Organization and Management
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Institutional Homes:

[Logos of the institutions]

Suggested citation:

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This document contains an overview of the organization and management of the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project.

Project Team

A complex undertaking such as the V-Dem project requires coordinating the work of many individuals, each of which bringing unique skills and knowledge to the project. The core team is listed below.

The Steering Committee (SC) was created in 2014 for the purposes of overall guidance and decision-making connecting the various “branches” of V-Dem: 1) the original V-Dem data collection project led by its PIs Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Staffan I. Lindberg, and Svend-Erik Skanand; 2) Historical V-Dem led by Jan Teorell and Carl-Henrik Knutsen; 3) the main V-Dem Research Program funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond with Staffan I. Lindberg as main PI and where Ellen Lust’s program funded by the Swedish Research Council plays an important supportive role; 4) the experiment and vignettes part mainly funded by Lindberg’s Wallenberg Academy Fellowship and where V-Dem’s main methodologist Daniel Pemstein plays a key role; 5) and the consolidation of a coherent and permanent V-Dem research infrastructure for data collection, processing, dissemination and outreach with the V-Dem Institute’s Program Manager Josefine Pernes in the lead. All the above-mentioned individuals are members of the SC. It generally functions by consensus but may also make decisions by a qualified (3/4) majority rule.

Principal Investigators (PIs) – Coppedge, Gerring, Lindberg, Skaaning – constitute the V-Dem PI Board. This is the highest decision-making body of the original V-Dem project and generally functions by consensus but may also make decisions by a qualified (3/4) majority rule. The PIs began work on this project in 2008. In addition to the current PIs, Jan Teorell was one of the founding members and was until March 2015 part of the PI board.

Project Managers, along with the PIs, were instrumental in the development of survey questions and the preparation of the collection of data in specific substantive areas. Most of the Project Managers have been part of the project since 2009: Direct Democracy (David Altman, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile), Civil Society (Michael Bernhard, University of Florida), Sovereignty (Michael Bernhard, University of Florida), Legislatures (M. Steven Fish, UC Berkeley), Parties and Party Systems (Allen Hicken, University of Michigan),
Subnational Government (Kelly McMann, Case Western University), Formal and Descriptive Representation (Pamela Paxton, University of Texas, Austin), Elections (Staffan I. Lindberg, University of Gothenburg), Media (Michael Coppedge, University of Notre Dame), Civil Liberty (Svend-Erik Skaaning, Aarhus University), Judiciary (Jeffrey Staton, Emory University), Executives (Jan Teorell, Lund University), Political Equality (John Gerring, University of Texas, Austin). After the initial phase, V-Dem recruited additional PMs for Historical Data (Carl Henrik Knutsen, University of Oslo), Experiments (Brigitte Zimmerman, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Evolutionary Models (Patrik Lindenfors, Stockholm University), Causal Inference (Adam Glynn, Emory University), Measurement Methods (Daniel Pemstein, North Dakota State University), and Computational Infrastructure (Steven Wilson). The diverse specialization of the team and the division of labor enable us to define concepts, identify existing data sources, and create survey questions that reflect the wide-ranging work and accumulated knowledge on these topics. It also allows for a decentralized system of informal consultation among experts (academics and practitioners) in these areas. Project Managers are also responsible for assuring cross-country equivalence for their indicators, so that a given question is not interpreted differently in varying country contexts.

**Regional Managers** (RMs) are responsible for identifying Country Experts and inspecting for problems of validity at regional level. Occasionally, RMs manage only a single country, in which case they are referred as a *Country Managers* (CMs). First Regional Managers were recruited in fall 2011 and there are currently 28 of them engaged in the project.

A *Country Coordinator* (CC) is selected by the Regional Manager for each country to gather the type (B) data for that country. In the first rounds of data collection, they cross-checked A* ratings (see Methodology document) and assisted the Regional Manager with the identification of Country Experts.

*Country Experts* (CEs) code type (C) indicators (see Methodology document). They are generally holders of a PhD and usually residents or citizens of the country they are coding. They also have specialized knowledge in at least one of the thematic sections of the V-Dem survey. The Country Experts have been recruited on a rolling basis since the start of the pilot study in Spring 2011.

*An International Advisory Board* provides guidance on the project (the board is not
responsible for the content or conduct of V-Dem). The Board includes a mix of academics, jurists, and practitioners from around the world.

**The Institutional Homes**

The V-Dem project has two institutional homes: The V-Dem Institute, lead by Director & Professor Staffan I. Lindberg, Department of Political Science at University of Gothenburg (Sweden) and the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame (USA), where Professor Michael Coppedge is located. The V-Dem Institute is the headquarter and the executive management arm of V-Dem with responsibility for most aspects of the project. In addition to Prof. Lindberg, the following team is based at the V-Dem Institute:

*Program and Financial Manager* Josefine Pernes has worked at the V-Dem Institute since September 2012. She coordinates and oversees all activities taking place at the V-Dem Institute. This includes among other things: the data collection infrastructure, general project management, financial management, fundraising, policy work, external relations and, human resources. Josefine is a member of the Steering Committee and sits in on the Principal Investigator board meetings where she acts as the executive link between the high-level decision-making and the daily operations.

*Operations and Outreach Manager* Natalia Stepanova has worked at the V-Dem Institute since its inception in January 2012. She is coordinating many of the daily operations at the Institute. Her main focus is outreach and communications, policy-related work, organization of workshops and conferences. She is also in charge of IT developments, websites development and maintenance, and the development of the coding management system. Together, Josefine and Natalia are also coordinating all activities relating to data collection involving some three thousand country experts, and handle most coordination and collaboration with Regional Managers and Country Coordinators around the world.

*The Analyst and Data Operation Manager* Laura Saxer and the *Data Officer* Moa Olin have the overall responsibility for the management of the V-Dem data. They are responsible for coding factual (A) type data; they lead and perform quality control of the data collected with the expert surveys by carrying out systematic checks for discrepancies; making
necessary revisions. developing and implementing scripts and protocols to clean the data\(^1\). Laura and Moa are also involved in the policy-related work of V-Dem in terms of producing thematic and country reports and policy briefs based on V-Dem data and working papers. In addition, Laura is in charge of updating the codebook and other reference documents, as well as managing data in the V-Dem online database and the website online graphing tools. Moa is involved with tasks related to the online analysis tools, producing V-Dem’s Graph of the Week and activities relating to data collection involving country experts.

The Data Manager Joshua Krusell is in charge of the processing of the data and is involved in a number of tasks related to preparation and release of the data. The data manager is largely involved in the work of developing and running the Measurement Model and works closely with the measurement model-team. He is also in charge of compiling the dataset and creating the V-Dem indices, developing and implementing scripts and protocols to clean the data\(^2\).

The Assisting Data Manager Johannes von Römer works closely with Joshua in all data related tasks concerning cleaning, preparation and release of the V-Dem data.

Post-Doc Research Fellows, located at the University of Gothenburg, assist with various aspects of constructing the final measurement model, data validation, aggregation, policy-analysis, and training. The current post-doctoral research fellows are:

- Anna Lührmann (PhD Humboldt University, 2015) who is also taking the lead on the emerging policy unit at the V-Dem Institute together with Valeriya Mechkova (presented below). They are also actively engaged in the V-Dem collaboration with partner organizations such as the World Bank, Int. IDEA, the European Commission, Foreign Ministries and UNDP. Holding capacity-building trainings on quantitative research methods and the V-Dem online analysis tools are other tasks of this team;

- Kyle Marquardt (PhD Wisconsin-Madison, 2015) who besides research works with Daniel Pemstein on developments of the IRT-based measurement model we use to aggregate Country Expert ratings, as well as assist with the

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\(^1\) To read more on the cleaning process and protocols, please refer to the V-Dem Methodology document.
experiments and vignettes project;

- Constanza Sanhueza Petrarca (PhD University of Mannheim, 2016) who besides her research with PM Brigitte Zimmerman assume responsibility for design and implementation of the experiments and vignettes projects;

- Rachel Sigman (PhD Syracuse University, 2015) who besides her research has developed the conceptualization and measurement of Egalitarian democracy but also assists with quality control and cleaning in the data collection; and

- Steven Willson (PhD University of Wisconsin, 2016) who besides his research completely reprogrammed the part of V-Dem’s research infrastructure that is used for Country Expert surveys and data collection.

Former research fellows are Eitan Tzelgov (PhD Penn State University, 2013), Brigitte Zimmerman (PhD University of California, San Diego, 2014) and Yi-ting Wang, (PhD Duke University), who are all still involved with the project by conducting research.

PhD Students are also located at the University of Gothenburg and funded by Lust’s Swedish Research Council grant, also assist with various aspects of data collection, validation, aggregation, policy-analysis, and outreach. The current PhD students are:

- Valeriya Mechkova, formerly employed as analyst and data processing manager, now conducts research on causes, sequences as well as effects of accountability and is active in the policy unit with particular responsibility for our work with measuring the Sustainable Development Goal 16;

- Marcus Tannenberg, studies legitimacy in autocratic regimes and is also assisting with data quality and policy briefs.

- Felix Dwinger, studies origins of dictatorships and democracy, and also assists with data collection and cleaning.

Former Data Manager, Analyst and Data Operation Manager and Data Officer are Farhad Miri, Valeriya Mechkova, Frida Andersson and Vlad Ciobanu. A number of graduate students at University of Notre Dame, Boston University, University of Gothenburg and Lund University have also provided research assistance in the past, including Talib Jabbar, Lucia
Tiscornia, Fernando Bizzarro Neto, Lee Cojocaru, Matthew Maguire, Sandra Botero, Chad Kiewiet de Jonge, Cecilia Lero, Krystin Krause, Claudia Maier, Tove Ahlbom, Tove Selnes, Ole Martin Laegreid, Ammar Kamalaldin and, Rodrigo Castro Cornejo. More than 30 Notre Dame undergraduate students have also helped in various ways.

**Funding**

The funding for data collection cover all costs associated with collection of A/B/C/D data, this includes fees for Country Experts, Country Coordinators and Regional Managers as well as staff costs to maintain the competencies and organization at the V-Dem Institute. It also includes development of the unique and highly complex research infrastructure that has been built over the course of this project and which is the foundation on which this project rests.

Pilot Study: the principal funding for the pilot phase of the program came from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Sweden, supplemented by a small grant from the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

For first phase: funding was secured funding for the data collection in 173 of the countries in the world with a total funding of about USD 4 mn. This was funded by (not in order of magnitude):

- Canadian International Development Agency
- Danish National Research Council
- European Commission/DEVCO
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Denmark/Danida
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Sweden
- Swedish National Research Council
- Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Sweden)
- Research Council of Norway
- Quality of Government Institute

Third phase: the following funders have, and some still are, contributing to updating the data for 177 countries as well as the addition of vignettes, and enhancing processing and quality control 2014-2019 (not in order of magnitude):
• Aarhus University
• European Commission/DEVCO
• Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos
• International IDEA
• Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation
• Mo Ibrahim Foundation
• Riksbanken Jubileumsfond (Sweden)
• Swedish National Research Council (PI: Lindberg)
• Swedish National Research Council (PI: Lust)
• Swedish National Research Council (PI: Teorell)
• University of Gothenburg
• Wallenberg Academy Fellowship (Lindberg/Knut & Alice Wallenberg Foundation)

The hosting universities, the Kellogg Institute of Notre Dame and the University of Gothenburg, have provided substantial funds for the pilot phase and both institutions have committed additional co-funding for the data collection: University of Notre Dame at USD 500,000 and University of Gothenburg at about USD 4,200,000.

The V-Dem Research Program on Democratization is primarily funded by a grant to Staffan I. Lindberg and Jan Teorell from the Swedish Research Council (USD 0.9mn, 2012-2016); by a grant from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (USD 5.8mn, 2014-2019) co-funded by the University of Gothenburg at USD 2mn; a grant to Staffan I. Lindberg as a Wallenberg Academy Fellow (USD 1.15mn, 2014-2018) co-funded by the University of Gothenburg at USD 0.5mn; a grant from the European Research Council to Staffan I. Lindberg (€ 2mn, 2017-2021) co-funded by the University of Gothenburg at € 1mn.

The V-Dem Infrastructure

Being the executive arm of V-Dem, the staff at the V-Dem Institute is responsible for most of the V-Dem operations. Most importantly, the Institute hosts the data collection process and has over the last years built a complex and tailored made research infrastructure. The V-Dem research infrastructure is described in more detail in the document V-Dem
Methodology. The infrastructure consists of six interrelated parts, below we briefly go through each part of the infrastructure.

1) The network of almost 3,000 Country Experts across the world providing the raw data, as well as the staff operating and maintaining the infrastructure is the very core of the infrastructure.

2) A software for managing Data Collection and Country Experts. The Institute is hosting the management software that is the “heart” of the operations of the infrastructure. It is connected to the Postgres database and the web-based coding interfaces and it is primarily used to manage the update of the data and management of Country Experts. In a simplified description, the management software handles a roster of potential experts numbering some 20,000 individuals, and for the roughly 3,000 Country Experts. To be able to manage the data collection in an efficient, professional and secure way, a lot of information is tied to each Country Expert. For instance: information on qualifications, country-expertise, surveys, affiliation, emails sent, coding progress, payment forms and payment status, coding conducted, just to mention a few. The coder management tool is just one out of over 10 tools in this database. Connected to this software is also a web-interface portal which makes it possible for Regional Managers to securely upload Country Expert rosters, without having to share confidential information via email.

3) A Postgres database that contains all the raw data, experts coding, indices and related data and consists of some 16 million data points and includes a large set of tables that relates to the data collection.

4) A set of web-based coding and administrative interfaces through which the experts submit the data.

5) A public website with information about the project and access to download of the data free of charge.

6) A set of online tools for analyzing the data for example in terms of graphing tools and motion charts (also available on the website),

The three latter parts of the infrastructure are connected to the V-Dem website which can be viewed at www.v-dem.net. The website, survey interfaces and underlying relational database was originally designed following the PIs guidance, by the Center for
Research Computing (CRC) at the University of Notre Dame 2011-2013. It was then partly overhauled by the independent company Imaginary Landscape in a process directed from Natalia Stepanova at the V-Dem Institute. During fall 2016 Dr. Steven Wilson (V-Dem Post-Doc) re-wrote most of the operational system, the survey and administrative interfaces from scratch making the system for the first time thoroughly professional, free of bugs, and much more user-friendly.

Most importantly, the website hosts the coding interface where Country Experts submit their ratings. The coding interfaces consist of a series of web-based functions that in combination allow experts to log in to the system using their individual (randomized) username and self-assigned (secret password) access the surveys assigned to them. They are able to submit ratings for each question in each survey over long series of years. The coding interfaces combines features such as allowing for many types of questions (binominal, ordinal, multiple selection, etc.), country-specific and question-specific year masks (for example to allow coding only for elections years). Question-specific instructions and clarifications are offered for each question in the survey, and the survey interface also features coder-self assessed confidence levels for each rating submitted. All data except confidential information about the coders is made public. All personal identifying information is kept separately from the raw data on encrypted servers behind several layers of protection.

The most used section of the website is the section including the Online Analysis tools which has been specifically designed for V-Dem. At present, there are three tools for online analysis.

- **Country Graphs:** This tool can be used to display multiple variables and/or indices for one country over time. It compares multiple question results, allowing for several design features such as varying time period, as well as “drilling down” into the components of indices at the will of the users, and allows for free download of graphs in pdf or another selected format.
- **Variable Graph:** This tool is used to compare multiple countries for one index or one variable at a time. A user can choose a single question and compare multiple country results. Data are aggregated by year.
• Motion Chart: Allows for bivariate graphical modeling over time of two variables with control/illustration of a third variable, using the same type of software Hans Rosling has used for his famous illustrations of the Gapminder initiative.

Radar chart, sequencing and mapping tools are currently under development and forthcoming features.

**Progress to Date**

The progress of the V-Dem data collection may be summarized in three phases.

First, there is the conception and management of the project itself, including the pilot study. This phase was completed in October 2011. With the support of Sweden’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Sweden), the Vice-Chancellor’s Office, the College of social Sciences, and the Department of political science at University of Gothenburg, and the Kellogg Institute and other bodies at the University of Notre Dame, a pilot study was conducted in twelve countries from May to December 2011. These included two countries from each of six regions: Mexico and Suriname in the Americas, Japan and Burma in Asia, Russia and Albania in the post-Communist region, South Africa and Ghana in Africa, Egypt and Yemen (North and South) in the Middle East, and Sweden and Switzerland in Europe. These pairs were chosen to represent countries in each region that, in the team’s judgment, would be fairly easy, and fairly hard, to code. (For example, in the Americas it was anticipated that Mexico would be fairly easy and Suriname fairly difficult.)

Almost 100 experts submitted 461,000 country-date-question-expert ratings. Preliminary analyses indicate that the methodology was sound and worked as intended to collect data of highest quality. For example, experts were asked not only to choose a response to each question but also to estimate their confidence in all their responses. The average summary certainty level in the pilot data is 84 percent, which means that based on the agreement among experts and their confidence in their ratings, one can be, on average, 84 percent confident that the summary scores are correct. Cronbach’s alpha averages .709 (conventionally considered in the “acceptable” range) for the 131 pilot-study type (C) questions for which there was enough data to calculate it. In addition, very preliminary analyses have shown that aggregated scores discriminate well not only across countries and
over time, but also across components. For example, a country can do well with respect to civil society but less well on administration of elections or legislative strength. Such distinctions are among the most important contributions of V-Dem’s approach. The pilot study was also used to pinpoint the weakest questions and modify or drop them, and this information was used to revise the questionnaire extensively in order to improve reliability before the current phase of data collection. In addition, the pilot study demonstrated the need for having more coders/country-question, a better system for standardize instructions and management, as well as the need for an expanded post-survey questionnaire allowing for systematic assessment of potential biases in coding.

The second phase of V-Dem, comprising of data collection for the entire world from 1900 to 2012, began in March 2012 and was concluded in fall 2013. 167 countries/territories existing today were included, this required the involvement of some 2,000 coders. In preparation of the release of the first V-Dem dataset, this phase also involved cleaning of the data, conducting extensive quality control and measures for correcting for errors. The full V-Dem dataset was first released by the end of December 2015. During this phase, several grants made it possible for the team to begin a large-scale research program addressing the issues of democratization both in terms of endogenous processes of sequencing and diffusion, and the role of various exogenous factors in explaining transitions to and development of various types of democracies.

By December 2014, V-Dem entered into a third phase by the very first update of the data. Going forward we hope to be able to update the data on an annual or biannual basis for all/as many countries as possible. The datasets will be launched each year during spring; thus, the next dataset will be launched spring 2018.

First data update: Data was collected for 2013-2014 for 54 countries and collected data for the fulltime period from 1900 to 2014 for six new countries. The dataset was launched spring 2015.

Second data update: By March 2016 the second update was concluded. This time data for 76 countries for 2013-2015 had been updated.

Third data update: Is launched in April 2017 and includes updated data for 174 countries, including four new countries. This is the very first complete data update that the V-Dem institute is conducting. The V-Dem database now contains more
than 17 million data points.

The subproject *Historical V-Dem* is funded by the Swedish and Norwegian Research Councils and is hosted by Lund University (Jan Teorell) and University of Oslo (Carl-Henrik Knutsen). The goal is to extend coding for as many political units and as many indicators and years as possible of the period from 1789 to 1900 in order to supplement the current V-Dem coverage. The data collection started in December 2015 and will be completed during 2017.

*Varieties of Autocracies*, led by Anna Lührmann, is another promising subproject that will take its first steps in 2017 with a conceptualization and measurement workshop funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Sweden).

**Outreach and Communications**

Numerous projects and papers based on V-Dem data are being produced by academics and professionals. In future decades, the project team anticipate that the V-Dem database and web site will become even more of a focal point for policymakers, practitioners, students, and scholars across the social sciences that are interested in democracy. The V-Dem team is working hard to make V-Dem a useful and accessible source for as many as possible, to put V-Dem on the agenda for policy makers, researchers, students, and media around the world. To facilitate this a broad range of activities have been taken on. Some of them are elaborated on below.

V-Dem Institute created a visiting scholars program for selected individuals who have served as Country Experts, Regional Managers, or advisors in the project so that they can visit the V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg for a period of a month or so. During this time, they are expected to complete research on a theme related to the project.

The V-Dem Institute holds annual conferences at University of Gothenburg, as well as smaller workshops, as means to further stimulate innovative collaborations and as additional venues for generating new ideas and publicizing the results of research conducted with V-Dem data.

The project is introduced at social science conferences throughout the world. This includes the International Political Science Association meetings, at workshops organized with by Regional Managers in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, and at meetings of regional political science associations (Africa, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe,
Latin America, the United States). Project team members and members of the advisory board who live or work in each region assist in that region’s conferences.

One of V-Dem’s core activities is producing high-quality research that provides insights into crucial questions such as the relationship between democracy and development, the conditions that make democracies endure, and the determinants of women’s political empowerment. As of February 2017, 41 Working Papers have been published on the V-Dem website covering a wide range of topics.

Publications in high-profile academic journals and press outlets of a more popular nature will ensure that all relevant communities of interest are informed of the availability of V-Dem and how it can be used to help them do their work better. At the time of writing, 16 articles have been published in international, peer-reviewed journals and we expect many more to come out in the coming years.

In addition to article-length working papers, V-Dem regularly produces a range of publications targeting a wider audience. The V-Dem Country Briefs outline the most important political trends in a specific country. The Policy Briefs summarize policy-relevant research findings on topics like accountability, legislative strengthening, and executive corruption.

All data is a public good but end users of the data can contribute initial drafts of their work to the V-Dem Working Paper series. V-Dem data will continue generating an increasing number of working papers, journal articles, chapters, and books by scholars around the world, contributing to a growing stream of interrelated research.

Traffic to the website, as channeled by Google and other search engines and links on related sites, offers a further channel for outreach – making V-Dem accessible to anyone who searches on key terms (e.g., “democracy”). Information is shared to the public via social media.

Latest statistics on outreach in numbers:

**V-Dem Publications:**

- 45 V-Dem Working Papers have been viewed 6,500 times, and downloaded 2,500 times
- 26 Country Briefs/Reports viewed 2,600 times
• 9 Briefing Papers viewed 1500 times.

V-Dem Outreach:

- Website: 105,000 unique visitors, and 1,500,000 page views in total
- “Graph of the Week”: 75 graphs, viewed 1,800 times
- Facebook and Twitter posts: reach on average 15,000+ people/week
- Presentations at academic conferences and policy forums since 2014: more than 160
- Visiting scholars at V-Dem Institute since 2014: over 30

Policy Relevance and Collaborations

As part of its policy outreach program, V-Dem is cooperating with a number of international organizations that work in the sphere of democracy and development, thus creating a network of democracy experts both from academia and the policy world. We have published and contributed to a number of publications, organized and participated in conferences, workshops, and capacity-building trainings. Below a selection of policy collaborations are listed:

• V-Dem and International IDEA have collaborated since 2014. This has generated funding from multiple sources as well as a set of joint activities for instance the development of an Index on the Global State of Democracy.

• The use of V-Dem data as complementary indicators for the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 16 has been the focus of two V-Dem policy briefs and various seminars for instance at the UN headquarter, the German Development Institute and the Community of Democracies. In the report resulting from UNDPs Virtual Network expert group on the topic, 60 V-Dem indicators are included.

• V-Dem data on corruption is now included in Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI). The first CPI measure that includes V-Dem data was released in January 2017.

• Community of Democracies (CoD) is also using V-Dem data to operationalize and measure the 19 core principles of democracy stated in the CoD Warsaw Declaration,
2000. The Declaration is the founding document of CoD and defines the essential practices and norms for the effective establishment and consolidation of democracy. V-Dem data will also be used in the annual report on the state of democracy in the world.

- V-Dem has collaborated with the World Bank in the drafting of the World Development Report 2017. V-Dem data is used throughout the report – both from V6 of the data set as well as expert-coded data specifically collected for the purpose of the World Development Report. Furthermore, the V-Dem team drafted a background paper on sequences of accountability.

- V-Dem project team has developed an index on political participation, based on V-Dem data, for the Council of Europe.

- Each May, V-Dem organizes a policy dialogue conference to enhance the cooperation between researchers and democracy practitioners. The conference includes leading experts on democratization, democracy, good government and corruption from over 50 organizations.

- Capacity building trainings for NGOs, young researchers and partner organizations are being conducted as well as statistical trainings on quantitative research methods and how to use the V-Dem online analysis tools.

- The team has also had direct interaction and often substantial exchange with for example: the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), OECD / DAC, Fordi, UNDP, UN Democracy Fund, USAID, the European Endowment for Democracy, Transparency International, Global Integrity, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), the World Bank Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade /
Australian Aid, Zambia National Women's Lobby, Foundation for Democratic Process / Zambia, Swisspeace Foundation, the International Forum for Democratic Studies, German Development Institute, GIZ, CARE / DK, IBIS / DK, ONE, and many more.

In addition to this, V-Dem centers all around the world are being established. These centers will bring V-Dem closer to the local and regional levels, and will further enhance regional research and the involvement of regional scholars. Regional Centers have been already established in Estonia, Portugal, Kyrgyzstan, Chile and Egypt, and are evolving in the Philippines, South Africa, Zambia and Burkina Faso.

**Sustainability**

V-Dem must continually be revised and updated in order to remain useful for scholars, practitioners, and citizens. Most importantly, the V-Dem data needs to be updated on an annual or semiannual basis in order for the data to stay relevant. These updates should be used as opportunities to re-code prior years (e.g., the 5 years prior to the update), offering a further check on inter-coder (or intra-coder) reliability. The same Country Experts are employed whenever possible, further enhancing the efficiency of each update (since coders would be already familiar with the database and the online coding system). At present, there is funding for full updates for 2018 and 2019. The project team is discussing continued funding of (bi-)annual updates with existing funders and other interested parties for the period from 2019 and onwards.