

AI Hub: Year One

Interim Report



September 2026

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1. Introduction

Last year, at DFF, we shifted our [Community Programme](#) strategy to focus our activities around [Community Hubs](#): thematic strategic litigation communities of practice that bring together those working on legal strategies to advance digital rights. The Hubs seek to provide a space for participants to brainstorm thematically aligned strategic litigation cases, share best practices, knowledge and skills, and foster meaningful and long-lasting collaborations.

The [AI Hub](#), which focuses on legal strategies to ensure that the development and deployment of AI and its related digital infrastructure centre human rights and environmental justice, was the first Hub we launched, and it has now reached the one-year mark of its two-year cycle.

This interim report provides an overview of what has happened so far, who is participating, what cases are being developed, the main challenges we've faced, the insights and learnings we've gathered along the way, as well as what's next as we move into the Hub's second year.

2. What has happened so far?

The hub was officially launched in June of 2025 at our [Digital Environmental Justice Workshop in Marseille](#), followed by an open call for applications to join the Hub in July, which received more than 60 applications.

In September, we began hosting regular monthly calls with the selected cohort of approximately 30 Hub participants. The following month, many of them joined us for our [in-person Strategic Litigation Retreat in the Bavarian Alps](#).

So far, our monthly calls have focused on the Preparation Phase of the Hub's programme. Through group discussions and guest speaker sessions held throughout the year, we have explored topics such as jurisdiction, choice of law, standing and admissibility, evidence gathering, litigation timelines and budgets.

Participants have also had the opportunity to reflect on the broader aspirations and strategies within which their cases are embedded, and to regularly share and discuss their current and most pressing needs.

We recently closed out the Preparation Phase with a follow-up to our August 2026 monthly call, offering an office hours Q&A session on litigation timelines and budgets with our Grantmaking Lead, Thomas Vink. The session was available exclusively to Hub participants to provide them with tailored guidance to develop more robust litigation plans and grant applications, and as part of our continued efforts to strengthen the connection between our Grantmaking and Community Programmes.

3. Who is participating?

A cross-regional cohort bringing together participants organisations across Europe, Latin America, and Africa, as well as organisations with a global scope.

- [Zamleh](#)
- [Aston University](#)
- [AI World Project](#)
- [AlgorithmWatch](#)
- [Amnesty International](#)
- [Avant-Garde Lawyers](#)
- [Border Violence Monitoring Network](#)
- [Civil Liberties Union for Europe \(Liberties\)](#)
- [Collaborative Research Center for Resilience \(CRCR\)](#)
- [Código Não Binário](#)
- [Data for Good](#)
- [European Center for Not-for-Profit Law](#)
- [FIND](#)
- [French League of Human Rights](#)
- [Génération Lumière](#)
- [Gesellschaft für Freiheitsrechte e.V. \(GFF\)](#)
- [Good Law Project](#),
- [Green Screen Coalition](#)
- [Homo Digitalis](#)
- [IGLYO](#)
- [Leitmotiv](#)
- [Oversight Lab Africa](#)
- [P-IA: Alianza en Derecho Digital y Economía de la Innovación](#)
- [R3D: Red en Defensa de los Derechos Digitales](#)
- [Rooted Futures Lab](#)
- [Sherpa](#)
- [Smart Aid Initiative](#)
- [SOMO](#)
- [State Capture Accountability Project](#)

4. What legal cases are being developed?

The cases and legal strategies being developed in the Hub address a wide range of human rights, social and environmental harms related AI and digital infrastructure. Below are some examples of the issues and topics addressed in participants' cases, clustered into three broader thematic areas.

a. Platform Accountability, Online Censorship, Algorithmic Discrimination and Transparency

- Harmful AI chatbot outputs.
- The amplification of hateful content through algorithmic recommendation systems and inadequate content moderation.
- AI-facilitated gender-based violence and harms arising from AI-enabled devices.
- Labour rights and protections for workers involved in training AI systems.
- The protection of artistic expression from algorithmic censorship and arbitrary content removal.
- Transparency and accountability for the deployment of AI systems in public services.

b. Environmental Justice and Digital Infrastructure

- Community resistance to data centres.
- Social and environmental harms across digital infrastructure supply chains.
- The application of greenwashing rules to investment funds financing digital infrastructure projects.
- Corporate accountability for the role of digital infrastructure projects in the repression of environmental activists and land defenders.

c. Use of AI in State Surveillance and Armed Conflict

- Militarisation and dual use of AI
- Corporate accountability for AI-driven technologies and cloud infrastructure used in the contexts of human rights abuses and authoritarian repression.
- Challenges to national security exemptions that shield AI surveillance from scrutiny and accountability.

5. Challenges, insights & learnings

This section brings together challenges, insights and learnings surfaced from our monthly calls, in-person events and surveys, building on and expanding on what we had gleaned during the [Hub's first six months](#).

Main Challenges

Some of the main challenges that have emerged over the past year relate to participants' capacity to attend regular meetings due to factors such as time zones, workloads, and organisational capacity. The fact that calls are scheduled during regular working hours has also been a significant barrier for participants doing volunteer-based work in their organisations, whose members often balance full-time work, studies, care responsibilities and other obligations alongside their voluntary work. To address these challenges, we have already implemented some suggestions from participants, as well as ideas developed by our team, to continue creating more opportunities for knowledge-sharing and coordination to take place asynchronously outside of the regular monthly calls.

We have also had to deal with finding ways to accommodate different levels and areas of expertise among participants, cases at different stages of development, and work spanning different jurisdictions and legal frameworks. While we recognise that these challenges are inherent to the Hub's design and goals, we have also sought to remain flexible and responsive, adapting session

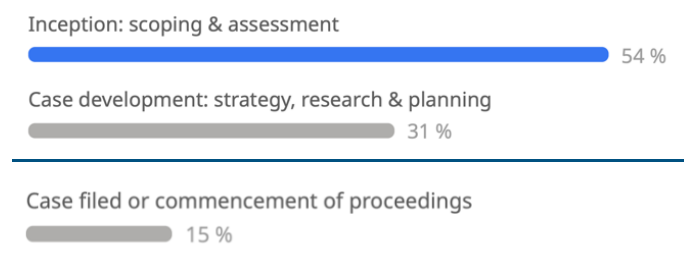
formats and breakout groups to the topics being discussed, as well as to participants' different levels/areas of expertise, and the thematic focus/particularities of their cases. At the same time, while we acknowledge that these factors can present certain complexities, they can also be managed to create valuable opportunities for mutual learning and broader connections among participants.

Case development progress

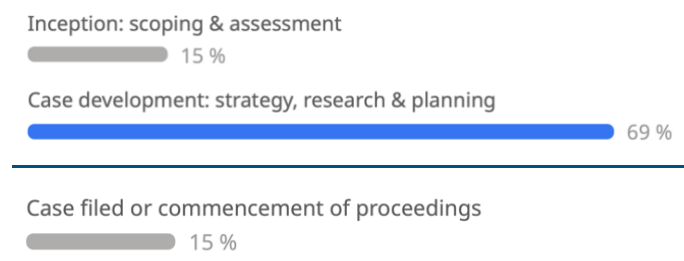
Because the Hubs are a new format we are piloting to convene our community, we have given participants significant opportunities to shape not only the content of the programme, but also the pace at which topics are covered during our monthly calls. One of the things we had already observed at the six-month mark was that participants wanted to spend significantly more time than we had originally envisaged focusing on the Preparation Phase, which we have just recently concluded.

In hindsight, this makes a lot of sense taking into account that, according to our annual survey, **85%** of participants' cases are still either in the inception or development stage, with only **15%** of cases filed and in active proceedings. However, we have been able to track significant progress throughout the year, as the ratio between those at the inception stage and the development stage has shifted substantially between the time they joined the Hub and the one-year mark.

In what stage was the case you are developing through the AI Hub when you joined?



In what stage is the case you are developing through the AI Hub now?



Participant assessments

The feedback we received in our annual survey indicates that participants strongly feel that the AI Hub contributes to DFF's mission and our two main strategic priorities rating the Hub's

contribution to **advancing strategic litigation as a tool for change** with a score of **4.8/5**, and **shifting power to those most affected by digital harms** (including organisations led by or working in close, non-extractive collaboration with them) with a score of **4.7/5**.

Participants also indicated that the Hub was on the right track towards achieving its main goals and expected outcomes. They rated the Hub's role in **building collective power to challenge tech-driven environmental and human rights harms** at **4.5/5**, while the remaining three goals — **developing and supporting practical legal strategies for the digital rights community**; **facilitating knowledge-sharing to enable mutual learning and coordinated action within the digital rights community**; and **fostering partnerships that centre affected communities and environmental activists** — each received a score of **4.4/5**.

The feedback we have received from participants indicates overall a high level of satisfaction with the Hub, with survey respondents rating their **participation in the Hub as a good use of their time so far** with a score of **4.3/5**, and **Hub meetings being well organised** with a score of **4.4/5**.

It is also worth noting that participants have identified a wide variety of aspects of the Hub as particularly beneficial to the development of their cases, including networking, thematic discussions, guest speaker sessions during monthly calls, knowledge-sharing and connections facilitated by the DFF team members outside of Hub activities, collaboration with other Hub members outside Hub activities, and attendance at in-person events.

Although not all participants have been able to attend one of our in-person events, we have consistently received feedback that these events are among the Hub's most important value-adds, particularly in building trust and sparking collaboration. Given that fostering partnerships is precisely one of the Hub's main goals, the feedback we have received suggests that some are already beginning to flourish, with promising signs that the connections established through the Hub may lead to even more collaboration over time.

Have you engaged with other AI Hub members outside the monthly calls and in-person events?

I have been in contact with colleagues I connected with through the hub



85 %

I have started collaborating with colleagues I connected with through the hub



31 %

I have renewed connections with colleagues I was already connected with before joining the hub



23 %

Participant voices

"It is fascinating to see the acceleration in the past year of strategic litigation on AI & digital infrastructure across Europe. The AI Hub discussions help to see what others are working on and to exchange helpful tips and ideas on litigation in this complex and fast-developing area." – **Christiaan / Leitmotiv**

"The most impactful aspect has been exchanging ideas, strategies, and connections. For us, the context has become significantly more urgent. The rush to secure AI infrastructure and mineral supply chains has intensified alongside the ascendancy of deportation and border infrastructure, including forced third

country transfer arrangements. We are seeing tech deployed at even faster rates to fast-track removals to the same sites of manufactured precarity and extractivism, producing compound rights violations. The Hub has been useful for situating our efforts within a broader ecosystem of organisations confronting these converging harms." – Coline / Collaborative Research Center for Resilience

"The past year was an opportunity for us to discover what strategic litigation is, how it is done, and to learn from others in the lab who have already done it. Now we have a better understanding of what strategic litigation is and of the kinds of actors we want to hold accountable. We are also starting to research our case and connect with people who can provide us with more information." – Hairat / Generation Lumière

"Being part of the AI Hub has been a truly rewarding experience. It has been uplifting to meet and collaborate with such a diverse group of people, bringing together different geographical perspectives, professional backgrounds, and areas of expertise." – Anonymous

"A great opportunity to meet and brainstorm with other CSOs working on similar issues; a well-structured approach to fostering collaboration in the AI/tech accountability space." – Anonymous

"Community-led litigation strategy and action for digital rights? Sign me up!" – Anonymous

6. What's next?

Now that we have completed the Preparation Phase, the Hub will enter its second year focusing on the Litigation Phase. During this phase, we will cover topics such as drafting pleadings, structuring legal arguments, translating complex technical issues into accessible legal arguments, preparing interventions and amicus submissions, navigating procedural obstacles and delays, and coordinating litigation with campaigning, policy, and communications strategies, among others.

Besides our regular monthly calls, in October we will host an in-person InterHub Gathering at the University of Amsterdam Law Hub. The event will bring together participants from our AI Hub and our Digital Democracy Hub to exchange knowledge and insights and facilitate cross-thematic learning around the issues and legal strategies being developed across the two Hubs. It will also seek to strengthen relationships across Hubs, foster cross-movement solidarity and ecosystem-building, and improve coordination, alignment, and mutual reinforcement of strategic litigation efforts within our community.