

## Making International Cooperation in Cybersecurity Institution and Capacity Building with Developing and Middle-Income Economies “DAC-able” or “ODA-eligible”<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction:

"Official development assistance" (ODA) is a statistic compiled by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to measure what does (and what doesn't) count as aid."


“This ODA eligibility database presents examples of ODA and non-ODA eligible projects. The examples are meant to illustrate the application of the eligibility rules agreed by the DAC, see the Statistical Reporting Directives. They will facilitate the assessment of the eligibility of similar cases in future. The tool allows searching by different filters, e.g. sector or theme, or eligibility. Initially, the database covers all the cases presented in the ODA casebook on conflict, peace and security activities agreed by the DAC in 2017, but additional examples will be added in future.” (<https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/oda-eligibility-database/?hf=5&b=0&q=ICT+security>).

Cybersecurity Cooperation or Support to Cybersecurity Institution and Capacity Building **do not**, at present time, constitute ODA eligible or “DAC-able” projects or programs. ICT4Peace<sup>2</sup> and major actors in the

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<sup>1</sup> This is an initiative based on a discussion between the Ambassador at Large for Cyber Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia and the President of ICT4Peace Foundation Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> ICT4Peace has been conducting eighteen (18) Cybersecurity Policy and Diplomacy Capacity Building Workshops on all Continents since 2014 ([see note](#)).

sphere of  Cybersecurity  
such as the Government of Estonia are of the view, that International  
Cooperation in Cybersecurity Institution and

Capacity Building is **not** sufficiently recognized as a “Development Issue” and/or treated as a development priority by the Development

Community, Development Partners, or by the MDGs or SDGs. A recent paper by the Dutch Government aims to bridge the gap between the discussions on cyber capacity building and the SDGs.<sup>3</sup>

It is hoped, that by bringing the discussion around the need for increased cybersecurity institution and capacity-building (as expressed inter alia by the UN GGE and OSCE) also into the policy orbit of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Cyber Security Capacity Building will be recognized as a development priority by policy makers and more ODA will flow into this sector in a consistent and coherent fashion.

## **2. Background.**

States bear primary responsibility for the safety and security of their citizens, including in the ICT environment. Many states, especially developing countries and LDCs however, still lack sufficient capacity to protect their citizens and ICT networks from the malicious use of the cyberspace and to engage in bilateral, regional and global cooperation (including with the private sector and civil society) at the technical and diplomatic level and to learn about concrete and emerging threats and respond effectively to them.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://unoda-web.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/the-kingdom-netherlands-non-paper-on-cybersecurity-capacity-Building-and-sdgs.pdf>



The telecommunication, medical, transport and financial sectors of a country are vulnerable to cyber interference, that can hamper economic and social development.

It can make a country even an unwitting haven for malicious actors,

which negatively impacts the global ICT network on the whole, thus also in the industrial world. It is often said, that the global ICT network “is only as strong as its weakest link”.

Support to institution and capacity building in cyber security policy, strategy and diplomacy is playing an essential role in (1) States engaging in international cooperation and negotiations), (2) enabling countries to secure its citizens and its ICT infrastructure from malicious use of the cyberspace for economic and social development and (3) to strengthen the global cyberspace and ICT network and to ensure their peaceful use for economic and social development.

### **3. Proposal**

What is needed is a concerted effort by states, academia and civil society, that have an interest and a track record , to launch a process of discussion with the OECD Secretariat, interested Governments, Think Tanks and Academia etc. around the feasibility of and achieving ODA-eligibility and “DAC-ability” of Cybersecurity Institution and Capacity Building Cooperation with Developing and Emerging Countries (incl. LDCs).

ICT4Peace stands ready to launch and co-lead such a process as well as convene an initial meeting.

Daniel Stauffacher, Geneva, 26 February 2020.