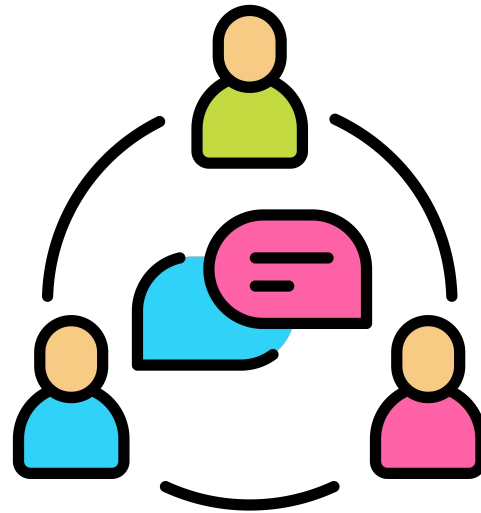


# 3.3

## ABCDE and the DISARM Frameworks

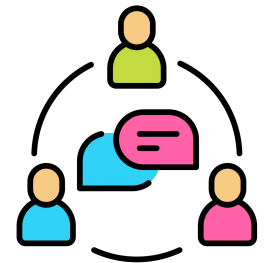
# Note

- Interactive symbol: tasks for groups


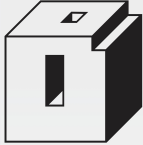





# ABCDE Model

- Pamment (2020). The ABCDE Framework from The EU's Role in Fighting Disinformation: Crafting A Disinformation Framework ([here](#))
- Build groups: According to Pamment, what are the main questions to ask when dealing with information manipulation campaigns?



# ABCDE Model

				
Actor	Behaviour	Content	Degree	Effect
Who is spreading malicious content?	How are they doing it? What tactics are they using?	What's being spread? What's the story?	To what extent has the content spread?	What impact has it had on the community or society?

Source: Own illustration based on Pamment, 2020

# ABCDE Behaviour

				
Actor	Behaviour	Content	Degree	Effect
Who is spreading malicious content?	How are they doing it? What tactics are they using?	What's being spread? What's the story?	To what extent has the content spread?	What impact has it had on the community or society?

Source: Own illustration based on Pamment, 2020

# When talking about behaviours, we are talking TTPs

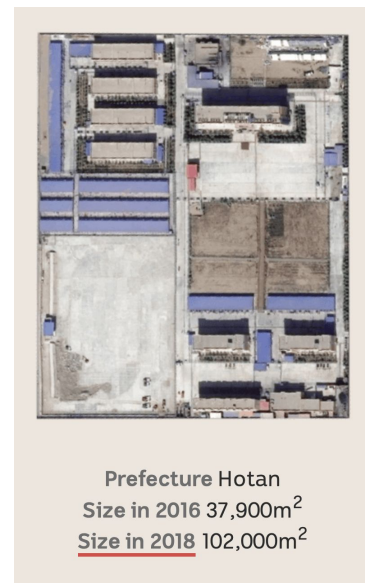
- **TTPs:** *Tactics*, techniques and procedures
  - **Tactics:** operational goals that the threat actors try to achieve with their actions (e. g. **5Ds**)
  - **Techniques:** concrete actions taken to to accomplish the goals according to the stage of an operation (e. g. concrete messages)
  - **Procedures:** specific combinations or patterns of behavior that are used by certain actors (e g. recurring narratives) (Hénin, 2023)

# 5Ds

- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** as elaborated in the first EEAS report on FIMI ([EEAS](#), 2023; Hénin, 2023)

# 5Ds

- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** allegations and denigrate the source <sup>(1/2)</sup>
  - There is no forced labour in Xinjiang and accusations of Western governments are hypocritical – Spamouflage\*

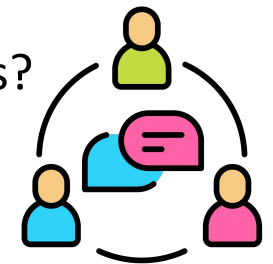


Satellite images reveal size and spread of internment camps

\*a long-term China-related campaign using fake accounts to denigrate Western countries

- More examples?

Source: [abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au), 2018  
(link)



# 5Ds

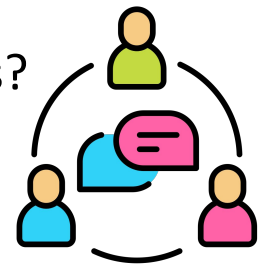
- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** allegations and denigrate the source <sup>(2/2)</sup>
  - Russia is not acting aggressive with its war in Ukraine. On the contrary, Russia reacts to and defends itself from Western aggression: Russia is fighting in Ukraine against Western imperialism and neo-colonialism (link to report: [European Commission, 2023](#))

# 5Ds

- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** the information environment <sup>(1/2)</sup>

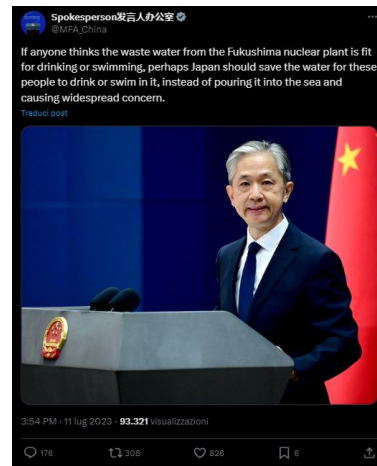
- Russia’s war in Ukraine is justified, because Ukraine produces a plutonium-based “dirty bomb” by using leftover from the abandoned Chernobyl nuclear power plant (link to report: [debunk.org](https://debunk.org), 2022).
- As Ukraine also seeks nuclear weapons, attacks civilian nuclear infrastructure, and hides weapons in nuclear power plants, it would be legitimate for Russia to use tactical nuclear weapons against Ukraine (link to report: [European Commission](#), 2023)

- More examples?

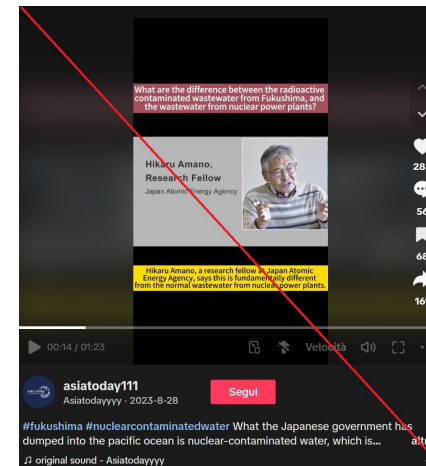


# 5Ds

- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** the information environment (2/2)
  - Fukushima wastewater release discussed above (link to report: [Alliance4Europe](#), 2024)



Government  
spokesperson



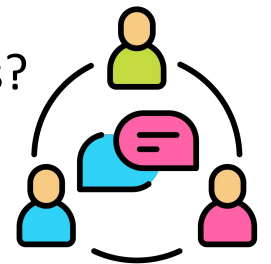
False experts on  
radioactive waste

Source: [Alliance4Europe](#) (link)

# 5Ds

- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** public attention and shift blame to certain actors <sup>(1/2)</sup>
  - The West is hindering peace negotiations to end war in Ukraine by fuelling the conflict (link to report: [euvsdisinfo.eu](https://euvsdisinfo.eu), 2023)

- More examples?



# 5Ds

- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** public attention and shift blame to certain actors <sup>(2/2)</sup>
  - The US is fuelling the conflict in Gaza to benefit military industry – Spamouflage (link to report: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2023)



Source: [isdglobal.com](https://isdglobal.com)

# 5Ds

- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** to threaten and frighten opponents <sup>(1/2)</sup>
  - Allegations against journalists and activists raising their voices against the regime targeted against foreigners and domestic citizens (link to report: [wilsoncenter.org](https://www.wilsoncenter.org), 2024)



**Evan Gershkovich** [Follow](#)

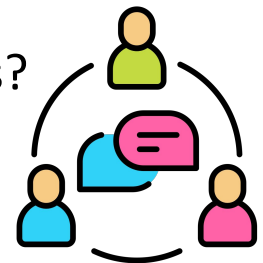
Reporter, The Wall Street Journal



Evan Gershkovich is a foreign correspondent for The Wall Street Journal formerly based in Moscow. He is currently writing a book about his seven years living in Russia—including more than a year in prison on fabricated espionage charges—and the country's slide toward autocracy.

Source: [WSJ](#)

- More examples?



# 5Ds

- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** to threaten and frighten opponents <sup>(2/2)</sup>
  - The UK wants Ukraine conflict to go nuclear (link to report: [euvsdisinfo.eu](https://euvsdisinfo.eu), 2023)
  - “To defend Russia and our people, we will certainly make use of all weapon systems available to us. This is not a bluff”
  - “The consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history” (link to report: [euvsdisinfo.eu](https://euvsdisinfo.eu), 2023)

# 5Ds

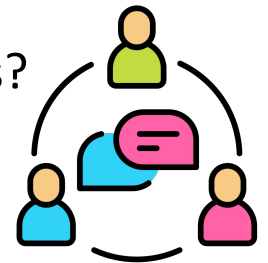
- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** publics and generate conflict <sup>(1/2)</sup>
  - Corrupt EU politicians ruin member states with Green Deal climate policies (link to report: [adacio.eu](https://adacio.eu), 2024)



Source:  
news-front  
.su\*

\*Russian  
disinformation and  
propaganda outlet  
based in Crimea

- More examples?



# 5Ds

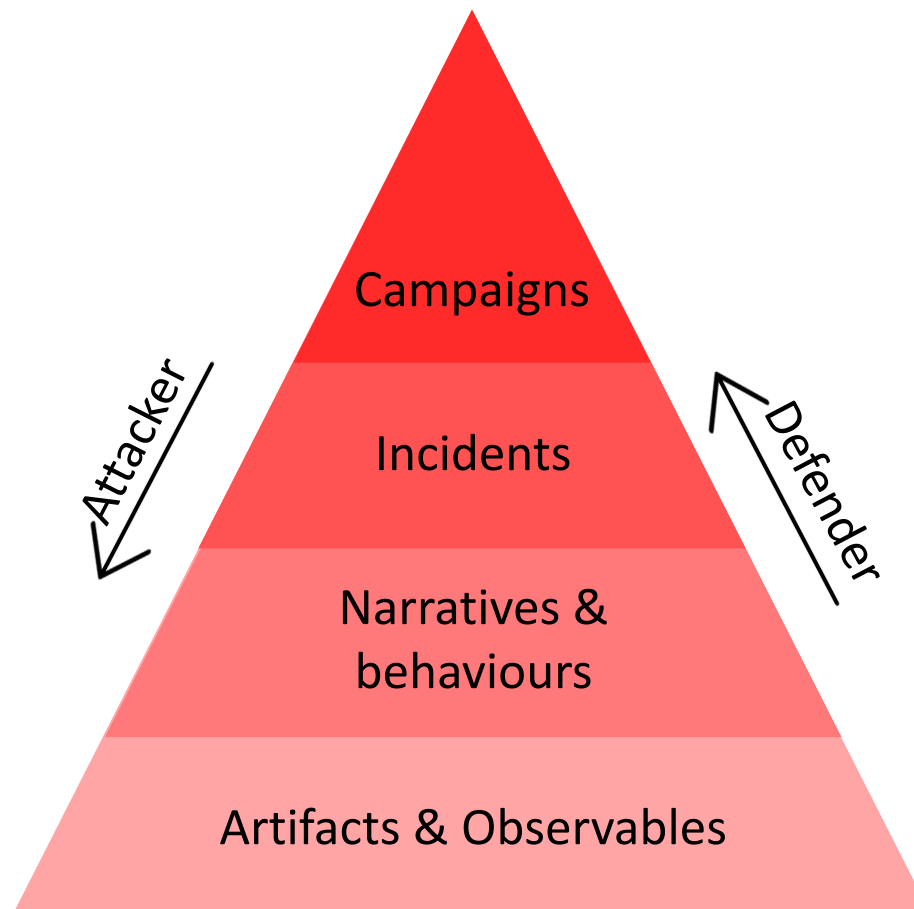
- **Dismiss – Distort – Distract – Dismay – Divide** publics and generate conflict <sup>(2/2)</sup>
  - Ukrainian “regime” is persecuting Russian Orthodox believers (link to report: [euvsdisinfo.eu](https://euvsdisinfo.eu), 2023)
  - Ukraine has been committing genocide in Donbas for years and Russia had to intervene to protect the people (link to report: [European Commission](#), 2023)

# The Kill Chain



- Describes the steps an info manipulation campaign takes to launch a coordinated attack
  - Consists of 4 phases: **Plan** – **Prepare** (left of Boom) – **Execute** – **Assess** (right of Boom)
  - **Boom**: Moment when actions taken by an (info manipulation) campaign start to produce observables

# The disinformation pyramid

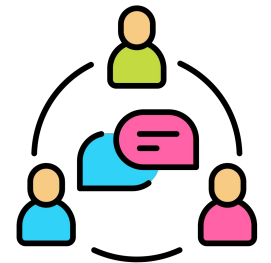


Source: Terp & Breuer, 2022

# The Kill Chain

- **Observables**

- In your group: Which traces does an online influence campaign produce for analysts to use as indicators or “breadcrumbs” to pin down an orchestrated manipulative effort?

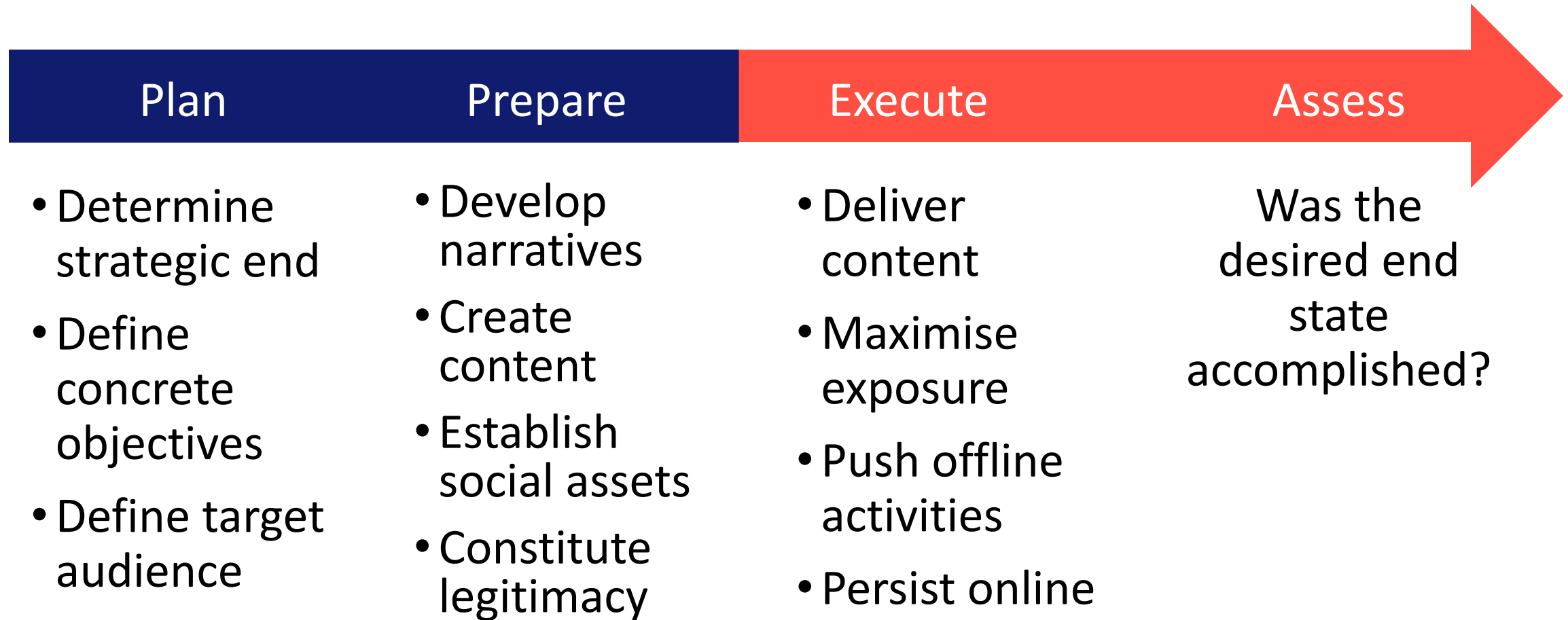


# Kill Chain

## • Observables

- In your group: Which traces does an online influence campaign produce for analysts to use as indicators or “breadcrumbs” to pin down an orchestrated manipulative effort?
  - Infrastructures, social assets, and content: e. g. fake profiles, sock puppet accounts, manipulative social media messages, spoofing websites, fake articles, propaganda content, etc.
  - Further reading: The ADAC.io Information Influence Operation (IIO) Attribution Framework ([here](#)) gives an overview over different types of information and data accesses for analysing influence operations, especially attribution, aiming to foster information sharing between different stakeholders such as journalists, researchers, NGOs, companies, and government agencies.

# The Kill Chain – Plan your own information influence campaign



# The Kill Chain – Plan your own information influence campaign



# Plan

- Determine strategic end
  - Establish country “x” as a new top travel destination and increase tourism
- Define concrete objectives
  - Discredit alternative travel destinations (“a”) attracting a similar clientele
- Define target audience
  - Tourists that are the potential clientele for the new travel destination in “x”

# The Kill Chain – Plan your own information influence campaign



# Prepare

- Develop narratives
  - In travel destination “a”, wastewater is discharged unfiltered into rivers
- Create content
  - Online materials showing wastewater being discharged from a hotel in “a”
- Establish social assets
  - Fake accounts and bots posting materials and commenting on bad water conditions in “a”
- Constitute legitimacy
  - Create fake expert claiming to have found alarming concentrations of bacteria in fresh water in “a”

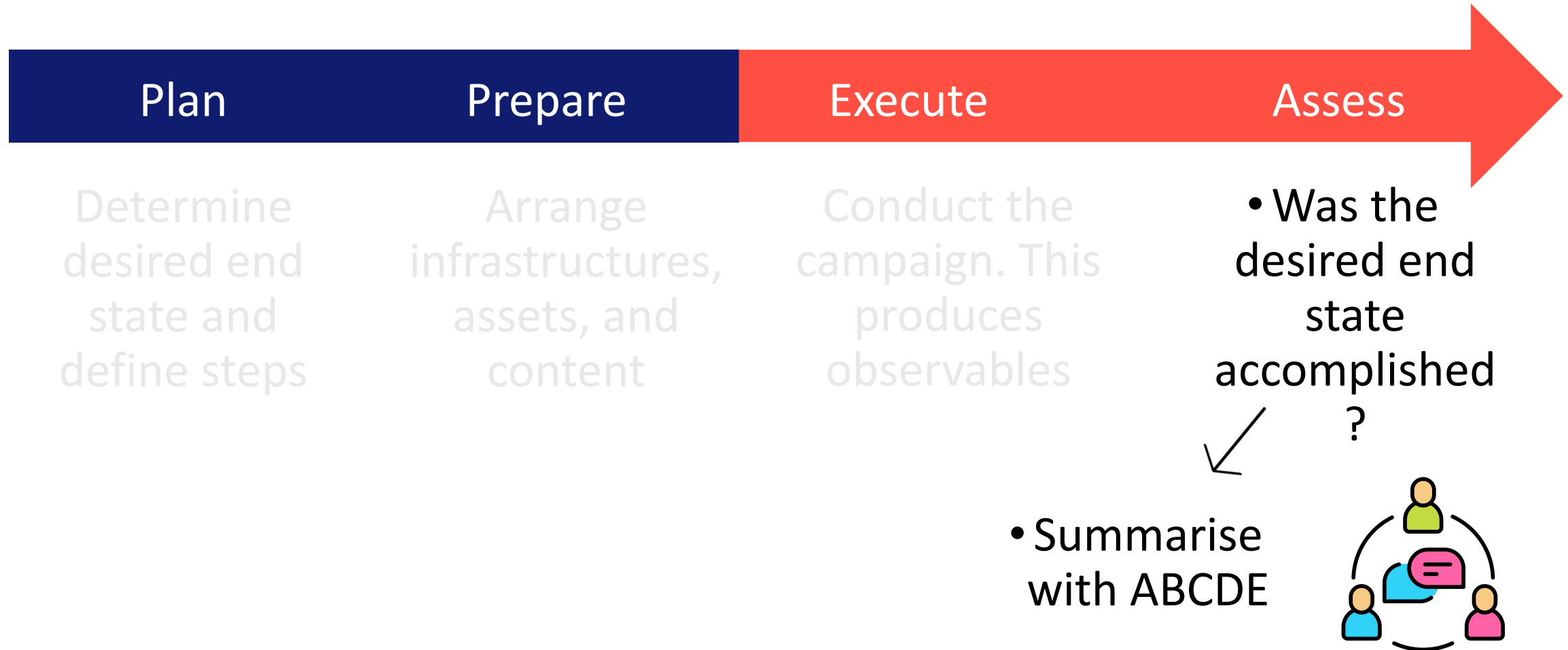
# Kill Chain



# Execute

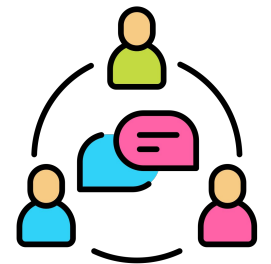
- Deliver content
  - Post materials on all established accounts, starting with a small dose (pump priming)
- Maximise exposure
  - Fake amplification: bots liking and repost content on bad conditions in “a”
- Push offline activities
  - Infiltrate travel fairs with actors reporting on their bad experience in “a”
- Persist online
  - Continuously delete existing and reestablish fake profiles. Redirect users to blogs

# Kill Chain



# Assess

- In your group: Which steps would you take to assess your campaign?



# Assessment

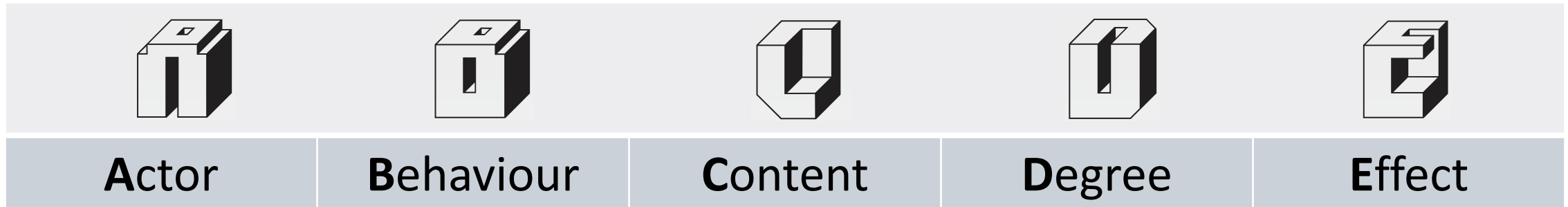
- Steps to assess your campaign
  - **Formative** (ex-ante): message design and audience analysis (Rice & Moxley, 2021)
  - **Process**: during activities are undertaken. Allows for potential adjustments during an ongoing campaign.
  - **Summative** (ex-post): Evaluation of outcomes and impacts, not only on activities and outputs (Macnamara & Gregory, 2017)

# Assessment

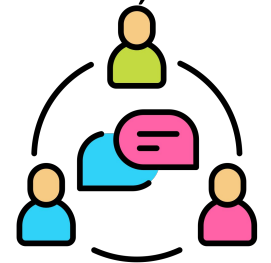
- Steps to assess your campaign
  - **Formative:** Target audience (which clientele on which platforms); message design (how to tailor manipulative content to resonate with the target audience)
  - **Process:** Campaign persistence (are there fake accounts operative on platforms, is the fake content still available), online activity (likes, shares, comments by genuine users), online sentiment (valence and emotional arousal)
  - **Summative:** Offline success (how many travellers visit the discredited location “a” compared to pre-campaign travel seasons; how many people visit the new location)

# Summary

- In your group: Use the ABCDE Framework to write a short summary report of your own manipulation campaign. Prepare to read it out in the plenary session



Source: Own illustration based on Pamment, 2020

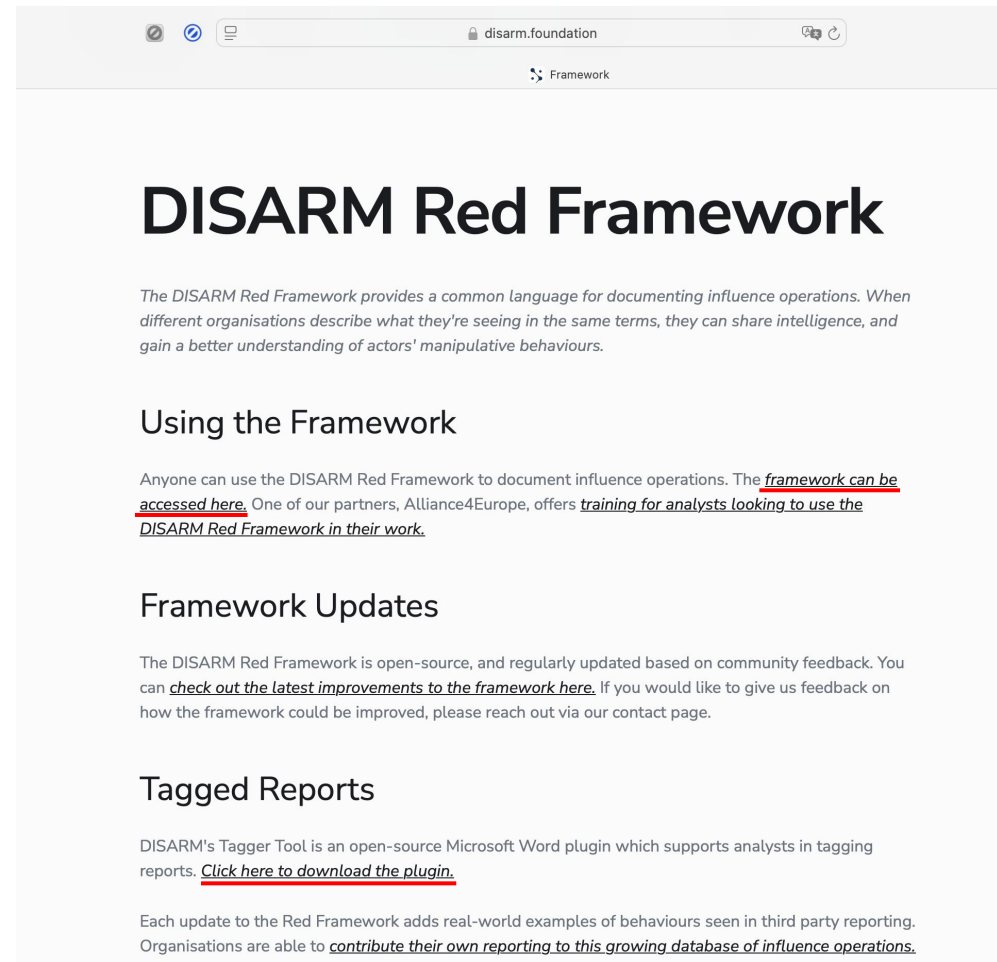


# Summary

- Short summary

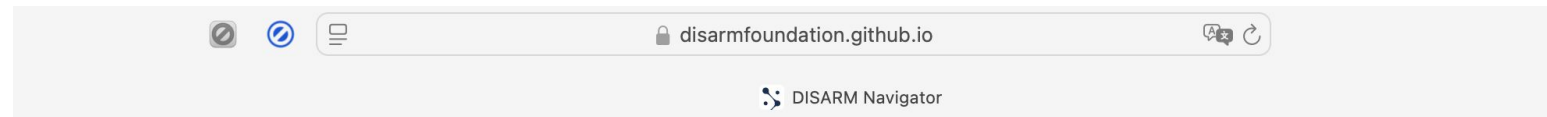
- A: Country “x” as host (or principal) of the manipulation campaign, agents running fake social media accounts, employed troll farms, fake experts on your payroll
- B: Spreading denigrating texts and videos on country “a” via fake accounts, using trolls and fake experts
- C: Narratives on bad environmental conditions and health risks, denouncing travel destinations and hotels in “a”
- D: Online spread plus offline activities (to certain extent)
- E: Potentially an image loss of “a” and an image gain in “x” (cog.), increased numbers of tourists in “x” and decreased numbers in “a” (behavioural)

# DISARM Framework



Source:  
<https://www.disarm.foundation/framework>

# DISARM Framework



## DISARM Navigator

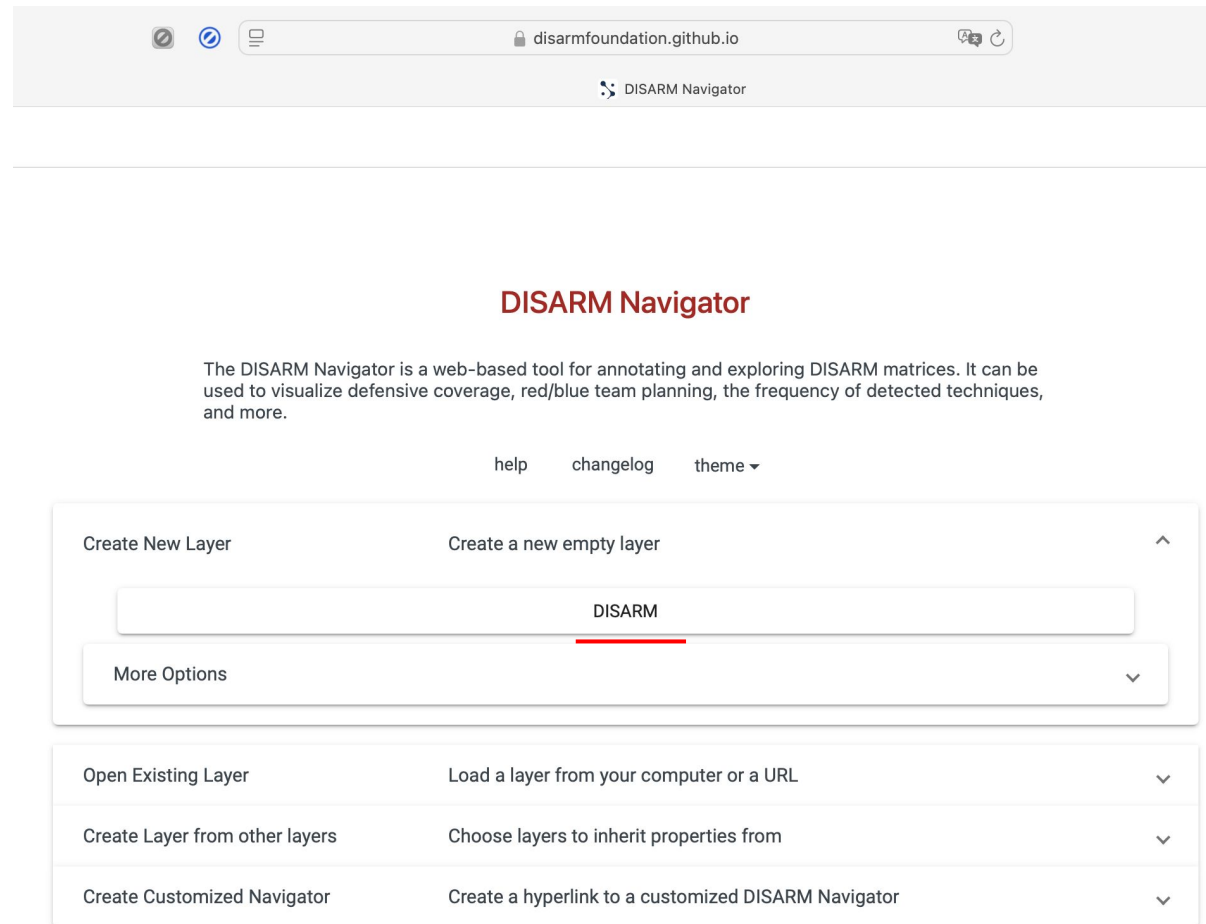
The DISARM Navigator is a web-based tool for annotating and exploring DISARM matrices. It can be used to visualize defensive coverage, red/blue team planning, the frequency of detected techniques, and more.

[help](#) [changelog](#) [theme ▼](#)

Create New Layer	<u>Create a new empty layer</u>	▼
Open Existing Layer	Load a layer from your computer or a URL	▼
Create Layer from other layers	Choose layers to inherit properties from	▼
Create Customized Navigator	Create a hyperlink to a customized DISARM Navigator	▼

Source:  
<https://disarmfoundation.github.io/disarm-navigator/>

# DISARM Framework



Source:  
<https://disarmfoundation.github.io/disarm-navigator/>

# DISARM Framework

The screenshot shows the DISARM Framework web application interface. The browser address bar displays 'disarmfoundation.github.io'. The interface features a top navigation bar with tabs for 'layer', 'selection controls', 'layer controls', and 'technique controls'. Below the navigation bar is a grid of 13 columns, each representing a phase of the framework. Each column has a header with a title and a count of techniques. The techniques are listed in rows, with some cells containing a double vertical bar '||' indicating a specific technique or a group of techniques.

Plan Strategy 2 techniques	Plan Objectives 13 techniques	Target Audience Analysis 3 techniques	Develop Narratives 7 techniques	Develop Content 8 techniques	Establish Assets 16 techniques	Establish Legitimacy 5 techniques	Microtarget 4 techniques	Select Channels and Affordances 10 techniques	Conduct Pump Priming 5 techniques	Deliver Content 4 techniques	Maximise Exposure 7 techniques	Drive Online Harms 5 techniques	Drive Online Harms 5 techniques
Determine Strategic Ends (0/4)	Cause Harm (0/3)	Identify Social and Technical Vulnerabilities (0/8)	Demand Insurmountable Proof	Create Hashtags and Search Artefacts (0/2)	Account Asset (0/7)	Co-Opt Trusted Sources (0/3)	Create Clickbait	Bookmarking and Content Curation	Seed Distortions	Attract Traditional Media	Amplify Existing Narrative	Censor Social Media as a Political Force	Conduct Fundraising
Determine Target Audiences	Cultivate Support (0/8)	Map Target Audience Information Environment (0/5)	Develop Competing Narratives	Develop Audio-Based Content (0/2)	Acquire/Recruit Network (0/2)	Establish Inauthentic News Sites (0/2)	Create Localised Content	Consumer Review Networks	Seed Kernel of Truth	Comment or Reply on Content (0/1)	Bait Influencer	Control Information Environment through Offensive Cyberspace Operations (0/4)	Encourage Attendance Events (0/2)
	Degrade Adversary	Segment Audiences (0/5)	Develop New Narratives	Develop Image-Based Content (0/4)	Asset Origin (0/8)	Persona Legitimacy (0/4)	Leverage Echo Chambers/Filter Bubbles (0/3)	Digital Community Hosting Asset (0/17)	Trial Content	Deliver Ads (0/2)	Cross-Posting (0/3)	Harass (0/4)	Organise Events (0/2)
	Dismay		Integrate Target Audience Vulnerabilities into Narrative	Develop Text-Based Content (0/7)	Build Network (0/3)	Persona Legitimacy Evidence (0/2)	Purchase Targeted Advertisements	Digital Content Creation Asset (0/2)	Use Fake Experts	Post Content (0/3)	Direct Users to Alternative Platforms	Platform Filtering	Physical Violence (0/2)
	Dismiss (0/1)		Leverage Conspiracy Theory Narratives (0/2)	Develop Video-Based Content (0/2)	Cultivate Ignorant Agents	Present Persona (0/22)		Digital Content Delivery Asset (0/7)	Use Search Engine Optimisation		Flood Information Space (0/8)	Suppress Opposition (0/3)	Sell Merchandise
	Dissuade from Acting (0/3)		Leverage Existing Narratives	Distort Facts (0/2)	Develop Owned Media Assets			Digital Content Hosting Asset (0/12)			Incentivize Sharing (0/2)		
	Distort		Respond to Breaking News Event or Active Crisis	Obtain Private Documents (0/2)	Employ Commercial Analytic Firms			Formal Diplomatic Channels			Manipulate Platform Algorithm (0/1)		
	Distract			Reuse Existing Content (0/4)	Establish Account Imagery (0/7)			Gated Asset (0/7)					
	Divide				Financial Instrument (0/9)			Online Polls					
	Facilitate State Propaganda				Infiltrate Existing Networks (0/2)			Traditional Media (0/3)					
	Make Money (0/6)				Leverage Content Farms (0/2)								
	Motivate to Act (0/3)				Online Infrastructure (0/9)								
	Undermine (0/4)				Prepare Fundraising Campaigns (0/2)								
					Prepare Physical Broadcast Capabilities								
					Recruit Malign Actors (0/3)								
					Software								

Source:  
<https://disarmfoundation.github.io/disarm-navigator/>

# Coding exercise

“Sweden’s centre-right coalition of the Moderates, Christian Democrats (CD), and Liberals is now facing turbulent waters as revelations about its ally, the far-right Sweden Democrats (SD), allegedly running a troll farm, threaten to upset the political balance.

“Last week, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson’s leadership was dealt a major blow when TV4 revealed that the communications department of the far-right SD (ECR) party had used numerous anonymous accounts to spread social media content favourable to its views, sometimes at the expense of its coalition allies.”

Source: EURACTIV

# Coding exercise

“Last week, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson’s leadership was dealt a major blow when TV4 revealed that the communications department of the far-right SD (ECR) party had used numerous **anonymous** accounts (**Conceal Information Assets: Use Pseudonyms [T0128.001]**) to spread **social media** (**Digital Community Hosting Asset: Social Media Platform[T0151.001]**) content favourable to its views (**Cultivate Support: Cultivate Support for Initiative[T0136.005]**), sometimes at the expense of its coalition allies.”

Source: EURACTIV

# Literature

Hénin, N. & EU DisinfoLab. (2023). TOWARDS a EUROPEAN REDEFINITION OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE.  
[https://www.disinfo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/20230412\\_FIMI-FS-FINAL.pdf](https://www.disinfo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/20230412_FIMI-FS-FINAL.pdf)

Macnamara, J., & Gregory, A. (2018). Expanding evaluation to progress Strategic communication: beyond message tracking to open listening. International Journal of Strategic Communication, 12(4), 469–486.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2018.1450255>

Pamment, J. (2020) The ABCDE Framework from The EU's Role in Fighting Disinformation: Crafting A Disinformation Framework on JSTOR. (o. D.). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26180.6>

Terp, S., & Breuer, P. (2022). DISARM: a framework for analysis of disinformation Campaigns. IEEE.  
<https://doi.org/10.1109/cogsima54611.2022.983066>

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