and practices (Mair, 2014; Brown, 2015; Bermeo, 2016; Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Runciman, 2018).

Scholars and civil society organisations are working to address this issue. However, the field is constrained by a lack of empirical evaluation and cost-effectiveness data; it is thus challenging for organisations to identify the most effective strategies and the best way to direct funds and/or other resources.

Power for Democracies is seeking at least in part to address this deficit. Power for Democracies integrates established and customised research methods to produce its recommendations.

For this initiative, we

- (1) documented authoritarian moves from all over the world
- (2) developed prioritisation methods to drill down on key countries
- (3) conducted case studies of shortlisted countries related to their importance, authoritarian threat, tractability, and opportunity for democratic change
- (4) interviewed regional and democracy experts
- (5) conducted literature reviews of tactics for countering authoritarianism

(6) developed methods to compare relevant countries and countertactics

(7) evaluated civil society organisations working on those tactics.

ECAPB is designed to set new standards for evidence-based democratic support. This will primarily enable donors to act decisively and strategically in directing their funding to countering authoritarianism and strengthening democratic ecosystems globally. It can also be informative for civil society organisations, researchers, and policy-makers.

## **Our process**

The process we followed is set out below, in Figure 1. While here we seek to formalise our approach for reasons of clarity, our process was highly iterative. We tested many things, adapted, and tested again. We used an ever-changing live document to record and adapt our processes as we progressed.

The sections following set out the main approaches that worked.

**Figure 1: ECAPB research process**



# 1. Background research

Preliminary research covered two basic research questions:

- What projects and studies have there been to date that have sought to identify and compare the most effective ways to address authoritarianism? Which have useful approaches and tools that we can use for our initiative?
- Where have authoritarian moves been applied and what countermeasures have been identified?

This phase laid the groundwork for the project by systematically surveying relevant literature. The phase underwent several iterative adaptations throughout the first half of the research round; its findings and outputs fed directly into the subsequent stages of the project.

## 1.1 Landscape scan of existing democracy efforts

The initial step in the preliminary research involved a comprehensive desk review or landscape scan of global initiatives and studies that addressed topics related to ECAPB's thematic focus.

Globally, this searched for projects and studies that had addressed similar issues, and for methods and tools that could be adopted or adapted for ECAPB. This was conducted twice – first, at the outset of the project, and then, midway through – to ensure the analysis reflected most up-to-date developments.

The process relied firstly on web-based research targeting academic publications and reports from civil society organisations. This allowed us to map what existing organisations do and the kinds of projects they support. But it provided little information about the underlying strategies and decision-making tools that organisations used.

Following the desk review, further research was carried out through networking and reaching out to people in the field.

## 1.2 Mapping APB moves and countermoves

The second component involved a rigorous mapping of authoritarian playbook (APB) moves documented in academic and civil society literature. Several interrelated research questions shaped this process:

- (1) Which APB moves have been identified?
- (2) What is the frequency and type of APB moves across various national contexts?
- (3) Which countries and actors have exhibited these APB moves?
- (4) How are APB moves categorised and defined?
- (5) What terminology is used in the literature?

Based on a review of the academic and civil society literature, we collated a list of 67 types of APB moves. We combined these APB moves into seven categories: (1) discursive; (2) information/media; (3) civil society; (4) checks and balances; (5) electoral; (6) all-encompassing; (7) transnational. An explanatory codebook with definitions accompanied the categorisation.

We drew on the data in the annual reports produced by democracy watchers of note and record, including Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) and Freedom House, from 2019 onwards. We collected every APB move that was documented, along with the countries and years where these APB moves took place. We assigned each APB move to one of the seven categories mentioned above.<sup>1</sup>

The dataset that we produced was repeatedly updated to incorporate new recent moves and to revise our categorisations.

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<sup>1</sup> The categorisation was done to get a better overview of the landscape of APB moves. In the end, we did not use these categories as we realised they did not correspond well with the available literature on APBs and because we did not need them when researching individual APB moves in the next phases.

Second, and in a parallel process using the same methods, we mapped and categorised APB countermoves. This led us to the conclusion that there is less research on APB countermoves and their effectiveness, and thus on how civil society organisations could effectively pursue or implement them, than there is on APB moves. This was so much the case that the results of this research could not be used systematically; rather only some findings from Phase 2 and 3 were sporadically included where they were found to be useful.

This highlights the need for more original research on the effectiveness of countermoves and counterstrategies to APB moves that could then be applied by civil society organisations, and support policy and funding decisions.

## 2.A Prioritisation of countries

The research team tried different entry points to this new and original research, ultimately deciding to start with a prioritisation of the countries in which to look for pro-democracy initiatives.<sup>2</sup>

The country prioritisation phase of ECAPB developed and applied a robust methodology for selecting priority countries. This process involved:

- (1) developing a set of quantitative data on importance, threat, tractability, and opportunity
- (2) the initial selection of 26 countries for further research

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<sup>2</sup> One of the approaches we tried was the decontextualised prioritisation of the APB moves themselves. We started to collect qualitative and quantitative empirical studies on impact size and impact probability of each APB move and scored each of them on the quality of the evidence. During the process, we realised that the very wide variety of available evidence makes comparison between the moves largely impossible. Even though the number of studies with a global scope that analysed one of our APB moves was limited, these studies each had a very different focus and frame of reference that did not allow for comparison between APB moves. Furthermore, the impact size and impact probability of each move was highly dependent on the country it occurred in (and the legal frameworks, cultural conditions, actors involved), which made the individual case studies that do exist even less effective for comparison.

- (3) the production of short-form profiles on the selected countries containing both quantitative and qualitative data on the four dimensions
- (4) a systematic rating and prioritisation process for the countries based on this data.

Thereby, we continuously narrowed our scope while increasing the variety and quality of data we based our decisions on.

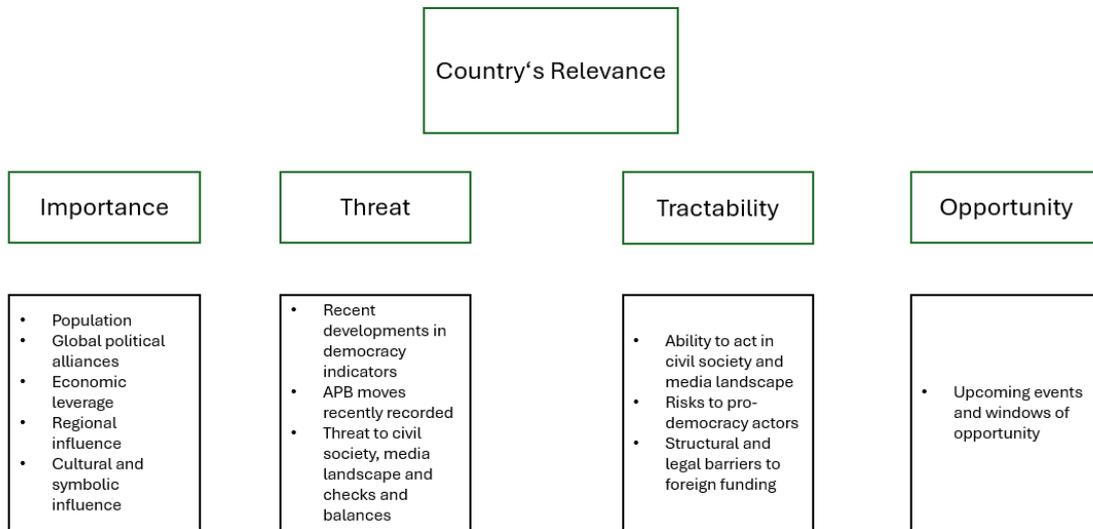
### **Conceptual framework**

Within the framework of the ECAPB Initiative, four conceptual dimensions that were designed to help select countries with a good balance of need for and feasibility of pro-democracy work informed this prioritisation:

- (1) The countries' importance
- (2) The authoritarian threat they are under
- (3) The general tractability of pro-democracy efforts
- (4) The windows of opportunity coming up in the near to mid future

These four dimensions were combined in a concept tree (shown here). They have structured the work in both the country prioritisation phase and the deep dive phase.

**Figure 2: Concept tree of country’s relevance**



The idea of reducing complexity by drafting concept trees that contain components with different levels of granularity and make concept constellations (such as on democracy, or, in our case, relevance for ECAPB) measurable was coined by Munck and Verkuilen (2002).

We adopted this idea to conceptualise the ECAPB-relevance of countries as being defined by a combination of importance, threat, tractability, and opportunity (refer to **Error! Reference source not found.**).

The concept tree balances importance, threat, tractability, and opportunity, offering a robust, donor-relevant framework. Though the distinction of these four components is an original conceptualisation by the Power for Democracies research team, each individual component’s conceptualisation and indicators can be backed by literature.

Importance reflects global or regional weight (Nolte, 2010; Dahl and Tufte, 1973) and population size; threat captures recent authoritarian backsliding (Levitsky and Way, 2010); tractability assesses whether additional funding can succeed at driving change given the civic space

and state capacity (Carothers Brechenmacher, 2014; Verba et al., 1995); and opportunity highlights near- to mid-term windows for impact (Tilly, 1978; Tarrow, 1994).

This process also has some similarity to the scale, neglectedness, tractability approach commonly adopted for prioritisation processes in the effective altruism community (MacAskill, 2015; Oehlsen, 2024).

## 2.A.1 Country prioritisation spreadsheet

The first component of the process involved designing a comprehensive spreadsheet tool that could aggregate a wide range of indicators relevant to country selection. The underlying research questions were:

- (1) Which distinct indicators are there that are highly relevant to the four concepts?
- (2) How should these indicators be weighted and aggregated?
- (3) Based on the answers to the first two questions, which countries should be selected for further research?

The spreadsheet enabled our selection of countries for further research, but our selection process factored in additional considerations.

### Indicators and aggregation

A master spreadsheet was constructed listing countries alongside selected indicators from a variety of reputable datasets including Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Civicus, Freedom House, Reporters without Borders (RSF), and the World Bank.

The indicators were chosen for their ability to reflect the four components (importance, threat, tractability, opportunity), and their completeness of data (available for all or most countries) across countries (refer to **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Some indicators were directly transferred from their original datasets, while others were mathematically transformed. For example, we used the additive inverse of some indicators for conceptual reasons,<sup>3</sup> ‘deltas’ in key indicators were added to track democratic trajectory over time, and we took the log of population size and gross domestic product (GDP) to avoid overemphasis on very large and very wealthy countries.

The spreadsheet incorporated mechanisms for calculating z-scores of all the data, taking weighted averages, managing missing data, excluding cases based on specific criteria,<sup>4</sup> and adjusting for qualitative inputs. The indicators were weighted<sup>5</sup> and aggregated into component indices, and the components in turn aggregated as a weighted average into an overall ‘country eligibility score.’ This considered the relevance of each component, and the variety and quality of data.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, we used the additive inverse of the delta between Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) scores 2022–2024 when aggregating the threat component to reflect the reasoning: the larger the decrease of the LDI score, the higher the threat to the country.

<sup>4</sup> Such as a country’s categorisation as a closed autocracy (as there is almost no tractability in those countries).

<sup>5</sup> The initial weights were determined based on the conceptual importance we assigned each indicator, and we did some model testing and robustness checks to fine tune the weighting and aggregation process. However, we are aware of the considerable inherent weaknesses of the model and we tried to account for these with the more detailed and qualitative approaches to country selection in the following phases.

**Table 1: Indicators country database**

Purpose/ component	Indicator	Source	Weight within component	Reasoning for inclusion and caveat
Exclusion criteria	Region			
	Regime type			
Importance	Log population ( <i>logarithm naturalis</i> )	Wikipedia collection of national census data ( <a href="#">Wikipedia contributors, 2025</a> )	37%	The more people live in a country, the more people are affected by the state of democracy within it. Log to avoid overemphasis on very large countries
	World Power Index 2022	World Power Index ( <a href="#">Morales Ruvalcaba, 2023</a> )	55%	The more powerful a country, the more its state of democracy is going to influence other countries' states of democracy. Goodliffe & Hawkins (2017), Brinks and Coppedge (2006).  Component index covering different aspects of power from different sources, so higher weight. Caveat: mostly

economically focussed indicators

	Log GDP	<a href="#">World Bank data</a> (World Bank, 2025)	8%	Economic status correlates with political influence Tabellini and Magistretti (2025); <a href="#">Lai (2019)</a>
Threat	APB move count 250,317: total number of APB moves per country recorded in 2019–2024	Own compilation based on reports from V-Dem and Freedom House	15%	Number of APB moves indicates threat level
	Delta V-Dem LDI 2022–2024; inverted	Official V-Dem data, variable: v2x_regime 2024_spelled ( <a href="#">Coppedge et al, 2025</a> )	20%	Drop in V-Dem index indicates democratic backsliding which often correlates with authoritarian threat
	Delta women political empowerment index 2022– 2024, inverted	Official V-Dem data, variable: v2x_gender ( <a href="#">Coppedge et al, 2025</a> )	7%	Authoritarian threats usually correlate with drop in women’s empowerment <a href="#">Ortiz et al (2023)</a> , <a href="#">Wang et al (2017)</a> . Caveat: correlation
	Mobilisation for Autocracy (V-Dem) - Delta 2022–2024	Official V-Dem data, variable: ( <a href="#">Coppedge et al, 2025</a> )	5%	Mobilisation for autocracy correlates with authoritarian threat. Caveat: correlation

	Political Corruption Index (PCI) (V-Dem) - Delta 2022–2024	Official V-Dem data ( <a href="#">Coppedge et al, 2025</a> )	7%	Authoritarianism usually correlates with political corruption <a href="#">McMann et al (2020)</a> . Caveat: correlation; mixed empirical evidence for medium-democratic countries ( <a href="#">Sung (2004)</a> ); <a href="#">Montinola and Jackman (2001)</a>
	V-Dem liberal democracy score 2024; inverted	Official V-Dem data ( <a href="#">Coppedge et al, 2025</a> )	20%	Lower democracy score correlates with lower resilience against authoritarian moves and thus an increased threat posed by authoritarianism <a href="#">Croissant &amp; Lott (2024)</a> , <a href="#">Boese et al (2019)</a> . Caveat: correlation
Tractability	Control of APB Corruption 2023	World Bank Control of Corruption Index ( <a href="#">World Bank, 2025</a> )	5%	Pro-democracy efforts are often inhibited by corruption (i.e. non-institutionalised participation in protests etc. declines <a href="#">Bauhr</a>

and Grimes (2014); Arkhede Olsson (2014),  
so control  
increases  
tractability

2023 World Bank Data  
on Judicial  
Independence

World Bank Prosperity  
Data (World Bank, 2025)

10%

Judicial  
independence  
increases  
chances of  
successfully  
countering APB  
moves through  
legal means  
Powell, Emilia  
J.; Staton,  
Jeffrey K.  
(2009, Crabtree  
et al (2015)

Legislative Constraints  
on the Executive Index  
(V-Dem) 2024

Official V-Dem data  
(Coppedge et al, 2025)

10%

Checks on the  
executive limit  
the autocrat's  
scope for  
action if they  
are in the  
executive.

Government  
effectiveness index  
2023 (World Bank)

World Bank Government  
Effectiveness Index  
(World Bank, 2025)

5%

An effective  
government  
can put checks  
on  
authoritarian  
efforts from  
other spheres  
of the political  
system

Civicus 2024 score

Civicus Index (Civicus,  
2025)

8%

An effective  
civil society  
can build  
pressure on  
political actors

Variety of  
Success

and put checks on authoritarian efforts, thus reducing the risk of democratic breakdown  
Bernhard et al (2020),  
Bernhard et al (2015); Staden (2022)

Median salary of working people

Calculated from:  
 - Median income 2017 (Our World In Data, 2024)  
 - Unemployment percent (Our World In Data, 2024)  
 - Working age percent (Our World In Data, 2024)

20%

Plausibility checked w. UN Gross Monthly Wages (UN, 2025)

All else equal, countries with low or medium incomes are likely to be more cost-effective for that philanthropic funding. The lower the salary working on pro-democracy efforts, the more they can achieve per euro spent

Press Freedom Index 2024

Reporters Without Borders Index (RSE, 2025)

8%

A free press can build pressure on political actors and thus put checks on authoritarian efforts  
 Hiaeshutter-Rice et al (2019),  
 Mechkova et al, 2019).

Freedom on the net  
2024

Freedom House Index  
([Funk et al, 2024](#))

8%

A free internet is an important infrastructure for civil society and media to coordinate in building pressure on political actors and thus put checks on authoritarian efforts.

[Ruijgrok \(2016\), Jha & Kodila-Tedika \(2020\)](#);

Morton, F. L., & Allen, A. (2001)

Moore, Susan A. (1996);

Hatano, Aya (2019)

Washington v. Blake (2021);

Inter-American Court of Human Rights. (2024). [Serie C 400: Case of the Indigenous Community of the Lhaka Honhat \(Our Land\) Association v. Argentina.](#)

Federal Constitutional Court. (2021, March 24). [Order — constitutional complaints](#)

against the Federal Climate Change Act (Bundes-Klimaschutzgesetz – KSG).  
 Press release 31/2021.

Verein KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz and Others v. Switzerland, App. No. 53600/20 (European Court of Human Rights Grand Chamber, 9 April 2024).

Opportunity	Planned elections in 2026 (score=1) or 2027 (score=0.3)	Wikipedia data collection ( <u>Wikipedia contributors, 2025</u> )	10%	Elections are an institutionalised opportunity for regime change.
	Pro-democracy mobilisation (V-Dem) 2024	V-Dem official data ( <u>Coppedge et al 2025</u> )	10%	Ongoing pro-democracy mobilisation can be leveraged and increased for pro-democracy efforts in a country.

Please note that a basic template for this model was borrowed, with permission from the research team at Ambitious Impact, and the concept itself draws from their work into Weighted Factor Models.

## 2.A.2 First country selection based on prioritisation spreadsheet

The next stage was to convert the data into concrete decisions according to the following steps:

- (1) Countries were filtered to remove those deemed out of scope: closed autocracies, and states we only had insufficient or unreliable data on.
- (2) Weightings were applied and the overall Country Eligibility Score was calculated for each country. Countries were ranked from top to bottom on this score.
- (3) We introduced minimum thresholds for the importance, threat, tractability, and opportunity index values, to find countries with a good balance of all components (rather than countries with especially high values for one or two components that accounts for the overall high score).
- (4) We applied region-based filtering. This was implemented to comply with our aim to be global in scope, and to ensure that no one region is systematically favoured due to our aggregation mechanisms.
- (5) Finally, we generated a medium list of countries for further research. We did not just pick the top-scoring countries on a single ranking but conducted robustness checks to ensure that countries were not selected due to a single data aberration. One round of prioritisation was conducted by a core team and based on spreadsheet results and internal discussions; a subsequent round integrated input from additional researchers. Cross-checks were performed using rapid background scans to account for political developments not yet reflected in the datasets. This hybrid approach aimed to realise both data-driven rigour and contextual awareness.

Updates to the database were made during the process due to the publication of the new 2024 V-Dem and Freedom House reports.<sup>6</sup> To manage this, we scheduled several rounds of selection: in an initial round, we selected four countries to start the research and in subsequent rounds we selected additional countries based on the updated data.

In total, 26 countries were selected based on the aggregated scores from the country database and the additional considerations just outlined: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, South Korea, Tunisia, Turkey.

The United States consistently ranked among the top priority countries in the spreadsheet, despite the data not being updated with 2025 authoritarian threat developments. Because the United States has a particularly sophisticated democracy donor and research ecosystem, we did not follow the same ECAPB research process for the United States. For the first US recommendation, we selected from initiatives suggested by existing impact-oriented democracy researchers after an additional review and vetting process.

### **2.A.3 Short country profiles**

The short country profiles aimed to provide additional context to the quantitative prioritisation results and home in on the tractability of future initiatives. A standardised profile template was created to check exclusion criteria and integrate data from the prioritisation spreadsheet concerning: (1) importance; (2) threat; (3) tractability; and (4)

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<sup>6</sup> However, even the most current data in the available databases reflected on the situation in 2024, with some data being even older than that.

opportunity. Throughout the profile drafting phase, this template was refined and all profiles were updated to ensure comparability.

## **Drafting short country profiles**

Whenever a country was selected, we started the more qualitative portion of the process by researching country-specific data on further research that had been additionally conducted and applied the exclusion criteria that had not been covered in the country database.

Countries were excluded if:

- (1) they were engaged in active war in their own country to an extent that led to a cessation of ‘normal’ political activity, e.g. civil society and national political system are not operating as usual
- (2) martial law was enacted
- (3) they were considered a ‘failed state’ in 2025
- (4) there were restrictions that prevented all or most civil society organisations from receiving foreign funding, including:
  - legal restrictions
  - 
  - money-transfer problems.
  -

Based on this exercise, we excluded El Salvador, Ethiopia, and India from further research.

If countries were not excluded on the basis of these criteria, we started more qualitative research on them according to the four components. Since the importance component was one of the weakest in the country database, we did most additional qualitative research on this in the report phase to get a better picture of the countries that had according to our criteria so far been selected.

We added information concerning each country's:

- regional or global influence (including key alliances and memberships)
- influence on the region's democracy and its potential to cause instability in the region in case of democratic backsliding
- economic weight and active influence on other countries' political systems.

Regarding the threat level, we identified the three APB moves from our APB move mapping that posed the largest threat to the country's democracy. We based these assessments on background research that considered sources like the country reports published by Freedom House, and V-Dem.

Moreover, we did quick analyses on each country's status regarding judicial independence, election integrity, civil society, and media freedom. In the tractability section, we evaluated how feasible supporting pro-democracy initiatives through foreign funding would be in each country. We took a variety of factors into account, including:

- an assessment of the resistance to APB moves and evidence of past success stories
- the strength of civil society and activists' and NGOs' ability to work
- various legal barriers to democracy aid
- the government's receptiveness to reforms
- the risks involved in pro-democracy action for civil society organisations.

Finally, the opportunities section identified the most promising windows for pro-democracy engagement over the next 12–36 months, such as upcoming elections, mass mobilisations, or emerging civil society initiatives.

During the research process, we paused work on Egypt and Senegal due to legal restrictions.

Full reports were done on 20 countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, South Korea, Tunisia, Turkey.

## **2.A.4 Second country selection**

We conducted a decision-making workshop to prioritise countries. This process combined independent assessment, group deliberation, and three different approaches to prioritisation to validate choices and explore strategic fit.

For the second iteration of country selection, we used a process that was inspired by the Delphi method. This method is a survey and decision-making procedure for expert panels under conditions of high uncertainty (Khodyakov et al., 2023). It is often used in policy-making (Rayens and Hahn, 2000), research (Okoli and Pawlowski, 2004), and other decision processes in diverse areas involving forecasting or prioritisation (Kauko and Palmroos, 2014; Hasson et al, 2025). It aims to increase the epistemic quality of a collectively deliberated decision. When faced with a problem where actors cannot find consensus on the optimal model, probability of variables, and desirable outcome for a given situation, it is particularly useful (Marchau et al, 2019).

The Delphi process is usually conducted in multiple rounds, aggregating the experts' independent opinions and/or reasoning, followed by a revision phase where experts can see the aggregated response and have the chance to update their preference in the next round of voting (Linstone and Turoff, 2002; UK Government Office for Science, 2024). The decision is repeated until more potential options are ruled out.

Similarly, our second country prioritisation involved several stages and perspectives on selecting relevant countries for further research – namely a core team scoring, a team discussion, a threshold approach, and a portfolio approach.

- **Core team scoring:** Before the in-person workshop, a pre-scoring exercise was conducted by the team members who had written the country reports and were therefore highly familiar with the criteria leveraged in the reports and the countries they had researched the profiles on. These team members independently scored the countries on the four prioritisation dimensions using a 1–5 scale. Each score was accompanied by a written justification, producing a transparent, traceable scoring sheet. During the workshop, the core team met to discuss and update their scores.
- **Team discussion:** The second approach to prioritising countries was conducted by the entire research team based on the information provided in the country profiles and the initial scorings by all team members. The first step was to exclude countries the team members unanimously agreed upon, resulting in the exclusion of Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Slovenia, and Tunisia. Secondly, the preliminary rankings were debated and adjusted in light of collective insights.
- **Threshold approach:** Based on these updated scores, a threshold approach was applied, going through each country’s importance, threat, feasibility, and opportunity in turn, and excluding those falling below critical cut-offs on key indicators. Countries that made it through the threshold approach were Hungary, Turkey, Italy, Indonesia, Poland, and Argentina.
- **Portfolio approach:** To ensure that the portfolio reflected strategic diversity, countries were also grouped into clusters based on shared characteristics, for example, ‘high-threat with current pro-democracy momentum’, ‘democratising after U-turn’, or ‘stable democratic decline.’ Not all countries could be classified this way,

but this provided an overview of the countries not ruled out yet and the strategic opportunity to pick countries with different contexts for further research.

These methods allowed for layered decision-making, combining different approaches to prioritising countries for the ECAPB research round.

## **2.B Prioritisation of democracy tactics**

Alongside the work on country prioritisation, we undertook an attempt to identify the most effective approaches that civil society organisations can adopt to effectively counter APB moves. We describe these as ‘tactics for democracy’ or ‘democracy tactics.’

### **2.B.1 Identifying and categorising democracy tactics**

We constructed an initial list of democracy tactics. We began by reviewing literature and reports from various democracy civil society organisations, identifying what actions they were taking. We then invited input from across our Power for Democracies research team to expand the list with any tactics that team members were aware of that were not already on the list.

To exclude those tactics that did not match the project requirements, we developed a set of exclusion criteria based on the scope of ECAPB. These were independently applied by two Power for Democracies staff. Where staff disagreed, they discussed and a third staff member was brought in to review the decision.

The exclusion criteria ruled out actions that were:

- a. politically partisan: such as raising support for a particular candidate
- b. state-based: tactics to be carried out by government actors rather than civil society actors
- c. only loosely related to democracy: such as providing psychological support to activists

- d. years away from manifesting impact: such as working with young children
- e. many steps away from manifesting impact: such as a democracy awards ceremony
- f. ethically concerning: like reputational attacks.

This list was flexible and was adapted to our research as the research process progressed. This often meant breaking down tactics to align with the existing academic and grey literature. For example, when researching ‘electoral observation’, there was different literature on institutional electoral observation and on citizen-led electoral observation, thus the tactic was split into two.

The list grew to about 90 tactics. There is no definitive list used for the ECAPB initiative since the list is ‘live’: it continues to change and adapt to the initiative’s needs.

## **2.B.3-5 Researching what works**

For each democracy tactic, we carried out a very short literature scan (taking less than a day per tactic) that we captured in a short report. Each report listed the key papers that could be identified on the particular tactic in the available time and the key findings of each of those papers.

These short reports focussed on identifying papers that provided empirical evidence that the tactic had impact. Where there were no or very few papers with experimental evidence, report authors also considered case studies of when and where the tactic had been successful based on media and civil society organisation impact reports, and the theoretical case made in the literature that a tactic for democracy should lead to an impact.

Based on the findings from the literature, each short report listed:

- the key types of impact that the tactic for democracy led to, e.g. increased voter turnout, lower levels of fraud, identification of

corruption, and where possible any quantitative data on the scale of that impact

- any harms and risks of the democracy tactic.

For each tactic, the report author judged the quality of the evidence available on each tactic and scored this according to the rubric summarised below.

#### Quality of evidence rubric

- **Number of high-quality studies (0 to 5):** This is a ‘high-quality study’ = relevant (quasi-)experimental study, with no reason to doubt its validity
- **Scope/variety of studies (0 to 3):** Is there evidence from sources other than experimental studies, e.g. good quantitative assessments, case studies, impact reports etc.?
- **Theoretical groundedness (-1 to 1):** Do we have a clear conceptual/theoretical understanding of the circumstances under which this democracy tactic has impact and if results vary, do we know why?
- **Issues with applicability (0 to 1):** Are there applicability issues, i.e. situations (regions or democracy types) where the likely context for the application of this intervention is different to the context where it was applied in the studies?
- **Researcher discretion (-1 to 1):** For example, +1 if the reviewer thinks there is good evidence on the other steps of the theory of change, -1 if the studies seem to be biased, etc.

As a caveat, the rushed nature of this work – this was one step in a long process to make donor recommendations – meant that some of it did not, we felt, meet a quality threshold for publication; we therefore chose not to publish the individual reports on each tactic.

The exercise nevertheless provided us with a rough mapping of available modes of action, the positive and negative effects they produce, and

the available empirical evidence for these effects (refer to 2.A.6) that could feed into our process.

We also experimented with ChatGPT Deep Research on some of the reports, which had some usefulness, although fairly limited. We developed a detailed prompt to be applied for each tactic in order to achieve consistency across reports.

Even using this tool, the outputs remained very different in length, depth, and quality. As a result, we did not use AI-generated outputs systematically for assessing tactics. Nevertheless, some of the better AI-generated reports came in useful in later stages as a starting point for more in-depth research on the tactics.

Generally, AI-generated content – if we used it at all – was a starting point for further research, but never a research output and never employed without double-checking each piece of information for veracity.

## 2.B.6 Drawing practical conclusions

We assessed each democracy tactic in the following ways, in this order, chronologically:

- **Quality of evidence score.** A -1 to +11 score set by the authors of the short literature reviews previously described.
- **Impact score.** A score on a scale from 1 to 10 applied to each tactic, this was set through a consensus discussion by a four-person project group who were working on this after the literature reviews were complete.
- **Delphi-inspired forecasts.** Everyone in the team was asked to read at least the summary of the research on each tactic and then to forecast the likelihood that Power for Democracies would recommend funding to a civil society organisation for its work on this tactic. Forecasts were shared, discussed, and re-forecast. This exercise was carried out for two different scenarios: scenario 1 featured a country undergoing democratic decline, with an

authoritarian leader and an upcoming election; and scenario 2 focussed on a country that was previously on the decline and is now improving. This produced a probability likelihood for each tactic.

We mapped these results in a second spreadsheet that summarised the research done and the scores for each tactic. They gave us an initial overview of available methods being used by civil society organisations supporting democracy and of empirical evidence of these effects. However, we noted that the effects of tactics are highly dependent on the contexts in which they are being applied, so no decisions were made based on this initial mapping and preliminary scoring.

Although no tactics were fully ruled in or out for further research, the prioritisation spreadsheet that was created was referred to at the next stage of the research and helped inform researchers about what democracy tactics might be more effective in the countries that they were investigating.

### **3. Country deep dives and identification of democracy tactics**

The focus of this research stage consisted of deep-diving into specific countries to identify in greater detail the key threats facing those countries as well as effective tactics that could be funded to address those threats. These were compiled as reports.

With the ultimate aim of identifying ‘country-tactic combinations’ (i.e. specific tactics in a specific country) promising for further research, we also gathered information about promising focus areas for funding.

Our research explored different tactics that could be applied by civil society organisations and the effects of those tactics on democracy within the selected country contexts.

To assess each option, we carried out detailed analyses, gathering sufficient evidence to judge whether supporting a civil society

organisation working on that tactic in that country would genuinely strengthen democracy. We used standardised templates to collect all the data on each option in country-focussed deep dive reports, which facilitated a systematic comparison between the options at the end of this phase.

At the same time, we maintained a broad perspective, examining more country-tactic combinations than we might ultimately need. This allowed us to compare across contexts and select only those with the greatest potential impact on global democracy.

This stage progressed in the steps detailed in 3.2-3.3.

### **3.1 Deep-dive reports**

Our deep-dive analysis was the main focus of this stage of the research. This was captured in country-focussed reports on the following countries: Hungary, Turkey, Italy, Indonesia, Poland, and Argentina.<sup>7</sup>

Our analyses in the deep dive phase were based on desk research, a literature review, a review of current events, and expert interviews. In order to facilitate a systematic comparison between the countries and available tactics, we designed a report template to ensure that all reports had roughly the same structure and types of data. To further support the comparability of our data, we developed guidance for report authors on the core steps of the process; we conducted a workshop on the concept and development of theories of change, and we developed an interview guideline for the expert interviews and conducted workshops to acquaint our researchers with both the guideline and the interview situation they might expect.

Research for these reports began by following the format of our previous research, using desk research on each country to update and map out in greater depth the:

- **importance** of that country on the global stage

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<sup>7</sup> We also began a report on Bangladesh but this was ruled out due to the uncertainty caused by the upcoming general election.

- **threats** to democracy within that country
- **tractability** of pushback, focussing on the strength and freedom of civil society within that country
- **opportunities:** any upcoming events or important potential turning points that might be relevant.

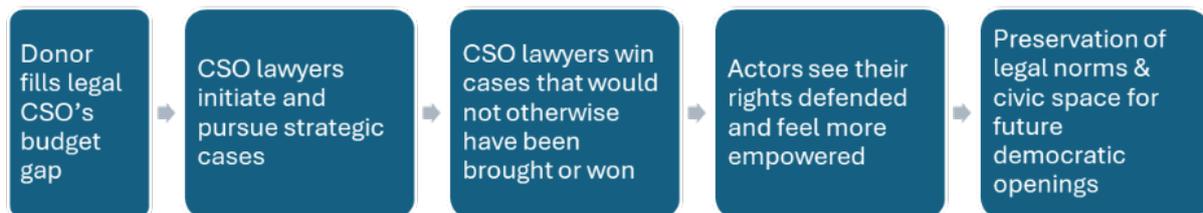
To corroborate and strengthen our research, we conducted interviews on the four dimensions with experts in each country, to gain insights from the experiences of those on the ground. We spoke to between three and five people from each country, reaching out to key individuals in civil society, academia, and the media who we believed would be useful to help us understand the country's situation.

We identified interviewees based on their area of expertise both on a given country's democratic and political situation as well as on the use of specific pro-democracy tactics. We prioritised the contact of those interviewees to ensure a range of expertise and experiences were represented. Ultimately, we interviewed those who responded to our outreach and were willing to participate in an interview.

We conducted systematic guided interviews with each expert to confirm the data we collected in desk research, focussing especially on what they considered to be the most important threats to democracy in their country at the time of the interviews. Additionally, we asked them to give their views on what were the most effective tactics for countering these threats and to name examples of initiatives that applied these tactics.

Based on these expert opinions and additional background research on these and other possible tactics, we created a list of tactics that addressed the key threats that we identified, navigated potential tractability issues, and could leverage windows of opportunity for change that were identified.

We developed detailed theories of change for each tactic. Then, based on a comparison of probabilities regarding steps and underlying assumptions, we chose 1-3 tactics that appeared to be among the most promising to counter threats to democracy in the specified country.

**Figure 3: Sample theory of change (Strategic litigation in Turkey)**

The list of country-tactic combinations covered in full or in part by these reports were:

- Hungary – Lobby the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) for election observation
- Hungary – Lobby European Union (EU) to take action on Hungary
- Hungary – Voter mobilisation of expats in Western Europe
- Hungary – Support independent journalists (*added later*)
- Turkey – Targeted legal support
- Turkey – Financial support for individual media journalists and journalists' networks
- Italy – Voter mobilisation to swing votes in the next local, general, or snap election
- Italy – Policy work to ensure press freedom
- Italy – Supporting magistrates' associations in their fight for their own independence as the judiciary, and other important cases
- Indonesia – General legal aid focussed on democracy issues
- Indonesia – Funding for legal associations for research to defend the constitution and their own independence, including by legal action etc.
- Indonesia – Supporting (funding) journalists or journalists' associations
- Poland – Lobbying for decriminalisation of defamation

- Poland – Development and distribution of fact-checking AI technology
- Poland – Democratic innovations
- Argentina – Countering disinformation to dismantle attacks on democratic norms
- Argentina – Legal action/legal support
- Argentina – Monitoring backsliding and strengthening civil society organisations’ ability to resist it

At the end of the overall ECAPB research process, the countries in which donor recommendations were made were the focus of a published country report. These reports were crafted based on the deep dives described in this section, and contained the following sections:

- Need to know
- Democracy snapshot
- Threats to democracy
- Geopolitical importance
- Countering democratic decline
- Opportunity for change
- Recommended action
- Theory of change

## 3.2 Comparing and prioritising promising options

We prioritised the country-tactic combination on a range of key factors for comparison to decide on the most promising options.

Due to the challenges we faced in finding good evidence as well as time constraints, not every factor was applied to every country-tactic combination. This meant we had to make the best decisions we could even with incomplete evidence. Moreover, some factors were found to be more useful for comparison and others were less useful. While diverse perspectives are an asset when studying such complex issues, comparing research on country-tactic combinations was also difficult

because our diverse group of staff produced heterogeneous arguments and evidence.

The factors that we identified and applied to each country that were most useful for comparison and prioritisation were:

- **theory of change and tractability analysis** – The theory of change was mapped out for every country-tactic combination. Key assumptions were identified for each step of the theory of change. Each assumption was assessed on a rubric of ‘very high’, ‘high’, ‘medium’, ‘low’, ‘very low.’ This was aggregated to give an overall probability of success.
- **expert analysis** – An assessment of the views of the in-country experts we interviewed on each country-tactic combination, rated on a rubric as: ‘strongly support’, ‘support’, ‘solvable issues/no comments’, ‘hesitant/mixed’, ‘against.’

Additional factors we used but which, for various reasons, played a slightly lower role in the comparison and prioritisation process were:

- **country analysis** – This took the form of team aggregated scores on importance, threat, tractability, opportunity for each country, with adjustments from the lead report author. This was only applied to the countries, not to the country-tactic combinations.
- **strategic analysis** – Each country was assessed by how well its situation aligned with the six structural and seven dynamic factors making a U-turn more likely as identified in the democratic U-turn research. This was only applied to the countries, not to the country-tactic combinations.
- **quantitative analysis** – Researchers calculated for each country-democracy tactic the:

$$\frac{\text{Expected change in future V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index score} \times \text{Population} \times \text{Number of years change will last}}{\$100,000 \text{ donated}}$$

The expected change in future V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) scores was calculated by breaking down the score into constituent questions and then estimating the expected change

of each question or looking at other countries where similar tactics had been applied and the resulting change in V-Dem scoring. Number of years change will last was set to five for government/policy change and one for ongoing actions like legal aid. This process was useful for identifying considerations that could have a large effect on the expected outputs. However, results were erratic and often unachievable.

- **quality of evidence analysis** – Lead researchers made an assessment of how strong the evidence that each tactic would deliver its expected outputs was globally, based on the tactics for democracy literature scan (2.A3-5). They also assessed whether those outputs would have a fundamental effect on democracy and considered how the country context affected this, providing country-specific evidence where available. This was both scored and mapped onto a rubric for comparison. In many cases this was not completed before we made our prioritisation decisions, thus additional evidence was sought after the prioritisation decisions had been made.
- **harms and risks** – Views from the lead researchers on any potential downsides, harms or risks. This was put into a rubric of: ‘very low harm/risk’, ‘low harm/risk’, ‘medium harm/risk’, ‘high harm/risk’, ‘very high harm/risk.’ No high risk or very high-risk tactics were considered.
- **practical considerations** – Views from the lead researchers on the expected number and size of civil society organisations in each country working on the tactic. This was not completed for all country-tactic combinations.

Other factors were also considered, including population of each country, reputational risk to Power for Democracies, and interactions between tactics within the same country. We also aimed to ensure that a variety of different countries with different political situations was selected, as this would benefit the long-term learning of our organisation.

The prioritisation process was as follows:

- Rubrics and scoring were made by the lead researcher of each deep-dive paper.
- Scores were checked for consistency.
- The team all read each other's papers and had a Q&A with the lead authors.
- The least promising options were ruled out in a group discussion.
- There were small group discussions on the quantitative analysis, quality of evidence analysis, and on the theory of change and tractability analysis, as well as on practical considerations.
- In an overall discussion, the group came to a consensus prioritised order for the next stage of research, with various caveats about the need for additional research on some of the options.

The top options in the priority order at the end of this discussion were:

1. Argentina – Strategic litigation mostly to uphold the constitution
2. Italy – Supporting magistrates' associations to continue to fight for the independence of themselves as judiciary and other important cases
3. Turkey – Targeted legal support, especially for norm-setting or key political candidates, also journalists and campaigners
4. Indonesia – Funding for legal associations for research to defend the constitution and their independence including by legal action etc.
5. Indonesia – General legal aid focussed on democracy issues
6. Turkey – Financial support for individual media journalists and journalists' networks
7. Indonesia – Support (funding for) journalists or journalists' associations
8. Argentina – Countering disinformation to dismantle attacks on democratic norms

## 4. Identification and evaluation of civil society organisations

The fourth and final phase of the ECAPB project sought to identify effective civil society organisations that Power for Democracies would recommend for funding. This phase systematically evaluated candidate civil society organisations working on the tactics that we had found to be promising in the countries we had prioritised.

The process used a rigorous yet adaptive set of methods that ensured selected organisations met strategic relevance criteria and possessed the operational capacity to deliver meaningful outcomes for democracy.

### 4.1 Identification of Organisations

To lay the groundwork for the evaluation, we conducted a background risk assessment that could be applied to all countries. Additionally, at least one experienced civil society organisation in each country was consulted so as to better understand the legal, operational, and reputational risks associated with being included in our donor funding recommendations portfolio. This would help us mitigate ethical and practical considerations in our process of selection and evaluation.

The process was conducted in six steps, from mapping organisations through to evaluating them to the final recommendations.

- **Mapping:** Researchers began by consolidating the list of civil society organisations identified in the country deep dives, the expert interviews, and in conversation with Power for Democracies' network partners. To ensure this was comprehensive in its coverage, we conducted further desk research using public databases, networks, and more interviews with experts and civil society actors. For each organisation, we

collected some initial data about its core working area and an initial assessment of the organisation's fit with Power for Democracies' goal and mission.

- **Initial selection:** Our goal was to identify five to six candidate organisations for further evaluation per each Power for Democracies/country-tactic combination from those that had been found to be the most promising for inclusion in the first wave of recommendations. An internal prioritisation exercise shortlisted those most aligned with the tactics for democracy prioritised by Power for Democracies. Criteria for exclusion or deprioritisation included: (1) termination of organisation's operations; (2) misalignment of organisation's focus area with Power for Democracies' mission and goals; (3) a too narrow scope of the organisation's work. We also considered contextual knowledge about what kind of organisations have the largest influence in the country, with regard to our preferred tactic for democracy.
- **Desk-based data collection:** A structured datasheet was created for each candidate civil society organisation for recommendation to collect information on the criteria that would be used for the final selection. Researchers initially included as much information as they could from organisations' websites and other publicly available sources.
- **Outreach:** Power for Democracies contacted selected civil society organisations via email to request an introductory call. This conversation introduced Power for Democracies' mission, reassessed the civil society organisation's fit with Power for Democracies' mission and goals, and confirmed the organisation's willingness to participate in the evaluation and potential recommendation process. Following the call, a customised data request form was shared with the civil society organisation. The organisations were asked to clarify information already gathered during the desk research step and to provide additional data needed to complete the evaluation. If civil society organisations

declined or failed to respond after follow-ups, other organisations that had previously been deprioritised were considered.

- **Evaluation and selection for recommendation:** Each civil society organisation was evaluated using a scoring rubric applied independently by two researchers. The criteria for the scoring were collected on the civil society organisation datasheet and included the following sections:

(1) *Mission and/or project alignment with Power for Democracies goals*

(2) *Operational capacity*

(3) *Impact*

(4) *Project cost-efficiency to date*

(5) *Need for additional funding and ability to scale*

(6) *Track record*

(7) *Credibility*

(8) *Financial management and capacity*

(9) *Governance and leadership*

Scores were discussed, reconciled, and recorded. Those organisations that had scores below the requirement on a certain number of rubrics were ruled out. A qualitative review followed, where a team of at least three researchers discussed each organisation, taking into account contextual factors that might have been under- or misrepresented in a relatively rigid rubrics-based approach. Civil society organisations rated ‘yes’ or ‘probably yes’ advanced to final review. Adjustments to the rubric or requirement score were permitted based on country context or gaps in the candidate pool.

- **References and due diligence:** With permission from the organisations, we contacted their previous funders and collaborators to seek additional feedback. Additionally, we conducted final background research on reputational considerations with regards to funding this organisation.
- **Final reports:** For each civil society organisation that is recommended, a short recommendation, a deeper organisation

evaluation report, along with a country background report were produced that summarised key findings. These bundles of reports serve as the evidence base for funding decisions and undergo multiple internal review processes before publication and/or donor engagement.

The process of evaluation and selection will be conducted in several batches and waves to ensure there is a continuous flow of recommendations to donors for the pro-democracy funds Power for Democracies is seeking to release.

The first batch includes two recommendations for organisations from Argentina and Turkey that are working on strategic litigation and legal support.<sup>8</sup> Additional initiatives from these countries, as well as Indonesia and Italy, are under review.

## 5 Theoretical background research

During the deep-dive phase and evaluation phase, we also conducted additional theoretical background research.

Part of this was a cross-cutting research project exploring the structural and dynamic conditions that allow societies to reverse a process of autocratisation and reengage in democratisation. We primarily used academic literature to examine the structural conditions and trigger points (including tactics for democracy) that were likely enablers or inhibitors of a return to a democratic pathway or trajectory in autocratising countries. The findings from this research fed into our prioritisation processes in both phases.

Moreover, we did additional research on the tactics that seemed to surface independently in several country deep dives as potentially the most effective. These reports collated the evidence of the tactics' effectiveness in greater depth than our earlier democracy tactics work had done. They helped understand the tactics and the contexts in which they worked most effectively and the possibilities for supporting these

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<sup>8</sup> In a parallel workstream, we identified an organisation working on voter mobilisation in the United States.

tactics through increased funding. They fed into our prioritisation of country-tactic combinations and informed our evaluation of the individual organisations' theories of change. Reports were written on strategic litigation, lobbying and advocacy, supporting journalism, and large-scale protests.

## Conclusion

### Challenges – external

A number of key external factors made the evaluation and selection process particularly difficult. These include:

- **The low quality and/or absence of evidence.** For many tactics there was very limited evidence that the tactic has an effect on democracy. For example, on misinformation, experiments in controlled settings show that teaching someone to identify misinformation enables them to identify misinformation ten minutes later. However, there is both limited data on how to deliver this at scale and no data on the expected impact on democracy of having a population better able to identify misinformation.
- **Changing circumstances and autocratic response.** This research process took over nine months. Throughout the process, real-world political changes continued to take place. In some cases, this was the result of active opposition: autocrats are directly responding to civil society, instituting new laws or crackdowns in order to prevent promising tactics. Our current process design is not agile enough to respond well to these changes.
- **Limited monitoring and evaluation among civil society organisations.** Our research indicated that many civil society organisations in this space place limited emphasis on systematically tracking and measuring their impact. While many organisations do monitor outputs – such as the number of advocacy campaigns conducted or petition signatures collected – there is often less focus on assessing outcomes or longer-term impact, such as policy changes resulting from their initiatives. We believe many organisations would benefit from adopting more

evidence-based approaches to monitoring, evaluation, and learning to track and identify the impact they are having on improving democracy.

Going forward it could be advantageous to design a more agile and flexible process that can adapt to changing political circumstances. We could do this by drawing on risk management protocols, forecasting and similar disciplines, setting up a monitoring function, and building in-house regional expertise that can deliver rapidly to address global needs.

Alternatively, it could be valuable to research ideas and civil society organisations that are likely to remain more consistent over longer periods of time. For example, ideas such as social media reform that are not directly tied to the politics of a specific country, or civil society organisations that work across countries and can themselves adapt in an agile manner to political changes.

## **Challenges: weaknesses and limitations of our research process**

There were also a number of weaknesses and limitations in our research process.

- Country prioritisation spreadsheet
  - Data sources have limitations. We tried to mitigate conceptual weaknesses by using a mix of sources, but used the main data source, V-Dem, extensively. However, there was nothing we could do to mitigate the necessary time lag between data collection and publication, nor the frequency of publication and the currentness of the data we could use.
  - Small changes in the model weights had potentially large impact on the overall list.
  - Model testing (plausibility checks) may have introduced biases based on what is considered plausible.
- Country short profiles and prioritisation
  - Time caps on country profiles have probably led to researchers overlooking relevant aspects.

- 
- Democracy tactics shallow dives
  - We aimed for breadth over depth. This meant capping time for each literature scan and heavy time pressure.
  - Due to its speed, the literature scan process is liable to contain errors and key literature might have been missed.
  - Many of the literature scans were extremely narrow in scope. Due to time caps, researchers focussed very narrowly and on the given definition, missing adjacent areas. For example, when investigating ‘digital and media literacy’ for the shallow dive, authors focussed solely on ‘initiatives aimed at educating or training individuals to understand, interpret, and interact with digital and media content.’ The shallow dive did not look at all at setting up systems to ensure the public better understands the media they engage with without training (e.g. community notes on social media, etc.).
  - Some literature scans were not completed in time. In those cases, scores may have included educated guesswork or were based on ChatGPT reports. In other cases, some ideas were deprioritised and never assessed; our process is not complete.
  - The choice of what to research was based on our understanding of the common actions that civil society organisations undertake. This meant that tactics that may be highly effective but are not common to civil society were less likely to have been researched.
  - The literature scans do not investigate the full theory of change from initiative to better democracy, they just look at the available data on each type of tactic and the expected outputs noted in the literature.
  - Given the above, we should note that overall, we believe the results of this exercise to be directionally correct. There is no strong reason to expect that errors of missed literature or otherwise are systematic.
- Country-tactic deep dives

- In some cases, it was challenging to find good evidence for this.
- One particular challenge that arose at this stage of the research and remained challenging throughout was managing changing country situations. Threats that had been identified disappeared or became more prominent as a result of political changes. There were similarly changes to the freedom of civil society in some cases or to expected future opportunities.<sup>9</sup>
- Bias could have been introduced by expert selection and response rate, and choice of desk research methods.
- Time constraints limited our capacity to do deep research on all viable options.
- Political changes in Hungary forced us to reconfigure our search strategy during the process.
- We struggled to apply a clear consistent measure of ‘effectiveness’ with regard to the expected impact on democracy of different interventions.
- Our selection process was rather inconsistently applied, and not every criterion we wanted to base our selection on was sufficiently researched for every country-tactic combination.

## Final view and confidence in results

We can consider our results as a series of high-level research questions:

1. Are the selected countries the most valuable ones to be working on?
2.
  - **Confidence in process:** We are confident that the process we used is good for researching this question.

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<sup>9</sup> For example, work related to Hungary was paused due to anticipated legal changes (i.e. ‘Transparency of the public sphere’ Act, [Bill-T11923 Transparency-of-Public-Life.pdf](#)) announced by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s government that would significantly constrain the ability of foreign donors to support Hungarian civil society organisations. These developments raised concerns about the tractability and legal safety of funding local initiatives under the evolving regulatory environment.

- **Confidence in conclusions:** We cannot be fully confident that the countries we selected are necessarily the most eligible and that we didn't miss any that are or could be more relevant for our focus. This is partly because we aimed for regional and political variety in order to learn as an organisation, and partly because we have some concerns about our theoretical work on autocratising countries that make U-turns reversing democratic decline.
3. **Is there good general evidence that the tactics identified are effective at improving democracy?**
- 4.
- **Confidence in process:** The approach we adopted suffered from severe limitations in terms of time and capacity. That said, we have created an initial base of research and we hope to be able to build on this going forward and that others can do the same.
  - **Confidence in conclusions:** We are confident in the value of voter mobilisation, strategic litigation, and policy advocacy. We are less confident in the value of supporting journalists and this deserves further research.
5. **Are the tactics identified the most valuable ones in those countries?**
- 6.
- **Confidence in process:** Some elements of our analysis, such as our theory of change analysis, were clearly useful, but we had challenges with other elements, such as the quantitative analysis. Although some elements of what we tried in order to enable good decision-making did not work well enough, our process worked to give us confidence in our results.
  - **Confidence in conclusions:** Enough of our process was useful, and we have significant in-house expertise in every country we are currently looking into. As such, we have a reasonable level of confidence in the conclusions reached.

7. Are the civil society organisations identified effectively delivering the tactic within the country?

8.

- **Confidence in process:** We are confident in the process we adopted for civil society organisation evaluation, although we see ways to streamline it better for us and the civil society organisations.
- **Confidence in conclusions:** We are confident that every organisation we recommend is high-quality (relative to others in the field) and effectively delivers the tactic within the country (with the caveat that this work is ongoing making full post-hoc review challenging).

Overall, we believe that Power for Democracies has delivered something new and original in a challenging field, outputting plausible results within time and capacity constraints. We are happy with the direction we took and the process we adopted. We are proud of our work and the whole team who has worked on this.

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