Defend Democracy

Strategy 2021–2025

(public version 19 Oct 2020)

Defend Democracy works to defend and strengthen liberal democracy against foreign, domestic and technological threats. We work at the intersection of freedom, security and technology. We operate on the frontline: building awareness, shaping advocacy and taking action. We are independent, nonpartisan and transatlantic.

VISION & MISSION

Vision
In liberal democracies, citizens live in freedom and security. Their democracies are strong enough to withstand any internal, external and technological threats.

To achieve this ambitious vision, we see our mission as follows
* FREEDOM: Defend liberal democracy against internal/domestic threats & strengthen freedom
* SECURITY: Defend liberal democracy against external/foreign threats & strengthen security
* TECHNOLOGY: Defend liberal democracy against technological threats & humanise tech

To achieve our mission, we will
* Inform, inspire and mobilise **civil society** (both grassroots and civil society organisations)
* Pressure & mobilise **countries** to defend & strengthen liberal democracy, including through coherence, cooperation & coordination
* Pressure & mobilise **institutions** (EU, G7, NATO, UN) to defend & strengthen liberal democracy, including through coherence, cooperation & coordination

Impact
* democracy **valued**
* democracy **defended**
* democracy **strengthened**

Objectives
* **civil societies** who value democracy and are active and resilient
* **countries** that value democracy and defend and strengthen it
* **institutions** that value democracy and defend and strengthen it

What makes Defend Democracy unique?
* an action, advocacy, and awareness-oriented do tank (not another think tank)
* a 360° view (not limited to e.g. disinformation, cyber security or participatory democracy)
* a coherent approach: uniting the freedom & security approaches of democracy (no silo-thinking)
* a transatlantic presence, activity and approach

Organisational priorities
Pillars: freedom, security & tech
Geography: transatlantic
Team: develop a small, paid core team; a flexible circle of paid externals; a team of volunteers
Partnerships: maintain and expand our network
Audience: 'democracy defenders' (grassroots & orgs), policy-makers, law- & decision-makers
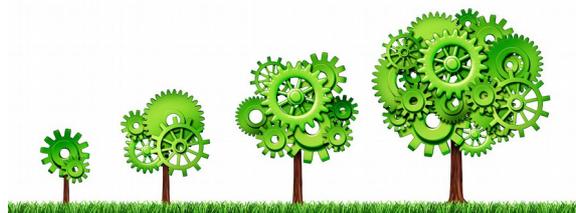Fundraising: develop a diverse portfolio of core, project and self-sustaining funding

Change program
PHASE 0: **Plan** (2020)
PHASE 1: **Sow** (2021)
PHASE 2: **Grow** (2022)
PHASE 3: Grow & **Reap** (2023 and onward)

IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE 0: **Plan** (2020)
Do: Plan for professionalisation, growth and sustainability.
Result: Clarified vision and direction of the organisation

PHASE 1: **Sow** (2021)
Do: Put the building blocks into place.
Result: Professionalised organisation with a clear sense of direction

PHASE 2: **Grow** (2022)
Do: Use partnerships to grow to new topics and geographies.
Result: Deliberate and focused pursuit of new opportunities in freedom, security & tech; in awareness, advocacy and action

PHASE 3: Grow and **Reap** (2023 and onward)
Do: Scale and sustain Defend Democracy. Remain unique in field and agenda-setter.
Result: Using strategic partnerships and funding to scale to more units and projects

FUNDING

Defend Democracy will seek to raise core funding to provide sustainability for the foundation. Besides core funding, Defend Democracy will also seek project funding and aim to raise money in creative ways. For all sources (core, project, self-sustaining), due diligence & transparency are key.

Core
Unrestricted core funding from trusts, foundations, public crowdfunding, programme contributions

Project
Project funding related to the delivery of thematic outcomes, investigations and special initiatives

Self-sustaining
Funding related to the delivery of trainings, services and other self-supporting initiatives

GOVERNANCE

Defend Democracy is a nonprofit foundation registered under Dutch law.
Defend Democracy will seek ANBI status (tax-exempt charity) in 2020.
Board of Directors (1 Executive Director, well beneath maximum Dutch NGO-sector salary scale)
Supervisory Board (3 members, all pro bono)