

Policy-Plan-2025-2026-Beleidsplan

Introduction

Stichting Leitmotiv (“Leitmotiv”) is a not-for-profit foundation¹ focused on the public interest and registered in the Netherlands. Leitmotiv is a think-and-do tank for an alternative digital economy. Through research and original evidence gathering on the ‘production side’ of the digital economy (from chip production and data centers to the cloud service market), we shine a spotlight on how our digital world is created. Our work aims to enable NGOs, policymakers, philanthropists, and the public to take meaningful action, empowered by our research, information products and fresh perspectives. At Leitmotiv, we also engage in policy and legislative advocacy, and we support strategic litigation through our research. Our vision is to contribute to an alternative digital economy that operates within planetary boundaries, where excessive concentration of corporate power is contained by democratic forces and where human rights, dignity, and equality are respected and promoted.

The Foundation’s Objectives and Activities

Leitmotiv is a ‘think-and-do tank’ that exists to promote an alternative digital economy that operates within planetary boundaries and where the benefits of digitalization are shared equitably and democratically. In order to achieve these objectives, we engage in at least the following activities:

- Undertaking **research**, gathering evidence and presenting this research and evidence on upstream digital markets, the impact of these markets on climate change and our natural environment, concentration of economic power on these markets and other social impacts of these upstream digital markets;
- Contributing to **public debate, raising public awareness and education** in relation to the objectives of the foundation;
- Contributing to **strategic litigation** that promotes the objectives of the foundation through our research and evidence gathering.
- Contributing to **policy and legislative debates** that relate to the foundation’s objectives and engage in dialogue with relevant policymakers;

¹ Leitmotiv is in the process of applying for ANBI status with the Dutch tax authorities.

- Developing **ideas, advice and recommendations** on an alternative digital economy and digital future and the realization thereof;
- Developing **online and offline platforms and tools for interaction and the exchange of information** between civil society organizations, academics and others working towards an alternative digital economy and future;
- **Cooperating with and supporting other organizations or individuals** with similar objectives and activities and who can contribute to the objectives of the foundation.

Objectives 2025-2026

Leitmotiv was founded as a stichting on 25 November 2025. We are in the process of preparing and launching a number of projects and expect to solidify our organization in 2026. Projects currently in preparation are:

Data Center Environmental Transparency Project

- A that focuses on establishing more comprehensive environmental transparency for the data center industry across Europe. This project will develop an interactive online dashboard with data visualizations and modeling capabilities, a comprehensive research report documenting corporate non-compliance, lack of transparency and regulatory gaps; a global advocacy toolkit and methodology guide developed in partnership with civil society organizations in, and outside, Europe to enable replication of this transparency intervention in other regions facing similar corporate opacity; and a series of webinars and training sessions related to the dashboard, report and global advocacy toolkit. These tools will be designed for policymakers, politicians, investigative journalists, NGOs, and concerned publics to inform legislative processes, strategic litigation, regulatory oversight, and public debate.

Strategic Litigation Projects

- Several supported by Leitmotiv, which focuses on leveraging the law in relation to digital infrastructure. These projects will work towards the following outcomes: (i) Greater transparency of public and private investments in data centers and the corporations that develop, own, or operate them, enabling more informed oversight and accountability; (ii) Reduced financial greenwashing, with investment funds accurately reflecting the environmental

impacts of their holdings in the data center industry; (iii) Slower and more regulated growth of hyperscale data center developments, with fewer opportunities for corporations to relocate projects to jurisdictions with weaker oversight; (iv) Recognition of the climate and environmental impacts of data center development as a human rights issue, informing policy, litigation, and public awareness.

Policy-Oriented Research Project

- A that builds evidence for an alternative digital economy and its proper regulation. This includes presenting research that contains concrete ideas on how to retake democratic control over data centers and other digital infrastructure. At the same time, our research project will present a positive agenda of how the affordances of digital technologies can enable a human rights-respecting digital economy that combines the benefits of open markets with the protection of public goods and values through laws and other public institutions. As part of this track, Leitmotiv will pursue at least the following outcomes: (i) Evidence-based guidance on regulatory and public interventions that promote effective competition in digital infrastructure markets; (ii) Demonstration of viable, less extractive socio-technical and community-led alternatives, showing that Big Tech's dominance is not inevitable; (iii) A more informed public debate on data center harms, anchored in concrete political issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, housing pressures, and rising electricity costs; (iv) Defined environmental caps for digital infrastructure that align with planetary boundaries and support sustainable development; (v) Strengthened transparency regimes and complementary measures that enable ongoing monitoring of data center operations and corporate practices. (vi) Clear procurement guidance to promote the adoption of the most environmentally efficient and sustainable digital resource production practices.

The sources of income

Leitmotiv's income is diversified to ensure robust funding for its initiatives. Leitmotiv will raise funds from national and international philanthropic organizations, individual gifts/donations, legacies, inheritances, subsidies and other types of donations. Leitmotiv will furthermore seek *pro bono* support from academic organizations, partner organizations and other institutions in order to fulfill its mission and objectives. Collaborations with like-minded organizations may also lead to shared fundraising opportunities. Leitmotiv's fundraising will consist of applications for

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project financing with philanthropic organizations, applications for organizational funding with philanthropic organizations, and seeking individual donations through (crowdfunding) campaigns and other fundraising activities.

How Leitmotiv's funds are spent

As a non-profit, the funds raised by Leitmotiv are used to further Leitmotiv's mission, as outlined above. Leitmotiv's income serves the public interest purpose of the organization and are spent to pursue the public interest activities described above. No natural person nor legal entity can dispose of the assets of Leitmotiv as if they were their own. Assets are disbursed by the Board. Leitmotiv's main expenditures are labor costs, procurement of services and associated expenses, office costs, organizing workshops and other public events, travel costs, and costs of digital services to support our work.

How Leitmotiv's assets are managed

As a Dutch foundation (stichting), Leitmotiv is dedicated to diligent asset management to ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of its mission. Our asset management principles include:

- **Financial record keeping:** Leitmotiv maintains comprehensive and accurate financial records, including detailed accounts of all income and expenses, receipts, agreements, and correspondence, in accordance with legal requirements.
- **Board oversight:** The management board is entrusted with the responsibility of managing the foundation's assets and making all strategic financial decisions. Regular board meetings are held to review financial performance, approve major transactions, and ensure proper documentation and minutes of all proceedings. No individual Board member is allowed to exercise majority control over the institution's assets.
- **Prudent financial management:** All funds received are exclusively utilized for the foundation's public interest objectives. Leitmotiv does not hold more assets than are reasonably necessary for the continuation of the anticipated activities of the foundation. Leitmotiv intends to build up a financial reserve with which the continuation of the foundation can be guaranteed for at least one year ('continuity reserve'). Any surplus income generated is reinvested into achieving Leitmotiv's public interest objectives.
- **Auditing and reporting:** Leitmotiv's commitment to transparency dictates regular internal and, as deemed necessary, external financial reviews.

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Accounts are audited on an annual basis by external accountants. Leitmotiv will report to philanthropic organizations on the use and disbursement of funds and its impacts. Leitmotiv will also publish an annual report of its income, expenditure and impact for the general public

Governance and organization

Leitmotiv was founded in November 2025 and is governed by a Board that consists of its three founders: Corinne Cath, Max Schulze and Christiaan van Veen. Leitmotiv is in the process of seeking members for an informal Advisory Council that can assist the Board with advice on its governance, fundraising, policy and projects and programs. Leitmotiv's statutes allow the Board to establish a Board of Supervisors, which the Board intends to set up in 2026.

