End term evaluation of the project

DIGITAL FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN (D4GW)

BFA22005

Belgium, Burkina Faso, Uganda

Technopolis Africa

Final evaluation report

June 2025

enabel.be

This evaluation was carried out as part of the cooperation between Burkina Faso, Uganda and Belgium.

The report was drawn up by independent external experts.

The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the authors and are not necessarily shared by Enabel, the Belgian Cooperation or the authorities of Burkina Faso, Uganda.

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1 Acronyms

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AICS	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
APAC	Asia-Pacific
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BFA	Burkina Faso
CFA	Communauté Financière Africaine (Franc)
CIPESA	Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa
CSAG	Climate System Analysis Group
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
D4D	Digital for Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DES	Digital and Entrepreneurship Skills
DGD	Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (Belgium)
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology of the European Commission
EC	European Commission
EIB	European Investment Bank
ETE	End-term evaluation
EF	Expertise France
EU	European Union
EUDs	Delegations of the European Union (to third countries)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAN	Gender Advisory Network
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
ICDL	International Certification of Digital Literacy
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
LGBTQIA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MPCA	Multi-Partner Contribution Agreement
SSA	Sub-Saharan African
TEIs	Team Europe Initiatives
TFF	Technical & Financial File
ToRs	Terms of Reference

2 Glossary

Attribution	The ascription of a causal link between observed (or expected to be observed) changes and a specific intervention.
Baseline study	An analysis describing the situation prior to a development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.
Beneficiaries	The individuals, groups, or organisations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the development intervention.
Capacity development	The process by which individuals, groups, and organisations develop their capability to identify and deal with challenges that they meet in the development process.
Coherence	The extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions within a country, sector or institution.
Conclusions	Conclusions (in evaluations) point out the factors of success and failure of the evaluated intervention, with special attention paid to the intended and unintended results and impacts, and more generally to any other strength or weakness. A conclusion draws on data collection and analyses undertaken, through a transparent chain of arguments.
Contribution	The contribution to the results of an intervention that can be attributed to the performance of one or several of the activities.
Data collection tools	Methodologies used to identify information sources and collect information during an evaluation.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
Evaluability	Extent to which an activity or a program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.
Evaluation	The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision–making process of both recipients and donors. Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or program. An assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, on-going, or completed development intervention.
Feedback	The transmission of findings generated through the evaluation process to parties for whom it is relevant and useful so as to facilitate learning.
Finding	A finding (in an evaluation) uses evidence from one or more evaluation tools to allow for a factual statement.
Formative evaluation	Evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs.
Hypotheses	Assumptions about the conditions that allow outcomes to transform into impact in the longer term.
Intervention Area	Specific clusters of activities defined during the inception phase to structure the AU-EU D4D Hub project's activities
Impacts	Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
Impact evaluation	Evaluation of impact in the wide sense of the term (covering outcomes as well as impacts in the sense of long-term effects), usually with statistical methods. An impact evaluation tries to distinguish as carefully and reliably as possible between changes that can be attributed to the evaluated intervention and changes that would have occurred anyway.
Indicator	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

Lessons learned	Generalisations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.
Logical framework (Logframe)	Management tool used to improve the design of interventions, most often at the project level. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a development intervention.
Monitoring	A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.
Outcome	The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs.
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention
Performance	The degree to which a development intervention or a development partner operates according to specific criteria/standards/guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated goals or plans.
Programme	A set of interventions, marshalled to attain specific global, regional, country, or sector development objectives.
Project	An individual development intervention designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources and implementation schedules, often within the framework of a broader program. *Note:* AU-EU D4D Hub is referred to as a Project by stakeholders.
Quality assurance	Quality assurance encompasses any activity that is concerned with assessing and improving the merit or the worth of a development intervention or its compliance with given standards.
Recommendations	Proposals (in an evaluation) aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a development intervention; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources. Recommendations should be linked to conclusions.
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.
Reliability	Consistency or dependability of data and evaluation judgements, with reference to the quality of the instruments, procedures and analyses used to collect and interpret evaluation data.
Results	The outputs, outcomes and impacts (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention.
Review	An assessment of the performance of an intervention, periodically or on an ad hoc basis. *Note:* Frequently "evaluation" is used for a more comprehensive and/or more in-depth assessment than "review". Reviews tend to emphasise operational aspects.
Stakeholders	Agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the development intervention or its evaluation.
Summative evaluation	A study conducted at the end of an intervention (or a phase of intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced.
Sustainability	The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time. *Note:* Stakeholders often understand sustainability as the continuation of similar activities under the auspices or other programmes and projects.
Triangulation	The use of three or more theories, sources or types of information, or types of analysis to verify and substantiate an assessment.
Validity	The extent to which the data collection strategies and instruments measure what they purport to measure.

3 Cooperation project/programme sheet

Title	Digital for Girls and Women
Project code	BFA22005
Intervention zone	Belgium, Burkina Faso and Uganda
Priority sector(s) Global Challenge(s)	Digital Digital skills development among women/Women digital rights
Partner country	Belgium
Partner institution(s)	Ministry of ICT & National Guidance (MoICT&NG) Ministry of Digital Economy Ministry of Digital Transition, Posts, and Electronic Communications (MTDPCE)
Total budget	2 250 000 €
Start date & end date of the specific agreement	December 10th 2021
Start date & expected end date of implementation	April 2023 / July 25th 2025
Impact	Equal opportunities for women and men to participate in and contribute to an inclusive digital rights-based digital transformation /economy.
Outcome	Outcome 1: Women are economically empowered through increased access and better use of digital technologies Outcome 2: People, especially women and girls, are empowered to claim their digital rights
Outputs	Output 1.1: Women have an increased access to digital technologies through a shared and adapted infrastructure Output 1.2: Women have the skills needed to participate in the digital and digitally enabled economy Output 1.3: The expertise of national stakeholders, and Belgian and international development actors to contribute to closing the gender divide in the digital and digitally enabled economy has been strengthened Output 1.4: The D4D Hub Africa has adopted and operationalised a joint approach to contribute to closing the digital gender gap in the digital and digitally enabled economy Output 2.1: Women and girls' (targeting both students and teachers) knowledge and understanding on their digital rights is enhanced Output 2.2: People in Burkina Faso and Uganda are aware of digital rights and understand gender specific issues Output 2.3: Women and girls have access to support services to assert their digital rights

	Output 2.4: The expertise of national, as well as of Belgian and international development actors to promote digital rights has been strengthened Output 2.5: The D4D Hub Africa has adopted and operationalised a joint approach to promote a human rights-based digital transformation
Period covered by the evaluation	2022-2025

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The collective efforts of all involved have made a significant impact, and we look forward to future collaborations.

5 Evaluation team

Our evaluation experts selected for this assignment provide experience and expertise of the highest relevance for delivering the assignment to the highest standard. The team was composed as follows:

The core team is composed of four consultants:

- **Andrea STEMLER**, Senior Consultant at Technopolis Africa, as the team leader.
- **Dr. Joyce NAKATUMBA-NABENDE** as local consultant in Uganda.
- **Dr. Tegawendé F. BISSYANDE** as local consultant in Burkina Faso.
- **Yasmine KONÉ**, Analyst at Technopolis Africa.

6 Background and Context

6.1. Digitalisation for development

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, identifying a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) linked with information and communication technologies: SDG 9 mentions universal and affordable internet connectivity in least developed countries, and SDG 5 the enhanced use of ICT to empower women.

In 2016, the World Development Report (WDR) published by the World Bank[1] outlined the development potential of digital technologies and the importance of improving "digital dividends" in developing countries: the use of digital technologies represents a major lever to foster development, help the most vulnerable populations and provide better services to citizens. The potential is immense, especially for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Around the same period, most international donors have developed digitalization strategic frameworks and act on digitalization and development: in the spring of 2016, the US Department of State launched the "Global Connect Initiative," and Digital for Development was included on the agenda of the G7 and G20.

Countries in the European Union also started working on Digital4Development (D4D) which ultimately led to the publication in 2017 of the EU Commission's "Digital4Development: mainstreaming digital technologies and services into EU Development Policy" and in 2020 of the creation of the D4D Hub by 11 EU member states (Belgium, France, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden). By 2024, four additional EU countries had joined the D4D Hub (Latvia, Romania, Italy, and Croatia). Belgium played a leading role in shaping the EU's Digital for Development (D4D) agenda. As early as July 2015, Minister De Croo took the initiative to convene 14 EU member states to co-sign a joint letter addressed to High Representative Mogherini and Commissioner Mimica. The letter called for the development of a clear EU vision on the impact and potential of digitalization in development. It proposed the preparation of an EU Staff Working Document to be presented in the first half of 2016. Furthermore, the D4D Hub was launched through the efforts of Enabel and Belgium, which brought together various member states during the Digital Economy Task Force process to support this initiative.

The Digitalization for Development (D4D) Hub is a multi-stakeholder platform that brings together European and partner country actors to promote a human-centered, rights-based, and inclusive approach to digital transformation. Recognizing that digital technologies now shape access to services, participation in public life, and the exercise of rights, the D4D Hub supports the shift from digital mainstreaming to treating digitalization as a strategic domain in its own right. It aims to bridge the digital divide by aligning European digital cooperation efforts and fostering partnerships that prioritize equity, sustainability, and empowerment in the digital age.

6.2. The AU-EU cooperation in science, technology and innovation

The foundation of AU-EU research and innovation (R&I) cooperation for the coming decade is the new AU-EU Joint Innovation Agenda, which emerged from the first AU-EU Ministerial Meeting on R&I in July 2020. This renewed engagement focuses on translating R&I efforts into concrete outcomes, such as products, services, businesses, and employment opportunities, while also establishing a sustainable

[1] World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends (worldbank.org)

model for long-term AU-EU R&I collaboration. It is important to note, however, that digitalization is no longer considered a subset of innovation within the EU framework. Since 2023/2024, digital and innovation are handled by distinct units (previously managed by separate teams within the same unit), reflecting a strategic shift in how these domains are addressed in EU external cooperation.

The AU-EU Joint Innovation Agenda focuses on four key research and innovation priorities: public health, the green transition, innovation and technology, and strengthening scientific capacities, while also addressing cross-cutting issues. Its implementation is supported by the Global Gateway Africa–Europe Investment Package, which is not a single flagship initiative for the AU-EU R&I agenda, but rather a package of multiple flagship initiatives that collectively contribute to delivering the broader Global Gateway strategy on the continent. This investment package aims to support Africa's strong, inclusive, green, and digital recovery and transformation by accelerating the green and digital transitions, fostering sustainable growth and the creation of decent jobs, strengthening health systems, and improving education and training.

The investment package will be implemented through **Team Europe initiatives**: the EU, its Member States, and European financial institutions will work together to support jointly identified concrete and transformational projects in priority areas.

6.3. The D4D Hub

The D4D Hub is a global coordination platform for digital cooperation that brings together political, technical, and multi-stakeholder perspectives across all world regions. While it is often referred to as a political coordination mechanism, the D4D Hub originated as a purely technical coordination initiative and has since evolved to encompass broader dimensions, involving EU Member States, private sector actors, civil society, and financial institutions. It was officially launched at a high-level political event on 8 December 2020, marking a significant step forward in EU external digital engagement. At the launch, a first Multi-Partner Contribution Agreement (MPCA) was signed to operationalize the AU-EU D4D Hub, the platform's first regional branch, focused on Africa. This initial regional initiative transformed the D4D Hub from an informal coordination mechanism into an operational platform. Enabel (Belgium) acted as the lead partner for this first MPCA, with GIZ (Germany) as co-lead, joined by Expertise France (France) and AECID (Spain), and later expanded to include AICS (Italy). While the D4D Hub was one of the first initiatives implemented in a "Team Europe Spirit", it has not been formally labelled as a Team Europe Initiative (TEI), a designation typically requiring a specific process and criteria within EU structures. Nonetheless, it exemplifies the collaborative and coordinated approach that Team Europe aims to foster in external partnerships.

Its role is not to implement projects, but to facilitate dialogue among European and local stakeholders, to coordinate action among European stakeholders, to act as a catalyst to European resources and expertise towards partner countries' digital transformation, and to promote European values and knowledge. Notably, the D4D Hub aims at strengthening the Team Europe approach in EU programming regarding the digital sector. The D4D Hub plays a strategic role in facilitating and coordinating Europe's external digital engagement. While the D4D Hub Secretariat itself does not implement projects, even though it manages mechanisms such as the MPCA, which are implemented as projects, the broader D4D Hub community, comprising EU Member States and implementing partners, does lead and implement several Team Europe Initiatives focused on digital transformation. The Hub serves primarily to facilitate dialogue between European and partner country stakeholders, coordinate action among European actors, and catalyze European resources and expertise in support of partner countries' digital agendas. It also plays a key role in promoting European values, standards, and knowledge, and in strengthening the Team Europe approach in EU external programming related to the digital sector.

The D4D Hub is composed of:

- A **Board of Directors** comprising all the Member States party to the initiative, at the ministry level or representatives of this level, and chaired by the European Commission, meets at least once a year to provide political guidance and impetus to the Hub's activities. Additionally, there are ongoing discussions about complementing the high-level meetings with a middle-level exchange forum, where heads of units meet annually to discuss more technical aspects. This middle-level forum allows ministries to engage in detailed discussions and prepare for the Board of Directors' meetings, ensuring that both strategic and technical perspectives are addressed in the decision-making process.
- A **Secretariat** in charge of the Team Europe coordination. It is now composed of seconded experts engaged by the MPCA signatories (GIZ, AFD, AICS, Enabel, AECID), as well as two experts appointed by Finland and Slovenia. As such, it has elaborated a mapping of D4D Hub members' thematic & geographic interests, activities, and best practices. It has also supported the EU Delegations for the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument's (NDICI) programming exercise at the local level through facilitating input from bilateral development agencies present in the field. The Secretariat also liaises with several external stakeholders, including other EU initiatives and facilities (e.g. the Africa RISE facility, Business Europe, Concord Europe, the European University Institute, Friends of Europe/Africa Europe Foundation, Internet Society, PRIDA, etc.), so to define their role and possible interplay with the D4D Hub.
- Members of the Secretariat are also constituted in **thematic working groups**, co-led by MS and DG INTPA, responsible for topics like cybersecurity, digital governance, AI, connectivity, digital skills, gender & digital rights etc., etc. Their role is to gather the diverse inputs and strategic interests of the Member States and the EIB around the topics they handle. The members of the secretariat co-facilitate working groups, where member states ministries and agencies come together to develop joint initiatives, share knowledge, and develop joint positions.
- The members of the D4D Hub platform have also formed regional **branches,** which ensure the development of strategic partnerships and the emergence of Team Europe Initiatives between European and local stakeholders in key regions. Regional branches are co-led by the European Commission (DG INTPA or DG MENA/ENEST) and one or several Member States (Latin America and the Caribbean: ES, IT, Asia-Pacific: FR, Africa, covering the Sub-Saharan Africa region: BE, FR, IT; Neighbouring countries, covering the Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans, and Southern Neighbourhood: IT)

  Within the **Africa Branch**, DG INTPA and MS have aligned their efforts and pooled resources for a number of Team Europe projects and initiatives, including on data governance, digital entrepreneurship, digital and green, and digital health. Regional branches support the identification and co-creation of initiatives but do not follow their implementation. Indeed, the Africa branch's mandate says: "Support INTPA in coordinating joint initiatives under the 'TEI Digital Economy and Society in SSA', including facilitating annual or bi-annual meetings on a needs basis between INTPA and the staff of the different joint initiatives for sharing experiences and lessons learned; Ensure synergies between the regional and national joint D4D initiatives."

6.4. The Digital for Girls and Women project

With a total budget of 2,25 million euros managed by Enabel for the Belgian State, the Digital for Girls and Women (D4GW) project strives to directly affect the lives of women and girls by increasing awareness of the challenges, risks, security concerns, and rights related to digital spaces, including privacy and data protection. It also aims to show all the advantages related to digitalisation and offers training on how to best take advantage of it. The project underscores that human rights principles that apply offline should also be upheld in the digital world. Promoting freedom of expression and inclusivity in digital spaces benefits not only men, women, and girls but also marginalized communities, ensuring that the opportunities presented by digitalization are accessible to everyone.

Digital rights and skills empower women and girls to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools for their socio-economic advancement. With these skills, women can transition their businesses to online platforms, allowing them to reach a broader market and generate income that can significantly improve their lives. Digital safety and security knowledge also equips women and girls to navigate online abuse and harassment, helping to create a safer, more secure online environment for them. **Digital safety and security** is not the sole responsibility of women, who are often disproportionately affected by digital rights abuses. That is why the project also actively engages men and focuses on creating an environment where **women have access to appropriate support services** and protection mechanisms.

6.4.1. The project's conception

The D4GW project was elaborated upon request of the Minister of Development Cooperation, who expressly required to use the lever of digitalisation as a means to "making girls and women economically independent"[2] The project reflects a strategic shift in Belgium's development cooperation, transferring the focus from digitalisation toward inclusive D4D (Digital for Development) and broader societal impact. Designed as a pilot initiative, this **project carried ambitious objectives despite its limited scale**, marking the first time Belgium implemented a project of this nature.

Enabel decided to implement the D4GW project in Belgium and two African countries: Burkina Faso and Uganda. These are partner countries with strong ties where existing programmes have given a foundation to the foreseen activities. In **Burkina Faso**, the rise of terrorist attacks and the presence of non-governmental armed groups meant a limited engagement in bilateral projects for Enabel for many years. The Paas Panga project, executed between 2021 and 2023, introduced the topic of digitalisation in Enabel's activities in Burkina Faso. It focused on capacity-building among educators, journalists, government officials, private and associative entrepreneur support services, with the specific aim of developing innovative and digital skills in line with the social and economic opportunities. A needs assessment executed in December 2023, recommended the conception of a training focusing on the digital rights and skills of women and girls, with an optic to enabling them to have an economic activity. The report emphasised the importance of adapting the training to the needs of illiterates and rural populations. It also recommends the training of trainers that would multiply the impact of such an activity, as well as a communication campaign about digital rights and ethical behaviours in the digital space. Burkina Faso has, for several years now, established ambitious legal, strategic, and institutional frameworks to promote digital development. For example, the National Strategy for the Development of the Digital Economy (SN@DEN) 2018–2027 envisions that: "By 2027, Burkina Faso will have a competitive digital economy that positively, sustainably, and inclusively contributes to its development." This reflects the government's strong commitment to making digital technology a key pillar of Burkina Faso's economic and social transformation.

In **Uganda**, the history of projects focusing on digitalisation is longer. The "Support to Skilling Uganda" project, focusing on integrating digital literacy and ICT into TVET and vocational training, started in 2015. The WeWork project (2019–2021) aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and digital skills among youth. The IDEA project (Innovation Dialogues Europe-Africa), supporting the role of civil society and academia in a human-centred digital transformation, was running between 2021 and 2023 in both Uganda and Burkina Faso. The local Enabel team therefore accumulated a significant experience and complementary knowledge on ICT (Information and Communication Technology), law and human rights, as well as a wide network of partners (Ministry of ICT, The Uganda Internet Governance Forum (UIGF), Civil Society Organisations, Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) that promotes internet freedom in Africa). Previous projects also gave a foundation for certain activities of the

[2] D4GW TECHNICAL & FINANCIAL FILE

D4GW project, as the regions were selected for implementation because of the pre-existence of Enabel digital innovation hubs.

In addition, Uganda possesses an existing political and operational framework for digital transformation that provides the legitimacy that the D4GW implementation needed. Several national strategies have been adopted to support digital development, including Uganda's Digital Transformation Roadmap 2023/24–2027/28, led by the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance (MoICT&NG), which provides a strategic framework to advance digital inclusion and technological innovation across the country.[3] Another governmental action was led by the Uganda Communications Commission (UCU) through its universal services Access fund (UCUSAF) implements both demand-side and supply-side programs. The programs include ICT in Education, ICT for Persons with Disabilities, ICT for Agriculture, Digital Skilling, Internet Connectivity, Access Infrastructure, Youth Multimedia, Research Support, and Devices for underserved communities. The Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), established during the 5th Parliament (1989 - 1994), aims to engender the legislative process, create awareness on women's rights, encourage lobbying and advocacy, networking, training, and ensure organizational capacity building. The Uganda Police Force Cyber Crimes Unit is charged with the responsibility of mitigating cybercrime in Uganda.

The project's third component, implemented in **Belgium**, served as the primary link to the D4D Hub, of which Belgium has been a member since its inception. As part of the country's parallel co-financing, the D4GW project, was designed to bring field-based knowledge on implementing D4D activities integrated with gender considerations was directly into the D4D Hub. This included leveraging lessons learned from activities in Uganda and Burkina Faso to inform both Belgian and broader European and international discussions.

Although the priorities and expected activities of this component were clearly defined from the outset (as outlined in the TFF), implementation required continuous adaptation to an evolving institutional context. While the D4D Hub was formally established at its launch in December 2020**,** alongside the start of the AU-EU D4D Hub MPCA, the current contract was only signed and launched at a later stage**,** with the D4WG initiative forming a parallel co-financing to support its objectives. Setting up an operational Secretariat and developing a coherent strategy and work plan took time, contributing to delays in execution. Nevertheless, this component remained strategically important for Belgium, reflecting the government's commitment to strengthening its leadership and expertise in gender-responsive digital development**,** and embedding this approach within the broader D4D Hub framework.

6.4.2. The project's governance

The implementation of the D4GW suffered a significant delay. The delays in project implementation were the result of several converging factors. While the Africa regional secretariat of the D4D Hub was already in place, the Global D4D Hub Secretariat, to which the D4GW project serves as a parallel co-financing mechanism and seeks operational synergies, only officially began under a new MPCA on 1 January 2023. This later start significantly impacted the project's timeline. Additionally, although a seconded expert was planned to support structured engagement, the recruitment process for this and other key expert positions faced delays. Compounding these issues, the initial project management arrangement proved ineffective, with inadequate staffing and oversight structures. Furthermore, while the D4GW project was originally intended to be managed from Brussels, the decision to relocate management to Burkina Faso required a full revision of the HR setup, contributing further to delays. As a

[3] Annual report 2022-2023

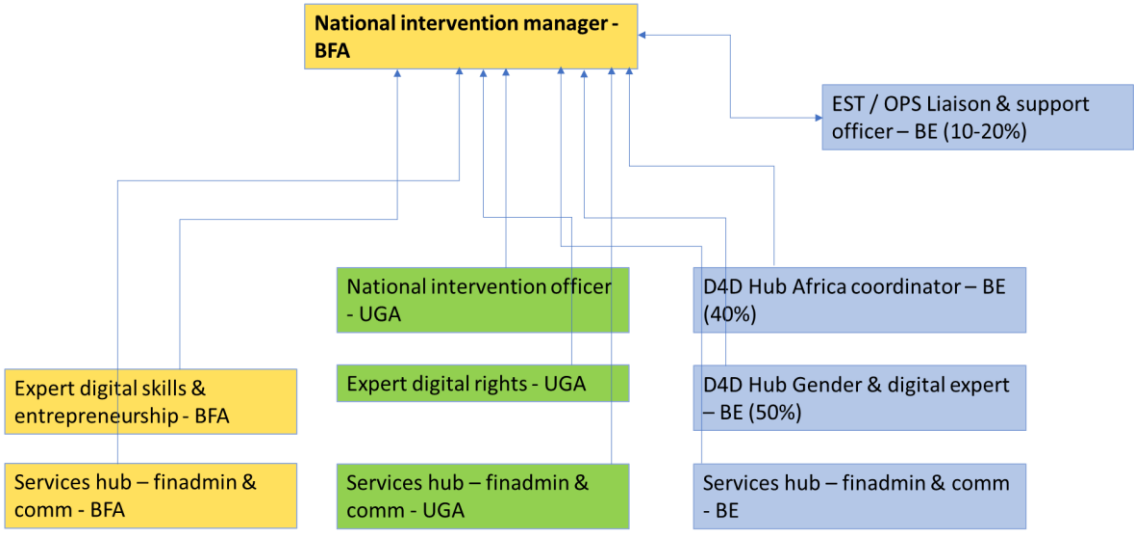
result, despite being officially set to start in December 2021, no substantive implementation took place in 2022.

Eventually, a new policy framework prioritising local coordination also known as internal Enabel Policy of the projects led to the transfer of the project's anchoring from a Brussels-based coordination to a **Burkina Faso-based coordination**. The project is currently managed by a national Project Manager based in Burkina Faso but overseeing all components (see Figure 1 below). A Steering Committee composed of delegates of the Ministry and of the project management monitors progress. An amendment without cost extension and prolongation in June/July 2024 approved the changes and adjusted the starting date to November 2022 (the project ends on 31/07/2025). The Avenant was signed on the 1st of July 2024.

Developed since 2024 and officially adopted in March 2025, this policy is still undergoing major changes. The procedures and tools to effectively conceive and manage such multi-country projects, as for example formulation checklists, operation set-up templates, program management cycle revision procedures, etc. are only being elaborated as we speak. The operational guidance and capacity building aspects allowing its smooth implementation are not yet determined.

Digital for Girls and Women, being one of the first multi-country projects to adopt local coordination, this process did not go smoothly. Some responsibilities (budget, communication) have not been fully clarified, and some information about implementation in the other countries is still not visible to the project manager. Differences in the language and cultural context have also increased the difficulties. While the Project Manager did all he could to absorb the delay, the coordination between the three components is still not perfect. Initially, the digital rights expert in Uganda and the digital skills and entrepreneurship expert in Burkina Faso should have been more systematically involved in the D4D Hub working groups to ensure greater coherence and knowledge sharing.

Figure 1 The D4GW project's management setup



Source: D4GW HR Setup

6.4.3. The project's activities

The project experienced delays due to the late establishment of the D4D Hub and challenges related to the recruitment and deployment of expert staff.

In Burkina Faso

The activities carried out in the Burkina Faso component focused on empowering women and girls through comprehensive digital skills training and digital rights awareness campaigns. Building on the foundation established by the previous Paas Panga project that ended in 2023, the D4GW project leveraged existing partnerships and the government's commitment to digitalization to create meaningful impact in the Central East region.

The D4GW project began its implementation in Burkina Faso with a comprehensive **launch and reflection workshop** conducted in both Ouagadougou and Tenkodogo in partnership with Fem Faso. This foundational activity engaged 100 major stakeholders from the Central East region, including representatives from **traditional chiefdoms, youth and women's associations, educational institutions, and local government**. The workshop served as a critical platform for introducing the project's objectives, establishing local partnerships, and ensuring that project activities would be deeply rooted within their respective communities while maintaining administrative and financial autonomy.

A strategic selection process was implemented to identify and **establish digital centres** that would serve as the backbone of the project's infrastructure component. This call for applications resulted in the selection of two key centers: Collège Marie Reine and Maison de la Femme in the Centre-Est region. The selection criteria emphasized institutional capacity, community integration, and long-term sustainability potential. Each selected center was equipped with 20 desktop computers, 10 tablets, 1 projector, 1 multifunction printer, and all required accessories, creating fully operational digital hubs specifically designed to serve women and girls. Following the selection process, comprehensive infrastructure development was undertaken at both centers. Solar power systems were installed to ensure energy sustainability and continuous operation, addressing one of the key barriers to digital access in rural areas. Internet connectivity was established in January 2024, enabling beneficiaries to access online resources and participate in digital learning activities. A symbolic handover ceremony was held on January 23, 2024, at Collège Marie Reine, marking a key milestone in the project's implementation and formally launching the digital centers for community use.

The cornerstone of the Burkina Faso intervention was the **Digital Skills Training program** conducted from September to December 2024 in partnership with BIMADES Consulting. These intensive training sessions took place in Tenkodogo and Koupéla, covering essential areas including digital marketing initiation, new enterprise management, social media operations, leadership development, and resource mobilization strategies. The program also included a comprehensive "train-the-trainers" component on digital marketing, towards ensuring sustainable knowledge transfer and local capacity building.

Complementing the skills development efforts, a **Digital Rights Campaign** was launched in December 2024 across multiple locations, including Tenkodogo, Garango, Pouytenga, and Koupéla. This campaign, implemented in partnership with local women's organizations, focused on raising awareness about digital rights through targeted conferences and sensitization sessions, particularly reaching students and young people who represent the next generation of digital citizens.

To maximize outreach and cultural relevance, the project employed innovative **community engagement strategies**. Radio sessions and sensitization programs were conducted from December 24-30, 2024, across Bagré, Garango, Pouytenga, and Koupéla in partnership with Massaka SAS. These were complemented by the creation of educative songs developed by artist Mouniratou DIALLO from December 18-23, 2024, which used local languages and cultural expressions to communicate key messages about digital inclusion and rights.

The project's commitment to participatory approaches was demonstrated through extensive **community debates and discussions** held throughout December 2024 in multiple locations, including Koupéla, Pouytenga, Andemtenga, Kando, Ouéguédo, Dialgaye, Soumagou, and two sectors (2&5) of Tenkodogo. These sessions, facilitated by Massaka SAS, engaged diverse populations, including men, women, and children, in meaningful dialogue about digital transformation and gender equality.

The project's foundation was established through strategic initiatives including a **Project Launch and reflection workshop** conducted in Ouagadougou and Tenkodogo in partnership with Fem Faso, which brought together 100 major stakeholders from the Central East region. Additionally, a **call for applications for the selection of centers for IT equipment** was launched to ensure sustainable infrastructure for ongoing digital skills development.

Targeted interventions included an **Awareness Session on Digital Rights for Young Girls** at Marie Reine College in Tenkodogo, directly reaching 300 young girls with crucial information about their digital rights and opportunities. The project also developed comprehensive **Capacity Building and Nationwide Campaign Plans on Digital Rights,** specifically designed for the Central East region, creating sustainable frameworks for continued advocacy and education.

These coordinated efforts in Burkina Faso demonstrated a holistic approach that combined technical skills development with rights-based advocacy, utilized culturally appropriate communication methods, and built local partnerships to ensure sustainable impact in advancing digital inclusion for women and girls.

In Uganda

The project was launched in Central, North-Eastern, Albertine, and Rwenzori regions. The **launch** focused on engaging various stakeholders, including government, civil society, private sector, academia, and technical communities, about the project, its objectives, scope, and intended impact. In the Central region of Uganda, the project was launched in Kampala on the 24th of August 2023.

The activities carried out in Uganda focused on the overall project objective of empowering girls and women with skills and opportunities to actively participate and contribute to an inclusive, rights-based digital economy. The first activity was on enhancing women's economic empowerment by improving their access to and utilisation of digital technologies. The second activity was to carry out **training** that would empower women and girls to assert their digital rights.

Enabel in Uganda then went ahead to work with WOUGNET, a local civil society organisation in Uganda with expertise in capacity building on gender and ICTs and empowerment of women. WOUGNET partnered with Enabel to carry out the digital skills for women and girls training in Uganda. Before the commencement of the training, WOUGNET carried out a **needs assessment** exercise to identify potential risks and barriers to technology access and usage for women and girls. 60 participants, including 44 females and 16 males, were reached through a needs assessment to identify potential risks and barriers to technology access and usage for women and girls. The outcome of this exercise provided recommendations on the building interventions that were tailored to address the specific needs and challenges women and girls face in accessing and using digital technologies. WOUGNET carried out **four trainings** in Uganda at the intersection of gender and technology. They were able to reach out to 134 participants (96 females and 38 males).

Furthermore, WOUGNET carried out a two-day **Trainers of Trainees** (TOTs) workshop for 20 on the intersection of gender and technology. The purpose was to equip women and girls with the right skills to navigate, engage, and contribute to online spaces with key focus topics such as Freedom of Expression, Personal Privacy, and Data Protection. The TOTs were also able to train more people in their communities and pass on the skills that they had learned. The project was able to train 220 Civil Service Organisation (CSOs) and stakeholders directly, 20 TOTs and 5,183 women and girls indirectly.

Another important activity that was carried out was the development and launch of an **Online Gender-Based Violence Knowledge and Support Services Portal** (https://ogbv.wougnet.org/) to provide reliable information and referral pathways for survivors and advocates. The portal was launched on 13th February 2025. Awareness campaigns were carried out to publicize the OGBV portal through two bilingual radio talk shows in English and Luganda.

WOUGNET also worked on a **Comic Book**: “Juliet's Journey: From Silence to Connection”. The book highlights the gender digital divide and the transformative impact of digital inclusion for women and girls.

The comic book has been made available in English and local languages, localised into Luganda, Runyakitara, and Runyoro. They distributed 6,360 books in different regions in the Rwenzori, Central, and South-Western regions.

In Belgium

The activities carried out in the Belgian component focus on streamlining gender considerations into the D4D Hub's activities. To this purpose, several activities were conducted under the coordination of the Gender expert seconded by Enabel to the D4D Hub Secretariat and with the help of two working groups co-led by Belgium Digital skills and Gender & digital rights. Although the gap between the departure of the first expert and the arrival of the second was held off.

The **Digital Skills Working Group** was established in March 2024, under the co-leadership of Belgium (Enabel) and Estonia (EstDev). It aims to identify best practices in promoting digital skills; mobilise Team Europe for joint initiatives to increase the impact of digital skills and education initiatives in close collaboration with partner countries and regions; raise awareness and ensure that digital competences and skills are considered in all initiatives of the D4D Hub; adopt a common terminology and develop joint indicators to improve coordination, knowledge sharing and monitoring of EU impact on digital skills and education.

The **Working Group on "Gender and Digital Rights"** was also created under Belgian leadership. Its main purpose is to streamline the considerations of the gender divide and digital rights into all activities of the D4D Hub. To do so, it steered work towards the adoption of the gender transformative strategy and the elaboration of a new Joint Intervention on Women Leadership in the Public ICT Sector. The working group was also in the driving seat for the capacity-building actions in the form of a workshop and a webinar series. Eventually, the working group was not reconducted in the new D4D Hub strategic framework 2025; instead, it was transformed into a transversal component to ensure even better integration of these topics into all initiatives. This can be regarded as a major achievement.

Work started very soon on developing **the D4D Hub's Gender Strategy,** "A transformative and intersectional approach to placing gender equality at the heart of digital development". Inspired by the European Commission's "Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations 2020–2025" (GAP III), it was finalised in 2024. The Strategy applies a twin-track approach consisting of (1) mainstreaming gender in all actions and stages across all thematic and operational areas of work and (2) designing gender-targeted actions where necessary. It champions capacity-building and training to enable all involved and adopts the OECD gender markers are a statistical tool to record activities that target gender equality as a policy objective. The Strategy also has a communication and stakeholder engagement component and is translated into an Action Plan that defines roles and responsibilities.

Enabel also organised a **Gender & Digital Rights Webinar Series** with 2 webinars on (1) "LGBTQIA+ Rights in the digital era" and (2) "Digital inclusion of migrants and indigenous communities" in 2024. The first two webinars saw the participation of around 50 D4D Hub members. Four other webinars were planned for 2024 but could not be realised because of a vacancy in the post of Gender and Digital Expert seconded by Enabel to the D4D Hub Secretariat. Other editions of the webinar will follow in 2025 with topics that are aligned with other thematic working groups of the D4D Hub, so that the topic of the gender divide can be examined through the lens of D4D Hub members who are not familiar with its characteristics. Hence, the third webinar concentrated on "Addressing Gender & Ethnicity bias in AI"

A two-day **Workshop on Gender-transformative digital cooperation** was held in October 2024 for the D4D Hub Secretariat and the European Commission. Preceded by a needs assessment survey, the workshop concentrated on introducing the basic terminology, presenting the global policy framework, including the D4D Hub's Gender Strategy, providing tools for gender analysis and impact measurement, as well as brainstorming about gender mainstreaming strategies.

The **participation in the Connected Africa Summit 2024,** organised by the Kenyan ICT Authority, allowed the D4D Hub to coordinate several gender sessions in partnership with Smart Africa. This was an opportunity to draw the attention of the digitalisation experts attending the conference to tackle the digital divide. It has also permitted the launch of the gender advisory network, which has since participated in a number of events (e-learning Africa, FIFA) and contributed to the different resources Enabel is developing for the D4D Hub on gender, digital rights, and the human-centric approach

The Forum on Internet Freedom in Africa (FIFAfrica) is the largest gathering on digital rights on the continent. It reunites key stakeholders, such as policymakers, regulators, journalists, activists, global platform operators, telecommunications companies, human rights defenders, academia, and law enforcement. Also, we have the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF) 2025 that brings together stakeholders from civil society, government, private sector, and academia to engage on key issues such as digital inclusion, data protection, online freedoms, and emerging technologies. Under the theme "Promoting Digital Ubuntu in Approaches to Technology," DRIF25 explored how collaborative and rights-based digital ecosystems can advance equity, trust, and accountability across the continent. This brought about a capitalization process, including the introduction of a Digital Rights Manual aimed at improving accessibility to key concepts, and the establishment of a Gender Advisory Network to ensure inclusive and gender-responsive approaches in digital policy and programming.

In May 2025, the D4D Hub also participated in the E-Learning Africa Conference in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania to (1) showcase good practices and lessons learned from D4D Hub members; (2) mobilise civil society and private sector voices, especially through and the Gender Advisory Network (GAN) led by Enabel; and finally (3) strengthen partnerships and connections with key stakeholders in Africa working on digital skills and inclusive digital education. The programme included a session on "Empowering Digital Citizens - Building inclusive and resilient societies through digital skills" and a workshop on "Co-creating a shared vision for EU-Africa collaboration on digital skills". At eLearning Africa, the D4D Hub shared key insights from the conference in a post highlighting five major takeaways for advancing inclusive digital education. First, it emphasized that digital transformation is about more than just connectivity it requires critical thinking and digital citizenship skills. Second, the importance of co-creating digital skills agendas with local actors was underscored to ensure relevance and sustainability. Third, building skills for today's jobs and tomorrow's challenges was seen as essential in a rapidly evolving digital economy. Fourth, participants stressed the value of scaling impact through strategic partnerships. Finally, the D4D Hub called for closing the digital divide with equity and purpose, ensuring that no one is left behind in Africa's digital transition. These takeaways reinforce the D4D Hub's commitment to rights-based, inclusive approaches to digital development, particularly in education and skills-building.

The final effort is concentrated on developing guidelines (an implementation checklist and a toolkit) for future initiatives integrating the **human-centric approach**, particularly its gender and digital rights component. The human-centric approach aims to "Foster inclusive digital economies and societies in which all citizens, notably women and young people, have equal opportunities to participate in the digital world. The human-centric approach puts people at the heart of the digital transformation driven by people's needs, fundamental rights, and intersectional challenges to closing digital divides".[4] Elaborated in co-creation with D4D Hub members, including Member States and the European Commission as well as CSOs, academia, and private sector stakeholders through the D4D Hub Advisory groups, the guidelines would also align with investment priorities and private sector engagement strategies.

The **Joint Initiative Women Leadership in the Public ICT Sector co-created and discussed at the Gender and Digital rights working group,** is in the final phase of approval in 2025. It will strive to increase the number of girls and women leading an inclusive digital transformation effectively and proactively in their

[4] CONCEPT NOTE on Co-creation of a toolkit on Human-Centric Approach of Digital Transformation

country. The initiative should contribute to reducing the gender digital divide while raising awareness on the power dynamics imbalance in the ICT sector in Africa, APAC, and LAC regions.

One of the objectives of the Belgian component was to make permanent the **pan-African gender expert network** created for the project (and building on previous work done by Enabel in the region) permanent as a Gender Advisory Board to the D4D Hub Africa branch. It was finally decided that members of the Gender expert network could be included (on a case-by-case basis) in the D4D Hub's Civil Society (CSAG) and Private Sector Advisory Groups (PSAG). However, Enabel also intends to use this network for other Gender related projects where Enabel is playing a significant role, such as the Women on ICT leadership initiative. This would contribute to the D4GW project's sustainability by giving continuity to the partnerships that it helped to elaborate.

A budget was made available for a study on gender and digital skills, specifically focusing on how digital skills empower women. The objective of the study was to bring together project stakeholders and generate insights to guide future interventions. However, despite the tender publication during three consecutive times, the procurement failed (with no valid offer presented).

At the end of 2024, the procurement of an interactive video to disseminate the Gender strategy was launched. The video is under final review now.

7 Objectives and methodology

7.1. Objectives of the evaluation

This **end term evaluation** (ETE) of the Digital for Girls and Women (D4GW) project is both *summative* and *formative* with a general purpose to assess overall project performance. It aims at identifying all project outcomes and generating learning for scaling, sustainability, and policy integration within broader D4D initiatives.

Users of the ETE are:

- Main users:
  - Enabel - Management and Project Teams
  - Government Partners in Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Belgium – Ministries and national agencies responsible for digital transformation, gender equality, and ICT policies
  - The European D4D Hub and Development Cooperation Actors – at the European and international levels
  - Implementing Partners and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) – Organizations engaged in digital skills training, digital rights advocacy, and gender-inclusive technology initiatives
- Secondary users:
  - Private Sector and Tech Industry Partners – Companies involved in digital solutions, connectivity, and digital skills development
  - Academia and Research Institutions – Universities and research organizations studying digital inclusion, gender equality, and ICT policy
  - Donors and International Development Organizations – Agencies funding or supporting digital development programs
  - Media and Advocacy Groups – Journalists, think tanks, and advocacy organizations focused on digital rights and gender equality
    - Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will consider all pillars of the Project and its diversity in activities. Therefore, the scope is:

- **Temporal**: the ETE covers the whole implementation period, hence from December 2021 to May 2025, complementing the findings of the previous reviews (2022-2023 Results Report).
- **Geographical**: the ETE covers the project's three geographical intervention areas: Belgium, Burkina Faso, and Uganda.
- **Thematic**: the ETE will assess the entire project, covering the analysis of the 2 specific objectives of the project, the interventions in the 3 countries, and the expected results.

7.2. Our evaluation approach

Our approach to conducting this evaluation and the methodological tools that we will deploy are presented in the sections below. The methodology will be refined during the EE inception phase and take into account the needs of the primary users of the evaluation to inform key choices and prioritisation.

We propose to conduct the ETE based on the following key methods:

- **A theory-based approach** relying on a contribution analysis that links together the inputs and activities of an intervention with its expected outcomes and impacts. A Theory of Change (ToC) is used to explain this intervention logic. This theoretical model specifies how the intervention is intended to produce the desired results and formulates assumptions that must be met for the transformation of inputs and activities into the expected outcomes and results and the achievement of the objectives. The evaluation will reconstruct the project's ToC as it was implemented and establish the realised outcomes and possible impact as a result, as opposed to

the expected ones. This approach will allow us not only to assess whether expected changes have occurred but also to judge whether the design and assumptions underpinning the logical framework are appropriate.

- **Process evaluation:** This methodology allows for understanding how well a program is working, the extent to which the program is being implemented as designed, and whether the implementation mechanisms are sufficiently efficient. While focusing on the "how" and "why", it observes variances to initially intended, planned, and implemented activities. The objective here is to assess whether Enabel's implementation strategy of the D4GW project has been optimum and to identify best practices and lessons learned that can be used in future implementation procedures. Notably, the multi-stakeholder approach and the learning processes will be closely analysed.
- **Collaborative and utilisation-focused approach:** We will ensure to establish our analysis, interpretation, judgement and recommendations with an active involvement of evaluation users. This will not only improve the quality of our work but also allow a greater ownership and dissemination of our findings. We will keep the evaluation flexible, as new users may emerge over the course of the evaluation or new questions may become important. We will ensure that results and recommendations from the evaluation are practical, operational and grounded in the reality of the project's objectives and activities to facilitate their uptake. We will also consider of the timing of decision-making cycles and ensuring the evaluation provides the right information and knowledge at the right time.
- **Capitalising on existing data & evidence and combining qualitative and quantitative investigations:** gather existing data from multiple sources, mainly the project management team and the beneficiaries, but also from the literature. Quantitative data provides hard evidence on the desk review, informs about the initial needs assessment and design of the programme, its implementation process, and outcomes. The literature will also feed into a mapping of key stakeholders and allow a better understanding of the context. This analysis will be complemented by the 33 key informant interviews (KII) and 4 focus group discussions (FGD) with key stakeholders to complement and nuance the answers to the evaluation questions.
- We propose a **mixed methods approach** to conduct this evaluation, using a variety of tools to collect and generate credible evidence and respond to the evaluation questions. This methodology has been designed also to **generate "useful" learning** throughout the evaluation process for the project management and for Enabel in general. We aim at gathering existing data from multiple sources, including previous evaluations conducted (MTE), mainly the project management team and the beneficiaries, but also from the literature. Quantitative data provides hard evidence, and the desk review inform about the initial needs assessment and design of the programme, its implementation process and outcomes. We also aim at gathering first-hand information mainly qualitative, thanks to a field visit, ensuring that the evaluation take stocks of what has been achieved and identifies lessons learned.

7.3. Evaluation framework

The evaluation questions cover the following OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability**, completed by the criterion of gender.

The list of evaluation questions is based on the Terms of References and amendments and clarifications proposed at the inception phase. The following evaluation matrix also proposes sources of information, tools for data collection and triangulation and analysis methods.

Table 1 Evaluation matrix

	Evaluation questions and sub-questions	Information required/Sources	Methodologies/ evaluation tools
Relevance	Q1. Is the programme doing the right things? • To what extent and how has the Project responded to the strategic needs and interests of local partners in terms of decreasing the digital gender divide? • What are the best practices to guide future gender-responsive Digital for Development (D4D) strategies	• Ex-ante assessment of needs and interests of partners • Adequacy of approach to addressing the gaps • Project Theory of Change • Perception of partners of the response brought by the project • Perception of stakeholders on added value of the project • Perception of partners of context evolution and the remaining needs and necessary approaches	• Desk review • ToC analysis • Key informant interviews • Focus groups
Coherence	Q2. How well does the project/programme fit? • To what extent was the project coherent with the countries' strategic orientations? • To what extent was the Project coherent with other initiatives? • What are the existing mechanisms to ensure coherence that were or can be leveraged upon?	• Analysis of other donors, EU and AU portfolios on D4D and mapping of other projects/programmes • Identification of mechanisms to ensure synergies/complementarities • Perception of donors on complementarities/synergies of the project with other interventions, as well as mechanisms in place to ensure coherence	• Desk review • Key informant interviews • Focus groups
Efficiency	Q3. How well the project was managed and resources used? • How efficient were the steering, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning arrangements? • How did the multi-country set up function? Did it bring added value? • How was the quality of collaboration and dialogue between implementing partners in Belgium, Uganda and Burkina Faso?	• Analysis of initial budget and timeline and current implementation status (Annual reports, indicators) • Description of modalities, design, management, roles in implementation of activities • Perception on adequacy of all above; identification of potential improvements • Perception on timely implementation • Analysis of Monitoring-Evaluation-Learning (MEL) system and notably outcomes/impact indicators • Perception of the Project management on MEL outputs	• Desk review (e.g. Review of MEL framework, financial data, progress reports, governance documents) • Key informant interviews • Focus groups
Effectiveness	Q4. Is the project achieving its objectives? • Was the Theory of Change coherent and valid? Were the assumptions verified? • Were the digital skills training models appropriate? Did they produce the expected outputs and outcomes? • What were success factors? What were challenges?	• Identified outputs and outcomes of project by stakeholders • Perception on drivers and obstacles • Perception on key successes / challenges / strength / weaknesses and emerging lessons • Perception on effectiveness of approach to achieve outputs and outcomes	• Desk review • ToC analysis • Key informant interviews • Focus groups
Impact	Q5. What difference does the project/programme make? • Q7. What intended and unintended effects of the Project (both positive and negative) can be observed? • To what extent and how has the project been able to empower women economically through increased access and better use of digital technologies? • To what extent was it able to help them claim their digital rights? • What long-term impact can be expected in the next few years?	• Perception on intended and unintended outcomes • Projection of future impact • Evidence on changed attitudes, capacity and application of shared tools • Perception on opportunities to decrease the digital gender divide	• Key informant interviews • Focus groups

	Evaluation questions and sub-questions	Information required/Sources	Methodologies/ evaluation tools
Sustainability	Q6. Will the benefits last? • Are the effects and benefits of the Project likely to be sustained after the end of the intervention? • What were be the mechanisms in place to best ensure sustainability of the benefits? • Did the multi-stakeholder approach increase local anchorage of the project?	• Existence of a sustainability strategy • Existence of an exit strategy to enhance the ownership • Existence of strategic documents/operational guides/briefing notes that have been transferred to partners • Perception of stakeholders on the sustainability of the effects of the project	• Desk review • Key informant interviews • Focus groups
Gender	Q8. To what extent has the project integrated gender issues into the implementation?	• Gender strategy in the ex-ante assessment produced • Gender perspective included in the project ToC • Gender perspective/approach in activities implementation • Gender disaggregation of indicators in the MEL	• Desk review incl. MEL data • ToC analysis • Key informant interviews • Focus groups

Source: Technopolis Africa

7.4. Evaluation tools

Table 2 Proposed data collection and analysis tools for evaluation

Data collection/ analysis tool	Brief overview	Objectives and added value
Desk research and data analysis	• Collect, review, and analyse available documentation on the project from key stakeholders • Analysis of project documents, reports, financial data, and monitoring & evaluation frameworks. • Review of relevant policies, national strategies, and global best practices in digital gender inclusion.	• Understand the initiative's objectives, activities, funding, and governance structure • Become acquainted with the MEL framework and procedures, the intended results, partners, and beneficiaries • Finetune the methodology and the engagement approach, and select stakeholders to be interviewed
Theory of change	• Reconstruction of intervention logic and hypothesis	• Develop a tool to test hypothesis for changes
Scoping interviews (4)	• With Enabel staff in Burkina Faso and Uganda	• Understand the context and stake, develop a detailed understanding of programme's intermediaries, beneficiaries, procedures, and implementation mechanisms.
Key Informant Interviews (20*3)	• With key stakeholders, i.e., implementing partners, government stakeholders, private sector actors, CSOs, women beneficiaries, trainers, community leaders, and digital rights advocates, specifically Regional women's network, Women's association, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), Wezesha Women Initiative, Ateker Women Agenda for Equality.	• Gain a nuanced understanding of project's strengths and weaknesses, of its results and achievements thus far as perceived by stakeholders • Identify issues encountered, best practices and lessons learned • Gather first insights to recommendations for the future development of similar projects
Focus Group Discussions (3)	• Three focus group discussions in the three countries covered by the project: Belgium, Burkina Faso and Uganda, with key stakeholders	• Discuss initial findings of previous steps and deepen the answers to the evaluation questions • Identify best practices and lessons learned, elaborate recommendations

Source: Technopolis Africa

7.5. Limits of the evaluation

To date, we have knowledge of a certain number of factors that can influence the solidity of D4GW project's evaluation. Notably,

- No documentation is available on internal coordination procedures.
- The budgetary reporting is incomplete; 2025 are estimations of projected expenses only.
- A significant number of activities which were executed by local Enabel teams were not documented or followed by an activity report.
- The monitoring framework has not been populated continuously. Data were aggregated only occasionally.
- No activity documentation was made available for the evaluators for the period 2022-2023, nor on activities carried out in Uganda in 2024-2025. Hence, information about activities executed before 2024 comes from a secondary source and corroborated by the interviews and focus group discussions.
- Activities gender disaggregated monitoring data were not captured systematically and there is no uniform gender disaggregated data at project level.

8 Analysis and findings

8.1. Performance analysis

In this section we present the key findings from the evaluation activities carried out. The elements below are organised according to the evaluation framework validated during the inception phase. They were collected through the triangulation of the results of all data collection efforts (document review, Focus Group discussions, Key Informant Interviews). Triangulation implied aggregating answers to interview questions and results of the group discussions in all three countries.

RELEVANCE	A	B	C	D

The Digital for Girls and Women project was designed to meet the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries in Uganda and Burkina Faso, but also to global needs.

Preceded by thorough needs assessment in Burkina Faso and Uganda, based on expertise gained and connections built through previous projects in both countries, its orientation was significantly guided by local stakeholders, mainly civil society organisations. Although its focus was empowering girls and women in the digital space and increasing their autonomy, the project was built on a wide outreach strategy. Besides capacity building activities for direct beneficiaries, it also contained trainings for trainers as a lever for multiplying impact, but also awareness raising campaigns for the wider public. Public authorities were, however, not part of the target groups.

The Belgian component serving the expansion layer of the project meant to directly use expertise and experience gained on the field for influencing European and international D4D policies and initiatives. In this, it served a global need of empowering girls and women in the digital space worldwide.

COHERENCE	A	B	C	D

Although formal coordination with national policies did not take place, the D4GW project was in line with national and global policies on digitalisation, human rights and gender policies. No duplication of similar donor initiatives was noted in the implementing countries, which confirms Belgium's pioneer role on the topic. The Brussels component was directly formulated to integrate the considerations on digital skills, digital rights and the gender divide into the D4D Hub's activities, thus increasing their internal coherence along these lines.

The project's internal coherence, however, is more difficult to establish. When examining a single component, a well-structured, multi-layered approach can be observed between the different activities, going from infrastructure improvement to trainings that build on that infrastructure to training of trainers able to multiply the impact. The wider outreach activities are destined to reinforce raise awareness about the same skills and rights the trainings concentrate upon, but in the wider public.

The coherence between the three components of the project has shown some gaps. For instance, the experts based in Burkina Faso and Uganda were ultimately not integrated into the D4D Hub's broader activities, limiting their contribution to the Hub's collective agenda. Additionally, although the project initially envisioned the formalization of a Gender Advisory Network as part of the D4D Hub's structure, this did not materialize. It is important to clarify, however, that when the Gender Advisory Board was proposed by D4GW, the PSAG (Private Sector Advisory Group) and CSAG (Civil Society Advisory Group) had not yet been established. On the other hand, the manual "Digital Rights for Beginners" developed with experts from Burkina, Uganda and the region, will be used in trainings in Uganda and disseminated through the Belgian component.

EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT	A	B	C	D

A very important delay (nearly two years) in the set-up phase hindered significantly the implementation of the project and most probably limited the impact the project will be able to achieve. A more effective coordination between the three components could have further boosted the project's achievements.

As a result of a major push in 2024 and 2025, nearly all foreseen activities have been carried out and the majority of outputs were achieved. More notable is the fact that the trainings already show some measurable impact realised by the direct beneficiaries. Several women reported a sharp raise in their turnover and some trainers were able to put in place additional trainings, outside of the project. A certain change of mentality is also observable, although not thanks to the wider communication campaigns at systemic level, but at individual level, thanks to the trainings.

It is important to note, that due to a deficient MEL framework, the project's outcomes and impacts are difficult to measure. A key challenge lies in the lack of quantitative data to measure the projects positive results, making it difficult to assess effectiveness and impact with confidence. Much of the evaluation of these criteria appears to rely on qualitative input, particularly interviews with beneficiaries, rather than on systematically documented evidence or measurable indicators. Moreover, documentation of success stories or tangible outcomes was largely unavailable, which further limited the ability to verify or triangulate reported achievements. While the evaluation employed a contribution analysis methodology, which is appropriate for complex interventions, it was hindered by the absence of robust baseline data and performance metrics, weakening the strength of the causal links drawn between project activities and observed outcomes.

EFFICIENCY	A	B	C	D

The D4GW project was considered a pilot, therefore the budget was limited compared to the ambitions. Budget cuts due to the global context came further shrinking the available resources. Nevertheless, the budget was used according to plans and nearly in full. As Enabel's budget has suffered cuts due to recent global events, some activities might intentionally be cancelled to realise some savings.

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework shows some serious flaws. The outputs defined at conception phase are outcomes. The indicators defined at the beginning had to be simplified, but even the new set is composed of solely output indicators, performance, outcome and impact indicators are entirely missing. No baseline has been established, and target values have only been defined in August 2024. No gender disaggregated data is available in a gender-focused project.

The project coordination suffered several set-backs throughout the project. First, delays in staffing impeded the timely set-up of the team. Then, the project management was transferred from Brussels to Ouagadougou. The fact that the decentralised coordination of a multi-country project was put into place before the decentralisation policy was fully elaborated left a huge imprint on the project's efficiency. Lacking tools and procedures for such a complex endeavour, the coordination team had to improvise, which left room to ad-hoc and unstructured communication.

SUSTAINABILITY	A	B	C	D

No sustainability strategy has been explicitly elaborated for the D4GW project. However, in Burkina Faso and Uganda, a rigorous identification of needs and a participatory approach involving the beneficiaries from the design stage ensures a certain sustainability of the results. The multiplier effect issued from the strong partnerships that were built and the capacity building that was either intended (ToT) or unintended (implementing partners) will most probably last and be built upon by future projects.

The outcomes themselves can have a lasting effect if built upon. The training manual has already raised interest from the governments of Burkina Faso, the OGBV support portal will stay alive in Uganda. The Gender Transformative Strategy will enrich the work of the D4D Hub, so will the pan-African network of gender experts The Women in ICT Leadership Joint Initiative will continue to work on the gender

divide on a broader scale. The fact that the Belgian component further disseminates outputs created by the two other components also contribute to their survival beyond the project's lifetime.

The security situation in Burkina Faso might affect sustainability of results and achievements. Violence is for now limited to a few regions (The Sahel, North, and East regions) but can overflow to other regions in the future.

GENDER	A	B	C	D
Reducing the digital gender divide was the very focus of the project gender issues were integrated in a systematic and informed manner. Gender considerations were embedded in both planning and execution, ensuring that women and girls were prioritised in access to digital skills, tools, and opportunities. The needs assessment in both countries provided a clear understanding of the barriers women and girls face in accessing digital technologies, including socio-cultural constraints, limited digital literacy, affordability, and lack of representation in the tech ecosystem. However, no gender disaggregated data is available, nor outcome or impact indicator that would allow the assessment if the project was successful in addressing this priority.				

8.2. Detailed analysis

8.2.1. The project's MEL framework

Intervention logic

The project's founding document (TFF) mentions that intervention logic is based on two layers. The first is the country level, where **Enabel's expertise is deepened** through the implementation of activities focusing on the digital divide and fostering digital skills and rights of women and girls in Burkina Faso and Uganda. The second layer **expands this very expertise** and mainstreams it into bilateral and European initiatives.

However, the project's **General Objective** (GO), according to which Women and men shall have equal opportunities promoted by an inclusive and rights-based digital transformation/economy, is only translated to two **Specific Objectives** (SO).

1. Promote the economic empowerment of women and girls by ensuring **increased access and better use** of digital technologies and
2. Ensure that people, especially women and girls, are empowered to claim their **human rights,** specifically in the context of an increasingly rapid digital transformation

The project also identifies a series of **Expected Outputs**, which, however, **are Outcomes**. Therefore, the step of the outputs is lost in the Theory of Change elaborated by Enabel.

- Women have increased access to digital technologies through a shared and adapted infrastructure (SO1)
- Women have the skills needed to participate in the digital and digitally enabled economy (SO1)
- The expertise of national stakeholders, Belgian and international development actors, to contribute to closing the gender divide in the digital and digitally enabled economy has been strengthened (GO)
- The D4D Hub Africa has adopted and operationalised a joint approach to contribute to closing the digital gender gap in the digital and digitally enabled economy (GO)
- Women and girls' (targeting both students and teachers) knowledge and understanding of their digital rights is enhanced (SO2)
- People in Burkina Faso and Uganda are aware of digital rights and understand gender specific issues (SO2)
- Women and girls have access to support services to assert their digital rights (SO2)

- The expertise of national, as well as of Belgian and international development actors, to promote digital rights has been strengthened (GO)
- The D4D Hub Africa has adopted and operationalised a joint approach to promote a human rights-based digital transformation (GO)

Some expected outcomes (EO), specifically those related to the expansion layer and Enabel's contribution to the D4D Hub or other international and bilateral initiatives, are rather hard to fit into the SOs, as they serve rather general, overarching purposes. **A third SO could have been defined** for their purpose, also facilitating the streamlining of the Belgian component. Indeed, although the activities carried out in Burkina Faso and Uganda can mostly be fit into the two SOs, the Belgian component mostly focused on bringing the experience accumulated in those two countries (and elsewhere by Enabel) to the D4D Hub level.

The EOs were eventually fine-tuned during implementation, although still keeping the same structure (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Expected Outcomes per Specific Objectives

Component A (SO1): Women are economically empowered through increased access and better use of digital technologies	**Component B (SO2)**: People, especially women and girls, are empowered to claim their digital rights
• **A1**: Women have increased access to digital technologies through a shared and adapted infrastructure. • **A2:** Women have the skills needed to participate in the digital and digitally enabled economy • **A3**: The expertise of national stakeholders, Belgian and international development actors to contribute to closing the gender divide in the digital and digitally enabled economy has been strengthened • **A4**: The D4D Hub Africa has adopted and operationalised a joint approach to contribute to closing the digital gender gap in the digital and digitally enabled economy	• **B1**: Women and girls' (targeting both students and teachers) knowledge and understanding on their digital rights is enhanced • **B2:** People in Burkina Faso and Uganda are aware of digital rights and understand gender specific issues • **B3**: Women and girls have access to support services to assert their digital rights • **B4**: The expertise of national, as well as of Belgian and international development actors, to promote digital rights has been strengthened • **B5**: The D4D Hub Africa has adopted and operationalised a joint approach to promote a human rights-based digital transformation

Source: Budget data

The Theory of Change rests on two key assumptions:

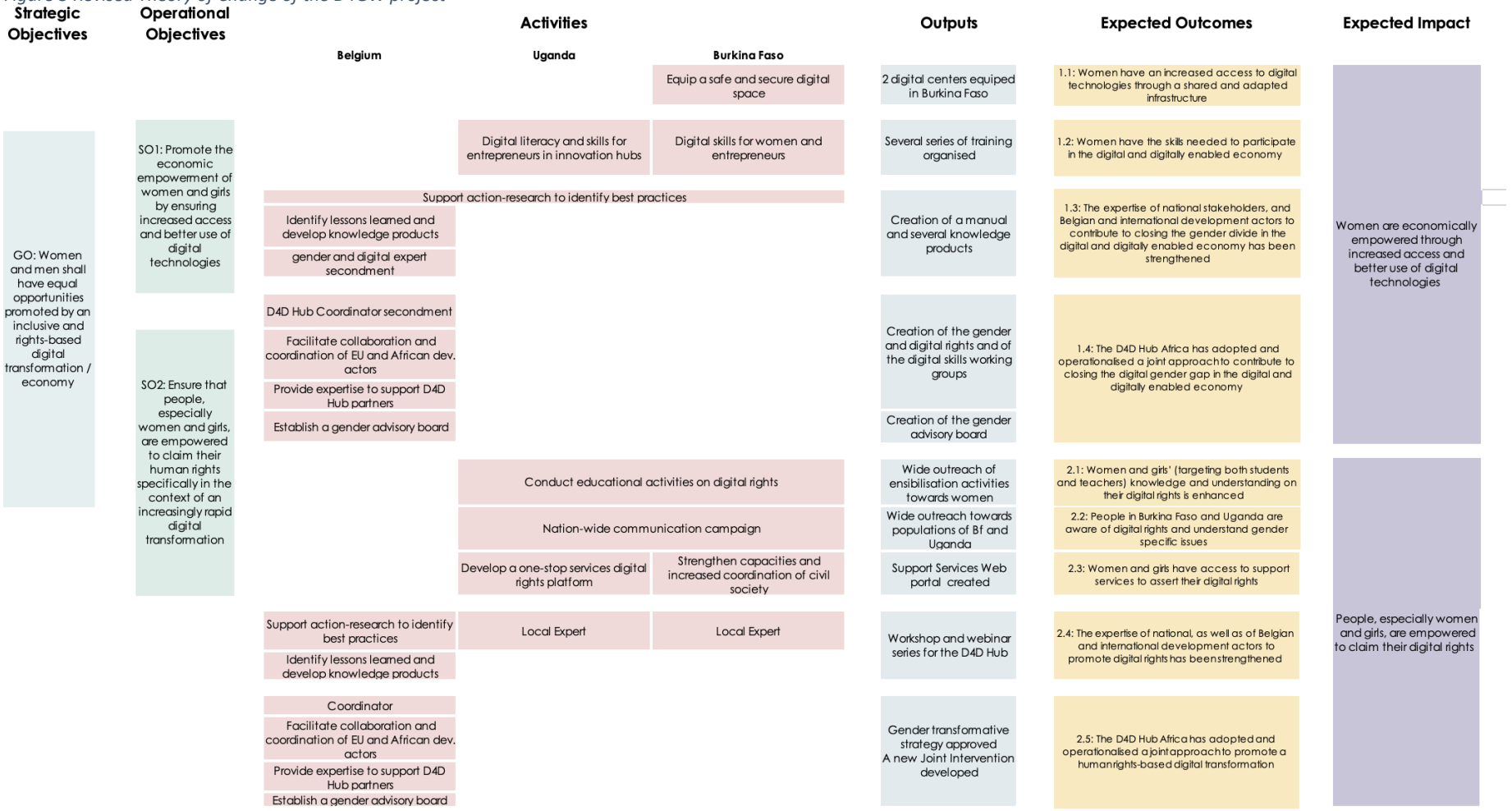
- Increased access and skills in digital technologies for women lead to economic empowerment, contributing to an inclusive digital economy.
- When women and girls understand their digital rights and have access to supportive services, they will claim these rights, fostering an inclusive, rights-based digital transformation.

According to the Technical & Financial File, these assumptions are widely supported in the literature and practice on digital inclusion and gender empowerment[5].

Based on the information retrieved from the data collection phase, we can draw the following revised **Theory of Change** (Figure 2):

[5] Technical & Financial File. 2025. Gender-sensitive and rights-based approach in digitalisation mainstreaming

Figure 3 Revised Theory of Change of the D4GW project



Source: Technopolis Africa

Monitoring data

No baseline and no target values were determined for the indicators at the inception phase. Usually, the project management is supposed to fine-tune and inform the indicators once the project starts. However, delays in the implementation and late staffing prevented such endeavours. In August 2024, the indicators were eventually simplified, and target values were defined for most of them by the Burkina Faso team. Baseline values were replaced by 0 as a proper baseline study has not been carried out.

The evaluation framework (cadre de monitoring) has not been filled out, and no connection was made with the already established country evaluation systems. Monitoring matrix (cadre de résultats) was **not populated** either throughout the implementation period; indicators were calculated when needed for a report, such as the annual presentation in front of the Steering Committee and the annual reports. Two "annual reports" were produced, one for the years 2022-2023 and one for the year 2024. The 2025 annual report is under construction.

Based on information available in the draft 2024 Annual Report, we created the monitoring matrix below. **Although the so-called outputs are outcomes, the indicators correspond to outputs indeed**. Gender disaggregated data is only available for certain activities in Uganda, which makes it impossible to add to the project-wide table. Indicators specifically focusing on women are difficult to evaluate in absence of a baseline value.

Table 3 Monitoring data

Activities	Outcomes	Output indicators	Baseline	Target	End value (Aug 2024)
• Equip a safe and secure digital space	1.1: Women have an increased access to digital technologies through a shared and adapted infrastructure	Number of women accessing and making use of the connected shared space during the intervention	0	1000	249
• Digital literacy and skills for entrepreneurs in innovation hubs • Digital skills for women and entrepreneurs	1.2: Women have the skills needed to participate in the digital and digitally enabled economy	Number of women who have completed digital skills trainings (digital literacy, digital entrepreneurship, advanced digital skills for employment in the digital economy) disaggregated by age and type	0	720	720
• Support action-research to identify best practices • Identify lessons learned and develop knowledge products • gender and digital expert secondment	1.3: The expertise of national stakeholders, and Belgian and international development actors to contribute to closing the gender divide in the digital and digitally enabled economy has been strengthened	Number of knowledge products and/or capitalisation documents created made openly available	0	N/A	12
		Number of participants (disaggregated by BE & general EU) in trainings/ online webinars organised	0	200	125
		Study / consultancy report on closing the gender digital [divide for the digital economy]	0	1	0
		Development of guidance tool to mainstream gender	0	1	0
• AU-EU D4D Hub Africa Coordinator secondment • Facilitate collaboration and coordination of EU and African dev. actors	1.4: The D4D Hub Africa has adopted and operationalised a joint approach to contribute to closing the digital gender gap in the digital and digitally enabled economy	Number of joint strategies or approaches developed and / or adopted	0	1	10
		Number of D4D Hub Africa projects supported with expertise provided to European and African partners	0	2	1
		Number of side events and annual events and dialogues in which the	0	2	1

Activities	Outcomes	Output indicators	Baseline	Target	End value (Aug 2024)
• Provide expertise to support D4D Hub partners • Establish a gender advisory board		gender advisory board has participated			
		Gender advisory board established with African representatives as part of the outreach platform D4D Hub CSO and Private sector AGs	N/A	N/A	N/A
• Conduct educational activities on digital rights	2.1: Women and girls' (targeting both students and teachers) knowledge and understanding on their digital rights is enhanced	Number of people (gender-disaggregated) who have attended the training on digital rights	0	N/A	120
		% of women and girls reporting a higher understanding of their rights after the training	0	N/A	95%
		Number of gender-specific digital rights issues identified and shared through awareness raising campaigns	0	N/A	20
• Nation-wide communication campaign	2.2: People in Burkina Faso and Uganda are aware of digital rights and understand gender specific issues	Number of people (gender-disaggregated) reached through communication campaigns conducted on gender specific digital rights issues	0	10.000	14.500
• Develop a one-stop services digital rights platform • Strengthen capacities and increased coordination of civil society	Output 2.3: Women and girls have access to support services to assert their digital rights	Number of women and girls benefiting from digital rights support services	0	6.000	0
		Number of CSOs digital rights support services enhanced	0	134	0
• Support action-research to identify best practices • Local Expert in BFA and UGA • Identify lessons learned and develop knowledge products	2.4: The expertise of national, as well as of Belgian and international development actors to promote digital rights has been strengthened	Number of digitally enabled knowledge products created made openly available	0	N/A	0
		Number of participants (disaggregated by BE & general EU) in trainings/ online webinars organised	0	N/A	0
		Study/ consultancy report on women-specific digital rights issues	0	1	0
		Development of guidance tool to mainstream digital rights in D4D projects	0	1	0
• Coordinator • Facilitate collaboration and coordination of EU and African dev. actors • Provide expertise to support D4D Hub partners • Establish a gender advisory board	2.5: The D4D Hub Africa has adopted and operationalised a joint approach to promote a human rights-based digital transformation	Number of joint strategies or approaches developed and adopted	0	1	0
		Number of D4D Hub Africa projects supported with expertise provided to European and African partners	0	1	0
		Number of side events and annual events and dialogues in which the gender advisory board has participated	0	4	3
		Gender advisory board established with African representatives as part of the D4D Hub CSO and Private sector AGs outreach platform	0	N/A	1

Source: Monitoring Matrix, Annual Report 2025

8.2.2. The project's financial performance

Overall Budget

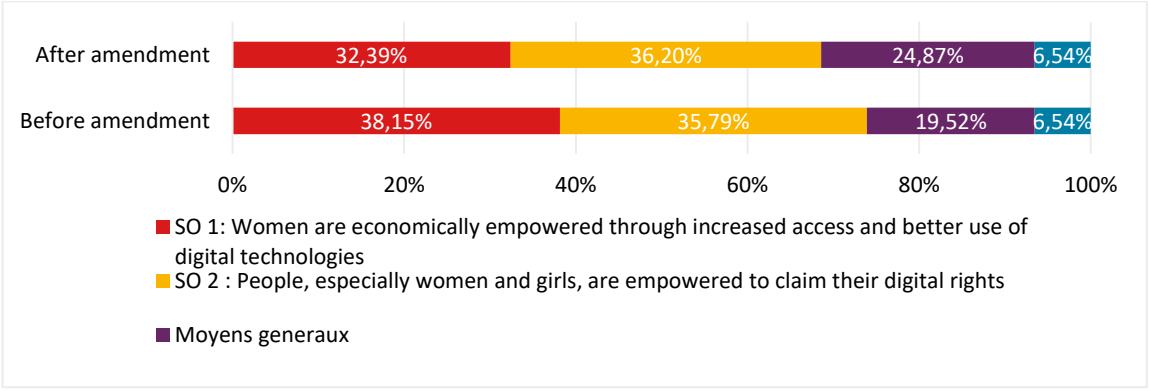
Figure 4 Overall Budget Table

BUDGET TOTAL				Details			BUDGET TOTAL	%	Budget modifications	New Budget total	% Budget revision
				Unit	Quantity	Amount					
A Women and men have equal opportunities to participate in and contribute to an inclusive and rights-based digital economy.							**1.663.542**	**79%**	**- 120.250**	**1.543.292**	
A	*01*		*SO 1: Women are economically empowered through increased access and better use of digital technologies*				858.371	**41%**	- 129.574	728.797	-15%
A	01	01	Activities for outputs 1.1 and 1.2				350.000		20.000	370.001	6%
A	01	02	Activities for output 1.3 - expertise				316.000		- 108.548	207.452	-34%
A	01	03	Activities for output 1.4 - D4D Hub Africa				192.371		- 41.027	151.344	-21%
A	*02*		*SO 2 : People, especially women and girls, are empowered to claim their digital rights*				805.171	**38%**	9.324	814.495	1%
A	02	01	Activities for outputs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3				400.000		- 31.341	368.659	-8%
A	02	02	Activities for output 2.4 - expertise				212.800		81.485	294.285	38%
A	02	03	Activities for output 2.5 - D4D Hub Africa				192.371		- 40.820	151.551	-21%
Z			**Moyens generaux**				**439.262**	**21%**	**120.249**	**559.511**	
Z	*01*		*Resources humaines*				359.280	**17%**	69.163	428.444	19%
Z	01	01	Personnel techniques				232.800		23.476	256.276	10%
Z	01	02	Support Services				126.480		45.687	172.167	36%
Z	*02*		*Investissements*				8.750	**0,4%**	- 3.250	5.500	-37%
Z	02	01	ICT				8.750		- 3.250	5.500	-37%
Z	*03*		*Coûts Opérationals*				40.800	**2%**	44.008	84.808	108%
Z	03	01	Telecom				7.200		- 2.400	4.800	-33%
Z	03	02	Office consumables				7.200		39.180	46.380	544%
Z	03	03	Coûts financiers				2.400		- 546	1.854	-23%
Z	03	04	Autres				24.000		7.774	31.774	32%
Z	*04*		*Audit, M&E et support*				28.500	**1%**	8.828	37.328	31%
Z	04	01	Monitoring and evaluation				18.500		18.828	37.328	102%
Z	04	02	Audit				10.000		- 10.000	-	-100%
Z	*05*		*Communication et capitalization*				1.932	**0,1%**	1.500	3.432	78%
Z	05	01	Communication and capitalization				1.932		1.500	3.432	78%
SUBTOTAL PROJECT COST							**2.102.804**		**- 1**	**2.102.804**	
Z	99	99	Coûts indirects				147.196		- 0	147.196	
TOTAL INCL INDIRECT COST							**2.250.000**		**- 1**	**2.250.000**	

Source: Amendment

The project' total budget has been set for **2,25 million euros** for four years at the time of contractualisation. It was distributed more or less equally between Specific Objective 1 (38.15%) and Specific Objective 2 (35.79%). General means and indirect costs amounted to 26,06% of the total budget. After the amendment, the general means have increased to 31.41%, whereas the SO1 decreased to 32.39% and SO2 remained at the same proportion, 36.2%. The increase in general means was primarily due to greater investment in travel, M&E support, and communication, which addressed challenges already identified at that stage, namely, the need for stronger coordination between countries, enhanced monitoring and evaluation, and improved communication efforts at both national and project-wide levels. This reallocation was made possible thanks to a significant reduction in human resources costs, which created fiscal space for these strategic adjustments.

Figure 5 Budget distribution before and after the amendment



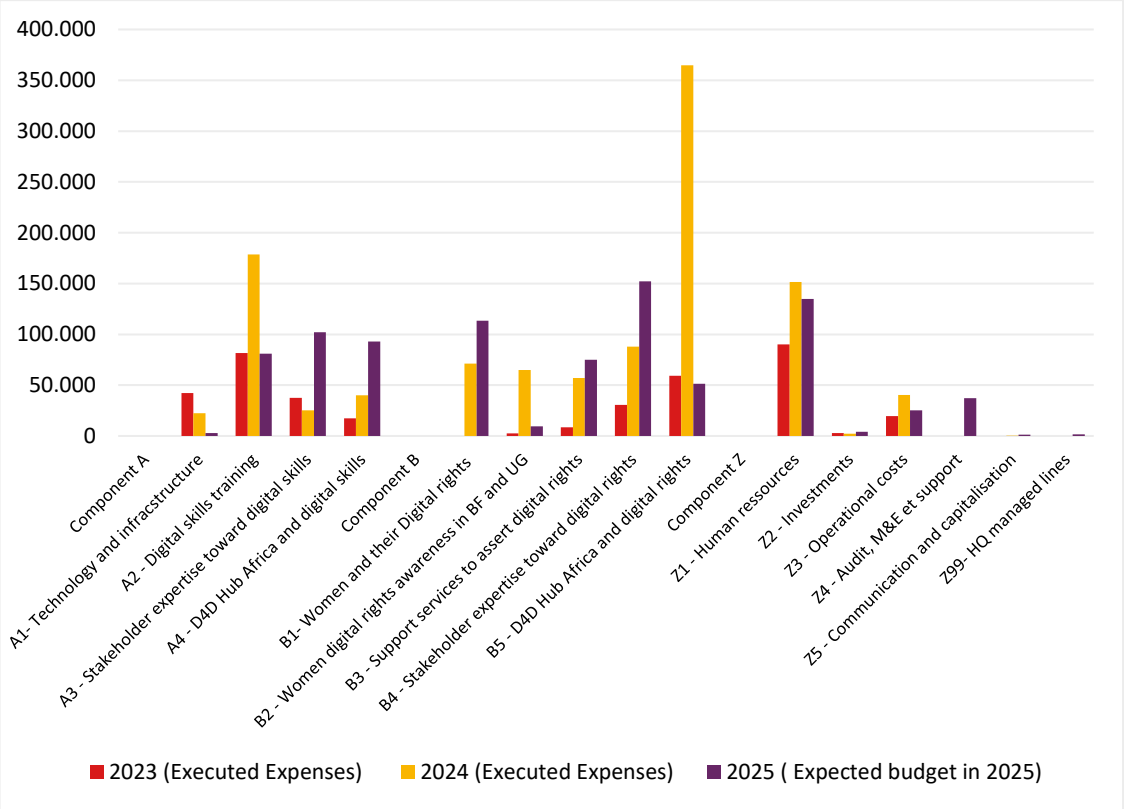
Source: Technopolis Africa based on budget data

The budget is further detailed according to the expected outputs that activities are likely to produce. This methodology would require that real outputs are defined that are directly relatable to the activity. Those defined by the D4GW project are however outcomes, which are more difficult to directly link to the budget line. The budget has also been distributed among the three countries: Belgium, Burkina Faso, and Uganda, for implementation purposes. As Figure 4 shows, a modification took place between the different categories at the moment the amendment was signed.

Budget analysis per Specific Objective and Expected Outcome

below shows how the different SOs and EOs make up the overall spending throughout the three years of implementation.

Figure 6 Total executed budget by outputs in 2023/2024 and expected budget for 2025



Rapport budgétaire BFA22005: Digital for Girls and Women-BFA

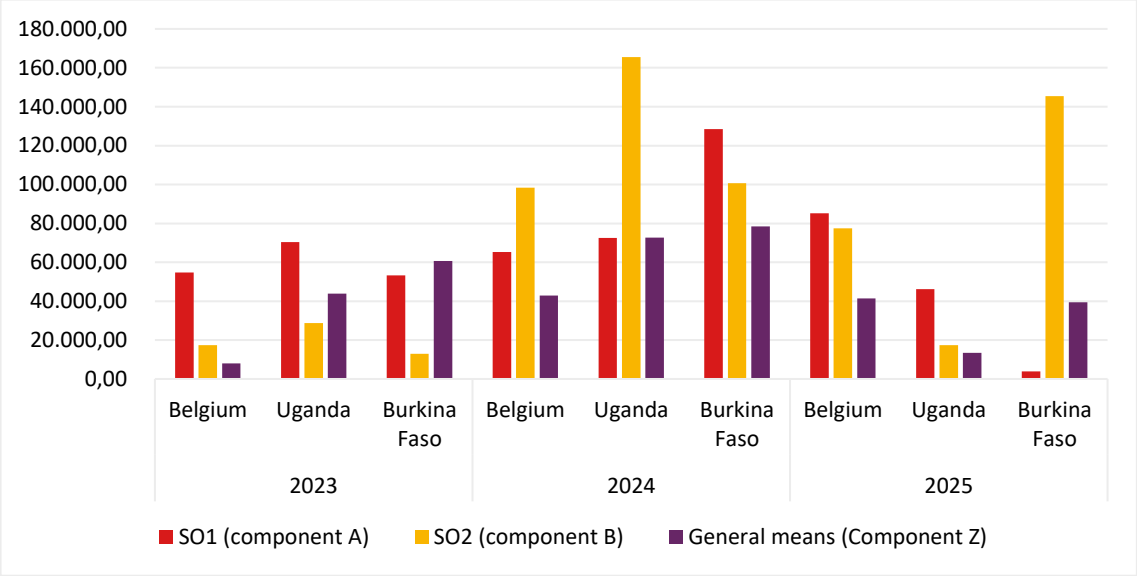
Overall, the evolution of spending between 2023 and 2024 demonstrates **a clear transition from foundational setup to full-scale implementation**. In 2024, the distribution of expenditures shifted. From an initial focus on infrastructure and equipment (A1) in 2023, the D4D Hub Africa joint action emerged as the highest-cost category. Digital skills training (A2) remained a key investment area, with expenditures rising to €178,725 (more than double the 2023 figure), underscoring the project's sustained commitment to absorb the delay in implementation in the first years. Meanwhile, Human resources expenses (Z1) increased to €151,529 in 2024, reflecting the recruitment of additional experts.

Investments in infrastructure and equipment (A1) were largely completed in 2023–2024 and declined significantly by 2025. Training (A2) peaked in 2024 and stabilized in 2025, showing maturity of the delivery phase. Stakeholder expertise (A3) & D4D Hub and digital skills (A4) increased considerably in 2025, indicating a growing focus on multi-stakeholder engagement and continental collaboration via D4D Hub Africa.

Human resources (Z1) remain the largest general cost but are slightly decreasing over time, suggesting stabilisation of staffing needs. Audits and M&E (Z4) and Communication and capitalisation (Z5) were newly introduced in 2025, reflecting a shift toward monitoring, evaluation, and visibility, which is common in a closing or reporting phase. Headquarters managed lines (Z99) suggested small-scale HQ-led financial or technical oversight planned in the final phase.

Component Budget per Country and Year

Figure 7 Component Budget Analysis per Country and year (till June 2025)



BFA22005_D4GW_ProposalBudgetModification

A comparison between the projected budgets and the actual country-level expenses illustrates the accelerated speed in implementation in 2024, which was needed in order to carry out all foreseen actions. In 2024, the actual expenses for all three components exceeded the projected budgets. For SO1 (Component A), actual country-level expenses reached €411,724, exceeding the projected amount of €266,293 by €145,431. For SO2 (Component B), actual expenses amounted to €450,360, surpassing the projected budget of €364,606 by €85,754. Similarly, General means (Component Z) recorded actual expenses of €275,698, which is €83,264 higher than the initial projection of €192,434.

In contrast, the available data for 2025 shows the opposite trend, with actual country-level expenses falling short of the projected amounts for all three components. For SO1 (Component A), only €116,651 of the projected €278,795 has been allocated at the country level, representing 41.8% of the expected budget, leaving a significant gap of €162,144. For SO2 (Component B), actual allocations amount to €305,948, which covers 76.3% of the projected €401,057, indicating €95,109 remains unallocated by country. General means (Component Z) shows a similar pattern, with country-level expenses of €157,699, or 77.1% of the projected €204,461, leaving €46,762 not yet detailed. This reflects the budget cuts that were executed in international development, including by Enabel and the Belgian State. Indeed, the project was requested to save around €250,000. This will most probably result in the non-completion of certain activities in all components, although the details about which ones have not been disclosed.

8.2.3. Relevance

C1. The Project has been designed to meet the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries in Uganda and Burkina Faso, but also contented global needs.

The relevance of the project is unanimously recognised by the participants and the intermediaries in Burkina Faso and Uganda. Based on previous experiences in the country, knowledge of the landscape,

stakeholders and a rigorous identification of needs and a participatory approach involving the beneficiaries from the design stage, the D4GW project addressed directly a problem on lack of awareness around digital rights, digital platforms, and lack of understanding of intersection of gender and technology (e.g. scams, sharing of manipulated images of girls and women). In addition, this **participatory approach** also builds local capacity and thus ensures not only a multiplier effect but also strong local ownership.

The project applied a variety of tools that were conceived to address several aspects of the problem statement in unison:

- Training for direct beneficiaries
- Training of trainers
- Training material development
- Infrastructure improvement
- Communication and dissemination campaigns

This comprehensive approach allowed for to engagement of all types of stakeholders from civil society through government officials to the larger public, with targeted messages adapted to their needs. Public authorities were, however, not part of the target groups, which is a **missed opportunity** to act on a systemic level.

The trainings were particularly adaptive, being delivered in several languages, recognising the linguistic diversity of the beneficiaries and taking into account the different levels of literacy of the participants. They were praised for being practical and immediately usable. Beneficiaries with no previous experience in the digital space were given not only general information but also useful tricks to improve their daily lives and increase their incomes.

The Brussels component differed somewhat from the in-country components, as it was formulated as the expansion layer of the project and the Belgian contribution to the D4D Hub. As such, it was going to focus on two objectives: bringing the Belgian expertise on the digital divide, digital rights, and skills to the D4D Hub Secretariat; and promoting the integration of these topics into the Hub's activities. The purpose was to develop gender strategic frameworks and tools (gender strategy documents, digital rights manual, studies on human-centric approach) and to use the global expertise developed by Enabel through its previous projects, such as the pan-African gender expert network. In this, it served a much more **global need** of empowering women and girls in the digital space worldwide.

8.2.4. Coherence

C2. The project was coherent both with national political frameworks as well as wider European and global strategies, although no formal coordination took place with national authorities.

Although the D4GW project was not part of the bilateral portfolios, which meant national government was formally not involved in the project's elaboration, government officials in both countries were kept informed and reassured that D4GW endeavoured to reduce the digital divide, both between the capital and the regions and between men and women. It was also closely aligned with national development policies and digital strategies in both countries. It was fully aligned with national policies in Uganda (the National Development Plan, the Digital Uganda Vision 2040, the National ICT Policy 2022, and the Digital Transformation Roadmap 2023–2027) and in Burkina Faso (national strategy for the development of the digital economy 2018–2027 and the national cybersecurity strategy)[6].

The project is also in line with different international and Regional Frameworks and Gender Policies.

[6] https://dig.watch/resource/national-strategy-for-the-development-of-the-digital-economy-2018-2027 and https://cil.bf/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/SNCS_BF1.pdf

- The EU Gender Action Plan III (2021–2025) is the European Union's strategy to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in its external actions. It mandates that at least 85% of all new EU-funded initiatives contribute to gender equality, with a strong focus on leadership, participation, and addressing the needs of marginalized groups.[7]
- The OECD Gender Equality Policy Markers, also known as the DAC Gender Marker, are a tool used by donors to track how much official development assistance (ODA) contributes to gender equality by classifying funding as not targeted (0), significant (1), or principal (2) concerning gender objectives. This system promotes transparency and encourages the systematic integration of gender equality across development programs, aligning donor practices with global commitments such as SDG 5.[8]
- Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by addressing key issues such as discrimination, violence, leadership gaps, and unequal access to resources, technology, and health rights. As a cross-cutting goal, SDG 5 influences progress across all 17 SDGs and serves as a universal accountability framework for governments and development partners.[9]
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, is recognized as the most comprehensive global framework for advancing women's rights and gender equality. It outlines 12 critical areas of concern, from poverty and education to violence and leadership, and serves as the foundation for subsequent gender frameworks like SDG 5 and the EU Gender Action Plan III, with periodic reviews to assess global progress.[10]
- The 67th Commission on the Status of Women (2023) held in March 2023, focused on the priority theme of "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality." It marked the first time digital transformation was placed at the center of global gender discussions. The session emphasized the urgent need to bridge the gender digital divide, promote safe and inclusive online spaces, and ensure that women and girls are fully included in shaping and benefiting from technological advancements. CSW67 concluded with Agreed Conclusions calling for gender-responsive digital policies, increased investment in digital education for women, and greater representation of women in tech and innovation sectors.[11]

C3. The Belgian component was itself designed to streamline digital rights and skills and the topic of gender divide into the activities of the D4D Hub, thus increasing the coherence within those

Although developed and managed entirely by Enabel, with input from the D4D Hub, the very purpose of the D4GW project's Belgian component was to streamline the topics of gender divide, digital rights, and skills into European digital for development policies through the D4D Hub. More concretely, its objectives were: Supporting the D4D Hub by developing joint approaches and active knowledge sharing, Encourage European stakeholders to mainstream digital rights and skills into projects at the bilateral level by deepening their expertise, Empowering women economically through increased access and better use of digital technologies and allowing people, especially women and girls, to claim their digital rights. The development of the human centric approach is being contributed to by the Global D4D Hub secretariat MPCA

The elaboration of the Transformative Gender Strategy and the promotion of these topics at international conferences all targeted a better inclusion of gender considerations into such policies and initiatives. The

[7] The EU Gender Action Plan
[8] Gender Equality Marker System
[9] Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5)
[10] The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
[11] United Nations Foundation. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) Agreed Conclusions

Hub members' capacity building also served as a tool to raise awareness among them and to enable them to use the latest methods in fighting the digital divide. The topics selected for the capacity-building webinars are also mindful of the coherence with other thematic working groups of the D4D Hub and address their priority areas one by one.

The two working groups were the very means of ensuring an increased coherence between D4D Hub initiatives through the incorporation of the gender issue. The very transformation of the topic into a transversal component of the D4D Hub 2025 annual plan is proof of success of this endeavour.

Another example of successfully exploited synergy is the digital rights check manual produced by GIZ which Enabel built upon when elaborating the digital strategy.

C4. The project is based on a well-structured, multi-layered approach, which ensures internal coherence among activities in the same country. Coherence between the three components is however more difficult to establish

Based on the information from the interviews and activity reports, the coherence between D4GW activities in Burkina Faso and Uganda demonstrates a **well-structured, multi-layered approach** where activities built upon each other in several ways. The activities followed a logical progression from infrastructure development to skills training to awareness campaigns. The equipment of IT centres in Burkina Faso created the physical infrastructure foundation. This was followed by digital skills training taking place in the very IT centres equipped by Enabel that provided participants with practical competencies. Finally, digital rights campaigns were targeting the reinforcement of an ethical and safety framework for the responsible use of newly acquired skills. Also, the Enabel local experts noted strong coherence with other Enabel initiatives, particularly building on previous project experience. This created synergies where previous relationship-building facilitated D4GW implementation, entrepreneurship skills complemented digital marketing training, existing community trust accelerated adoption, and known challenges informed improved approaches

The coherence between the three components is, however, somewhat lagging. Although the manual will be used for training in Uganda and disseminated through the Belgian component, the coordination could have been even more extensive. The experts stationed in Burkina Faso and Uganda were finally not included in the D4D Hub's work, and the gender expert network will not be formalised as a D4D Hub Advisory group. The decision not to make the gender expert network a separate D4D Hub Advisory group was made to simplify the institutional setup of this complex mechanism. The role, relevance, and ability of the gender expert network to convene in its current format are, however, retained.

8.2.5. Effectiveness and impact

C5. Some important outputs resulted from the D4GW project. The digital skills training model proved particularly successful, the end-beneficiary showing significant impact already.

The majority of the outputs have been realised, and **immediate impact** is already observable with beneficiaries of the **digital skills trainings and ToT sessions**[12].

The digital skills training models enabled economic empowerment amongst the beneficiaries. In total, 720 women completed a digital skills training (digital literacy, digital entrepreneurship, advanced digital skills for employment in the digital economy) in Uganda and Burkina Faso. Women have given testimonies on how they have been inspired after going through the courses, for example, some were able to set up

[12] Focus Group discussions

businesses, to access online spaces and markets that they could not access before. In Burkina Faso, all the products of the participating saleswomen are now published online, and the participants have noticed a clear improvement in the quality of their publications since the training. The economic impact of the D4GW project in Koupéla, Burkina Faso, is particularly impressive and measurable. One of the beneficiaries saw her monthly turnover increase from the 25,000-50,000 FCFA range to more than 150,000 FCFA, representing at least a threefold increase in her income. Another beneficiary saw her production of liquid soap increase, from 5 kilograms to 40 kilograms of ingredients being needed now. Most of this impact was generated by the appropriation of simple skills like adding a phone number to a picture to increase reachability or learning to publish pictures by oneself on social media. A group of young women engaged in producing washable sanitary pads in Uganda reported over a 60% increase in sales after publishing short, engaging videos on TikTok. The trainees' new digital skills have generated unexpected additional jobs. The participants developed new economic opportunities in addition to their core activities, creating a multiplier effect on local employment. We cannot have the exact number of people that benefited from unexpected additional jobs because of the data limitation. These economic impacts are accompanied by a strengthening of general entrepreneurial skills. Participants are not only using digital tools, but they are also developing a more strategic approach to their business activities.

As an unintended effect, the improvement in the visibility of local products has had unexpected repercussions at the highest regional levels. The governor of the region now takes his coffee breaks with local products that he discovered thanks to the online publications of the participants. Participants also benefit from the possibility of receiving feedback and advice remotely on their products, creating a network of exchanges and continuous improvement that goes beyond the time frame of the initial training.

The trainees indicated that through the trainings especially on Digital Security, they were given the skills and knowledge on how to navigate online platforms. One trainee confessed that before the training her husband would read through and monitor her emails and closely watched the social media activity. after Thanks to the training, however, not only did she learn to protect her accounts securely but also realised the importance of privacy in her sense of confidence, safety, and personal dignity.

The **Training of Trainers** also shows some encouraging results[13]. One participating teacher not only made progress in setting up the digital library, but the training also allowed him to become the manager of the high school's computer room, a position that was vacant due to a lack of skills. He was able to strengthen the teaching of digital technology in his school, thus creating a beneficial multiplier effect for the entire educational community.

Most of these trainees reported that they were able to pass on the knowledge to pairs in their communities. For example, St. Simon Peter's Vocational Training Institute in Uganda has taken the initiative of integrating digital skills training into its formal curriculum. After participating in the training, the YAWE Foundation established a computer centre dedicated to training underprivileged youth in basic and intermediate digital skills. Male allies and community leaders are also more engaged in advocating for women's digital rights.[14]

The **platform** encouraged women and girls to report online abuse and challenge discriminatory digital practices. However, the ability to claim and defend these rights in practice was still limited by structural barriers such as weak legal protections, limited access to legal support, and low institutional responsiveness in some contexts. More work is needed to translate awareness into institutional accountability and protective mechanisms.

[13] Interviews

[14] Rapport sur les causeries débats

High-profile **communication** events like Digital Week 2023 in Burkina Faso and the Uganda Internet Governance Forum have increased public awareness and visibility. Extensive media coverage and use of digital platforms have helped embed the project's narrative in the public discourse, increasing community engagement and support.

In Brussels, according to interviewees from the D4D Hub, the Belgian expertise was a major driving force in building capacity for the members and shaping the Hub's activities. Having a resource person focused on gender and skills to move ahead the D4D Hub work plan was most useful. This allowed to have coordinated actions towards the program objectives and pushed for the gender agenda in the D4D Hub effectively. At the end, all of the objectives were achieved[15]. The training was very well received and judged extremely useful and well organised by participants[16]. It was only offered to EC and D4D Hub Secretariat staff, although some interviewees thought wider D4D members (from bilateral agencies) should also have benefited from it. The webinars stirred mixed reactions, some interviewees appreciated the coverage of diverse thematic areas covered by other working groups, others found the topic selection too random. The material is there and will be capitalized upon. They were offered to all D4D members and recorded; the resources are available on the D4D webpage. Conferences may appear less impactful than training. Still, they are the forum to promote the gender agenda, network, and build relationships that are essential for the efficient implementation of projects.

The most visible proof of such a success is the transformation of the gender and digital rights working group into a transversal component, and the nearing signature of a new Joint Intervention on Women Leadership in the Public ICT Sector.

C6. Some complications hindered the implementation efficacy and limited the project's impact

The project implementation suffered a **significant delay** due to the late set-up of the D4D Hub Secretariat. The project started over a year and three months after the initial start date, as contracting the seconded gender expert (September 2023) under the D4D Hub Secretariat suffered delays, due to the integration of new Team Europe partners. Other experts have also been recruited much later than foreseen. Some staff were not appropriate for their function and had to be changed. These delays affected early-stage momentum and limited the timely execution of planned activities. Uganda team members joined in June 2023, Burkina Faso team members in April and July 2023, and Brussels team members in September 2023[17].

The implementation was further hindered by frequent **changes in personnel**, which left long gaps in the implementation (Brussels) or the loss of information (overall coordination). Although the modification of the **governance** model and transfer of the coordination to Ouagadougou was judged very positive overall, compared to a quasi-total lack of coordination previously, it also demanded high flexibility and adaptation from all Enabel staff.

The willingness to provide an inclusive **training** also available for analphabets resulted in very varied groups where the learning speed was not homogenous. Practically every focus group discussion regretted that the time allotted for the training was insufficient in the face of these pedagogical challenges and recommended increasing the duration from one day to a minimum of three days. Separate cohorts according to literacy level could also have solved this issue.

Participants raised important questions regarding the selection of beneficiaries, pointing to unclear criteria used by partners. Communication around the training conditions proved to be deficient, particularly regarding the methods of compensation for participants, creating misunderstandings and

[15] Interviews
[16] Interviews
[17] Annual Report 2022-2023

frustrations. For compensation, it appears that (1) information was lacking as to who could benefit from it, and (2) challenges with ID of sim cards prevented payment through mobile money for some participants.

As an unintended effect, the lack of internet access at training sites has forced rural women to personally fund their mobile data to download the necessary apps, raising questions of equity in access to resources. This additional financial constraint particularly affected the most economically vulnerable participants.

8.2.6. Efficiency

C7. The D4GW project was considered a pilot, therefore the budget was limited compared to the ambitions. Budget cuts due to the global context came further shrinking the available resources.

The project was conceived with an overall budget of €2,25 million for a period of four years (end of 2021 – end of 2025). However, its implementation experienced significant delays, and only effectively started in 2023. Most of the funds were spent in 2024, as this is when most activities happened. As a result, there was a rush to absorb as much of the budget as possible within a short time frame. As of the end of 2024, 55% of the total budget had been used. 2025 will see the implementation of several additional activities, but due to the budget cuts that occurred in the last months, the decision was taken not to spend the leftovers in full. Thus, a **saving** of approximately €0,15-0,16 million will be realised, although the ministry expected €0,25 million. Given the shortened period of implementation, this did not affect the project's implementation significantly.

Although the overall envelope can be estimated insufficient compared to the ambitions, the project was essentially a pilot for the multi-country approach in this thematic area. The **proof of concept** obtained, this type of project can now be duplicated in other countries and extended to higher levels of collaboration.

The project management required implementing partners to quarterly **report** to Enabel, in addition to the end-term reporting. This was challenging for some of them who lacked the capacity to do so. Some interviewees deplored the lack of transparency in spendings for equipment. The intricacies of Enabel's internal financial procedures (public procurement) also led to delays in payment for intermediaries.

Human resources and investment **costs** were rationalised. The use of local organisations and consultants reduced costs compared to international service providers. Building on investments realised by earlier projects proved most efficient, while also contributing to their sustainable management. Indeed, in Burkina Faso, the project built on prior initiatives and infrastructure (Paas-Panga), making efficient use of already available resources. In Uganda, integration with events like the Internet Governance Forum helped maximize visibility with minimal added cost.

C8. The MEL framework was not robust enough, although the 2024 simplified and improved indicators, which limited the ability to measure outcomes and demonstrate impact. Although the introduction of simplified and improved indicators in 2024 was a positive step, it came too late to retroactively capture key data or fully address earlier gaps. As a result, much of the assessment relied on qualitative feedback rather than measurable evidence, reducing the project's capacity for learning, adaptation, and accountability. This also constrained its ability to clearly demonstrate success, scale effective practices, or influence policy through evidence-based advocacy.

All sources were unanimous in saying that the MEL framework was **not robust enough**. Project indicators were improved and made smart after the submission of the first report; no baseline study has ever been carried out. After the 2024 amendment, the indicators were simplified and improved, target values have been set, and the coordination and follow-up were more regular. However, no performance, outcome, or impact indicators have been defined, and the conception itself mistook outcomes for outputs.

The D4GW project should have also contributed to the achievements of the D4D Hub. However, the latter's logical framework is somewhat vague, and targets are easy to achieve. There is only one indicator about gender. Other indicators should be gender segregated but there is no target figure or percentage.

Further detail can be found in the relevant chapter (The project's MEL framework8.2.1.)

C9. The multi-country set-up is still a model in the making, its efficient implementation requires some further support to the project management teams

Following the initial delays and the change in the governance set-up, some **mitigation measures** were adopted to help absorb the delay in implementation. Notably, the decision to appoint an on-site Project Manager helped improve oversight at the local level. Coordination was enhanced by the involvement of the Africa branch coordinator, who also oversaw the AU-EU D4D Hub project and worked closely with the PM in Burkina Faso. This dual coordination role facilitated synergies between bilateral and multilateral initiatives and helped streamline efforts across different components of the D4D agenda. The recruitment of three experts instead of two[18] provided focused expertise across digital rights, gender issues, entrepreneurship, and digital skills. Enhanced coordination mechanisms (monthly meetings) were put in place between countries, along with close follow-up and support from the Brussels office. Minor budget adjustments (transfers between countries) realigned resources and enhanced delivery capacity across all three components.

However, some serious inefficiencies remain that will require further adjustments. For example, the project management software (x)) does not allow the PM to see all components (notably the Belgian) of the project. The procedures and tools of **multi-country coordination** are only being developed now. The person in charge of this coordination only has mandate until September 2025; afterwards the coordination process and the responsibility of capacity building for in-country staff is unclear.

Stakeholder involvement and coordination were strong, **context-specific** and adapted to each country's realities. Effective collaboration with civil society and technical partners ensured smooth implementation and alignment with national priorities. promotional materials Production of (e.g., T-shirts, banners, artwork) to build visibility and stakeholder engagement. Effective outreach to local organizations, ensuring the participation of local actors, and well-targeted selection of participants, which has contributed to meaningful community-level engagement.

There is a continuous debate about **communication** issues as well, notably the articulation between Enabel and D4D Hub ownership. The project is the Belgian contribution to the D4D Hub, co-funded by DG INTPA, but the rules for communication have not been clearly defined by the MPCA. This, however did not create major disturbances in the project management.

8.2.7. Sustainability

C10. The results and benefits of the project are likely to be sustained due to several key mechanisms in place

Although the needs continue to exist, the **project** as such will not be reconducted. Interviewed stakeholders would have liked to see a second edition, however, the current context of international development does not allow Enabel to renew the experience on its own budget. In Uganda, as the bilateral portfolio is important and a substantial team is working on the topic of digitalisation and digital skills and rights, the achievements of the project will most likely survive. The sustainability will be more difficult to

[18] Annual Report 2022-2023

ensure in Burkina Faso, where budget cuts are more likely to happen as a reaction to some political turmoil. Follow-up projects can be elaborated in Burkina Faso (statistics on female entrepreneurship, financial and non-financial services for entrepreneurs, etc.) or in other countries (Tanzania, Senegal, Mozambique, Middle East, Ukraine) and pitched for third party funding by other donors (INTPA, Gates foundation).

Sustainability of the project **results** has been thought of from the design stage through the targeting of leaders of civil society organisations and teachers who have contact with students, allowing for a multiplier effect. Building strong multistakeholder engagement with well-established local organisations and alignment with national digital strategies was part of this strategy. The involvement of customary and religious actors and women and youth leaders from the outset has reinforced this sustainable approach. In Uganda, WOUGNET plans on continuing the Training of Trainers model, will maintain the partnership with Enabel's innovation and digital hubs and sustain the trainings through community-based organisations, or even extend it to secondary schools. In both Burkina Faso and Uganda, the project is deeply embedded within national institutions (e.g., MTDPCE in Burkina Faso, MoICT&NG in Uganda), increasing the likelihood of long-term political and administrative support.

Some of the **outputs** as the manual, strategy, comic book, require little effort for a continuous exploitation. The manual has been presented to the national governments and interest has already been shown to integrate it into the national curriculum in Burkina Faso. In Uganda, the OGBV Information and Support Portal also remains accessible as a centralised hub for victims, activists, and policymakers. Digital copies of the comic book, Juliet's Journey: From Silence to Connection have been uploaded to WOUGNET's website and produce more comic books.

The pan-African network of gender experts will survive, although not through the creation of a Gender Advisory board to the D4D Hub, as initially foreseen, but as members integrated into existing Advisory Groups. It will also be continuously used by Enabel in future international and bilateral projects as a "Gender network". Negotiations for the next edition of the D4D Hub have already started, Belgium plans on bring its strengthened expertise on gender to the table. The Women in ICT Leadership Joint Initiative will continue to work on the gender divide on a broader scale.

If built upon, the project has the potential to produce strong long-term impacts, including policy influence, the replication of similar initiatives or scale-ups in other regions, etc.

However, a notable gap in the project's sustainability strategy is the limited inclusion of public institutions and authorities as direct target groups. This represents a missed opportunity to act at a systemic level, where policy change, institutional ownership, and long-term integration of digital rights and gender-responsive approaches could have been more effectively anchored. Without stronger involvement of governmental actors, the risk remains that some project results may not be embedded in national frameworks or supported beyond the project's duration.

8.2.8. Gender

C11. Reducing the digital gender divide was the very focus of the project gender issues were integrated in a systematic and informed manner

The project has meaningfully integrated gender issues into its implementation, with a strong focus on reducing the digital gender divide. Gender considerations were embedded in both planning and execution, ensuring that women and girls were prioritised in access to digital skills, tools, and opportunities. The needs assessment in both countries provided a clear understanding of the barriers women and girls face in accessing digital technologies, including socio-cultural constraints, limited digital literacy, affordability, and lack of representation in the tech ecosystem.

In Burkina Faso, the project aligned its activities with national efforts to promote digital inclusion for women, gaining visibility and recognition during high-profile events like Digital Week 2023, which

highlighted gender as a central theme. In Uganda, the inclusion of local organizations and community-level engagement allowed the project to target and reach women in underserved areas effectively.

Furthermore, by partnering with stakeholders who have experience in gender-sensitive programming and by designing activities with an awareness of local gender dynamics, the project ensured that its interventions were both inclusive and responsive to the specific barriers women face in accessing digital technologies.

9 Conclusions

Globally, **the D4GW project has been designed to meet the needs and priorities of all stakeholders**. The slow set-up of the global D4D Hub Secretariat MPCA, to which the current project provided parallel co-financing, aggravated the de delay in implementation of the project caused by staffing difficulties (notably of the experts) and dysfunctionalities in the coordination. The delay was, however, successfully absorbed, **the majority of planned activities having been carried out**. Intentionally some of the activities planned for the latest stages will not be implemented so to realise some savings.

Some immediate outcomes can already be observed with direct beneficiaries of trainings. Wider impact on the population is going to be difficult to measure, though, as the impact of the project and organic changes in the society due to increased exposure to digitalisation are impossible to differentiate. In case beneficiaries of the awareness raising campaign could be identified, a counter-factual methodology (difference in differences or DiD) could be explored, but its costs would be proportionally too high for a small project like D4GW. Most probably, the impact will concentrate on the level of direct training beneficiaries and will be marginal at the level of the population, which was however one of the most expensive components of the projects, reaching a limited number of beneficiaries. No activity has been carried out in collaboration with the authorities, which might be a missed opportunity to achieve systemic impact.

The lack of baseline values and the inconsistency of outcome, impact and performance indicators make the project difficult to evaluate. The monitoring and evaluation framework has not been prepared by M&E professionals, although these are available internally at Enabel. The implementation of the new internal policy on multi-country project governance appears to have been directly applied to the D4GW project without prior adaptation of operational processes, tools, or the provision of sufficient guidance to teams. Such an unaccompanied change has resulted in improvisation and loss of data.

The results and outputs have a good chance of being sustainable if follow-up actions are taken, such as wider dissemination and future projects that build on them. The pilot character of the project also meant that different levels of intervention and different stakeholders were combined in a relatively small project. The purpose was to gain proof of concept of the approach that Digital for Development can and must go beyond the use of digital technologies to accelerate sustainable development (and should also tackle the digital divide and human rights violations in the digital spere as important socioeconomic effects of the digital transition). This can now be considered obtained and further lessons can be drawn from the implementation. Not only was the project a pioneer in focusing entirely on the digital gender divide, it was also instrumental in fostering cooperation between an anglophone and a francophone, a Western African and an Eastern African country.

The **key success factors and the main obstacles** identified can be summarised as follows (the order does not reflect the importance):

Key enablers

- The knowledge of the field acquired during previous projects on entrepreneurship in the region facilitated the local anchoring of the project.
- The human-centred approach allowed for the identification of activities in collaboration with strategic partners. Formal and informal collaboration with civil society networks, governments, academia, and members of the technical community ensure project ownership and sustainability.
- The multitude of languages and the training model adapted to illiterate beneficiaries allowed to reach a higher number of final beneficiaries in the rural areas.

Key challenges

- Some digital hubs in Burkina Faso face institutional or organisational weakness in fulfilling their role (i.e. reporting).

10 Recommendations

Recommendation	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
The training of direct beneficiaries produced visible impact, but they are very resource-intensive and the number of those that can be trained is limited. More significant impact could be attained through the training of trainers (ToT), which allows to multiply the benefit.	C5, C7	Enabel, D4D Hub	2	Long-term	Strategic

Although the most visible results were created by the training, only 720 women could be trained with a budget of €370.000. Training the trainers with the same budget would have allowed to reach thousands of beneficiaries through the multiplier effect.

Recommendation	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
Increase the efficiency of the trainings by forming homogenous groups and providing the necessary conditions (internet).	C5	Enabel, D4D Hub	1	Medium-term	Operational

The heterogeneity of the group created tensions, as the slow learning curve of the non-literate women contrasted with the pace of the other participants. Separate cohorts according to literacy level and assessment of pre-training level would have avoided this problem. The time allotted for the training proved insufficient in the face of pedagogical challenges and ToT did not contain pedagogical skills. The lack of access to internet at training sites has forced rural women to personally fund their mobile data to download the necessary apps, raising questions of equity in access to resources. This additional financial constraint particularly affected the most economically vulnerable participants. More digital hubs could also be established in schools or churches for easy access to computers by the participants.

Recommendation	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
The awareness raising campaigns are necessary, but more systemic impact could be achieved through direct engagement with the government that would help influencing the policies and regulatory frameworks.	C5, C7	Enabel, D4D Hub	2	Long-term	Strategic

Impact of communication campaigns is difficult to measure and differentiate from other factors simultaneously affecting the population. Collaboration with the government, however, can produce immediate results such as new and more adequate policy frameworks, modified strategic priorities, educational objectives, etc. These in turn can influence the whole population and on the long run, as the mechanisms are embedded in the society.

Recommendation	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
The monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework should be elaborated by M&E professionals at the beginning of the project. It is particularly important for a pilot project to be able to produce quantitative evidence of what works and what does not.	C8	Enabel	3	Medium-term	Operational

A solid MEL framework would have avoided many of the complications met by the project. If the Theory of Change is coherent and realistic, and the indicators are SMART, paired with baseline and target values, the monitoring process is easier, and adjustments are possible to make sure the objectives are achieved. This is particularly important in the case of a pilot project, where quantitative evidence can underline successes or failures and orient an evidence-based decision-making for scale up or abandon.

Recommendation	Related conclusion(s)	Targeted actor(s)	Level	Priority	Type
New corporate policies shouldn't be rushed into implementation without a proper plan and HR conditions, including change management at the level of the teams.	C6	Enabel	3	Medium-term	Operational

The new internal policy consisting of decentralising the management of multi-country projects (as well) to one of the beneficiary countries has been directly implemented without an adaptation of processes and tools, and without appropriate guidance to the teams to operationalise properly. This had tangible negative consequences on the D4GW project which was the first multi-country project to undergo the decentralisation. Implementing structural changes in ongoing projects should always be accompanied by the necessary conditions for such changes to be operationalised (guidance, established processes, and change management).